

# 2017 San Antonio Landlord Engagement Strategies Event

Summary & Recommendations

# Overview:

On August 23<sup>rd</sup> of 2017 CSH provided onsite technical assistance (TA) to the San Antonio Continuum of Care (CoC) focused on developing strategies to engage and retain landlord relationships. The San Antonio CoC is committed to simplifying and streamlining the process of accessing housing for those exiting homelessness. CSH facilitated a landlord engagement event. The event consisted of two sessions; a Landlord/Service Provider Panel Discussion and a Strategy Development Session. The panel discussion gave the CoC the opportunity to listen to landlords and service providers talk about the strengths and challenges of their partnerships as they exist today. Session two was focused on using the information gathered in the first session to develop strategies to invest in as a community to recruit and retain new landlords. The following slides are recommendations that resulted from the event.

# Summary:

- ▶ San Antonio is experiencing similar challenges as many CoCs, including:
  - ▶ getting landlords to the table,
  - ▶ fully capitalizing on the landlord partnerships that already exist,
  - ▶ approaching the engagement and retention strategies as a system instead of case manager by case manager

# Recommendation #1:

- ▶ **Analyze and identify the number of units needed to effectively match scattered site funding within the CoC.** CoC stakeholders should build relationships with property owners and management companies that provide access to the appropriate mix of unit sizes needed for the population being served (1-bedroom, 2-bedrooms, 3-bedrooms, etc.).
- ▶ **You will want access to open units whenever you have a person ready for lease up.** For example, if you project the availability of funding to support 100 units over the course of a year, you will likely need to secure relationships with landlords and property managers that gives you access to 3 times, or more, the number of units you are funded for, in this example, 300 units.

# Recommendation #2:

- ▶ Develop a comprehensive landlord engagement strategy that shifts the approach from individual providers doing work in silos to establishing a system/community level landlord engagement strategy.
- ▶ The CoC identified two phases for the comprehensive strategy:
  1. Landlord Recruitment
  2. Landlord Retention / Maintenance

# Recommendation #2.1: Landlord Recruitment

- ▶ In preparation to recruit landlords, the CoC finds it necessary to learn more about “*pain points*” landlords are experiencing in San Antonio through data analysis with San Antonio Apartment Association.
- ▶ This will increase CoC level of understanding regarding what the Homeless Response System can improve for landlords. **Increased understanding is needed regarding:**
  - Eviction costs/rates
  - Average turnover costs/rates
  - Arrears owed to landlords at particular properties
  - Average length of stay at properties (*properties below 18 months should be targeted*)
  - Vacancy rates

# Recommendation #2.1: Landlord Recruitment

- ▶ Following this data analysis, the CoC will identify local landlords who experience these specific “*pain points*”, develop talking points and a strategy that targets improvement to increase the potential for landlord partnerships.
- ▶ The CoC is interested in developing a Risk Mitigation Strategy to address existing challenges. **Ideas include:**

## Double Deposit Standard

*Implement a double deposit standard across system that clearly defines the circumstances under which a double deposit can be paid*

## Develop a flexible risk mitigation fund

*To cover damages, vacancy, and attorney fees*

## Standardize the ability to pay for a “vacancy clause”

*Standardize the ability to pay for a “vacancy clause” in master leased/site based supportive housing projects across the CoC. (1, 2, or 3 month vacancy clauses are typical)*

# Recommendation #2.1: Landlord Recruitment

- ▶ **Host quarterly landlord engagement events in partnership with the San Antonio Apartment Association:**
  - ▶ Recognize great landlord partners
  - ▶ Use engaged landlords to share their experience with new landlords
- ▶ **Develop a functional unit availability database for the CoC to give case managers and those that support people in finding housing the ability see real-time unit availability, in the right areas of town and within budget.**
  - ▶ These exist already, but are usually not being capitalized on (Social Serve, Go Section 8) because the systems, as they exist today, are not a useful tool
  - ▶ It is recommended that the San Antonio CoC invest in improving an existing system to meet their needs rather than developing their own from scratch



# Recommendation #2.2:

## Landlord Retention / Maintenance

- ▶ Add to the San Antonio CoC the role of “*Landlord Liaison*” that staffs a trouble-shooting hotline on Monday-Friday from 8am-5pm.
  - This person or team would primarily be responsible for: *supporting landlords and/or property management companies in trouble-shooting payment issues, contract issues, recertification issues, etc.*
  - This person would have access to and understand the administrative processes of all subsidized housing programs within the San Antonio CoC and have the ability to solve virtually all landlord concerns through one hotline number.

# Recommendation #2.2:

## Landlord Retention / Maintenance

- ▶ Develop a standardized “*Move-in Letter*” to be provided to the Landlord at lease up for every client across the San Antonio CoC. This letter would include:
  - ▶ Supportive housing program name
  - ▶ Agency name
  - ▶ Case Manager name
  - ▶ Case Manager phone number
  - ▶ Landlord Liaison Hotline number
  - ▶ Client name
  - ▶ Anticipated program subsidy
  - ▶ Client portion
  - ▶ Anticipated length of subsidy

# Recommendation #2.2:

## Landlord Retention / Maintenance

- ▶ **Build case management capacity** to improve retention, including a comprehensive training series covering best practices in home visits, eviction prevention, tenancy issues, etc.
- ▶ **Provide capacity building support** to landlords in partnership with the San Antonio Apartment Association and other service providers throughout San Antonio.

### Training:

- Fair Housing
- Liability Laws
- Mental Health First Aid
- Community Building Strategies
- Understanding & Dealing w/ Family Violence

### Community Events:

- Plan / host events at properties that a high number of clients reside
- Open the events to the entire property
- **Events could include:** health fairs, back to school fairs, job fairs, yoga classes, Diabetes Management classes

# Recommendation #2.2: Landlord Retention / Maintenance

- ▶ **Charge the Landlord Relations Subcommittee with the responsibility of implementing the strategies** outlined above to effectively engage and retain landlords and property owners to participate in the San Antonio Homeless Response System housing programs.
- ▶ **Recommendations for Landlord Relations Subcommittee participants include:**
  - ▶ Public Housing Authority
  - ▶ San Antonio Apartment Association representative
  - ▶ SARAH representative
  - ▶ PSH provider representatives
  - ▶ RRH provider representatives
  - ▶ Marketing and Development staff from the provider community
  - ▶ CoC communication and media staff/representatives
  - ▶ Housing and Community Development Department (county & city)