



THE OCCUPANCY CYCLE

September 1, 2010

1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Presenters:

Charlotte Keator

Janice Rodriguez

Prepared by the Denver Office of Public
Housing for the 2010 Sustainable Homes
and Communities Practitioner Training

Discussion Topics

1. Marketing
2. Intake/Selecting Participants
3. Initial Lease-Up & Leasing Requirements
4. Income and Rent Considerations
5. Annual Activities
6. Interim Activities
7. Portability/Move-Outs
8. Community Service
9. Grievance Procedures, Informal Hearings & Terminations



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Marketing

If families don't apply, then they will never get on the Waiting List

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Mission

- It is essential to the mission of the PHA and HUD to provide decent, safe, and affordable housing in the community.
- Occupancy /Vacancy is the first measurement of property value. Having occupied units is essential to creating cash flow.
- A voucher must be utilized in order to earn the Administrative Fee.



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Successful Leasing

Necessary Conditions for Full Successful Leasing

1. Willing Landlords with sufficient units meeting HQS available at affordable rents
2. Sufficient applicants with the ability to find and lease units
3. PHA management capacity



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Landlord Outreach/Education

PHA should consider:

- Holding landlord seminars and fairs to encourage landlord participation.
- Attending apartment association meetings
- Sending out newsletters, brochures, advertisements to educate the community.
- Ongoing recruitment, continued education and responsiveness to landlord concerns.



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Local Economic Conditions

- HCV - Determining level of Payment Standards needed to reach extended areas of the market. This could include seeking exception rents from HUD.
- LRPH - Is your housing competitive in your market?



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Rent Reasonableness & Flat Rent Considerations

- HCV - Rent Reasonableness process must be sound and flexible in order to pay a fair rent to landlords reflecting the market.
- LRPH - Flat Rents:
 - Are they comparable to units in the community?
 - Do they provide an incentive for higher income tenants to stay in the LRPH program?



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Customer Service for Landlords

- Are PHA staff prompt and professional in responding to landlord inquiries?
- Are initial inspections conducted speedily after landlord's *Request for Tenancy Approval*?
- Are monthly checks on time?
- Minimal delay in initial check.

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Establishing Landlord and Tenant Groups

- Conduct periodic landlord satisfaction surveys.
- Use meetings to obtain feedback, input on policies and procedures, problem solving.



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Screening of Participants Terminating Program Violators

- At a minimum criminal background, can consider more. Program will get a reputation for having good tenants, or at least will not have a negative reputation.



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Turnovers Affect Landlords

- Turnover is a fact of life – people die, move away, do or don't do things they should resulting in termination.
- Turnover creates opportunity for families waiting for assistance. In times of economic downturn, families tend to stay put.
- Remember, high turnover creates administrative burdens and financial expenses for the PHA but also the landlord. It impacts the PHA's and landlord's ability to achieve or maintain full occupancy or utilization of HCVs.



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Participant Outreach

- PHA must manage its waiting list
- Where demand for the HCV program is weak, staff must maintain sufficient number of eligible applicants to meet needed voucher issuance volume.
- Purging the waiting list often - more likely to reach those who are interested and ready to move.
- Streamline the application process.
- Marketing and outreach to social service agencies and community education.



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High Quality Briefing of Participant

- Informing and equipping participants with information about how the program works, and about the housing market, resources, etc.
- Some PHAs include role playing on how the voucher holder could sell a landlord on the HCV program
- Coach your applicants and participants.



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Security Deposit Assistance

- Many PHAs either operate or facilitate use of a revolving loan fund, or work with landlords, to accept partial payments.



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Case Management/Customer Service

- PHAs that organize staff around the client often lead to greater success by the participant. This also allows for better follow-up.



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Managing Human Resources

- Ensure PHA staff are sufficient in number, skill, and are provided with support to handle the workload to give excellent customer service.
- Develop effective procedures covering key leasing and related processes.



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Managing Human Resources

- Does an action or policy restrict the family choice?
- Is the policy expressly stated in the Administrative Plan or ACOP ?
- Are families clearly advised of policies as it affects their admission and/or continued occupancy?



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Manage the Voucher Issuance Process

- PHAs must track:
 - unit months under lease
 - participant turnover
 - participant success rate
 - average time to lease a unit
- Monthly tracking:
 - determine the number of vouchers that must be issued to reach a target number of unit months leased for the year.



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Finance & HCV Program Staff and the Budget Process

- Finance staff and HCV program staff collaborate to track program costs and annual budget authority to fully utilize dollars to issue vouchers.
- Ensure VMS reporting is reviewed and is accurate and shared within PHA staff.



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Managing the Process/Procedures

- Does PHA have effective procedures covering key leasing and related processes?
- Does PHA have quality control checks to ensure the process is working or is fixed?



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