



TO: HACLA Board of Commissioners
FROM: Carlos Van Natter, Director of Section 8 
THROUGH: Douglas Guthrie, President and CEO 
DATE: August 25, 2022
SUBJECT: **Section 8 Landlord Outreach Efforts**

Section 8 has worked diligently to maintain and expand the number of landlords participating in our Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) programs during the twin challenges of the pandemic and the incredibly tight rental market in Los Angeles of high rents and low vacancies. The vacancy rate in the city for affordable units at our price point is well below 3%. At the start of the pandemic in February 2020, the number of landlords in our program was 13,122. The number participating with us now is over 13,300, with the vast majority of landlords, over 90%, having 5 units or less on our program. HACLA continues to encourage landlords to participate in the HCV program through a variety of marketing strategies and outreach.

Administrative Practices

The Homeless Incentive Program (HIP), administered by Los Angeles County through HHH funding, provides homeless incentive payments to private landlords to house applicants from HACLA's homeless housing assistance programs. HIP provides Hold Incentives where landlords can receive up to one month's rent, per vacant unit held, based on the number of bedrooms and current Fair Market Rents (FMR) along with Move-In Assistance which may include security deposit, utility assistance, and furniture essentials depending on the needs of the homeless family or individual. Once the person or family secures housing, the Housing Authority or partner agency will make contact and arrangements. HIP also provides Damage Mitigation which provides a financial safety net to landlords for unit repair costs beyond the security deposit at time of tenant vacate. As the HIP has expanded, a dedicated team of 5 trained staff has been established to provide the best customer service, ensuring clear communication between clients and landlords. Response is provided within 24 hours and staff is consistently trained in the different areas of the HCV contracting process to assist landlords by troubleshooting and expediting new tenant contracting as well as resolving other landlord issues.

HIP staff is also responsible for conducting housing location and increasing unit stock by using different techniques and platforms. Accessing records from previous and current landlords, mass emailing's are sent out to market our incentive program and the easy enrollment process. Furthermore, staff is reaching out to landlords who list a vacancy on Zillow, Redfin, and social media marketplaces.

Through a separate funding stream, our Emergency Housing Voucher Program (EHV) has a team of

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Housing Support Specialists who engage landlords through a number of outreach efforts including those named above. Housing Support Specialists participate in quarterly Landlord Seminars and regularly networking with larger Apartment Associations in the LA area. Additionally, two brokerage firms have been contracted to engage landlords to secure vacate unit listings specifically for EHV. Since execution of the contract in October 2021, over 1005 units have been referred from the brokers. Through interagency agreements with five local housing authorities, we've been able to expand opportunities with landlords in other jurisdictions, increasing the stock of available units for our EHV clients.

We understand that turnover looks differently in today's market and part of our outreach strategy is to contact landlords whose vacancies are due to deceased participants. Contact is performed via phone, email and landlords are also invited to our virtual informational sessions so they are made aware of new ways to benefit from the program. In addition, and where applicable, we provide damage mitigation compensation to alleviate the financial burden that a landlord may face from tenant damages. Cold calling is also done to contact landlords who have recently entered into a Section 8 contract to inquire about additional vacancies and issue available incentives.

Marketing Efforts

The marketing effort emphasizes increasing landlord outreach in comprehensive messaging to landlords. We have targeted our marketing efforts to appeal to the rental business and mitigate the issues landlords may experience. Marketing materials such as newspaper, bus, and google ads have periodically served as means to promote the monetary incentives available to participating HCV landlords. Constant advertisement on our website and agency issued landlord newsletters highlight the availability of resources and upcoming events.

In addition to marketing materials, our HIP and EHV staff attends meetings to present and table about the benefits of working with HACLA. Staff have joined meetings throughout the different Service Provider Areas to ensure coverage across the city and county of Los Angeles. These meetings not only spread agency information but they serve to increase our available housing stock. Landlords interested in working with HACLA can complete an incentive application and schedule an inspection in real time. Once that unit passes inspection, we conduct all the advertisement of the unit on behalf of the landlord and ensure speedy tenant referrals to reduce turnover time of rental units.

This tactic has also been used to recruit owners during Apartment Association conference/trade shows. Attending several trade shows a year, HACLA has established relationships with event hosts and has been part of seminar hours to speak to landlords and partnering agencies regarding agency developments and inform of the financial assistance offered for move-in costs for our clients. Landlords have taken advantage of HACLA's HIP furniture assistance, knowing their tenants will have access to appliances through our program and security deposit assistance as needed. Incentives are also offered in the EHV program. A \$2500 signing bonus is available for every contract executed and owners are also eligible for the unit inspections repair incentive of up to \$5000 to aid in the cost of bringing their units up to Housing Quality Standards.

Moreover, we understand how important it is for landlords to feel heard. We have shifted some of the work we do to provide them with new information as it relates to their rental business operations. HACLA's HIP team conducts biweekly virtual informational sessions, known as "Landlords Coffee & Conversations," to attract new and existing Section 8 landlords. These sessions invite landlords to come hear topics such as HCV Inspections, ADU programs, rent stabilization ordinances, housing rights, landlord & tenant protections, and HACLA's incentive program.

Recognizing Landlord Contributions

We recognize the relationships established with our landlords as well. Items such as Thank You cards and recognition awards have been issued to participating landlords during owner appreciation luncheons. During these luncheons, Executive staff and other members of our team are present to speak with our landlords on a more individual level, hear suggestions, show appreciation, and build rapport. We have also featured some of our landlords in newsletters and ads to highlight the business we conduct together and the "win-win" advantages in partnering with us.

HACLA's landlord marketing efforts embody best practices outlined in HUD's landlord engagement listening sessions. We also continue to explore and implement new approaches such as working with the mayor's office to create a Public Service Announcement by the mayor encouraging landlords to work with us as well as strengthening relationships with city council offices that are doing their own landlord outreach for their constituents. We look for every partnership and marketing opportunity available to increase landlord participation and expect to see further progress as we maneuver through new COVID protocols and housing challenges.