

NEWS FOR OWNERS AND MANAGERS IN THE RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Property Manager Debunks Myths

Property manager Pete Smith knows all about the myths that abound about participating in the Section 8 Rental Assistance Program. But after six years of renting to “model tenant” voucher holders—and

portion increases. The renters’ portion is more likely to be on time, too, as their income-adjusted payments are easier for them to pay. “My rental assistance units have lower delinquency rates and have the most stability of all my apartments,” says Smith.



Pete Smith
property manager

“I’ve become a big proponent of Rental Assistance”

Myth: Owners/managers have no say in tenant selection.

Reality: You select your own tenant. Once an owner or manager agrees to participate in the Rental Assistance program, the Commission notifies voucher holders, who then call, meet with, and are screened by landlords in the same manner as non-assisted tenants.

Myth: You can’t charge Section 8 tenants as much as market rate tenants.

Reality: The Housing Commission pays owners the same rent charged to non-assisted tenants, providing the rent is in line with rents of neighboring units. Plus, you can raise the rent after the initial lease term just as you do in the general market.

receiving the San Diego Housing Commission’s portion of the rent “on time every month like clockwork”—Smith is ready to set the story straight.

“I’ve become a big proponent of Rental Assistance,” says Smith. Of the 4,000 apartments he manages, 15 percent are rented to families with vouchers.

Some of the myths he’d like to debunk include:

Myth: It’s financially risky to rent to voucher holders.

Reality: The Commission’s portion is guaranteed every month. And if a family’s income declines, the Commission’s

Smith also enjoys how voucher holders tend to stay longer since their rent is always affordable. Among Smith’s tenants with no plans to move is Elizabeth Saling, 61. Saling uses a wheelchair and gets by on a very limited income. “This is heaven,” says Saling of her home at the garden apartment complex that Smith manages.

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Rent Information

Want to Raise the Rent? We Can Tell You How

If you'd like to increase your Section 8 tenant's rent, here's all you need to do. Just send a 60-day advance notice to your tenant and the Housing Commission. And by the way, please forget about that long blue form that we got rid of last fall. Believe it or not, some of you are still using

photocopies of that complicated old "Request for Revision to Lease" form—even though we don't require it any more! (We used to send that form for you to fill out as part of the annual recertification process. Now, instead, we just send you a letter notifying you of the upcoming recer-

tification and inspection.)

So for rent increases, skip the form and just notify us and your tenant in writing per above—and we'll be happy to approve your increase just as long as:

- The initial term of your lease is completed.
- Your rent is reasonable for the area.
- You're not charging more for your Section 8 tenants. (Important! If you have two or more units, please provide rent information on those units.)
- Your market rate tenants, if you have any, are the first to receive the increase.

To help us process your request as quickly as possible, please be sure to promptly respond to any requests for information that we might have—such as addresses of comparable units. Note, rent increases go into effect on the first of the month after the end of the 60-day notice.



Staff Available to Help You With Your Rent Increase

Need help with your rent increase request? Call on our rent review staff! They are all "rent experts" when it comes to the specific neighborhood to which they are assigned:

Zipcode	Name and e-mail address <i>(All e-mails are followed by @sdhc.org)</i>	Phone
92113, 92114	Daniel Oelke (danielo)	619/578-7692
92113, 92101, 92102, 92103	Deborah Whitfield (deborahw)	619/578-7663
91950, 92037, 92104, 92106, 92110	Nghiem Nguyen (nghiemn)	619/578-7614
92111, 92116, 92117	Cery Lucas (ceryl)	619/578-7616
92105 (north of Laurel St.)	Regina Wilson (rew)	619/578-7611
92105 (south of Laurel St.), 92020, 92108, 92115, 92119	Nancy Tooson (nancyt)	619/578-7668
92139, 92154, 92173	Carmen Lee (carmenl)	619/578-7639
92107, 92109, 92120–92131	Joanne Gutierrez (margareg)	619/578-7696



Our New Computer System: Better, Stronger, Faster

Do you remember these words?—"Gentlemen, we can rebuild him. We have the technology. We have the capability... We can make him better than before. Better. Stronger. Faster..."

Well, that was the 70s, and technology has improved since then—especially here at the Housing Commission. Although we didn't build a Bionic Man like they did in the old hit TV series, we do have a super powerful, super fast new computer system.

We just went on line with our amazing new software that enabled us to "computerize" our 12,000-plus Section 8 tenant caseload files into a single database. This will help us more speedily assist you and your tenants with virtually every aspect of the Rental Assistance Program—from leasing, to rent increases and check runs. So, even though we've been doing a pretty good job getting out owner checks on time and responding to inquiries, we know we haven't been perfect—and of course we'll never be! But this new software will help us get closer to being error-free than we've ever been before, as well as enable us to provide you faster, better customer service. Of course, we'll probably have a few kinks to work through these first few months, so please bear with us as we work to get our new "bionic" software up and running! And if you have any questions in the meantime, please call Owner Liaison Lynda Brophy: 619/578-7680.



New Way to Pro-Rate Rents

We've only had our new computer system in place for a few weeks, and already it's telling us what to do. But, fortunately, it's telling us how to simplify one of our processes. So we will. When we "pro-rate" the Housing Commission's portion of the rent for move-ins that take place mid-month, we will now do so based on the

actual number of days of the month in which your tenant moved in (instead of the 30-day generic cycle we used to use). So, for example, if your tenant moves in, say, on July 12, and we've established that our rent portion will be \$780, then we'll calculate our rent per below, based on the actual number of days in July:

$$\$780 \div 31 \text{ days} = \$25.15 \text{ per day}$$

$$\$25.61 \times 19 \text{ days remaining in July}$$

$$= \$478.04$$

(our rent portion for July)



Myths vs. Reality

Continued from front page



Elizabeth Saling, resident of The Orchard

"I don't know where I'd be without Section 8," said Saling. Another myth that Smith has heard is how burdensome it is to work with the government. "Not so with the Housing Commission," says Smith, citing the agency's recently redesigned program that is known for its scarcity of paperwork, along with speedy leasing processes, inspections, and check disbursements.

Resources to Keep You Informed...



Fair Housing Tips to Help You “Rent Right”



We hope you'll be able to attend the fair housing seminar described below. In the meantime, here are some thoughts to help get you thinking about fair housing issues that affect you when advertising for renters.

What's O.K. to say: Feel free to describe the positive aspects of your property, such as jogging trails, playgrounds, gated parking and wheelchair access. You can also describe pet restrictions.

What's not O.K. to say: Avoid words and phrases that suggest preferences for renters of particular religions, marital status, age, occupation, or ethnicity. This includes avoiding verbiage such as “executive property” (which to some seems to suggest “white male”).

Of course, there's lots more to learn, so we look forward to seeing you at the fair housing seminar!

Events / Seminars

The Apartment Association Rocks....

Or at least they will—along with all of us—at the San Diego County Apartment Association's upcoming “Rock n' Roll Fantasy EXPO” for rental property owners and managers. It all takes place Wednesday, May 14, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., at the San Diego Convention Center. For more information, call Olivia Galvez at the Apartment Association, 858/278-8070.

Fair Housing Training

If you'd like to learn more about how to comply with fair housing laws, you might want to attend our free seminar Friday, May 30, 9 a.m. to noon. It will be held in the Balboa Park Club, 2150 Pan American Road West, San Diego, CA 92101 (in Balboa Park, behind the international cottages, just north of the puppet theater; accessed from Presidents Way off Park Blvd.).

The training will be presented by Kimball, Tirey & St. John, a law firm specializing in landlord-tenant issues. To sign up, please fill out and return the enclosed registration form, or call Lynda Brophy, 619/578-7680.

VIEWpoint is published by the Rental Assistance Department as a way to keep rental owners/managers updated on issues and policies regarding housing assistance programs. If you have any ideas for future stories, or if you have any suggestions about our programs, please contact Owner Liaison Lynda Brophy at 619/578-7680; lyndat@sdhc.org.

Rock n' Roll Fantasy EXPO

Presented by the San Diego County Apartment Association

Wednesday, May 14

8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

San Diego Convention Center

Fair Housing Training

Friday, May 30

9 a.m. to noon

Balboa Park Club



Good Neighbors
San Diego
Housing Commission

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