



VIEW

POINT

SUMMER 2001

NEWS FOR OWNERS AND MANAGERS IN THE RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

We've been hard at work—for you!

With helpful feedback from hundreds of property owners and managers, we've completely re-engineered our Rental Assistance program to make it faster and easier...so much so that we've dubbed it our "fast-track program." You'll especially notice the difference when you work with families who just got their vouchers; we can have them ready to move in within days of when they first contact you. Here's how it works:

- Instead of mailing in documents, and waiting to hear back, families get instant service at our new "leasing window."
- If your unit is ready, we'll set up a property inspection within 48 hours (if you want one that fast)—by appointment.
- You can use your own lease.
- Then just sign a contract.

- We pay you faster—starting with a \$250 "good faith" payment toward the first month's rent, given to you the same day as the inspection (if you are present).
- The rest of our rent portion for that month follows within two weeks.

The improved version of the program still has all the benefits you've enjoyed all along. Our portion of the rent is guaranteed to be on time. And you know you'll get competitive, market-rate rents, along with help ensuring your tenant is maintaining the unit through our free, annual inspections. When it's time to find a new tenant, you have instant access to a large pool of renters who are pre-screened for drug or violent crimes. If you ever have any questions or concerns, you can call our owner-liaison, Lynda Taylor, (619) 578-7680.

Free monthly workshops

Our monthly workshops are designed to help you get the most out of the Rental Assistance program with the least effort on your part. Sign up for one today!

- ◆ **Leasing Made Simple**
Friday, Aug. 31, 2–4 p.m.
- ◆ **Rent Increase "How To"**
Tuesday, Sept. 4
8:30-10:30 a.m. and
Wednesday, Dec. 5, 2–4 p.m.
- ◆ **New Owners: What To Expect**
Wednesday, Oct. 24, 2–4 p.m.

To reserve your space, please call (619) 578-7303. The workshops are held at the San Diego Housing Commission offices at 1625 Newton Ave., San Diego, CA 92113.

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Property owner Roberta Carrol (seated left) with Housing Commission owner-liaison Lynda Taylor (standing) and the Hernandez family.

Ready to rent? So are a thousand families!

This year, we've received more Section 8 vouchers than ever. We gained 1,464 last year, and we just learned that we're getting 900 more vouchers from HUD, bringing the total number of new vouchers to 2,364. This means more families than ever looking for housing this summer. Won't you help us by letting us know when you have a house or apartment available to rent?

To announce a vacancy in our listing that comes out every Tuesday, please notify us the preceding Friday by 5 p.m. Please use our vacancy form, available on our Web site, www.sdhc.net, under Information Page/Forms. When you've got a unit to rent, please fax the form to (619) 544-9193. For questions or additional forms, please contact Lynda Taylor—lyndat@sdhc.org or (619) 578-7860.



High-efficiency washers pave the way for utility savings

Do you want lower utility bills? Believe it or not, you can get them by installing new clothes washers in your laundry rooms. If your washers average three loads per day, the San Diego County Water Authority estimates that high-efficiency models can deliver savings of more than \$263 per washer per year. And to help you start saving, the Water Authority is giving out (starting in August) vouchers worth up to \$300 off the cost of new coin-operated high-efficiency washers. This is a program they've offered in the past with much success. If you have used the Water Authority's vouchers to purchase ultra-low-flush toilets, you're probably familiar with how this works. It's a point-of-purchase discount concept; you'll get the \$300 high-efficiency washer discount at the time of your sale or lease transaction.

Property manager Jeff Sachs, of John M. Sachs, Inc., says the washers are a great

investment: "Our residents like the front loaders because they don't require as much detergent, yet they appear to get clothes cleaner than top loaders. Residents are happier, management is happier, and we're happier."

For more information, please call 1-800-986-4538.



Inspection Notes

Faster inspections

In the general market, if a renter comes to you ready to move in, it's in your power to hand them the keys in the next day or two. So when we redesigned our Rental Assistance program, we aimed to mimic the market pace. In doing so, we especially focused on our inspection process, which is now much faster. Once your unit is ready and you give us some basic information (name of tenant, description of your unit and "comp" rents in the area), we can have an inspector out to your property within 24 to 48 hours after you call us.

Here is an overview of what the inspection entails and some pointers to help everything go smoothly:

- Make sure your rental property is ready. The inspection will cover basic habitability, health and safety.
- Have your lease ready. If you're using your own lease, fill it out and sign it ahead of time, leaving the effective date blank. (We'll fill that part in at the inspection.)
- If your property was built before 1978, also fill out a "Lead Based Paint Lease

Addendum." (We can do this during the inspection, too.)

- The inspection itself is quick—just a 15- to 30-minute look at your property. If all goes well, we'll cut you a check for \$250 toward the first month's rent, and the tenant can now move in. In some cases, we may need to ask you to make repairs, and then we'll come out again in one to two days.
- If your tenant needs to drop off or pick

up information or their voucher from us, they can use our new walk-up "leasing window" for instant service.

- Once the inspection is done, all you have to do is sign a contract, and we'll mail you the first month's rent as fast as two weeks. The check will be retroactive to the day the contract was effective. Thereafter, we'll send you our portion of the rent payment like clockwork every month.



Top five inspection tips



Want your property to pass inspection with flying colors? Our inspectors have identified the top five "inspection pitfalls" and how to avoid them:

- 1 Interior and exterior paint – look for any signs of chipping or peeling.
- 2 Windows that are accessible from the outside need to have permanently attached working locks. Also, make sure they don't have broken or missing panes, large cracks or leaks, and that they open and close properly.
- 3 Heating – A permanent, working heating system should be in place. (Portable heaters are not allowed.)
- 4 Appliances should be in good working order. A frequent "problem area" are stoves with missing knobs or malfunctioning burners.
- 5 Bathroom ventilation – Tenants will sometimes disconnect the vent in the bathroom because they don't like the noise, so be sure to turn it back on before we come.

In The News

Rental assistance program making headlines in San Diego



You may have noticed some of the recent news media attention to rental assistance programs. These stories have raised public concern and dialogue about the need to increase owner participation in the Section 8 program. Overall, the result has been positive, with some of you even responding by offering us more rental units. Publicity has included stories in Rental Owner Magazine, KGTV Channel 10, and the San Diego Union-Tribune - including a front-page news story, an editorial feature, and several letters to the editor. Among these was the following letter from the Commission's CEO:

The San Diego Housing Commission is proud of the relationships it has built with approximately 4,500 landlords who are our partners in the Section 8 program. Together, we help about 10,000 low-income families, seniors and persons with disabilities live in decent apartments and houses. In order to keep our current partners and encourage new landlords to participate, the commission has re-engineered the rental assistance program to make it more user-friendly. We began with the recognition of the importance of rental property owners/managers to our ability to house families and our responsibility to make this program work well for them. We dramatically cut the paperwork, offer quick inspections and pay our portion of the first month's rent, and then every month thereafter, fast and on time. This is in addition to benefits the program has always offered, including stabilizing the family's ability to pay rent and providing free criminal record screenings of clients.

Elizabeth C. Morris

Chief Executive Officer, San Diego Housing Commission

Myth vs. fact about rent limits

Myth: Rental property owners cannot charge Section 8 families the same rents they can charge non-assisted families.

Fact: HUD allows us to pay you the same rent you charge non-assisted renters for similar units in your complex (if you own more than one unit) providing the rent is in

line with what other units are charging in the neighborhood. In fact, the Housing Commission – realizing how much rents have increased in the last year – conducted a survey on rents that convinced HUD to allow us to increase our payment standards.

Caveat: Not every family receiving rental assistance may be able to rent your unit. That's because the individual or family that receives Section 8 assistance is allowed by HUD to pay no more than 40 percent of income for housing costs, including utilities, for the initial lease period (though it could pay more than 40 percent during renewal). While one family may not qualify, however, another family receiving Section 8 may have a higher income and could, therefore, rent your unit.



Help Wanted!

We currently have "Housing Assistant" job openings in the Rental Assistance Program department. This position entails working with Rental Assistance applicants to determine their eligibility and helping them understand the program, as well as representing families who already have their vouchers. If you or someone you know is interested in this employment opportunity, please click on the "Jobs" section of our Web site, www.sdhc.net. We will also be hiring a community outreach person to help educate property owners about Rental Assistance program improvements and benefits. For more information, please call Jeannette Stumpf, (619) 578-7744.



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 Taylor at (619) 578-7680; lyndat@sdhc.org.



Good Neighbors
San Diego
Housing Commission

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A state agency authorized by
the City of San Diego