

Housing Navigation for GPD Case Managers

Session 2 - September 21, 2022

Recording:

https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/play/2SXCctiTkEm0u6vW6JhuS4p-Bb_xbzZGg3dfd9ZV6Hml6srggJ3ycz8EwOhDsmLj6ywxZhEzTr5Zh2_b.AB9apch9-9i0Z7va?continueMode=true&xzmrtaid=8wG_S4fMQIO4VB5zG6sFFg.1669744170329.419be373aa05fc2a142aa3584179229f&xzmrtaid=824

Housing Navigation Series Agenda

Session 1

- Leading with Equity
- Tenant Screening Barriers
- Housing Retention Barriers

Session 2

- Housing Navigation
- Landlord Recruitment
- Housing Stabilization Case Management

Housing Navigation



Housing Barrier Recap

- Identify Tenant Screening Barriers that may cause a landlord to refuse to rent to a Veteran
 - Review credit report and Tenant Screening reports that local landlords use
 - Talk with Veteran about reasons for previous housing loss
- Identify Housing Retention Barriers that may increase the Veteran's risk of losing housing
 - Patterns that have contributed to previous loss of housing (ex. non-payment of rent, lease violations)
 - Prepare the Veteran for successful housing tenancy (ex. budgeting, review the lease, conflict management skills)
 - Identify housing that will support stable housing (ex. close to resources, far from problem people)

Initial Housing Search Plan

Don't assume...

- Households will substantially increase their incomes (unless they have zero income!)
- Veterans will find a unit at 30% of their income
- Veterans can't sustain housing due to challenges they face that are true of other private market renters

Help...

- Households focus on specific screening and retention barriers while coordinating other services as needed
- Veterans understand the reasonable choices they have given market conditions
- Veteran with housing search based on preferences and realistic goals

Consider...

- Shared housing as an option
- Which Veterans will need longer term service or subsidy support
- How you communicate needs with partners
- How you can begin to frame your landlord outreach

Match...

- Clients with housing options from partner landlords-- unless they want to do their own housing search (and then monitor to see how it's going)
- Veterans with other community resources (VA or mainstream)

Housing Identification Recap

Securing Housing

- Look for housing that can be maintained after project exit
- Help people find housing that will give them access to things they need (neighborhood amenities, transportation, employment, etc.)

Landlord Relationships

- Relationships with landlords will give you access to more housing units
- Actively recruit and retain landlord partners



Housing Search and Navigation Starting Points

Housing Navigation IS...

- Working on a 1:1 basis with Veterans conducting a housing search - taking them to units, negotiating with landlords on their behalf, spending multiple hours a week finding a unit w/each client if needed.
- Deep understanding of inspection requirements, and fair housing and local tenancy laws.
- Ensuring Veterans desires, choices and needs are front and center in the housing search.
- Addressing bias and discrimination – when it occurs - to ensure all Veterans have equitable access to housing options
- Support for Veterans after they move into housing - respond promptly to landlord calls if capacity exists for basic troubleshooting or other referrals

Housing Search and Navigation Starting Points

Housing Navigation **IS NOT...**

- Printing Craigslist ads and having clients cold call landlords for units.
- Sending clients into the community to find housing without support.
- Ignoring screening barriers with no plan to negotiate through them.
- Dictating which unit a Veteran must go to in order to retain their housing supports.

Landlord Outreach & Recruitment



Why Do You Need Landlord Partners?

- Some Veterans will be screened out of a permanent housing unit after landlords review their application and find past issues with evictions, credit or other tenant screening barriers
- Access to better housing choices will be severely limited
- Clients' only choices may be bad, low-standard housing
- The tighter the housing market, the harder it will be to exit homelessness
- GPD partnerships offer landlords less risk so your clients become more attractive tenants

Landlord Outreach and Recruitment

- Proactive relationship building with partners and landlords in the community.
- Ongoing dialogue and support to housing owners to cultivate new or existing relationships.
- Full awareness of Veteran screening barriers and which landlords are willing to negotiate around them.
- Ongoing search for different unit types, styles and locations.

Building Landlord Partnerships

- Your project has a good landlord outreach strategy
- Your project seeks to access incentives for landlord partners where needed

AND

- Your program knows landlord concerns and needs, and responds accordingly
- Your program creates a Win-Win for landlords and clients via tenant and landlord supports

Understand Your Landlords

- Use/build community/agency database to log Landlord unit types and amounts.
- Track landlord housing placements and denials in a disaggregated fashion so as to monitor for any disparities that need to be addressed
- Identify landlords known to be flexible with evictions, criminal histories, pets or other tenant screening barriers.
- Identify landlords willing to be flexible with rent/utilities in exchange for program support and services.
- Survey landlords to understand the market conditions for tenants, nature of building and neighborhoods, and other “soft” information.
- Make sure you are coordinating with other providers to avoid landlord confusion, fatigue or other issues.

Important Partners and Expertise in the Community

- Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF)
- Local Continuum of Care (CoC)
- Public Housing Authority (PHA)
- Community-Based Peer Support Services
- Veterans Services Organizations (VSO)
- Local Board of Realtors and Apartment Association
- State or Local Government
- Local philanthropic entities, Chamber of Commerce and other key business leaders
- Housing Rights Advocates

Many partners received large amounts of COVID relief funds for housing which could be utilized for landlord incentives!

Creativity in Landlord Recruitment

- In addition to traditional landlord outreach, identify new landlords or resources by tapping into other groups/resources:
 - Faith-based communities
 - Veteran Advocacy Groups
 - Fair Housing Groups
 - Realtor Boards
 - Chamber of Commerce
 - City Development Departments
 - Check small neighborhood newspapers
 - NAACP and/or other Advocacy groups for Disadvantaged Populations
 - YM/YWCA
 - Other ideas?

Landlords with Different Needs

- Important to consider different landlord needs, limitations and lenses when discussing program or matching Veterans
- Different situations may require a nuanced approach
 - Property owners with large properties/portfolios
 - Owners who primarily use a Management Company to operate housing units
 - Single property owners with landlord living on site
 - Property owners with a few multi-family units throughout a community



Landlords with Different Needs

- Consider creating a survey to send out to potential landlords to help identify these needs and limitations.
- Explore opportunities to provide direct educational opportunities to landlords to help increase comfort with low barrier housing. Examples:
 - VA 101 (demonstrating the robust services available for Veterans!)
 - Mental Health First Aid
 - Housing First 101

And Remember...

As advertised...



...in reality



Housing Support After Move-in for Veterans and Landlords



Promoting Veteran Autonomy and Skills

- Ensure the Veteran remains the “driver” of their own housing situation, including when working with their landlord.
- Consideration for Veterans with significant disabilities or housing challenges that may require more proactive approach.
- Teach/coach the Veteran in how to manage tenancy issues, questions or needs instead of solely relying on case manager for supports.
- Ensure Veterans are fully versed in their lease obligations and prepared to assume those obligations at program exit

Promoting Veteran Autonomy and Skills

- Consistent use of engagement strategies before and during tenancy-
 - Motivational Interviewing
 - Harm Reduction
 - Education on available resources
- Problem-solving concrete steps with Veteran to disrupt cycles of behaviors which create risk to tenancy. Examples:
 - Social Security Payee/VA Fiduciary discussed from a harm-reduction lens
 - Pre-pay several months of rental portion if Veteran receives a lump sum of money
 - Temporary respite options when there needs to be a 'cooling off' period

Landlord Support and Recognition

- With community providers or as a program, develop written standards for responding to landlord calls about vacant units or concerns about a Veteran.
- Check-in with landlords partners to maintain relationships
- Understand where tenants/landlords can turn if housing loss becomes apparent
- Recognize landlords as partners at organization events and in organization communications.
- Use social media and other low cost tools to promote landlord partnerships and recognize partners

GPD Case Management And Housing Stability



GPD Case Management Grants

- Case management services that grantees can provide include but are not limited to:
 - Home visits to monitor housing stability
 - Providing/coordinating educational activities
 - Meal planning
 - Tenant responsibilities
 - Use of public transportation
 - Referrals to needed services, such as mental health, substance use disorder, medical and employment services
 - Financial management
 - Development of natural supports

Case Manager Role

Unit identification/location

Gather financial documents with household for landlord or any rental assistance program assisting Veteran

Assist with completion of paperwork to lease up unit

- Role could be to gather signatures
- Assist with follow-up on outstanding items
- Act as a liaison to landlord to help participant complete steps to secure unit

Prepare for move-in including helping to get utilities turned on, securing furniture and household essentials, and planning for move

Decisions: Housing Placements

What can we guarantee to landlords in terms of Housing Placement services?

- One point person to call for questions/issues
- Case manager attendance at all interviews
- Timeframes for responses (i.e. 1-2 business days)
- Move-in costs covered
- Others?

Ensure household understands the lease they are signing for the unit and their responsibilities



Questions?