

SNAPS Special NOFO: Landlord Engagement

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On June 22, 2022 the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) released the [Continuum of Care Supplemental to Address Unsheltered and Rural Homelessness \(Special NOFO\)](#). This is a first-of-its-kind opportunity to address unsheltered homelessness and homeless encampments, and it includes funds set aside to address homelessness in rural communities.

To support communities in developing their plans to address rural and unsheltered homelessness, HUD is highlighting existing TA resources through a series of listserv messages. Today's message focuses on engaging landlords.

Landlord Engagement

Engaging landlords and property owners to identify an inventory of housing available for housing assistance is an essential component of any plan to house people experiencing homelessness. When landlords know about, trust, and feel supported by an organization, they are more likely to accept as tenants people with histories of homelessness and backgrounds that typically make it challenging to find someone to rent to them (e.g., criminal background, eviction history) that those organization works with. The importance of landlord engagement has become especially clear during the COVID-19 pandemic, as rapid re-housing and rental assistance efforts have required close cooperation with landlords and property managers.

In responding to the Special NOFO, CoCs are expected to demonstrate how they recruit landlords, and their units, in which to use tenant-based assistance. Recruitment should begin with a review of existing data to determine unit type, location, and site-specific needs of unhoused persons in the community. CoCs should pay particular attention to geographic areas of their CoC where people experiencing homelessness want to live but have not been able to find a unit. CoCs should also evaluate their existing landlord recruitment efforts to determine what has and has not worked well. This analysis should inform new approaches and renewed efforts.

From there, CoCs can hone their recruitment strategies to be more effective. Some ideas to consider:

1. **Identify new referral sources.** This can include local elected officials, housing authorities, housing counselors, landlord and property management associations, and existing landlords.
2. **Develop a centralized, system-level tracking tool.** If your CoC does not already a centralized repository of all available units and landlord contact information, they should consider creating one to store new landlord information. If possible, the tool should indicate whether the landlord has any available units in real time.
3. **Create and share standardized marketing materials.** This could be done through community virtual boards and newsletters or other online, video, or print sources. This is to ensure that all providers are sharing information about the same type of assistance in the same way.
4. **Develop a retention strategy.** Engaging new landlords is only the start of the process. It will also be important that your CoC develops strategies to retain existing landlords, particularly in instances where a tenant has not been successful in their unit.

During outreach, CoCs should present landlords with [a simple ask](#):

- How many units are available?
- What bedroom and bathroom size?

- Are you willing to accept tenants without photo ID or other traditional requirements for renting to someone (e.g., rental/credit history, etc.)?
- What can we do to provide you assurance that it is beneficial to rent to our clients? For instance, would you participate if you had access to a landlord risk mitigation fund, etc.?

For landlords on the fence about participating, CoCs should share the benefits of partnership. These may include timely and reliable rent payments from agencies, landlord/tenant mediation to resolve conflicts, assistance with minor repairs to bring units to habitability standards, and risk mitigation funds that pay for excessive damage to a unit beyond the security deposit. Establishing and consulting with a landlord advisory group may also help CoCs understand landlord worries and expand recruitment.

Throughout the process, CoCs should strive for timely and proactive communication with landlords. In a successful partnership, landlords are aware both of what CoCs require from them and of what CoCs can do for them. To ensure this, CoCs should do [the following](#):

- **Communicate:** Let landlords know about operational changes such as staffing, points of contact, and redetermination of tenant rent.
- **Respond:** Ensure providers have staff capacity to receive and respond to landlord inquiries and can prioritize proactive communication. If not, coordinate assistance.
- **Clarify your commitment:** Let landlords know how they will benefit: guaranteed rent, supportive services, regular communication.
- **Engage:** Activate local groups who work with marginalized populations. During landlord recruitment, these groups can help communicate the needs of the landlord engagement system and solicit referrals within marginalized communities. They can also support CoCs in efforts to provide ongoing translation for landlords and tenants who do not share a language.

The resources below provide further guidance for recruiting and retaining landlords.

Resource List

- [COVID-19 Homeless System Response: Leveraging ESG-CV Landlord Financial Incentives to Expedite Engagement](#)
- [COVID-19 Homeless System Response: Landlord Engagement](#)
- [Rapid Rehousing Roundtable Discussion Series: Landlord Engagement and Unit Acquisition](#)
- [HCV Landlord Resources](#)
- [HCV Landlord Symposium Toolkit](#)
- [SNAPS In Focus: Increasing Housing Placements of Homeless Veterans](#)
- [Emergency Housing Vouchers: A How-to Guide For Public Housing Agencies](#)
- [Emergency Housing Vouchers | HUD.gov](#)
- [2022 OHC, CPD, and FPM Virtual Conference: Serving Communities Through Housing Counseling](#)
- [Housing Counseling Webinar: Rental Housing Counseling - Promising Practices and Lessons Learned](#)

The Special NOFO is open through October 20, 2022. Please submit questions to SNAPSNOFO@hud.gov.

