

STRATEGY: TENANT EDUCATION

The goal of this education strategy is to provide current or future voucher holders with information and training on basics of the HCV program and tenant rights and responsibilities.

Who: All PHAs regardless of size and/or location.

Cost: \$ \$\$ \$\$\$

Implementation Considerations: ● LOW ○ MEDIUM ○ DIFFICULT

Tenant Education PHA Process Improvements

PHA Process Improvement	Tenant Education
Increase Recruitment	
Increase Retention	X
Improve Responsiveness	
Improve Tenant-Landlord Relationship	X
Improve Inspections Process	
Minimize Bureaucracy	



WHAT THIS IS AND WHY IT WORKS: Tenant education does not directly involve landlords. Landlords across the country have expressed interest, however, in having PHAs provide tenant education in an effort to improve the landlord-tenant relationship.

IMPLEMENTATION

As noted in the Education and Outreach Introduction (see Event Planning 101), this strategy is event-based. Below are specific suggestions and recommendations on how to plan a tenant education event.

EVENT FRAMEWORK

WHO IS THE TARGET AUDIENCE?	Target Audience: The target audience are potential or current voucher holders.
WHO WILL PRESENT?	Presenters: For the PHA, staff in attendance might include case workers and the primary HCV contact. Additionally, it might be helpful to have speakers who can lend insight to the agenda topics.



EVENT FRAMEWORK

WHAT WILL BE PRESENTED?	<p>Current tenants may have different agenda needs than prospective tenants; however, a range of standard topics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of HCV program • How to search for units • How to complete rental applications and what landlords look for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Guest speaker opportunity: property owner or manager • How to improve credit scores • Tenant and landlord rights <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Guest speaker opportunity: legal aid • Common unit preventive maintenance and when to contact the landlord or request inspections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Guest speaker opportunity: housing inspector • Renter’s insurance 101 • The tenancy addendum alongside a sample lease • How to be a good neighbor • Tips for getting to know a new neighborhood
HOW WILL THE INFORMATION BE DELIVERED?	<p>Tenant education would typically be presented in a lecture-style format, approximately 2-3 hours in length.</p> <p>A PowerPoint presentation and an agenda will help the PHA and speakers organize time and maintain momentum, cover needed topics, and include time for questions. What handouts do participants need to understand the topics?</p>
WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?	<p>Tenant education can set the stage for a successful relationship between tenants, landlords, and the PHA.</p>
WHERE WILL THE EVENT TAKE PLACE?	<p>Tenant education is typically low-key and does not have extensive or high-tech A/V or set-up needs. Presentation requirements for this type of event would typically be an LCD projector, screen, and laptop for visual; and a podium and theatre-style seating. Speakers and microphones may be necessary if the event includes playing a video or requesting input from a large group of participants.</p> <p>PHAs might find that their anticipated attendance numbers allow them to host the workshops in the PHA’s office meeting space. Public libraries or other local government or community facilities might also have space that meets the A/V and set-up requirements.</p> <p>Some PHAs offer tenant education at several locations throughout their service area, others choose to utilize the same space.</p>

EVENT FRAMEWORK

WHEN WILL THE EVENTS TAKE PLACE?

The PHA should look at the numbers of voucher holders, as well as those on the waitlist. Providing training in advance can make the tenant-landlord relationship start off well prior to move-in.

Two variations are below:

- **Program Overview:** Some PHAs choose to incorporate tenant education in the HCV process. PHAs could encourage tenants to attend a training to help them navigate the HCV program. These sessions might last 3 hours and would provide more high-level information than a course in which the tenant would receive a certificate.
- **Trainings on How to Be a Good Tenant:** These courses are voluntary and can result in the voucher holder receiving a certificate of completion which they can present to a landlord during the housing search and application process.



TIP: Letting landlords know that the PHA offers tenant education can motivate both tenants and landlords. Landlords can feel reassured to know this training exists. Tenants may have increased motivation for completing the training if they know landlords will be looking for it.

Offering trainings on the same day each month may help staff remember to inform tenants and also will help tenants know when they can attend. For example, workshops will be held on the last Thursday of every month.

See Appendix D2-Sample Tenant Training Certificate

IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS AND EVENT LOGISTICS

Although, tenant education trainings have similar implementation considerations and steps as new landlord orientations, PHAs may find it challenging to implement tenant education due to limited resources and competing events. PHAs may want to consider whether in-person training or online trainings better suit the needs of the PHA and its tenants. Regardless of the approach, the PHA should determine if the PHA will issue certificates of completion.

In-Person Training

- **Prepare Materials:** Materials might include a PowerPoint presentation, tenant FAQs, and resource lists. Keep in mind that participants will have a variety of educational backgrounds and experiences.



Partner!

Tenant trainings may be offered by partner organizations in your region. PHAs should reach out to local government agencies and non-profits that might be providing this service.

- **Identify presenter(s):** Consider having someone present who is familiar not only with the HCV program, but with the PHA as a whole. Other presenters might include landlords, legal aid, and the local fair housing organization.
- **Determine the initial frequency and timing of training:** quarterly trainings might be a good place to start to evaluate tenant interest.

- Identify and secure a location: Locations will also depend heavily on the availability of resources and the geographic service area. There may be options for free meeting space either at the PHA, partner locations, or public buildings. The availability of parking or public transportation is another factor to consider.
- Market: Marketing strategies could include advertising on the PHA's website and social media. The simplest marketing might be to include a message about the training in a mailing already scheduled to be sent to voucher holders.
- Evaluate: Feedback should be an important factor in determining the frequency, location, and content for trainings. These factors may change periodically.
- Sign-in sheets could include name, contact information, and a way for the participant to request additional information or follow-up.

On-line Workshops

- Identify content that may be conducive to online workshops. Consider where and how the training will be made available. Options include posting on the PHA's website or through a web-application
- Prepare materials: Materials might include PowerPoint presentations, tenant FAQs and resource lists. Partners: PHAs should reach out to other state and local agencies who might have online learning platforms that the PHA could utilize at little to no cost.
- Determine the on-line format for the training: PHAs should investigate different means of delivering the training. Options include webinars and on-line training applications.
- Certificates: Issuing certificates for on-line training is more challenging than for in-person trainings. The PHA must decide how completion of the training will be determined. Will the tenant self-certify? Take a quiz? Will completion be monitored through a web-application? This may inform the remaining decisions on how the training will be offered.

TIPS

Level of Commitment

Be mindful of time! When developing materials, the PHA should carefully consider tenant and PHA time commitments. PHAs that offer tenant education opportunities noted that their programs had difficulty when the time commitment for participants was too great. For example, one PHA noted that their program was too time intensive and consisted of multiple sessions taking more than 20 hours to complete in order to receive a certificate of completion. This proved to be too much of a time commitment and the program was ultimately not successful.

Another PHA with a multi-part training series, aware of the time constraints of attendees, worked to gain partners that would also host trainings. Thus, tenants could select from multiple times and locations to attend each segment.

Partners

PHAs should look to partner with other agencies and non-profits that might be interested in providing tenant training. PHAs should identify barriers that might prevent attendance. For example, childcare or assistance with transportation costs might make it easier for tenants to attend.

RESOURCES

Appendix D2-Sample Tenant Training Certificate

REGULATIONS

24 CFR § 982.301
https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=e9976589e4698eb05cbe1b7faec0b63a&mc=true&node=se24.4.982_1301&rgn=div8

