

landlord liaison project

a program managed by the ywca of seattle | king | snohomish

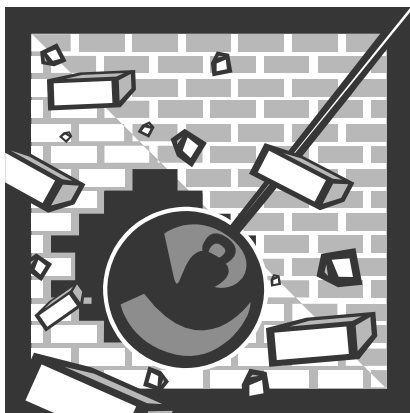


spring, 2010 | agencies edition

breaking down barriers

preventing history from getting in the way of the future

LLP partnering landlords are more open minded than most, but every once in a while even they run across an applicant whose rental, credit, or criminal history raises a red flag. Open bankruptcies, unpaid debt to a landlord, recent drug convictions or violent felony convictions present serious barriers to permanent housing. For landlords, who use minimal information about applicants' past to predict what kind of tenants they will be in the future, these red flags can mean one denial after another.



In these situations, service providers can be a powerful voice advocating on behalf of their clients. In general, providing a reference letter or phone call describing a client's progress is a great start. Here are a few more suggestions for addressing the situations listed above.

open bankruptcies

A bankruptcy is "opened" when a person files for bankruptcy, and remains open until a judge officially discharges the outstanding debt and "closes" it. Depending on the type of bankruptcy this process can take anywhere from a few months to a few years. To landlords an open bankruptcy raises concerns about financial irresponsibility, and the inability to collect if the tenant falls behind on rent. To allay these concerns, work with your client to develop a realistic budget and send a letter to a landlord explaining the plan; help your client to compile proof of any bills paid on time and in full over an extended period of time (i.e. utility or phone bills)

and show a copy to the landlord.

When a bankruptcy is closed, your client should receive a letter in the mail from the judge. If the bankruptcy still appears as open on a background check, provide a copy of this letter to a landlord. You can also help your client appeal to the courts records office that is misreporting the status.

unpaid debt to a landlord

Landlords care much less about unpaid debt than about whether there is a repayment plan in place. If your client owes money to a past landlord, help draft a letter proposing a repayment plan, even if the plan only

in this issue...

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Suggestions for helping clients overcome barriers from their past
- 2 understanding landlord tenant issues**
A learning opportunity for social service providers
- 3 upcoming events**
A complete calendar of LLP training events through April
- 4 announcements**
Free tax prep and more!



breaking down barriers

contd.

requires the client to pay a few dollars each month.

Some landlords and collection agencies will not agree to a repayment plan unless the tenant can pay half the money up front. If this is the case, your client can purchase a money order made out to the bill collector and present it to the office in person. Because the collection agency is listed as the sole recipient on the money order, the collection agency cannot decline the payment. Accompany your client to deliver the payment and you can then draft a letter certifying that your client is in repayment on the debts.

recent drug convictions

A recent drug conviction raises landlords' concerns about crime and drug activity. If your client has a recent drug conviction, help compile documentation of any drug treatment or chemical dependency counseling the client has successfully participated in. You may also want to send the landlord a letter from you or from the

client specifically addressing any life changes made since the conviction, the client's long term goals, and how housing fits in to these goals.

violent felony convictions

Violent felonies including domestic violence and other assault convictions are one of the most challenging barriers for prospective renters. Help a client with a violent conviction plan how to discuss the incident with a landlord. Sometimes it is useful to explain—in very general terms—what happened and how the client ended up in the situation. If the conviction was related to drug or alcohol use, tell about any rehab or counseling the client is participating in since the incident. If the client has a domestic violence conviction, focus on any counseling or anger management courses he or she has completed. Provide copies of certificates of completion for any relevant programs.

understanding landlord/tenant issues from an provider's perspective

Landlord tenant law is complicated and varies widely by jurisdiction. Understanding the ins and outs of landlord tenant issues and the resources available is a huge step in becoming a great advocate for your clients.

In March the Landlord Liaison Project is delighted to present Alouise Urness, educator at the Washington Tenant's Union. Ms. Urness will offer a training for LLP partnering agencies about landlord tenant issues, with a special focus on how you as providers can advocate on behalf of your clients.

Staff of all LLP partnering agencies are invited to attend.

When: Wednesday, March 24 from 9:30am-11:00am

Where: Wellspring Family Services at 1900 Rainier Ave S in Seattle

Questions: For more information please contact Rachel Wilch at the Landlord Liaison Project by phone at 206-336-4633 or by email at rwilch@ywcaworks.org

Special thanks to Wellspring Family Services and especially Derek Taylor for the use of training space!



upcoming llp events

FEBRUARY 2010

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10 Tenant Training	11	12	13
14	15	16	17 Landlord Update	18	19 Agency Update	20
21	22	23 Agency Update	24	25	26	27 Landlord Update
28						

MARCH 2010

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10 Tenant Training	11	12	13
14	15 Landlord Training	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24 Agency Training	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

APRIL 2010

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14 Tenant Training	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

Tenant Training

Feb 10, Mar 10 or Apr 14 2:00-3:30pm

At YWCA Opportunity Place
2024 3rd Ave in Downtown Seattle

LLP's monthly Tenant Training will cover tenants' basic rights and responsibilities, understanding a lease and problem solving ideas. All LLP clients are welcome (agencies, please spread the word!). Light refreshments will be provided.

Agency Update

Feb 19 9:30-11:30am

At SeaTac City Hall
4800 S 188th St in SeaTac

Or Feb 23 9:30-11am
At East Cherry YWCA
2820 E Cherry St in Seattle

LLP's Agency Update is great for case managers who are new to LLP partnering agencies, or who would just like a refresher on how the LLP works. Prospective partner agencies welcome as well.

Agency Training

Mar 24 9:30-11:30am

At Wellspring Family Services
1900 Rainier Ave in Seattle

Alouise Urness of the Washington Tenants Union will provide a training on landlord tenant law specially tailored to social service providers.

Landlord update

Feb 17 2:30-4:00pm

At SeaTac City Hall
4800 S 188th St in SeaTac

Or Feb 27 10:00am-12:00pm

At East Cherry YWCA
2820 E Cherry St in Seattle

A great program overview for new or prospective LLP partnering landlords.

Landlord Training

Mar 15 2:00pm-4:00pm

At SeaTac City Hall
4800 S 188th St in SeaTac

Representatives from SHA, KCHA and Shelter Plus Care will present on the benefits of renting to tenants with housing vouchers.

quarterly newsletter of the king county

landlord liaison project

4800 South 188th Street
Suite 245
SeaTac, WA 98188

The Landlord Liaison Project is managed by the YWCA of Seattle, King, Snohomish and is funded through generous support from the City of Seattle, King County, and the United Way of King County.

announcements

Free Tax Preparation

Between January 12 and April 15 the United Way of King County is offering free tax preparation for households making less than \$50,000. IRS certified volunteers will provide services at 16 locations across the country. Citizenship and English skills are not necessary; language support will be available for Spanish, Russian, Chinese, Vietnamese and Samoan speakers. For locations and dates please call 2-1-1 or 1-877-211-9274, or visit unitedwayofkingcounty.org/taxhelp

publicize your events

As we expand our training offerings, we would also like to open our newsletter as a venue to advertise your events.

If you know of upcoming trainings, meetings or other events that would be open to LLP clients or other clients from our partnering agencies, please let Rachel Wilch know. The newsletter is published quarterly so the sooner we know about events, the better.



stay in touch

- come by our office (see address above)
- give us a call at 206-336-4601
- drop us an email

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LLP by the numbers

147 Households Housed

39 Partnering Agencies

73 Partnering Landlords

159 Rental Properties

(3rd Quarter numbers)