

## People from all walks of life need safe and stable affordable housing

Landlords and property managers hold the keys to permanent housing. Building and sustaining relationships with landlords results in your current and future clients becoming housed.

Tip: use the [Rapid Re-Housing Landlord Benefits Checklist](#) by the National Alliance to End Homelessness to develop an elevator pitch to use with prospective landlord partners.

## Tips for engaging landlords in win-win relationships

1. **Save money on turnover costs.** Market tenant consistency and a reduction in turnover through practical problem-solving support for life challenges.
2. **Rent is paid on time.** Ensure timely and direct payment of rent on behalf of tenants who receive rental assistance.
3. **Someone to call.** Assist the landlord to resolve concerns.
4. **A consistently high standard of service.** Share with landlords a written document that outlines the ways your agency will support the tenant and the landlord. Provide reference information of other landlords that can speak to the quality of service your agency has delivered in the past.
5. **Tie agency efforts to broader community efforts.** Understand what is already being done in your community to engage landlords and coordinate with existing systems.

## Incentivize landlord participation

COVID-19 has emphasized the essential role landlords play in providing housing to low-income and formerly homeless households. To encourage enhanced landlord participation, programs can consider incentivizing landlords to rent to people receiving rental assistance.

Many areas have secured funds through private foundations, flexible state funding, and other fundraising efforts to create risk mitigation funds that can be used to pay for damages, costs accrued during evictions, or up-front expenses needed to make the unit safe and habitable.

**Washington State** has implemented a [Landlord Mitigation Program](#) that offers participating landlords the opportunity to submit claims for damages, expenses accrued prior to move-in to pass inspection, and unpaid rent with a cap of \$1,000. Risk mitigation funds can provide funding to help landlords preserve their properties and save time reviewing and processing claims. This strategy provides an extra level of safety for landlords whose most important charge is to protect their properties.

Other incentives include appreciation events, signing bonuses, cleaning units to expedite turnover, and referral bonuses for landlords who bring in other local landlords.

## Contactless lease up

Rental assistance programs must continue to house participants in ways that ensure tenants and landlords stay healthy during COVID-19. HUD's waiver allows for virtual inspections that accommodate stay-at-home orders and social distancing. This could include strategies such as digital lease signing, no-contact viewings and key hand-offs, and social distancing when in-person interaction is necessary.

When in-person interactions are necessary, programs should follow [CDC guidance regarding social distancing](#).

## Provide consistency during inconsistent times

Many landlords are experiencing terrific financial uncertainty during the pandemic, particularly with no-eviction orders in place. Tenants may be unable to pay rent, but landlords may also experience significant loss and have concerns about financial survival. Rental assistance programs can demonstrate the benefits of accepting tenants whose vouchers mean that rent is paid on time and there is someone to call for help if issues with the client arise.

On April 1, 2020, [HUD issued a memorandum](#) announcing the availability of regulatory waivers for CoC, ESG, and HOPWA programs that will allow them to continue housing individuals and families considering local and national restrictions.

Rapid rehousing providers in **Boston, Massachusetts** developed written standards for landlord engagement. Standards included expected response times when a landlord reaches out regarding a vacant unit or concern with a tenant, regular check-ins, and timeframes for completing inspections, applications, and viewings.

In **Vermont**, 39 agencies were awarded state funding to implement strategies like rapid rehousing and Coordinated Entry to permanently house people experiencing homelessness. Several agencies funded landlord liaison positions to support landlord engagement and housing placement across the state.

## Target vacant units

Once the relationship is built, rental assistance programs can help landlords keep their occupancy rates up. Your agency might be able to help create a virtual tour of the units, introduce landlords to prospective tenants, and screen tenants for housing. Every step you can take to make this an easy, painless process for the landlord is time well spent, and can lead to an enduring relationship that will pay off again and again in housing for your clients.

## For additional landlord engagement resources, visit:

- [Engaging Landlords: Risk Mitigation Funds Community Profiles](#) | United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH)
- [Housing Search Assistance Toolkit from HUD](#) | Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
- [Landlord Engagement and Recruitment Desk Book](#) | HUD
- [Landlord Outreach Strategies](#) | National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH)