



**Austin/Travis County Reentry Roundtable**  
**City of Austin “Good Landlord Program”**  
**Ideas/Thoughts for Program**  
**November 2014**

**Characteristics of a “good landlord”:**

- **Reasonable criminal background screening policy:**
  - No blanket criminal background such as “No felonies” or “No misdemeanors”
  - Appropriate look back periods for criminal convictions
  - Not using arrests that did not result in a conviction (unless charge is pending) for consideration
  - Using policies that would consider things like age at time of offense, extenuating circumstances, evidence of rehabilitation, etc.
  
- **Publically posting/or electronically providing information regarding all screening criteria** including criminal background screening policies:
  - Posted on line or provide via email when it is requested
  - This strategy would save time and money for both the prospective tenant and the landlords:
    - Prospective tenants currently have to go to apt complexes in order to get this information handed to them and many pay the application fees only to learn they were not eligible to begin with.
    - Landlords/leasing agents have to answer these questions anyway now and posting the policies would eliminate some of those calls/visits.
  
- **Providing an appeal processes or opportunity to present information regarding contributing factors or evidence of rehabilitation or case management services being provided to support their housing stability.**
  
- **Participation in workshop/s regarding building effective criminal background screening policies and/or building relationships with case managers serving persons with criminal backgrounds**
  
- **Polices that demonstrate understanding of the issues addressed in Violence Against Women Act in particular how domestic violence impacts women and children**
  
- **Eviction policies/practices that do not evict entire households based on the actions of one household member**

- **Provides practices that allows hard to house tenants flexibility in meeting criteria** (i.e., shorter term probationary leases to start with, higher deposits, etc.)

#### Ideas for Incentives:

- **Creation of a Landlord Liaison/s** to provide assistance to landlords in the program with navigating issues with hard to house tenants that they accept
- Creation of **risk mitigation funding pool** to provide financial assistance for any costs associated with issues/evictions of hard to house tenants they accept
- Provision of **landlord training/education opportunities** both in person and on line that help landlords understand the goals of a Good Landlord Program and provide tools to help us meet those goals
- Development of a **“good neighbor” training program for prospective hard to house tenants** that helps provide landlords evidence that a prospective tenant has received training/information re: expectations of maintaining housing
- **Voucher programs have minimum standards set** for timeliness of inspections, timeliness of rent payments, reduced paperwork, etc.
- Offer benefits such as **fast track for any rehab permits or other tax benefits** (including exploration of tax credit type program similar to the Work Tax Credit program)

#### Resources/Back Up Documents Re: to Good Landlord Program Conversation:

- **City Council Resolution:**  
<http://www.cityofaustin.org/edims/document.cfm?id=219706>
- **Housing Works Report: Housing the Hardest to Serve: Using Permanent Supportive Housing to Address Chronic Homelessness in the City of Austin, August 2014:**  
[http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Housing/Reports\\_and\\_Publications/Community\\_Reports/HardesttoServewebFNL\\_High\\_Res.pdf](http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Housing/Reports_and_Publications/Community_Reports/HardesttoServewebFNL_High_Res.pdf)
- **Salt Lake City Good Landlord Program:**  
<http://www.slcgov.com/landlord>
- **Editorial in Salt Lake City newspaper re: negative impact of good landlord program on serving former offenders, 10-31-14:**  
<http://www.sltrib.com/sltrib/opinion/58481199-82/landlord-utah-landlords-programs.html.csp>