

NEWS FOR OWNERS AND MANAGERS IN THE RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Meet Rental Property Owner Daniel Ognibene

Did you know that over 5,000 rental property owners/managers participate in the Rental Assistance Program in the City of San Diego? Participants include property management firms with numerous rental complexes, owners of single units, and entrepreneurial types—such as Daniel Ognibene—who've invested in the program to supplement their pensions.

tend to be very good about paying their rent on time and following lease agreements because they don't want to lose their assistance. "After a person's been on the waiting list for five years or more, these vouchers are like gold, which creates an incentive for the families to be model tenants," he notes.

In his "previous life," Ognibene worked for General Dynamics for 44 years. These days, even though he says he's "officially retired," he stays busy managing his rental properties. He owns five units (town homes and houses), two of which are currently leased to Section 8 families in Point Loma and Clairemont.

Ognibene also says he's benefited from the periodic trainings the Housing Commission offers rental owners, and cited a recent fair housing seminar. "Fair housing laws are very complicated, and violations can be extremely costly. So it was good to learn, for example, that there are certain things you shouldn't say to [prospective] tenants," says Ognibene. He also finds the Housing Commission's property inspections helpful: "The inspection staff is very thorough. They point out things I would have overlooked or that the tenants never would have brought to my attention, which enables me to avoid delayed maintenance."

When asked why he chose to participate in the voucher program, he says he particularly likes how Section 8 tenants



Rental owner Daniel Ognibene with tenant Celia Jimerson and her children.

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Rent Increase Requests

When requesting a rent increase, please be sure to send a 60-day notice to your tenant as well as the Housing Commission. (We've found that some owners thought notices sent to the Housing Commission were being "cc'd" to the tenant, but that's not the case!)

Once you've sent in your request, you'll get a letter from us to let you know we've received it. Before the end of your 60-day notice period, we'll send you another letter indicating the approved rent amount.

Owner Liaison Has Some Helpers

You may have noticed that in some cases when you leave a message for Rental Assistance Owner Liaison Lynda Brophy your call is returned by someone else, such as a housing supervisor or an inspections specialist. This is because Lynda is temporarily working on some other assignments outside her Owner Liaison duties; so to ensure owner questions or concerns are addressed, other staff members are jumping in to help. But no matter what, when you call 619.578.7680, we'll make sure you're "taken care of."

Tenants Moving? Don't Get Caught in the Middle

Ouch! Not understanding how and when tenants can move can hurt your pocketbook—so we wanted to clarify two new policies. **1)** If your Section 8 tenant wants to move from one of your units to another—or if a voucher holder wants to move from another owner's complex to yours—you'll want to keep the new "once-a-year moves" and "30-day notice" policies in mind so an unauthorized person

does not move into your unit (in which case you would not get the voucher share of the rent).

2) Tenants can only move once in a 12-month period. When eligible tenants do move, they need to give a 30-day notice to both you and the Housing Commission. Importantly, if tenants wish to move into the new unit prior to the end of the 30-day notice—and their lease term is completed—they may do so at their own expense, but we will not pay their portion of the rent for the "crossover" time spent in the new unit prior to the end of the 30 days.



Inspection Notes

"Pre-inspections" on Backburner for Now

You may recall that we had set up a special "pre-inspection" arrangement to help Section 8 landlords and tenants lease up faster these last two years. That program—in which inspection staff went out to view units before tenants even applied—was created to speed up the move-in of voucher holders to your vacant unit. Unfortunately, in the past few months many more units were being pre-inspected than needed, thus overburdening inspection staff and hampering their ability to quickly inspect units for which a Request

for Tenancy Approval agreement had been signed. As a result, we have gone back to our regular (post-tenant selection) inspection process, which works as follows:

- Tenant brings Request for Tenant Approval (RFTA) and lease (after you've signed both) to the Housing Commission, to the attention of their housing assistant.
- Housing Commission calls you to schedule inspection day. (Forgive us if scheduling the inspection takes a week in some cases; we've got some "kinks" in our new computer system that should be worked out soon!)
- Tenant meets inspector (unless you want to) at the rental unit.

Tip for Speedier Inspections

Please note that, in the case of tenants moving from other units, we need them to complete their "recertification" paperwork to do the inspection.

Please help us remind them to do so.
Thanks!



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 or lyndat@sdhc.org.



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