

# Landlord Outreach



**Presenters:**

**Michelle Davis**

*Executive Director  
Housing Resources, Inc.*

**Alisa Parker**

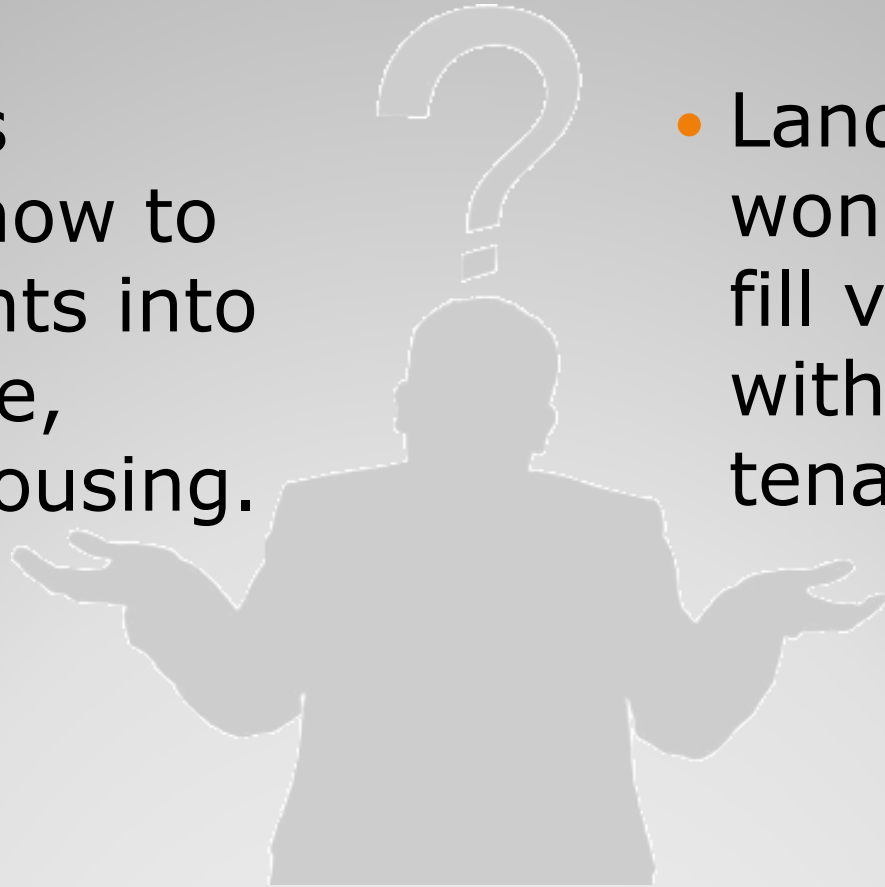
*Managing Attorney  
Legal Services of South Central Michigan*

**Douglas Gardner**

*Private Landlord  
Battle Creek, Michigan*

# WHERE IS THE HOUSING?

- Providers wonder how to get tenants into affordable, quality housing.
- Landlords wonder how to fill vacancies with quality tenants.



**WHERE ARE THE TENANTS?**

# Provider Assumptions

**“There is a lack of Affordable Housing  
in my area.”**

**“There is just not enough quality  
housing stock.”**

# What are some realities?

- Some provider assumptions are correct. But there are also other factors.
- Barriers that impact our clients may prevent entry into housing. For example:
  - Criminal history
  - Past eviction records
  - Poor/non-existent credit history
  - Lack of/Poor rental history (as it relates to landlord references)

# Additional Realities:

- How do we define what is affordable?
- Who are the landlords?
  - A: Commercial/Private landlords who generally provide housing at market rates (or above). Housing always meets or exceed code compliance. Often has the strictest tenant selection criteria.
  - B: Commercial/Private landlords who generally provide housing below market rates. Generally have the least restrictive tenant selection criteria. Housing meets code compliance.
  - C: Commercial/Private landlords who provide housing at any price point, but are consider slumlords. Generally housing does not meet code compliance or often has code compliance violations.

## So What are the Solutions?

- How do we engage landlords to help our clients find housing to meet their needs?
- How do we identify landlord who are willing to work with our clients?
- What are some considerations from the landlord's perspective that providers may not be considering?

# **Housing Resources, Inc.**

## **Landlord Engagement Strategies**

- 1. Eviction Diversion Program**
- 2. Landlord Partnership Program**
- 3. Participating Landlord Considerations**

# Housing Resources, Inc.

## **Kalamazoo County Eviction Diversion Program**

The Eviction Diversion Program is a collaboration with the Department of Human Services, City of Kalamazoo 8<sup>th</sup> District Court, Fair Housing Center, Legal Aid of Western Michigan and Housing Resources, Inc. The objective of the program is to prevent evictions within Kalamazoo County, offering services directly at the 8<sup>th</sup> District Court.

### **Landlords**

- Have you filed a summons with the 8th District Court?
- Are you interested in preventing an eviction?
- If your property is within the City of Kalamazoo is it certified?
- Is unpaid back rent your primary issue with the tenant?
- Is that balance not more than 3 months old?

### **Agreement between Landlord & Tenant**

Both parties must agree upon the following:

- Amount of rent owed
- Agree to the terms of Eviction Diversion Process
- To meet with an Eviction Diversion Specialist
- Sign agreement to prevent entry of judgment and time to resolve issue



# Housing Resources, Inc.

## Landlord Partnership Program

The **Landlord Partnership Program** goal is to increase rental opportunities for people with leasing barriers including poor credit, criminal history and evictions while providing incentives to landlords.

As part of the program, Housing Resources, Inc. (HRI) commits to provide:

- Guaranteed response to landlord concerns within two business days.
- Case Management including home visits for tenants enrolled HRI programs.
- Facilitated communication by Housing Specialists between landlords and tenants to help resolve crises or conflicts that may jeopardize housing stability.
- Access to the **Landlord Partnership Fund** for damages and vacancy loss. The fund is an investment in and an incentive for landlords/property owners to rent to clients participating in programs operated by Housing Resources, Inc. (HRI). Priority is given to landlords leasing to families exiting emergency shelter through HRI's Housing Assistance Team.

# Housing Resources, Inc.

## Landlord Partnership Program

### **What are the Expectations regarding Alternate Screening Criteria?**

Participating landlords agree to the following screening criteria:

#### Prior Tenancy History

- Generally, allow for prior evictions.
- Applicant with a prior eviction may need to obtain a written agreement with the former landlord to repay past debt or proof that the debt has been paid or forgiven.

#### Credit history

- Generally, credit history will be waived.

#### Criminal history

- No tenancy denial for misdemeanor convictions.
- Certain convictions will constitute an automatic denial of an applicant. This includes: Offenses resulting in inclusion in the sex-offender registry, arson, homicide, or the production, possession, or distribution of methamphetamine.
- Prior felony convictions will be examined over a time frame of 1-10 years depending on the type and severity of conviction. Landlords have some latitude to adjust the recommended alternate screening criteria when an applicant has a prior felony conviction.

# Housing Resources, Inc.

## Landlord Partnership Fund

### **What does the Landlord Partnership Fund Cover?**

In order to access the Landlord Partnership Fund, the landlord must guarantee that the unit will be leased to another HRI client by the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month or as soon as available not to exceed 30 days.

The fund provides **assistance for damages** and **vacancy loss** up to an amount equivalent to one (1) month's rent in each area. The Landlord Partnership Funds are in addition to any rental subsidies awarded.

# Housing Resources, Inc.

## Participating Landlords

### ❖ Considerations

- Increase the renter capital of the household (i.e. move in funds, subsidies) to make the housing more affordable
- Master Leasing or Co Signing
- Advocate for and persuade landlords to overlook capital deficits
- Offer financial protections or incentives in exchange for relaxing tenant selection criteria (landlord partnership fund, damage fund)
- Partner with your city and community leaders for solutions (weatherization, rental improvements)
- Recognize that landlords, property owners and managers are your customer and you are selling them a product.
- Address their concerns and mitigate their risks.
- Convey your understanding of the dollars and cents of the rental/real estate business and the risks associate with their revenue and property.
- Place ads in local/community newspapers and newsletters
- Create a "Ready to Rent" certification for clients

# Calhoun County Rental Roundtable

- What is it?
  - A collaborative group of social service agencies, housing providers, Legal Services and a local landlord.
- Purpose:
  - To educate both housing providers and social service providers about housing issues and to get to know each other;
  - Promote and expand Legal Services' Eviction Diversion program and work with Monday's Landlord-Tenant Court;
  - Organizing outreach and education to rental property owners; and
  - Build and expand a sharable housing list.
- Landlord Engagement Strategies Currently Implemented:
  - Quarterly Landlord Dinner & Discussion Series; and
  - Housing Resource Hour that adds connecting landlords to potential tenants.

# The Landlord's Perspective

- Tenant Selection Criteria—The 3-5 year tenant.
- The Landlord Business Model.
- Why don't some landlords want to take renters with subsidies?
- If a provider is advocating to get a client into housing, what are some helpful things the provider can do?

## Key Take-Aways:

- Does landlord engagement really work?
- How have we seen changes with being able to provide housing for our clients?
- At the end of the day, we all want the same thing—**stability & quality!**



**Questions?**



# Thank You

**Michelle Davis**

*Executive Director*

*Housing Resources, Inc.*

[mdavis@housingresourcesinc.org](mailto:mdavis@housingresourcesinc.org)

**Alisa Parker**

*Managing Attorney*

*Legal Services of South Central Michigan*

[parkeral@lsscm.org](mailto:parkeral@lsscm.org)

Office Phone: (269) 965-3951

**Douglas Gardner**

*Private Landlord*

*Battle Creek, Michigan*

[Duggardner@hotmail.com](mailto:Duggardner@hotmail.com)

Phone: [269 908-0159](tel:2699080159)