

NEWS FOR OWNERS AND MANAGERS IN THE RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Investing in Section 8 Program Key to Property Owner's Success In Real Estate

Two years ago, after a long career in the telecommunications industry, Eva Vernon-Nichols decided to become a real estate entrepreneur. By coincidence—but as a pleasant surprise—Vernon-Nichols discovered the Section 8 Rental Assistance program, which turned out to be key to her ultimate success in the real estate market. She now owns ten rental properties, six of which she rents to Section 8 families. She has been able to purchase new properties thanks to the incomes from her guaranteed Rental Assistance rent payments from the Housing Commission.

She learned about the Section 8 program when she put her first house up for rent. She received a call from a woman asking if she would accept Section 8. Vernon-Nichols had heard negative things about the program, but decided to do her own research, leading her to discover the many benefits of participating in Section 8 and its "user-friendly" appeal.

One of Vernon-Nichols' first tenants was Donna Bolden, a single mother of two teenagers. Even though Ms. Bolden earned a decent wage as a security guard, nearly her entire salary was going to pay rent. Housing assistance has helped to free up money for groceries and other expenditures. And she couldn't be happier in her new three-bedroom condo. "I looked everywhere and couldn't find a

place. Then a friend introduced me to Eva, and the rest is history. I love my new condo—I feel like I've come home," said Bolden.

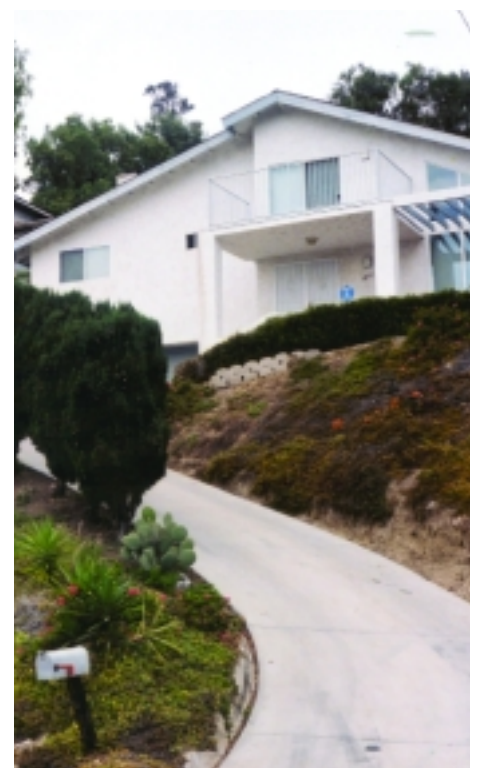
From a rental owner's perspective, Vernon-Nichols has been so pleased with the program that she has referred it to several other rental property owners. "I think Section 8 is the best thing around for rental property owners," she declares. She is halfway to her goal of owning 20 rental units, the majority of which she plans to make available to Section 8 families.



Eva Vernon-Nichols

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Need to Increase the Rent? It's Easier Than You Might Think...

Is inflation making a dent in your bank account these days? Then it may be time to raise the rents of your Section 8 tenants.

All you need to do is send, in writing, a 60-day advance notice to your tenant and

the Housing Commission. (Please note that you still need to provide a notice in writing even if you have already filled out and returned the blue lease revision form at the time of your tenant's annual

recertification.) You may ask for an increase at any time during a given year once the initial lease term is up, as long as:

- The rent is reasonable for the area (in the same price range as comparable units)
- You are charging the same for Section 8 renters as non-assisted tenants
- A written 60-day advance notice is given for the rent increase
- A market rate tenant, rather than your Section 8 tenant, is the first to receive a rent increase notice. (Unless, of course, you only have Section 8 tenants.)

To help us quickly process your request, please respond as soon as possible to any requests for information, such as rent rolls. To mail or fax us your rent increase request, please include a cover sheet with the tenant's name, directed to the attention of your tenant's housing assistant. Our fax number is 619/578-7371; our mailing address is 1625 Newton Ave., San Diego, CA 92113. For questions, please call Lynda Taylor-Brophy at 619/578-7680.



Go For the Direct (Deposit) Approach

Can't count on "snail mail"? Count on us, instead. With our new direct deposit program, we can deposit your rent check (our portion) on the first of each month. To sign up, call Cris Bolton, 619/578-7688.



Use Your Own Lease

A new HUD regulation turns out to be what our owners have preferred all along — to use your own lease form renting to Section 8 families. (But we'll still provide a lease if you don't have one, available on our Web site, www.sdhc.net.) Please be sure to include the following information in your lease:

- Tenant and owner names
- Rental unit address, including apartment number
- Initial lease term (minimum six months)
- Renewal provisions, if any
- Total monthly rent amount due to owner
- Utilities and appliances – indicate if tenant or owner is to supply
- Attach our "HUD Tenancy Addendum" sheet

Apartment Association Can Help You with Tenant Prescreenings

Did you know that the San Diego County Apartment Association can help you prescreen your tenants? The association offers a range of reasonably-priced resident screening packages, with services including credit reviews, social security number verification, eviction histories, and criminal background checks. We encourage you to take advantage of these screening services, since the criminal history checks the Housing Commission does are limited in scope.

Also, please keep in mind that, as with the general market, it is your right and responsibility as the landlord to choose the family that will live in your rental property.

While we are able to access criminal screening resources that are not otherwise publicly available, our background checks are not

comprehensive. For example, we don't have access to federal criminal information. Our prescreenings are based on San Diego Police Department arrest records and a state database that provides limited

statewide felony information. Also please remember that we only check for histories of drug-related or violent criminal activity. Applicants are disqualified from our programs if they have been arrested for such crimes within the past five years or convicted within the past ten years. (In certain cases, applicants with minor convictions may be eligible for our programs after participating in rehabilitation programs.)

For more information about supplemental tenant screening services, call the San Diego County Apartment Association at 858/278-8070. (Another resource for criminal histories is the Superior Court Criminal Records downtown San Diego office, 220 W. Broadway, second floor.)



With the Section 8 program, you select your own tenants, just as you would in the general market.

Section 8 and Self-Sufficiency Program Help Tenants Get Ahead



The Section 8 program helped Kim Richey get ahead.

Kim Richey is an example of someone who's been able to make a better life for herself thanks to the Section 8 program and the property owners who make the program possible.

Kim is often called on to share her story to other Section 8 renters because hers is a tale people can relate to—and one that inspires. Kim starts out by talking about how it feels like to be a single mom with a young son, having to share a cramped apartment with a roommate, and still not having enough money for groceries. But things started to get better when Kim and her son finally got their own apartment

through the Section 8 program.

The next positive step was joining the Commission's Family Self-Sufficiency program, which helped her to get on the right track to economic independence. After taking some courses at SDSU and exploring various career options, Kim eventually landed a full-time, well-paying job at the City of San Diego Water Department as a meter reader. Due soon for a raise, she is now close to no longer needing rental assistance. Her son is now 12, and proud of his mom. "I have a lot to be thankful for," says Kim.

Inspection Notes

Get Your Heater Checked for Free

Even though winter's a long way off, now's a good time — because it's a slow season, appointments are faster and easier — to have your water heater inspected by San Diego Gas & Electric. Just call 800/411-7343 to arrange a free inspection. This will not only help keep your tenants and property safe, but also help you get ready for your next Section 8 inspection. (Did you know that in addition to our annual inspections, we do intermediate ones from time to time — for example, if there is a special circumstance, or when we do the occasional HUD-required "spot inspections"?)



Free Educational Workshops

For handy property management tips and best ways to work with the Section 8 program, sign up for one—or all!—of our next free workshops. Our workshops take place at the San Diego Housing Commission main office, 1625 Newton Ave., San Diego Calif. 92113. For more information or to reserve a space, please call 619/578-7303.

Rent Increase "How-To's"

Wednesday, Sept. 11 and

Wednesday, Nov. 20

2:30–4:30 p.m.

Tips for increasing your rent after the initial lease term.

Preventative Law

Wednesday, Oct. 23

2:30–4:30 p.m.

A representative from the law Offices of Kimbal, Tirey & St. John will address top tenant-property owner legal topics.

New Owners: What to Expect

Wednesday, Dec. 4

2:30 – 4:30 p.m.

Designed for owners new to the Rental Assistance program

SDPD Training Program for Owners

The San Diego Police Department offers a free "Landlord Training Program," designed to promote positive and responsible partnerships between landlords, tenants, and San Diego police. The training covers such topics as:

- Preparing a rental property
- Screening applicants
- Rental agreements
- Active property management
- Problem solving
- Recognizing a narcotic activity in the neighborhood

The San Diego Police Department is committed to controlling crime and can help rental property owners keep up their

property values. If you would like to attend this free training program, please contact the Neighborhood Policing Resource Team at 619/531-1554. The Police Department also offers a "Problem Solving in Rental Communities" class. To sign up, call 619/531-2554.



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-Brophy at 619/578-7680; lyndat@sdhc.org.



Good Neighbors
**San Diego
Housing Commission**

- ◆ 1625 Newton Avenue
- ◆ San Diego, California
- ◆ 92113-1038
- ◆ www.sdhc.net



A state agency authorized by
the City of San Diego