

VOUCHER ADVANTAGE

Spring 2009

News for Owners and Managers in the Rental Assistance Program

Vouchers Serve as Safety Net in Down Economy



Rental owner John Kudela with tenant Dannette.

For rental owner John Kudela, the Rental Assistance Program is a vital business tool, especially in today's unstable economy. He finds peace of mind in knowing that the San Diego Housing Commission's portion of the rent is guaranteed, and that it will increase if the tenant's income goes down.

"That's important during these hard financial times. When non-assisted tenants lose their jobs and can't pay the rent, that puts the landlord in a real bind. You don't want to evict them, but you can't be expected to carry them.

That's why it's easier with Section 8 – because you know the Housing Commission will step in to cover the lost income," said John, who owns 50 rental units in the city of San Diego, most of which are leased to voucher households.

John has also noticed a lower overall turnover among tenants with vouchers. John (shown above with long-term Section 8 tenant Dannette) notes that program participants are less likely to move because their rents always stay affordable, avoiding the need to move due to unexpected financial hardships.

Business Benefits of Leasing to Families with Vouchers

Each year, SDHC pays \$125 million in rent to more than 6,000 rental owners who enjoy a number of benefits, including:

- **Guaranteed Rents by Direct Deposit.** SDHC's rent portion is directly deposited to your bank account on the first of each month.
- **Free Vacancy Listings.** Post your rental vacancy for free, through our new, searchable database: GoSection8.com.
- **Maintenance Inspections.** SDHC property inspections help ensure compliance with health and safety requirements – and alert you to problems.
- **Lower Turnover.** Tenants tend to stay longer, as their rents remain affordable.
- **Tenant Selection.** You retain all the same rights as a landlord when you lease to a voucher household. This includes pre-screening and selecting your tenants.

Apartment Association Resources

Water Conversation Information

The San Diego County Apartment Association (SDCAA) has been working with the City of San Diego during the water shortage crisis to ensure fair water allocation requirements for rental property owners.

For more information on this issue, go to www.sdcaa.com and click on Water Conservation.

Rental Housing EXPO

SDCAA's 35th Annual Rental Housing Education Conference & EXPO will be held Tuesday, May 12, at the San Diego Convention Center. SDHC will be among the hundreds of exhibitors participating in the all-day event.



The largest rental industry event in the county, the EXPO features seminars, refreshments, entertainment, and rows of booths showcasing the products and services of over 180 rental housing industry organizations.

For more information, click on EXPO 2009 at www.sdcaa.com.

Moving Closer to "Going Paperless"



Document Imaging Project Part of Ongoing Efforts to Boost Efficiency and Streamline Processes

The Rental Assistance Department is moving full speed ahead toward the goal of creating "paperless" or electronic caseload records. To date, the agency has scanned and archived over 12,000 hard copy files!

What does this mean for you, the landlord? It means staff will be able to more

quickly and efficiently provide you with information you request, minimizing delays – as it is much easier to access electronic documents than to retrieve physical paper files.

The document imaging project has been a collaborative effort between the Rental Assistance and Information Technology departments. Within the Rental Assistance Department, a dedicated group of Housing Assistants has been piloting the new system while effectively maintaining their regular caseloads. The "go-live" date for the entire department is expected to be July 1, 2009.

Helping Tenants "Get Ahead"

When Kimberly first turned to SDHC for assistance, she was grateful to get much-needed help paying her rent. Little did she know she'd also benefit from other agency resources, such as the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) and Aspire (financial education) programs.

The FSS program helps clients set and achieve career development goals. Aspire helps participants become financially "fit" while saving money for specific goals, such as starting a business or job training.

With help from SDHC, Kimberly carved a path to achieving her dream of becoming a court reporter. The FSS and Aspire programs helped Kimberly create a career development plan, enroll in a trade school, and save for the stenograph machine and software she needed. Kimberly is currently completing an internship in court reporting – her final graduation requirement before taking the state exam and becoming licensed and certified in her field.

For more information about the FSS and Aspire programs, go to www.sdhc.org and click on "Getting Help Getting Ahead."



With help from SDHC, Kimberly is on her way to becoming a court reporter.



New Vouchers for Veterans

SDHC's Rental Assistance Department was recently awarded 105 vouchers from HUD's Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) program. SDHC was one of only eight Public Housing Authorities in the state to receive these special vouchers.

VASH vouchers are designed to provide homeless veterans with secure, permanent and affordable housing along with supportive services through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

Please consider leasing to prospective tenants with VASH vouchers, keeping in mind that the VASH vouchers are as permanent and reliable as "regular" Section 8 vouchers.

Applicants are referred to SDHC by the San Diego VA. For more information, contact SDHC housing supervisor Samuel Beamon, 619.578.7111, samuelb@sdhc.org or San Diego VA Social Work Services supervisor Jessica Brian, LCSW, 619.400.5167.



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