



PARTNERS IN CARE

Oahu Continuum of Care

Partners in Care is a coalition of Oahu's homeless service providers, government representatives and community stakeholders working together in partnership to end homelessness.

Homeless Prevention & Diversion Series Session 3: A Guide To Finding The Best Rental Unit For You

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How to search for a LL

- 1) Cold calling
 - a. Housing search engines: Zillow, Apartments.com, High Central, Craigslist, Facebook Marketplace
 - b. Go to housing fairs, market yourselves, get face to face interactions with Landlords, give out business cards
 - c. Public Housing Authority Resources
- 2) Sell your program
 - a. Educate landlords on your mission and what you're trying to accomplish so that they become collaborative partners
 - i. How to do this? Show up for your landlords and your clients when issues arise
 - ii. It's important that landlords feel supported
 - b. Supportive services
 - i. The housing program is more than just a funding source. You're the wrap around services, the crisis intervention, your teaching independent living skills, so pitch this when explaining your program
- 3) Address barriers before placements
 - a. Cultivate a relationship with the client before housing
 - b. Use a trauma-informed approach when finding appropriate housing
 - c. Teach client how to be a good neighbor before putting them into housing

Searching for Units

- 1) Fair Market Rents – research this online and figure out how much rent is within your budget without utilities
- 2) Rental Search Engines – these can be very helpful if you want to do shared living and maybe have a roommate
- 3) Hidden costs – keep these in mind when doing unit search
 - a. If you looking in an area that is far from work, you may need a car or bus pass to get around
 - b. If you find a unit that doesn't include utilities, you'll have to account for this in your budget
- 4) Top 3
 - a. Pick the top 3 things that are most important to you in your unit search (ex. Having a pool, unit that is a walk up) – keep in mind what you can live without in order to make your unit search process easier

Unit Viewings & Applications

- 1) Do's and Don'ts
 - a. Always ask questions
 - b. Only answer questions when asked
 - c. Dress like you're going on a job interview
 - d. Always be on time

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- e. If not on time, communicate this to the property manager ahead of time
 - f. Don't disclose your whole life story
 - g. Don't come half dressed
 - h. Be professional
 - i. If you're going to smoke, don't smoke in the parking lot while waiting for a unit viewing
 - j. Don't be a no show!
 - k. When completing applications, don't leave anything blank
 - l. Turn in all documents required, a lot of property managers will not look at an application unless it's complete
 - m. If you have a criminal record, ask for character letters! This will help your application
 - n. Be upfront about any potential issues with your landlord or property management, ex. Mention an emotional support animal ahead of time rather than bringing that up later in the application process
- 2) Resources in the community

What do landlords look for in applications and potential tenants

- 1) Landlords like to see completed applications, bank statements, proof of funding or employment, etc.
- 2) Support services from programs – let landlords know the types of services provided by housing programs such as wellness checks for the property or for the tenant. These are important selling points that have convinced homeowners why they should go with a particular applicant that's coming through a subsidy program.
 - a. There are programs that offer landlord incentives such as funds for damages – this is a great way to get landlords on board
 - b. RYSE has been really successful by providing the wraparound support and making sure the landlord feels secure working with their program.
- 3) Making a great 1st impression
 - a. Put your best foot forward when meeting with a landlord

What to do when you get denied

- 1) Be persistent, be diligent. You can't only be looking for units once a week, it needs to be every day, sometimes multiple times a day. Make sure to follow up with landlords so they know you're responsible and eager.
- 2) Look for ways to increase your income, add family members to your household, choose roommates, utilize community resources to try to increase your budget or even your credit score
- 3) Find out why you were denied (this is especially helpful for housing programs to know so they can come back and help their clients work through why the client was denied and improve their applications in the future)

Questions & Answers

- 1) Could the three presenters share any strategies that may work when you have people that have that have pets that are not service animals?
 - Have the bill of health for the animal (making sure they go to the Vet)
 - Be prepared – renters' insurance with the pet added onto the policy
 - Provide photos of the pet upfront
- 2) Application screening fees – these are common and they add up, what do you suggest to do?
 - Some landlords require the application fee for them to do a background or credit check but if you could have a provider complete a credit check ahead of time to give to the landlord, then you can ask if they would waive the application fee.
 - Ask if you can wait to pay the application fee at the lease signing if approved
- 3) How does one typically navigate finding housing if they don't have a phone or computer?
 - RYSE has a learning center on site with computers and phones so that clients can apply for units
- 4) What type of community support services do landlords typically want tenants to have?

- Provide case management contact information as soon as you can to the landlord
- 5) How do you talk to landlords when you feel like they may be discriminating against a household?
- Educate them on what they can and cannot do such as give them the landlord tenant rules and any other resources you can find. It can be really hard to rent units to our homeless client population so as much education as possible is helpful.
 - Ensure clients understand their lease as well s know their tenant rights and landlord rights.
- 6) What personal information can you share or not share with a landlord regarding disabling conditions or diagnoses?
- A lot of housing programs do not like to disclose this information and it's an inappropriate question from the landlord. If a landlord asks questions about this, educate them that asking personal questions that may be medically related is not appropriate.
- 7) How do you talk to landlords about what's a crisis, what's an emergency, and what's not?
- It's important to have this conversation at the lease signing with the client and the landlord. Outline what an emergency would be such as a fire or flooding. Do this ahead of time so landlords do not call for small things. Set up boundaries in the beginning.