

VOUCHER ADVANTAGE

Winter 2008

News for Owners and Managers in the Rental Assistance Program

When Your Tenant Wants to Add a Household Member



Once you've screened the new tenant, all you need to do is sign and turn in an approval form.

Steps for adding adult members to voucher-assisted households:

Tenant screening (owner's responsibility):

When a tenant wants to add someone to their household, it's up to you – the owner or rental property manager – to accept or deny the request. As with any rental agreement, it's your right and

responsibility to select and screen your tenants.

Tenant submits request to Housing Commission: After getting a verbal "OK" from you, the tenant needs to request permission in writing from the Housing Commission to add the household member.

Owner signs and submits approval form: Staff will mail you an "Owner Approval of Adult Household Member" form. You simply need to sign and mail or fax back the form.

Tenant and Housing Commission next steps: Once your signed approval form is received, staff will mail the tenant a packet to complete (forms regarding assets/income, identification and permission to obtain a conviction record from the police department).

Response from Housing Commission: Within 60 days of receiving the completed package, and the tenant is approved by the Housing Commission, staff will notify you and the tenant by mail. The response letter will include notification of any changes to the tenant rent portion.

Newsletter Gets a Face Lift

With a new year comes a new look and name! The newsletter formerly known as *VIEWpoint* is now called *Voucher Advantage*. The change reflects our renewed focus on helping you use the Rental Assistance program to your best business advantage.

College Student Moves In With Mom

Rental property owner Marianne Allen was happy to approve her tenant's request to add a household member. The tenant, Marguerite Mack, wanted her adult daughter, Ratasha, to move in with her. Ratasha had just been accepted into UCSD and needed to live with Marguerite so she could afford to attend school full-time. And that was fine with Marianne, who'd known Ratasha for years. "All I had to do was sign the form and fax it in," said Marianne.

Upon receiving permission from the Housing Commission, Ratasha moved into her mom's home, a Normal Heights house built in 1925. The house is owned by Marianne – as are the two apartments behind it, which were added in the late 1980s.

Marianne rents out two of the units and lives in one. Marianne says she appreciates how the Rental Assistance program makes good sense for

her financially. Between the rents she collects from her tenants, and the Housing Commission's portion, Marianne "zeros out" her own housing costs.



Property owner Marianne, with tenants Marguerite and Ratasha

Housing Commission President & CEO Retires



Housing Commission President & CEO Elizabeth Morris

After 35 years of dedicated service in the affordable housing arena, San Diego Housing Commission President & CEO Elizabeth (“Betsy”) Morris has retired. She joined the Housing Commission in 1979 shortly after its formation. In the years to follow, she grew the public agency from a fledgling traditional housing authority to a comprehensive, multi-faceted organization that helps more than 80,000 individuals through efforts such as the Rental Assistance Program.

“The San Diego Housing Commission has offered me an extraordinary opportunity to affect the lives of thousands of San Diego families,” says Betsy. “I extend my utmost gratitude to our community partners, including our 6,000 rental property owners for helping us help others.”

Carrol Vaughan, the agency’s Chief Operating Officer, has been appointed Interim President & CEO while a search is conducted for a replacement.

Inspection Connection

Fire Safety Tips

Helping you avoid fire hazards is a top priority of Rental Assistance inspection staff. Use these fire safety tips to help your unit pass inspection – and protect your tenants and property.

Smoke Alarms/Detectors

- Smoke alarms must be properly installed and kept in working condition. Change batteries once a year.
- Smoke alarms should be near bedrooms. If ceiling-mounted, place four inches from the wall. If wall-mounted, install four to twelve inches from the ceiling.
- In newly constructed properties, every bedroom must have a smoke detector.
- Keep smoke alarms at least three feet away from kitchen entryways, bathroom doors (if there’s a tub or shower), heating or cooling systems.
- For hearing-impaired tenants, smoke alarms must have special visual alarm systems. They should be installed in the bedroom occupied by the individual and connected to a smoke alarm outside the bedroom.



Fire Extinguishers

If you choose to have fire extinguishers in your rental units, they must meet city codes and manufacturing standards. Certification must be kept current.

Fire Hazards

Avoid the following dangers: clutter and debris (may block exits, spark or fuel a fire, or prevent fire fighters from doing their job); weeds and long grass (could spark or fuel a fire).

We Can Help Your Tenants “Get Ahead”!

Did you know that the San Diego Housing Commission has resources to help Rental Assistance families succeed in the workplace? Through the agency’s Family Self-Sufficiency Program (FSS), thousands of voucher clients have achieved career goals.

Recent success stories include Rafael, who recently earned his license as a Registered Dental Assistant. Rafael now has a great job in his new field. “It’s a dream come true,” he says.

For more information about the Family Self-Sufficiency Program, go to the Housing Commission’s web page, www.sdhc.org.



Voucher Advantage is published by the Rental Assistance Department as a way to keep rental owners/managers updated on issues and policies regarding our programs. If you have any ideas for future stories – or if you would like extra issues sent to your staff – please contact Communications Specialist Janine Rojas at janiner@sdhc.org.



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