

Homelessness Prevention & Diversion Training Series

Subsidized Housing and Rental Assistance: Keeping Vulnerable People Housed

Disclaimer: Information presented during this webinar and in this document does not constitute legal advice.

What are some of the most common reasons why people lose their housing, particularly for public housing and subsidy programs?

- For tenants who participate in subsidy programs or public housing, keeping up with recertifications, inspections, and reporting requirements is very important. Intentionally falsifying information reported to the PHA, such as underreporting income, can result in termination.
- All tenants must comply with the terms of their leases. Common reasons why landlords initiate evictions include unpaid rent or utility shut-off, unauthorized occupants, and property damage.
- During the pandemic, evictions from public housing were extremely rare and only in cases of criminal activity. However, criminal activity, including crimes committed by young people, is a common cause of evictions from public housing.

What can providers and advocates do to help tenants address these issues so they avoid losing housing?

What are some easy solutions?

- Many landlord-tenant issues can be addressed early if someone is checking in on the household on a regular basis. *Note: while some programs like Housing First include ongoing case management, regular Section 8, public housing, EHVs, and some other types of subsidies do not include services.
- Sometimes, the problematic activity can be easily rectified before it becomes a major violation.
 - For example, one family did not realize that they were causing water damage to their unit and the unit below by having water pooling on the bathroom floor.
 - In another example, a person struggling with hoarding or excessive clutter worked with someone to clean out one area at a time and inspections were done in separate parts.
- Remember that on-site property management services are not intended to take the place of case management.

What can tenants do if they fall behind on rent and utilities?

- Qualifying households who meet the criteria for COVID-19 rent or utility relief should apply at the following locations:
 - Oahu: <http://oneoahu.org/renthelp>
 - Maui: <http://mauicounty.gov/MauiRentHelp>
 - Hawaii: <http://HawaiiCountyERAP.org>
 - Kauai: <http://KauaiRentHelp.com>
- Tenants in public housing or with rental subsidies may qualify if there is no overlap in payment.
- To ensure the rental assistance provider is able to contact you, applicants are encouraged to check their voicemail/spam email folder, make sure their voicemail is set up and isn't full, and remember not to submit multiple applications.

What do tenants who receive temporary rental assistance need to know?

- Temporary rental assistance is temporary – start planning early before your subsidy ends. Many households wait because they believe that there will be more funds coming from the federal government or more protections from eviction.
- Many households have factored the rental assistance into their current budget and need to adjust other expenses to make up for it. Consider seeking other types of financial or in-kind benefits, such as SNAP, utility credits, child care subsidies, etc. if eligible.
- Hawaii's eviction moratorium has ended and increased timelines from Act 57 are only in place through the beginning of August 2022.