

Landlord Engagement

Incorporating LL Engagement into Program Operations



Presented by: Ashley Mann-McLellan
Technical Assistance Collaborative, Inc.

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Agenda

- **Tips:** High Rental Market Strategies
- **Traveling Brainstorm:** LL Engagement Strategies
- **Landlord Speak:** Marketing Your Services to Landlords Effectively
- **Program Operations:** Incorporating LL Engagement to Sustain Relationships
- **Huddle**


Introductions

Intro- Ashley, Technical Assistance Collaborative

Introduce Yourself...

- Name
- Agency
-  Burning LL Engagement Question

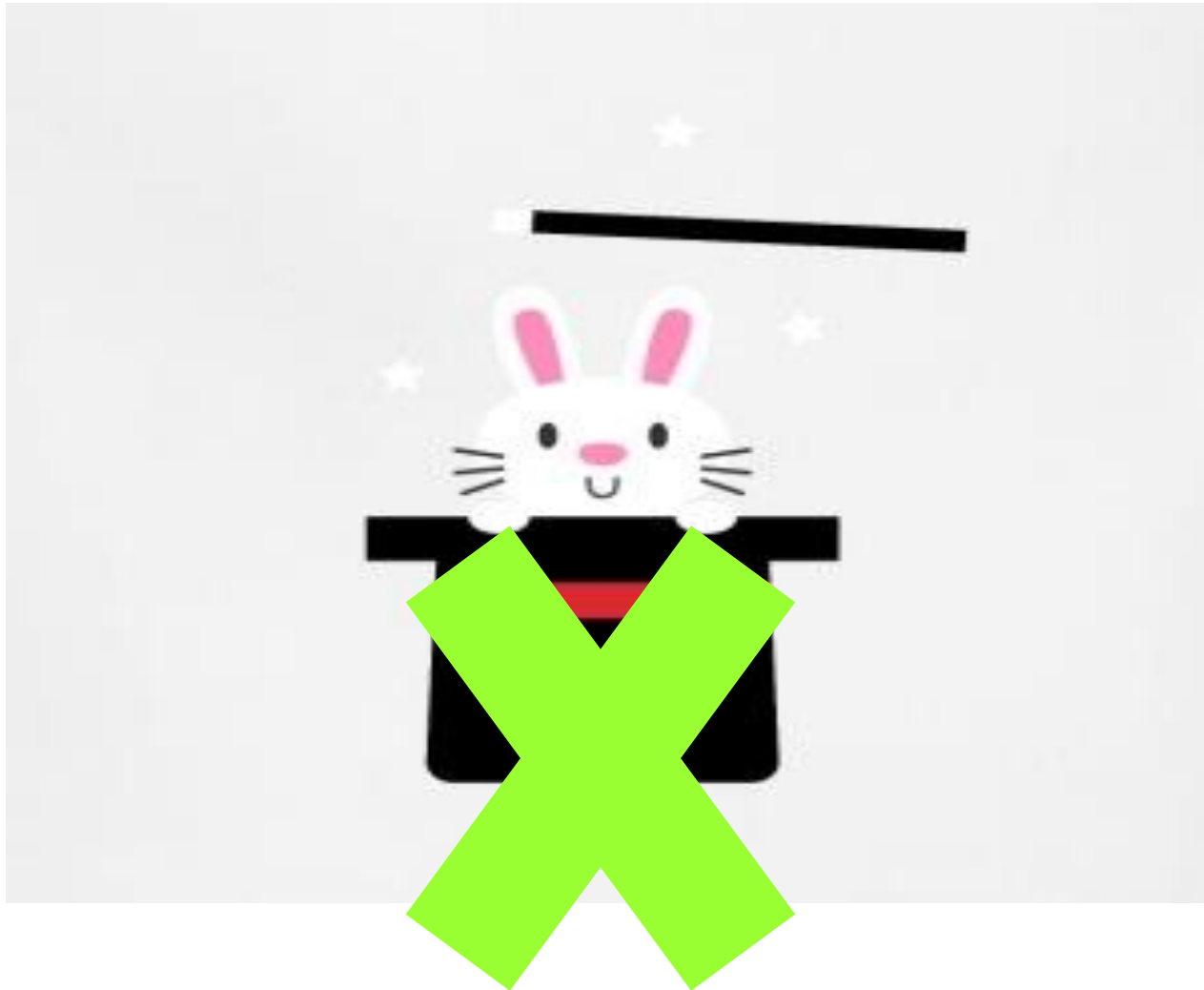
Guidelines for Today

- Respect everyone's remarks, ideas, input
- Parking lot any rabbit holes 
- Listen to understand
- Share freely to foster innovation

Poll: How Savvy Do You Feel?

- 1.) Expert-Status
- 2.) Somewhat experienced
- 3.) I have no idea what I'm doing!

A Word of Caution...



The Brain Power in the Room



Quick Tips: Finding Landlords

- Housing Authority websites
- Newspapers- subscribe
- “Apartment for Rent” signs in buildings
- Landlord/Realtor associations
- Chamber of Commerce
- Faith-based communities



Quick Tips: Finding Landlords

HUD Multifamily Developments

1. Tax Credit Units
“Shallow” subsidy, flat rent
2. Market Rate Units
No subsidy, market rate, typically FMR

Examples

- Metropolitan Realty
- Related Management
- Shinda Management



Excel Database for Attendees

Quick Tips: High Rent Areas

First Placement May Not Be Last Placement

- Bridge to PSH or VASH as appropriate
- Continue mainstream housing search while in unit
- Troubleshoot/transition plan with Veteran

Shared Housing

- In what ways have you found success?

Placing Ads/Campaigns in Local Media

Train Your Board in LL Recruitment

Vacancy Listings Website for LL's to Post

Landlord Funds

Risk Mitigation Funds

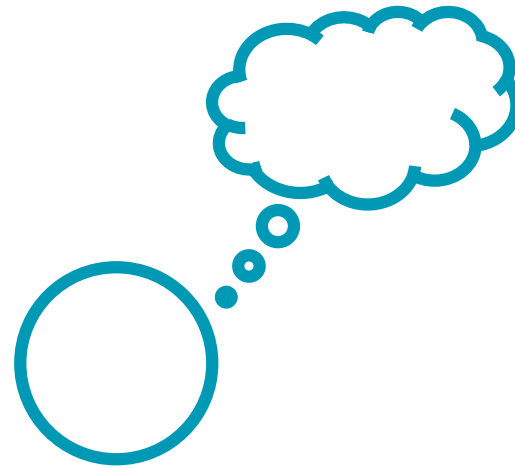
- Double security deposits
- Landlord hold fees
- Landlord sign on bonuses
- Extensive damages
- Landlord court fees
- Buy Down payments
- Transition dollars for tenant to prevent eviction



Examples

- Seattle Landlord Liaison Project:
<http://www.landlordliaisonproject.org/>
- Boston- Landlord Pilot Program:
 - <https://www.boston.gov/landlord-guarantee-pilot-program>

Questions?



Traveling Brainstorm

1. Count off, 1-4
2. Traveling Group: 3 minutes at each station
3. Write down ideas you've tried or WANT to try
4. Only add new ideas to sheet
5. Pick a Reporter to share ideas on the last sheet



Topics: Traveling Brainstorm

- Recruitment or Recognition Events for LL's
- Supporting LL's through Difficult Tenancies
- Leveraging Your Services: The Pitch
 - Advertising benefits of working with programs
 - Discussing high barrier applicants
 - Supporting shared housing arrangements
- Using Data to Inform LL Engagement
 - What data would you like to use to convince LL's?
 - What data do you already collect that can engage LL's?
 - What new data would you like to collect to engage LL's?



Overcoming Barriers & Engaging Landlords

- Documentation
- Reasonable Accommodations
- Peer Troubleshooting

Overcoming Barriers: Tips

- **Directly Address the Barrier w/your Documentation**
 - A character reference to offset a utility debt will not convince the property the applicant will pay rent on time.
- **Documents, documents, documents!**
 - Document every positive point you or your client wants to communicate **in writing**.
 - Self statements, case manager reference letters, letters from case managers explaining attempts made to retrieve what the property requested, etc.
 - **Remember**: sometimes a supervisor is making the decision. They may not have heard from your client directly

Reasonable Accommodations

Formula for Reasonable Accommodation Letters

Here is the general formula to keep in mind while you are gathering documentation for a reasonable accommodation request:

Specifics of the Disability to Explain Why Change is Needed +

Ask for Change in a Specified Policy +

Documentation of Changes Made to Lead to Success if Reasonable Accommodation is Granted =

Potentially Successful Request

Ex. Reasonable Accommodation

Medical Letter

Reasonable Accommodation: Successful Documentation

Example of an Effective Letter from a Healthcare Provider

Dear Housing Provider,

I treat Obama Smith for severe depression and anxiety. I am writing this letter to verify that Obama Smith does have the official diagnosis of depression and anxiety. I am also writing to explain that from 2002-2003 when Obama Smith was convicted of a few drug distribution charges, this was during a period of his time that he was actively using substances to medicate his mental health diagnosis. At the time, he had not been properly diagnosed as having severe depression and anxiety, so he did not have appropriate treatment for the disability.

Obama Smith started coming to my practice in June of 2009 and has been a consistent patient since. He adheres to his treatment regiment, and sees his therapist on a regular basis. During my treatment with Obama Smith, I have not observed him relapsing back into substance use.

I am asking for a change in your policy to allow him into housing even though he has the drug convictions because his disability is being properly treated now and he has not reoffended since he started treatment.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ben Blocks

Jamaica Plain Health Center

617-111-2121

Questions?



Overcoming Barriers- Peer Sharing

Peer Sharing- Scenario

Instructions

- Review Scenario
- Talk to Your Group
- Jot Down Key Takeaways from Chat
- Large Group Peer Sharing

Key Questions to Ask Yourself

- What have you done that's worked in the past?
- What types of documentation would you provide?
- What actions would you suggest to the client to put into place?

Scenario: Beyonce Smith

- Beyonce- **evicted from a market rate** unit
 - Eviction = Nonpayment due to **loss of job**
 - Owes **2x Months Rent** \$1500
 - Owes **6 Months of Electric** \$2,000
-

- What have you done that's worked in the past?
- What actions/referrals would you suggest for Beyonce?
- What types of documentation would you provide to the housing provider?

Scenario: Madonna Jackson

- Madonna- has **never had own tenancy**
 - Denied due to **drug possession** and **assault/battery charges** from 5-7 yrs ago
 - Frustrated- feels like **she made changes** but still being punished
-

- What do you suspect are the underlying reasons for Madonna's past convictions?
- What actions/referrals would you suggest to Madonna to offset the negative criminal record?
- What types of documentation would you try to provide to the housing provider?

10 Minute Break

Reunite in your groups.

Marketing Your Program

Landlord “Speak”

- Translate the benefits of working with your program into Landlord Speak
- *Reminder:* Landlords are not in our field.
- Broad Terms = Less Compelling
 - “Case Management”
 - “Services”
 - “Stabilization Services”
 - “Follow Up”
 - “Connection to Community Based Supports”



Marketing Your Program

Landlord “Speak”

Break it Down.

- 1.) In your groups, list top 3 questions/concerns Landlords often have
- 2.) Break down the services/benefits/features of your programs to address those concerns; think brochure language
- 3.) Select a note taker and reporter to share to the group
- 4.) 15 Minutes

Marketing Your Program

Landlord “Speak”

Tips to Break it Down.

- Centralized point of contact for the landlord
- # of business days to return LL’s calls
- Provide written character references ahead of time
 - From other sources- you as the “houser” should only provide a neutral reference

Marketing Your Program

Landlord “Speak”

- Break Down Supportive Services
 - Home visits, office visits, budgeting, connection to health-related services, move-in costs, frequency of client contact
 - Direct, scheduled check ins with landlords
 - Be specific so landlords understand
- Break Down Supports During Tough Tenancies
 - \$
 - Connection to legal advice
 - Soft landing for client
 - HP Assistance when available
 - Landlord in-services/trainings

Marketing Your Program

Landlord “Speak”

- Additional Tips
 - Obtain landlord references for your program
 - Under promise and over deliver
 - Importance of Training/Staff Expectations
 - Staff must be trained and agree to adhere to any terms outlined in order to keep the relationship successful

Questions?



Program Operations

A Landlord Engagement Perspective

- Create Program Designs with a Landlord Engagement Emphasis
- Institutionalizes Landlord Engagement
 - Assists with maintaining strong engagement in face of turnover

Program Operations

A Landlord Engagement Perspective

- Written Policies to Foster Landlord as the Second Client
 - # of Business days to return LL's calls
 - Reference Policy
 - Back up contact if you're out sick or on vacation
 - Frequency of check ins with landlords
 - Standard "script" of benefits your program provides

Program Operations

A Landlord Engagement Perspective

- Written Resources to Onboard New Staff
 - Go-to places to find landlords
 - Warehouse of agency's landlord's contacts
 - Homelessness prevention resources to support tenancies in crisis

Program Operations

A Landlord Engagement Perspective

- Routine Program Activities
 - Routine, proactive LL Check Ins
 - Support the landlord
 - Identify at risk households
 - Note: ensure ROI's cover this activity
 - Track results of check ins
 - Identify Landlord champions
 - Identify Landlords in need of your assistance
 - Track success with landlords to recruit additional landlords

Program Operations

A Landlord Engagement Perspective

- Landlord Database
 - Warehouse of landlord contacts to help staff tap into existing landlord relationships
 - Screening Criteria
 - Tenant Preferences
 - Areas where properties are located
 - Update vacancies in real time
 - Culture of Sharing Landlord Openings
 - Within agency
 - With other agencies
 - Goal- fill the unit with a homeless household

Questions?



Huddle

To Conclude today's workshop...

- Group up with your agency
- Reflect on the top 2 strategies you'd like to explore implementing
- Select a reporter to share with the larger group