

How-to Guide

Identifying Potential Rental Property Providers

The existing housing market in your area provides your organization with many opportunities to help people exit homelessness. Rental property providers are key partners in improving rental access. Knowing how to identify these rental property providers is a crucial first step in building long-term partnerships with them.



Understanding the local community

You can develop a detailed picture of the rental property providers in your target audience by asking the right questions, such as:

- Among the general population of area rental property providers, who are your ideal partners, and why?
- Who are the rental property providers you're most likely to succeed at recruiting, and why?
- Which rental property providers are currently renting to people with housing vouchers?
- Among rental property providers who do not currently rent to people with housing vouchers, do you know why? What concerns do they have?

These additional suggestions may also help you identify and recruit rental property providers:

- Get to know the professional associations and groups to which rental property providers belong. These can include property management firms, veterans' groups, apartment associations, low-income or subsidized housing organizations, and others.
- Be alert for hidden rental property providers, including "mom-and-pop" rental property providers with few properties. Residents in your service area may have spare rooms in their homes and be willing to partner with your organization.
- Faith-based community events, chambers of commerce, county supervisor meetings, supportive service meetings, and Rotary clubs can be additional sources of leads.



Assessing the local marketplace

Developing expert knowledge about your local housing market can help identify factors that influence **housing stock** (the class, size, and availability of rental space in the area) and **rental trends** (such as seasonal rentals, tourism, and housing for local college and university students). Also, by tracking unit availability and housing search assistance, you can better gauge turnover rates and develop a successful rental property provider outreach rhythm.



Emphasizing program benefits

Once you identify a prospective rental property provider, you can promote further conversation by highlighting program benefits such as:

- “Ready-to-rent” tenants who can fill vacancies almost immediately
- Guaranteed, on-time rent payments
- Financial incentives such as signing bonuses, additional security deposits, and rental property provider referral rewards
- Reduced costs, including fewer fees to advertise vacancies
- No competition for tenants with other rental property providers
- Rental property provider-tenant mediation as needed
- Financial education, case management, and other supportive services for tenants

Through voucher programs, many rental property providers are already renting to people experiencing homelessness and do not realize it. When these rental property providers partner with a program, they receive more support and information than rental property providers who just accept vouchers.