



EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

INTRODUCTION

Education and outreach to landlords and tenants are valuable strategies that public housing agencies (PHAs) can use to recruit new Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) landlords and retain current landlords. PHAs can provide education and outreach in a variety of ways. Some strategies include hosting or attending events targeted to landlords or affordable housing providers. Education and outreach can also include activities like newsletters, presentations, briefings to community groups, one-on-one appointments, or other ways of sharing information or creating relationships between PHAs and landlords. PHAs can scale these activities up or down based on the staffing available to plan and facilitate the activities. PHAs can increase the number of activities when there is a strong need to recruit new landlords or implement other types of activities when they debut a new service, such as a landlord portal.

The following strategies are included in this section:

- New Landlord Orientation
- Landlord Outreach Events
- Expanding Your Network
- Tenant Education
- Information Sharing

Related strategies include:

- Landlord Focused Customer Service
- Technology
- Partnerships

The education and outreach strategies identified in this chapter address the following areas:

Education and Outreach Process Improvements

PHA Process Improvement	New Landlord Orientation	Landlord Outreach Events	Tenant Education	Expanding your Network	Information Sharing
Increase Recruitment	X	X		X	
Increase Retention	X	X	X	X	X
Improve Responsiveness	X	X		X	
Improve Tenant-Landlord Relationship			X		
Improve Inspections Process					X
Minimize Bureaucracy	X	X			X

The contents of this document, except when based on statutory or regulatory authority or law, do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public in any way. This document is intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies



EVENT PLANNING 101

Three of the education and outreach strategies are event-based: new landlord orientation, landlord outreach events, and tenant education. Since the broad planning steps required to carry out these events are largely the same, this section outlines general steps and tips for planning that can help make events successful.

Of course, events also have specific needs and requirements. A weekday orientation event includes some considerations that are different from those in an annual appreciation event, for instance. After the Event Planning 101 section, the Guidebook describes each of the event-based education and outreach strategies in detail, and provides additional recommendations unique to each strategy. Use this Event Planning 101 section together with the information provided in each education and outreach strategy to plan events.

EVENT FRAMEWORK: When planning an event of any type, it is important to first establish a clear objective and purpose by answering the questions **WHO, WHAT, HOW, WHY, WHERE** and **WHEN** the PHA is holding the event.



WHO, WHAT, HOW, WHY: During the framework planning, it is important to clearly identify **WHO** is the target audience, **WHY** the event is being held, **WHAT** information will be delivered or received, and **HOW** the event will be structured. By answering these questions, the PHA should have a better understanding of what the event will look like and how the PHA will meet event objectives.

It is important to answer these questions before beginning the planning process. The answers to these questions drive all of the subsequent planning. The PHA should revisit the framework throughout the planning process to ensure that the intent and focus of the event is still consistent. If the intent or focus has changed, evaluate, and adjust as needed.

EVENT FRAMEWORK	
WHO	Who is the target audience? Both landlords and tenants? Will the event be open to partner organizations and/or the general public? How many participants does the PHA anticipate? Who will present the information? PHA staff? A group panel? An outside moderator?
WHAT	What information will be presented?
HOW	How will the information be delivered? Is this a series or stand-alone event? Is the event lecture- or discussion-based?
WHY	Why is this event important? What is the objective? Is the goal to update participants who already know the basics or provide training on brand-new information?
WHERE	Where will the event take place?
WHEN	When will the event take place? What is the date and time? How often will this event be offered?

Now, PHAs can address **WHERE** and **WHEN** the event will take place.

WHERE: Location can have a direct impact on attendance levels. Locations should be in a central or convenient location and be in close proximity to parking or public transportation. If the event will take place during lunch hours, PHAs should consider a location that has restaurants within walking distance.

To keep costs down, consider using free or low-cost meeting space. Locations might include PHA conference rooms or PHA-partner meeting space, but PHAs should also look into public libraries and community or recreation centers. For occasional events with a much larger audience, the PHA might need to look at options such as conference spaces, like hotels or convention centers.

Things to consider: Does the selected location have enough space to accommodate the anticipated number of participants? Does it have the audio-visual (A/V) equipment needed for presentations and microphones, if needed?

Civil Rights Requirements: Physical Accessibility

All events including, outreach activities, training sessions and meetings must be held in facilities that are physically accessible to persons with disabilities. Where physical accessibility is not achievable, PHAs must give priority to alternative methods of product delivery that offer programs and activities to qualified individuals with disabilities in the most integrated setting appropriate in accordance with HUD's implementing regulations for section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. § 794) at 24 CFR Part 8.

WHEN: The frequency and length depends on the nature and objectives of the event. Some types of events might be most effective by having multiple sessions on a set schedule. Other types of events might be better suited to be held on an annual basis. In the sections of this chapter that discuss individual strategies, there are recommendations for frequency based on the nature of the event.

Things to consider: Are certain times of the year or days of the week better than others? Will attending the event interfere with participants' jobs—should the event be held during or after business hours?

EVENT LOGISTICS

Establishing the framework helps the PHA establish the purpose and goals of the event. Logistics planning and implementation ensures the purpose and goals are met by executing a well-run event. After the event framework has been established, the PHA should begin executing the logistics planning and implementation.

Logistics planning and implementation do not always follow a linear process and some elements take place at the same time. A number of meeting planning activities involve confirming and re-confirming key elements of the event. For instance, the staff member in charge of the event asks an inspector to attend a meeting and discuss common inspection fail items. She agrees and is emailed the date, time, and location of the event. The PHA markets the event and landlords sign up, eager to get more information about the program. The staff member in charge of the event should plan to follow up with the inspector to make sure that the date is on her calendar and that she prepared for the event. Another good idea would be to request materials the inspector plans to use in order to make copies in time for the event.



Staffing

Most events can be planned by one person, but that person needs to be able to set aside time to plan and execute. A large event like a landlord symposium or landlord recognition event could require the assistance of additional staff.

STEP 1: CREATE A TIMELINE

Creating a realistic timeline with due dates is critical to success. When thinking about timeframes, keep the following in mind:

Tentative Date: The PHA should set a target date and time for the event based on the Where and When established in the framework. The PHA should allow for enough time to complete Steps 2 and 3. Note: The date and location is typically not firm at this stage. PHAs should consider waiting to market the event until Step 2.

If the date is flexible, estimate the amount of time required for each step and then set the date based on the timeline. This approach gives the PHA more flexibility in delivery.

However, if the date is firm, it is helpful to back into the timeline starting with the event date and then estimating the time needed for the previous step and so on. Adjust the due dates accordingly.

Larger events will require a longer planning process than smaller events. Sample timelines for large and small events are shown to the right.

Venue: The PHA should also have a list of alternates in mind if the preferred venue or presenter(s) is not available. Many PHAs have available space at their location. If the usual options for hosting group events are unavailable, PHAs should keep in mind what other alternate locations might be available to them at no or low cost.

Presenters: Presenters could include PHA staff or outside organizations.

Finalizing the location and presenters may involve some back-and-forth before a final date and location can be set. Remember if the date changes, adjust the timeline to match.

Materials: Revising and developing materials can be time-consuming especially new material development. The PHA should ensure that enough time is dedicated to developing or revising, formatting, and reproducing materials.



Effective Communication

PHAs must ensure that notices of and communications during all outreach events are provided in a manner that is effective for persons with hearing, visual, and other communications related disabilities consistent with section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (24 CFR 8.6), and as applicable the Americans with Disabilities Act. This includes ensuring that materials are in appropriate alternative formats is needed, e.g. Braille, audio, large type, sign language, interpreters, and assistive listening devices, per section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (24 CFR 8.6), and as applicable the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Furthermore, PHAs must take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to programs to persons with limited English proficiency (LEP), pursuant to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Executive Order 13166. This may mean providing language assistance services to ensure meaningful resident and community involvement for persons with LEP as a result of their nationality. The Department published Final Guidance to Federal Financial Assistance Recipients Regarding Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient Persons (72 Fed. Reg. 2732; January 22, 2007) to aid recipients of HUD assistance in identifying language assistance needs and developing language assistance plans.

Marketing: The PHA should aim to market the event 1-2 months prior to delivery. For larger events, at least 2 months is recommended.

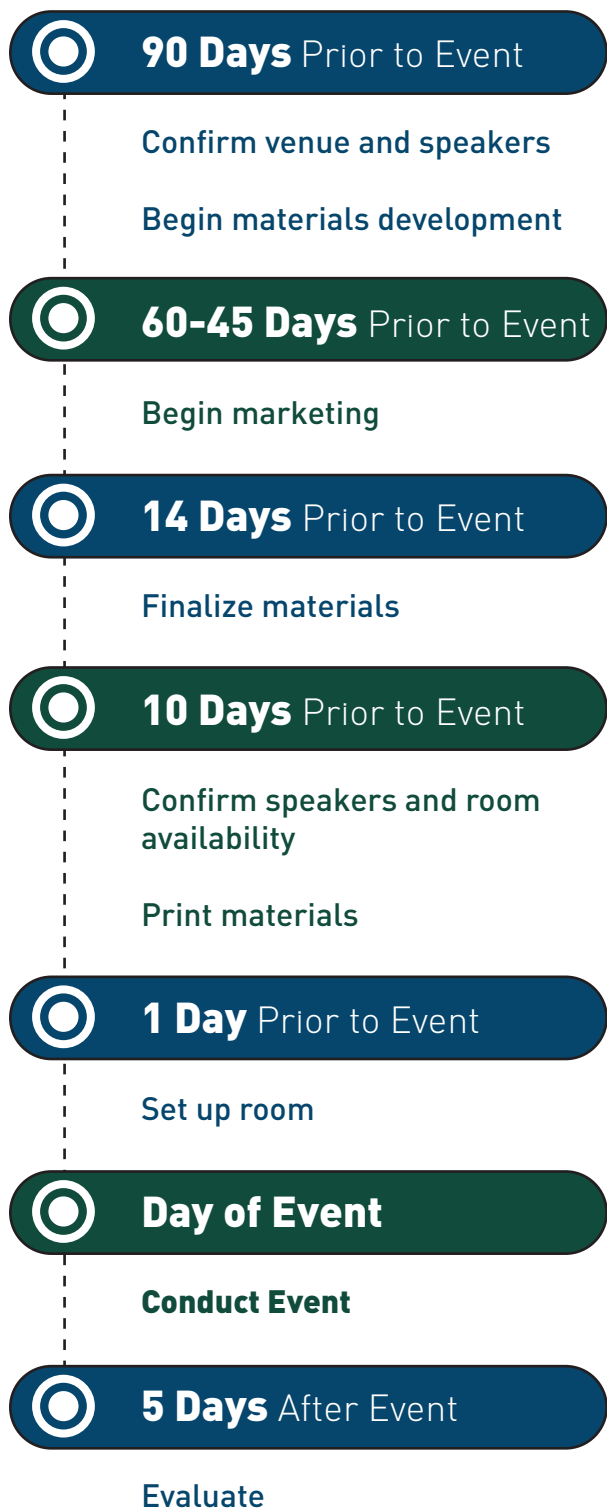


TIP: The timelines provide deadlines and activities in an ideal world. If you don't have as much time as recommended, don't let that stop you.

Rarely are event timelines perfect. The most important elements are to provide relevant and accurate information in a reasonable timeframe, and to provide an opportunity for landlords to engage directly with the PHA.

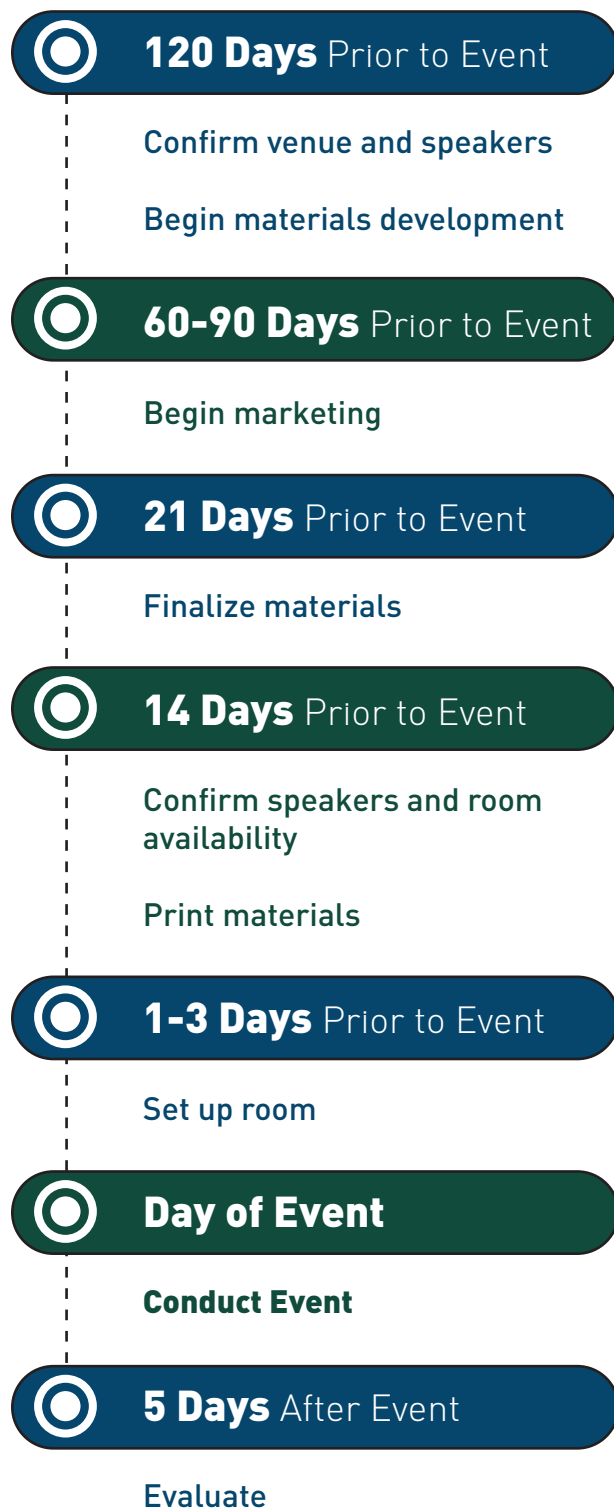
SAMPLE TIMELINE 1

Small event held at PHA.



SAMPLE TIMELINE 2

Large event held at a community building.



STEP 2: VENUE AND PRESENTERS

Once the PHA has established a timeline and set a tentative date, the PHA should begin contacting location options and possible presenters to understand their availability.

For events that cannot be accommodated in PHA properties or public partner spaces, the process for securing a space and making sure the space has the necessary amenities will require more time.

There are several ways to set up a meeting space. Some common set-ups are listed below.

Theatre-style: This set-up is typically used for lecture or presentation-based events. Attendees are seated in rows facing the speaker.

Crescent Rounds: Attendees are seated at round tables. To ensure that all attendees can view the speaker, only a portion of each table has chairs. This set-up is useful if attendees will network in a small group, take notes, or eat a meal.

Classroom Style: Attendees are seated in rows with long tables. This set-up is particularly useful if attendees will be taking notes.

STEP 3: MATERIALS, MARKETING, AND OTHER DETAILS

In the lead up to the event, some activities happen at the same time. There can be a lot of follow up. One way of tracking that tasks are completed when needed is to develop checklists.

Materials: The nature of the session and the information to be presented will often dictate what materials are needed. They might include PowerPoint presentations, marketing materials for landlords, or hard copies of handouts explaining program rules.

The PHA should develop an agenda for the event which should be made available on

the PHA's website or as a component of the marketing materials. PHAs should ensure that materials are in appropriate alternative formats is needed, e.g. Braille, audio, large type, sign language, interpreters, and assistive listening devices per section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (24 CFR 8.6), and as applicable to ADA.

Market: To ensure that the event makes it on to the desired audience's calendar, aim to market events at least 1 to 2 months in advance. Marketing strategies could include advertising on the PHA's website or social media, reaching out to local apartment associations and other community partners with similar missions and goals (minimal cost) or placing ads (higher cost). Flyers for the event can be included as part of any newsletters or other materials that the PHA already sends to landlords such as monthly remittances or checks to landlords. If PHA staff hold meetings or attend meetings, they can hand out flyers there. If the PHA uses social media, PHAs might post about the event more than once. The marketing materials should include the subject, target audience, date, location, time, and registration information, if applicable. The PHA should consider including information on transportation options, including parking, the agenda and speakers, and any other relevant information.

Before expending any money, PHAs will want to thoroughly review allowability under Federal regulations. PHAs may use administrative fees and administrative fee reserves to cover the cost of materials and marketing for events directly related to administration of the voucher program per 24 CFR §§ 982.152, 982.155. (For further guidance on the allowable use of administrative fee reserves for such outreach and education purposes, PHAs can refer to PIH Notice 2015-17.)

NOTE: PHAs should consider maintaining a landlord email list.

On-going Logistics Support: Throughout the planning process, the PHA will need to provide on-going support and monitor progress. The PHA should:

- Confirm A/V needs and equipment,





including any special requirements for persons with disabilities

- Confirm details with presenters and venue
- Be available to answer questions from participants
- Provide on-going marketing
- Print materials

STEP 4: CONDUCT EVENT

Depending on the size and nature of the event, PHA staff should arrive early to set up. Setup may include organizing and staffing a registration table, distributing materials and handouts, greeting participants and presenters, and setting up A/V and tables and chairs.

Whether there is a formal registration table or not, have a sign-in sheet like the attached sample (see Appendix D1-Sample sign-in sheet). All participants should be encouraged to provide contact information or business cards so the PHA can conduct follow-up efforts. If the PHA has enough staff on-hand, the PHA can sign-in participants using an Excel spreadsheet to ensure accuracy and completeness. If the participant is filling out contact information on a form, the form needs to have enough space to allow for neat handwriting. The PHA cannot follow up if phone number or email address are not legible.

The PHA should collect information that fits with how the PHA plans to follow up with the participant. For example, in a session that

seeks to recruit new landlords, will the PHA send out a follow-up mailing? If not, the PHA may not need to request addresses on the sign-in sheet. Contact information typically includes: company name and title, phone number, email address, and address.

STEP 5: EVALUATION

One of the most important components of an event is evaluating its effectiveness. There are multiple ways the PHA can gauge how successful the event was in meeting the goals they set out in their framework. These include:

Attendance: PHAs can measure the level of attendance immediately during the event by observation and after the event by reviewing the sign-in list.

During the event, the evaluation can be conducted by asking for a show of hands “How many in the room are landlords who have rented to HCV tenants? How many would like to see a speaker on landlord-tenant law?” This relies on participants’ willingness to comment and the host’s ability to quickly count hands and judge the response. Although this exercise may not gather much information, it will help the PHA quickly understand the composition of their audience. The PHA staff might also ask a few participants after the meeting if they felt that the goals had been met or what they’d like to see at future meetings.

After the event, the PHA can analyze the sign-in list to evaluate whether the target audience attended the meeting.

These attendance indicators can, over time, give the PHA an idea of how often to hold similar meetings, where to hold the meetings, and what content is most relevant for the target audience.

Evaluation Forms: PHAs can request participants complete formal evaluations, which should be no more than a page in length and offer some check-off questions. These questions might include

- Was this meeting too short, too long, or the right length?
- Did the meeting provide the information the landlord was looking for?
- Did attending this meeting positively impact the landlord's willingness to rent to HCV holders?

The PHA should provide options for some open-ended comments, as well.

Direct Outreach from Participants: The PHA staff could also call participants after the meeting to ask their opinion on how the event went. The PHA staff that attended the event could debrief what went well at the event and what may need to be improved for a future event.

Data: The effectiveness of an event can also be measured through data that may become available over time. For example, the PHA may want to see if the number of landlords renting to HCV families has increased or if more landlords are marketing units to HCV tenants after the event.



Key to hosting successful events

Evaluate attendance trends and feedback from participants.

RESOURCES

Appendix D1-Sample sign-in sheet.