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2017 Landlord Recruitment & Retention Program and Marketing Campaign

Report and Recommended Plan of Action

April 21, 2017

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY HOMELESS TRUST

Respectfully Submitted By:

theMnetwork.com

APPLE TREE PERSPECTIVES, INC.

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Objectives of Landlord Recruitment/Retention Program and Marketing Campaign

Apple Tree Perspectives, Inc. (Apple Tree) and The M Network were engaged by the Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust (the Trust) to create a landlord marketing campaign and program with the objective of recruiting and retaining landlords to more rapidly, efficiently and successfully house homeless individuals and families in Miami-Dade County.

The following report provides our research, findings, proposed strategies and a recommended course of implementation. Our recommendations are based on a significant amount of research conducted over the last several months. We reviewed other CoCs' mitigation and incentive strategies (most commonly referred to as risk mitigation funds or pools) and models of housing location services. Two focus groups were held, a CoC Provider Focus Group with staff engaged in housing location and placement and a Landlord Town Hall meeting/focus group. The in-person gatherings provided poignant, real life testimony regarding what is a functioning and operable, yet disconnected and fractured housing program.

Finally, we reviewed the results of a provider survey, "Connecting People to Housing Solutions through Housing Navigation," distributed by the Trust.

The strategies ultimately recommended in this document provide solutions to consistent themes and challenges shared by stakeholders regarding CoC expectations and deliverables to rapidly house homeless households. The foundational work recommended here will create a more efficient, marketable program with improved outcomes, including but not limited to, an improved reputation for the Trust and its CoC as a successful housing placement program.

Research and Findings

A. Incentives Employed by Other CoCs

Quite a number of CoCs across the country have established Risk Mitigation Funds to assist the CoC in recruiting property owners/managers and maintaining their participation. Apple Tree identified the most common forms of mitigation and incentive strategies employed by the following CoCs: Austin, Central Florida, Denver, Los Angeles County, Portland, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, San Diego and King County (Seattle). All nine CoCs utilize dedicated Housing Locator staff.

All of the CoCs offer a claims-based Risk Mitigation Pool (tenant damages, lost rent due to eviction or abandonment and eviction fees). Five offer a hotline or central point of contact. CoCs have also adopted incentive strategies. For example, most housing assistance programs will not commence rent payment until inspection and lease-up are completed, thus landlords are subject to rent proration. Five CoCs address this concern by offering funds to make the landlord whole for prorated days, while some CoCs offer a holding payment of up to one month to hold a unit. Two CoCs have adopted another strategy to reduce delay by offering expedited HQS or pre-inspections certification that is good for 60 days.

Four CoCs require landlords to enter into an Alternative Screening Agreement in order to access the benefits of risk mitigation and/or incentives. To reduce barriers to tenancy, the CoCs negotiate for alternative or adjusted screening requirements upfront.

A chart of these CoCs mitigation and incentive strategies as well as some examples of policy governing the strategies are attached (*Exhibit A*).

B. Focus Group: Providers' Housing Placement Staff

On November 16, 2016, Apple Tree led a focus group with CoC provider staff who engage in locating, and placing clients into housing. It was a robust discussion, identifying barriers to housing placement and reviewing mitigation and incentive strategies.

Lack of Affordable Housing

The foremost barrier was simply lack of affordable housing in Miami-Dade County, a universally shared opinion. This was followed by frustration with HUD's Fair Market Rate (FMR), which further reduces an already limited pool of affordable housing. Many agencies with long-standing grant agreements feel limited by the amount of rent initially budgeted years ago, which has not kept up with FMR. Providers also strongly voiced concern that existing CoC inventory and rental assistance resources are governed by the Order of Priorities, which privileges those scoring highest on the VI/SPDAT. To address their concerns, the CoC must generate affordable housing inventory for not only chronic individuals with long-term rental assistance, but for those able to manage affordable housing on their own or with the short-term assistance through rapid re-housing. Further,

the CoC must identify other forms of long-term rental assistance for households overwhelmed by market rents.

<u>HAND Program</u>

The next major barrier appears to be systemic to the CoC. Participants reported that the HAND Program has soured landlords' interest in working with the CoC. The most common reason is the high rate of households who do not pay rent after HAND assistance ends, resulting in eviction or unit abandonment. Landlords then incur loss of rent income and the costs associated with eviction and re-leasing. Furthermore, landlords do not know who to reach out to for help with these tenants, or are unaware that the tenants should be receiving housing stability services. Providers are concerned that RRH households do not have enough income when program assistance ends. The providers also stated that the CoC efforts around employment are not sufficient enough to increase households' income. Providers also voiced concern regarding lack of housing stability services and tenancy education sufficient to ensure that lease obligations are met and the household is prepared for program independence.

<u>Property Damage Concerns</u>

Participants reported that landlords also voice concern with potential tenant damage. A number of providers offer double deposit to provide the landlord with "peace of mind, " while others make upfront commitments to make or pay for repair of tenant-caused damage. A number of providers shared their best practices designed to prevent tenant damage or eviction. Such best practices include regular, consistent home visits and client-focused engagement to identify solutions that would assist clients in meeting their lease obligations.

<u>Screening Barriers</u>

The providers listed the screening barriers that prevented tenancy such as eviction, credit and criminal history. They were unaware of the Trust's successful negotiations with tax credit developers to lower screening requirements.

<u>Housing Recruitment and Navigation Programs</u>

A number of providers reported that housing recruitment and navigation is most effective if a business model is employed. This model recognizes landlords' foremost concern is monetary and that they are rarely motivated by "doing good" (also see page 8, "Check or Charity"). Landlords respond to programs that understand their business concerns and offer a professional experience grounded in real estate transactions. A professional real-estate approach should be employed from first engagement with a landlord, throughout the inspection, lease-up and rent start process and in providing program assistance in the event of tenancy concerns. In addition, having one point person to contact is important to landlords as well as open communication with landlords to address system-wide concerns.

<u>Incentives</u>

Finally, the providers identified mitigation and incentive strategies which would be most helpful: a Risk Mitigation Fund or Pool (repairs which exceed deposit amount, lost rent from eviction or abandonment, eviction fees), additional security deposits if necessary, dedicated housing locator and contact staff, possible hotline for emergencies, on-line tool to list and manage available units and reduction in tenancy screening requirements.

A copy of the Report on the Provider Focus Group is attached (Exhibit B).

C. CoC Landlord Town Hall

On February 2, 2017, The M Network hosted a Landlord Town Hall meeting on behalf of The Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust.   The turnout was strong – 14 committed, experienced landlords (LLs) who were willing to share their personal stories of working with providers to house Miami's homeless.   Their feedback is outlined below and is the basis for strategic recommendations outlined in Phases 1 – 3 on pages 12-17.

Top Three Takeaways

1) <u>Landlords have no reference point for what to expect from the program</u>.   One landlord thought that the program was part of Section 8 simply because Housing Coordinators may not have explained the program to him clearly and there are no websites or takeaway documents that can be used as references.   Further, there is a lack of consistency with program names, partner names, or housing coordinator contacts so it feels haphazard and without functioning standards.   Landlords stated that they don't feel they have the support they need to really commit to a partnership or consider growing with the Trust and their partners.   As an example, most of those at the meeting did not know they were supposed to have a go-to person to help them when tenant issues arose.   Three providers cited specific relationships with housing coordinators, but none of the experiences were similar or consistent.

2) <u>Fair market value isn't enough</u> to be competitive. The City often offers more for rent than the county. Landlords noted they could get much more from non-voucher renters which made it hard to come up with a business reason to keep working with Trust providers.

3) <u>All landlords cited issues with operations.</u> This includes duplicative paperwork and a system set up for "one landlord, one house, one tenant."   Landlords with a large inventory of "doors" stated that they needed more streamlined systems to make paperwork less work – one-off forms is time consuming. One LL stated, "It's so labor intensive to house the homeless that it's not worth it."

Also, several LLs cited experiences with tenants who were "approved today and not tomorrow." This frustrating circumstance was echoed by several at the meeting. It's a negative mark on the program because the slowdown translates into loss time and money.

<u>True or False</u>

Landlords were asked to respond True or False to the following four statements, which The M Network understood to be existing selling points for this program:

- LLs benefit from steady and timely rent payments.
  - ➢ Landlords responded that this was MOSTLY TRUE

- Tenants are more likely to remain long term clients compared with market rate tenants.
  - ➢ Landlords responded that this was MOSTLY FALSE

- Tenets are prescreened and supported by case managers who are available to intervene.
  - ➢ Landlords responded that this was FALSE.

- Tenants receive coaching on good tenant practices.
  - ➢ Landlords responded that this was FALSE. "If they do receive such services, it's not evident to us."

Other important comments were that:

- LLs were clear they want and are open to more contact with The Trust. They WANT to be more educated about what the Trust is doing.
- LLs were passionate that more tenant training is necessary.
- We asked each LL if they were in it for "check or charity." All answered "check", but two LLs said that after some time with the program, it also became "charity."
- Several LLs mentioned that Hialeah and Miami Beach have exceptional service and provide best practice models for paying of Section 8 vouchers. They suggested we take steps to understand how their system works and apply best practices to our system.

D. CoCs Housing Recruitment and Navigation Model: Case Study on King County

To be as comprehensive as possible in our research, Apple Tree researched current models of housing navigation services in place or being implemented by other CoCs (most through competitive process). Apple Tree particularly reached out King County (Seattle) Homeless CoC to learn more about its housing location and risk mitigation fund program, cited by US HUD as a best practice model. What we learned surprised us: while considered successful in many ways, King County is implementing a new business-oriented model following re-evaluation of the current program.

King County's Landlord Liaison Program developed as a traditional service program with housing navigators assisting clients with identifying housing, negotiating leases and offering risk mitigation funds for "peace of mind." King County has found that this delivery model is not effective in quickly generating the number of committed housing units in the quantity necessary to meet its placement needs. King County intends to now focus greatest effort towards large property owners and managers to secure units in quantity, while continuing to engage "mom & pop" units.

Echoing our own providers and local landlord feedback, King County found that landlords are motivated solely by financials. It is a "check vs. charity" mentality that was expressed in the Landlord Town Hall meeting led by The M Network. Landlords want three things: no vacancies, consistent rent flow and an absence of tenant-caused damages or disturbances. Housing recruitment and navigation must operate as a business model, offering strategies that address landlords' objectives and concerns, while securing the inventory needed by the CoC.

King County now is defunding the existing program in exchange for funding two well-paid housing 'deal-makers' to establish relationships with the larger rental property owners and managers and secure agreements to provide units based on first referral and with reduced

screening requirements. King County has found it more effective to negotiate reduction in screening requirements upfront, ensuring that clients will be screened in, not out.

King County's housing recruitment and retention program will not provide any direct services to tenants. Providers will be responsible for housing navigation (i.e. accompanying clients in visiting available units, application process, HQS coordination, lease-up and move-in). King County also stressed the importance of a uniform experience for landlords to ensure participation. The County further stressed the need for training. The housing deal-makers will be supported by an educator providing landlord education and trainings related to how the program works, the advantages of participating and how the CoC housing stability services work and provider training directed at how to meet landlord expectation, teaching their clients to be good tenants and how to effectively provide housing stability services.

Over ten years, King County has found that risk mitigation funds are not being drawn upon as much as originally anticipated. The County will still offer the benefit of mitigation funds to provide peace of mind. However, it intends to re-direct a portion of mitigation funds toward incentives to generate housing commitments quickly. Such incentives include offering funds to cover loss of rent due to program pro-rating, holding payments to keep a unit or a sign-up bonus. King County has had a landlord hotline for years; while there has been a very low rate of calls, they intend to maintain the service for peace of mind.

King County's fresh approach aligns closely with experience shared by Miami-Dade County CoC providers and landlords.

E. Provider Housing Navigation Survey

On March 5, 2017, the Trust circulated a survey on housing navigation activities to CoC providers ("Connecting People to Housing Solutions through Housing Navigation" survey). Twelve responses were received. Barriers to housing, whether rapid re-housing or permanent supported housing were the same as identified during in the Provider Workshop. The survey captured the following information:

- 62% had dedicated housing navigators and/or housing specialists. Of these, all the positions were titled Housing Specialist with one agency having both a Housing Navigator and Housing Specialists.

- The functions of such staff in the order of greatest response was:
    - Accompanies clients on unit site visits (91%)
    - Conducts the VI-SPDAT (82%)
    - Communicates with property owners/managers to identify units (82%)
    - Actively recruits landlords (82%)

    - Works with homeless clients to determine the appropriate type of housing (82%)
    - Negotiates with landlords on behalf of their clients (82%)
    - Assist clients with documentation necessary to apply for housing (64%)
    - Works with clients to obtain furnishings (64%)
    - Conducts home visits after housing placement (55%)

- o Checks in regularly after housing secured to address any barriers that may arise (55%)
  - o Assists clients with education and employment and education supports (55%)
  - o Utilizes a housing choice tool or assessment to determine client's housing needs (27%)

- Respondents develop new landlord leads through:
  - o Working from existing landlord contacts (42%)
  - o Cold calls (25%)
  - o Internet searches; on-street "rent" signage; and property owner/manager, realtor or realtor association engagement (8% respectively)
  - o Fifty-four percent (54%) maintained their own landlord databases in the form of excel spreadsheets or contact list.
  - o Only 15% with databases refresh or enhance their listings regularly/monthly. 15% reported as needed and 8% reported sparingly or as necessary or constantly looking for new units, respectively.

- The three top tools for advocating housing access for clients :
  - o Assurances of continued visits/aftercare for clients (50%)
  - o Explanation of continuing subsidy (17%)
  - o Character and advocacy letters from case managers (17%)

- The most important resources to improve housing placement and retention were:
  - o Increased landlord participation (92%)
  - o Incentives such as those found in Risk Mitigation Funds. (83%)
  - o Sharing of landlord leads among providers (50%)
  - o Centralized landlord helpline (42%)
  - o Uniform information materials to explain program (33%)

F. Research Findings – Key Features for Effectiveness

Based on our collective research and professional experience, the following are the <u>key features</u> necessary for effective landlord recruitment and retention that is critical to the CoC's ability to achieve its housing placement goals:

- <u>Approach housing as a business,</u> employing real estate and housing expertise, coupled with the professionalism expected within the rental housing industry and based on a business model to recruit and maintain participation of property owners and property managers.

- Providers and their program staff exhibit a <u>clear understanding</u> of landlord motivations, needs and expectations and the respective roles of the landlord, housing stability and case management staff and the clients.

- <u>Skilled housing locator "deal-makers"</u> with real estate experience, charged with securing commitments of rental units with first referral and upfront agreement to reduce screening requirements and focused on larger property owners/managers who have not participated in government-funded housing development programs (i.e. tax credits or HUD capital funding).

- <u>Uniformity in Presentation and Delivery</u>. CoC rental assistance presents as an organized, systematically consistent and effective program regardless of provider or funding source. Landlords as well as clients should have the same experience with CoC rental subsidy, whether long-term or short-term, regardless as to who is serving the client. There should be uniform rental assistance policies, procedures and forms as well as uniform application of best practices for housing navigation, transition and stability services. This should apply from beginning to end (i.e. landlord recruitment, housing location and navigation, streamlined eligibility and income verification and lease-up, and housing transition and stability services). Uniformity should also be reflected in marketing and education materials.

- <u>Landlord peace of mind strategies</u> are employed. This includes mitigation and incentive strategies to address landlord concerns and encourage their participation.

- <u>The CoC utilizes an exclusive rental listing database</u> of current or future units available for rent.

- Clients receive <u>tenancy readiness</u> <u>training.</u>

- <u>Provider staff trained</u> on preparing clients to be good tenants, supporting clients' housing stability planning and strengthening clients' problem-solving skills.

- <u>Effective housing navigation, transitioning and stability services</u> is provided to clients before and after placement to improve their rate of independence and success.

Recommended Course of Action

Our research has amplified critical issues, while providing excellent insight that has informed our recommendations below. We believe that our proposed strategies will improve program efficiency and the CoC's reputation in the rental market.

Net-net, priority number one is to help get the proverbial "house" in order before promoting the program publicly. We recommend three phases: (1) establishing the programmatic foundation for landlord recruitment and retention: (2) create landlord-directed recruitment and retention tools; and (3) launch an aggressive landlord recruitment campaign.

Phase 1: Establish Foundation for Landlord Recruitment and Retention

Other CoCs have emphasized the value of centralized CoC housing locator "deal makers," as well as a uniform front to the rental market. That said, due to budget constraints and hopes of utilizing current provider capacity, we have scaled back from a more robust centralized approach to one of coordination and training. The Trust may consider a more centralized "real estate" office in the future.

With that, please see our recommendations for Phase 1.

1. **Brand and Launch a CoC Housing Recruitment, Retention and Navigation Program**

   To project a single uniform CoC face to the real estate community and promote consistent delivery regardless of CoC provider, landlord recruitment, retention and navigation activities should be standardized and branded under one CoC program name, for example, REALL, that stands for "Real Estate and Landlord Liaison." This will improve recognition of our CoC, encourage cohesiveness in work partnerships, facilitate marketing and increase landlord interest. The branding and launch would come with a new program logo, business cards and a website landing page. Providers' housing locators would then fall under program name and could refer to themselves by provider campus: REALL Chapman, REALL Camillus House, REALL Lotus, etc.

2. **Lead Coordinator for CoC Housing Recruitment and Retention Activities**

   Allocate funding for a Lead Coordinator for all CoC Housing Recruitment and Retention (R&R) activities conducted by CoC providers (Housing R&R Coordinator). This Coordinator would:

   (a) conduct deal-making on behalf of the Trust to secure housing units under property owner agreements;

   (b) operate the Housing Locator and Navigation Certification Program to ensure professionalism and uniformity in providers' recruitment of and navigation with property owners and managers (see program description below);

   (c) monitor and report on whether tenancy readiness and housing stability support is being uniformly delivered and effective within the CoC;

(d) support the Trust in the administration of the Risk Mitigation Fund;

(e) manage the CoC's on-line exclusive listing tool (see below), and;

(f) serve as participating landlords' CoC point of contact on behalf of the Trust. It is strongly recommended that this person have a real estate background.

This position could be funded through competitive award of funds rather than creating a new Trust staff position.

3. **Housing Locator and Navigation Certification Program**

To ensure uniformity and effectiveness in landlord recruitment and retention across the CoC, we recommend a formal and mandatory Housing Locator and Navigation Certification Program. The Certification Program would be implemented and run by the Housing R&R Coordinator. The Coordinator will be responsible for developing the curriculum in consultation with the Homeless Trust, the most successful CoC Housing Coordinators/Locators, Apple Tree and Housing Innovations. The curriculum must be designed to standardize expectations and activities by all Housing Locators (HL).

The training should inspire a strong understanding of the HL's role in the reputation and operations of the CoC and its housing programs. Specifically, the training should cover:

- The CoC's housing goals and outcome measures and the HLs' role in achieving such goals and outcomes.
- Explanation of all CoC HLs' responsibilities, deliverables and performance expectations.
- The respective roles and responsibilities of landlords, providers and clients to ensure that households remain housing-stable.
- Expectations of HLs – from proper business protocol to sharing information and resources among all HLs to improve outcomes of the entire system.
- Benefits of the Risk Mitigation Fund and policies and procedures governing claims.
- Use of the CoC exclusive listing tool.
- Marketing the benefits of landlord participation in the CoC, how to use the CoC's marketing tools and how to address landlord concerns during recruitment.
- Negotiating property owner agreements, including reduction of screening barriers, and enrolling owners in the CoC exclusive listing tool to quality for Mitigation Fund benefits.
- Competency in tenant readiness and housing stabilization services (as described below).
- Landlord communication protocols.
- Effectively resolving tenant and program concerns reported by landlords after housing placement.

Additionally, throughout the year, when areas of weakness in the system are discovered, peer trainings can be held to address them. The trainer will share points related to their success in the particular area of weakness so that the entire HL system can learn from them. These would be on an as-needed basis.

The certification program is designed to ensure that uniform standards, best practices and program policies and procedures are employed system wide so that the CoC may achieve

its housing placement and stability goals. It is recommended that provider staff certification be incorporated into contractual obligations. It is further recommended that individual staff who are unable to conform with such standards, employ best practices and perform in accordance with policies and procedures lose their certification. Loss of certification would potentially impact the provider's good standing with the Trust. In such a situation, the Homeless Trust would recommend that another provider take over the responsibilities of the "failed" provider until the under-performing person can be replaced.

4. **Risk Mitigation Fund**

It is proposed that a claim-based Risk Mitigation Fund be implemented, providing payment for tenant-caused damages as well as eviction fees and lost rent due to the eviction. Policies governing the Fund should be modeled on those of other CoCs.

As many CoCs have found that actual pay-outs have not been as great as initially projected, the Trust Board may consider empowering Trust staff to redirect some mitigation funds toward incentive strategies if staff determines that it would generate greater number of units for the CoC. Such incentives could include providing funds to cover pro-rated days, holding payments to keep a unit or possibly a gratitude bonus.

Most important to note, and created as a means to encourage use of the LL listing tool (see number 8, page 15), access to these Fund benefits should be limited to parties who enter into an agreement to commit units through first referral to the CoC, list available units in the CoC exclusive listing system and honor a negotiated reduction in screening requirements

5. **Landlord Hotline & Points of Contact**

Landlords must have a point person whom they know will address their tenant and/or program concerns. A landlord should also have access to a resource in the event that there is crisis with a tenant after hours.

The following policy is suggested: The first point of contact for a tenant-related concern is the provider, who must respond to a landlord call the same business day (and immediately if a crisis situation). The CoC Housing R&R Lead Coordinator will be the designated point person on behalf of the CoC, responsible for addressing (a) concerns related to rental assistance administration (i.e. late subsidy payments) and (b) tenant concerns which are not addressed promptly or satisfactorily by the provider. The landlord also should have a contact for crisis intervention at the ready should a crisis occur after office hours or on a weekend. The provider, either affiliated with a crisis intervention service or through partnership, must provide the landlord with the service's contact information during lease-up.

6. **Streamlined Lease-up Process and Rental Assistance Delivery**

Lease-up should be streamlined based on the cities of Hialeah and Miami Beach's Section 8 Voucher processes. Lease-up entails lease negotiation, HQS inspection and comparable rent determination, execution of lease and program documents and commencement of rent,

coupled with the program's household income verification process to determine household share of the rent. Furthermore, uniform policies and procedures should be implemented to govern CoC rental assistance regardless of funding source. Development of such policies and procedures is currently underway with the assistance of Apple Tree.

7. **Tenancy Readiness and Post-Placement Support**

The CoC must provide tenant readiness services along with housing stability planning support pre- and post-placement. In general, the clients must be provided: (a) education on tenancy obligations, (b) housing stability planning support and (c) assistance with learning how to problem-solve to meet tenant obligations.

The CoC should adopt a single housing readiness curriculum that requires certification at the agency-level (for example, the Ready to Rent curriculum http://www.readytorent.org/index.html).

In addition, we recommend system-wide adoption of Critical Time Intervention (CTI), an empirically supported, time-limited case management model to prepare persons for housing and stabilize them once housed (see attached *Exhibit C*). The CTI model can be applied to both PSH and RRH. CTI encompasses housing first practices and builds on strength-based client engagement and support. Housing Innovations has recently provided a two-day training on CTI to CoC front-line workers. Housing Innovations has provided housing assessment, tenancy readiness and housing plan tools, which may be adopted by the CoC for system-wide use.

8. **Landlord Registration/Listing Tool**

In order to access the benefits of the Risk Mitigation Fund and CoC housing stability support, a property owner would agree to offer units exclusively to the CoC for a period of time along with agreement upfront to reduce screening requirements.

The Trust should adopt the use of an on-line listing tool that is easy for landlords to use, maintains fresh, real-time listings and makes participating landlords' listings exclusive to the CoC. To date, the CoC has taken advantage of the online Socialserve listing service, offered throughout Florida with state funding. However, all Socialserve listings are publicly available. Socialserve has now implemented a mechanism allowing exclusive control over listings generated by a specific housing initiative or program such as the one we propose here. There is a reasonable fee for exclusive listing.

9. **Landlord Program Website**

A Landlord Program site accessible through the Trust's website should be created to explain all aspects and benefits of landlord participation, support and reimbursement, including descriptions of program benefits (risk mitigation funds, gratitude payments, security deposits, continuity bonuses, rental guarantee funds, etc., depending on what is applicable.) The site also would host a direct link to the landlord registration and listing tool. Finally, the site will be replete with FAQs, form of Commitment Agreement, rental assistance program forms, and risk mitigation fund claim forms.
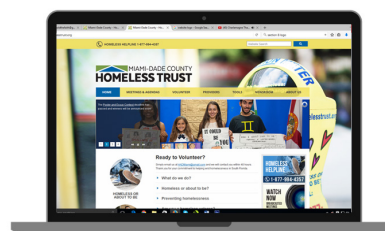
Phase 2: Create Landlord-Directed Recruitment and Retention Tools

Providing effective and useful content to landlords will go a long way in creating a sense that they are part of an organized, systematic, and effective program in which they can have confidence, and perhaps, even recommend to a friend. Therefore, as we are gearing up for the immediate action items described on earlier pages, we recommend also creating additional soft marketing tools that create content and opportunities for meaningful face-to-face interactions.

1. **Quick Reference Guides**

    Create a branded hard copy reference guide with phone numbers and website addresses for use by all current landlords. Provide program definitions so there is clarity between CoC, Section 8, and other voucher programs. This is a tool recommended by LLs at the Town Hall meeting.

2. **Landlord Advisory Committee**

    Launch a Landlord Advisory Committee by tapping into the landlords that attended the Town Hall meeting and agreed to provide insight and support to the Homeless Trust. The first committee meeting would also act as a Focus Group on this newly formed plan, as well as a place to get feedback on marketing materials. The committee could have meetings at six-month intervals to mine for new ideas and hear what the word on the street is so we can make adjustments as quick as possible, ensuring the program continues to improve.

3. **Town Hall Meetings**

    Host informational meetings where landlords learn about policies, procedures, legal rights, ask questions, and hear success story testimonials. This is a tactic highly recommended by LLs who attended the Town Hall meeting in January. Feedback is that these meetings are well attended when hosted by Section 8, and are essentially the best way to communicate with LLs.

4. **Sponsorships**

    Sponsor events with well-respected organizations like South East Florida Apartment Association. SEFAA is ready and willing to work with us to connect us with their member landlords who would see business value in partnering with the Trust and listing their units. Team would explore vibrant partnership positions and programs to maximize communications with potential large and mid-sized LLs.

5. **Success Story Repository**

    Collect and communicate success stories focused rekindled housing program and small successes. Stories can be used for marketing purposes and/or PR outreach.

Phase 3 – Launch Aggressive Marketing Effort

It is the opinion of this team that aggressive marketing initiatives should only occur once systemic issues are addressed and the foundation and tools for the landlord recruitment and retention are in place. A great marketing campaign for a mediocre product is worse than no marketing campaign at all. You only get one shot at engaging people so the promises we make must exceed expectations. Therefore, longer term traditional marketing tactics should be considered when Phase 1 and 2 are established and successful.

Timeline

<u>April</u>

- Present Report and Recommendations to the Services Development Committee on April 25th.

<u>May</u>

Upon approval of SDC:

- Initiate Branding of Housing Retention and Recruitment Program
    - Create new logo and design for program, as well as tools needed for everyday communication needs (PPT, letterhead, etc.)
    - Create content for program website (linked with HT website)
    - Prepare reference guide
- Establish and schedule a Landlord Advisory Committee Meeting
- Prepare RFP for Housing Recruitment & Retention (R&R) Coordinator
- Trust Board Adoption of recommendations and approval of RFP
- CoC-Wide Rent Assistance Program policies and procedures in place
- Make Sponsorship Recommendations
- Host Advisory Committee Meeting/Focus Group Members on Website and Marketing Tools

<u>June</u>

- Release RFP for Housing R&R Coordinator
- Establish Risk Mitigation Fund Policies and Procedures
- Implement CoC Exclusive Listing Tool
- Provider Training on Rent Assistance Policies and Procedures
- Additional CTI Training for Providers
- Determine Curriculum Needs for Certification Program
- Soft Launch of REALL Website Landing Page
- Schedule/host first Town Hall meeting to introduce new programs offered
- Identify PR Opportunities to promote the successes the newly formed program is having

<u>July</u>

- Selection and Contracting of R&R Coordinator
- Preparation of Certification Program Curriculum
- Determine Timeline for Materials Creation and Dates for Trainings

<u>August</u>

- Certification Trainings commence
- Consider online targeted social marketing options and/or targeted trade publication ads

Budgets

Operations

Risk Mitigation Fund

$100,000

CoC Exclusive Listing Tool
(Cost based on Socialserve proposal for use of its exclusive listing tool)

Year One $5,415

		Cost
Restricted Search Portal Set-up and Project Management	Build Restricted Search Group and Secure User Portal for Homeless Trust. Deploy implementation plan, including timeline and deliverables needed to launch restricted portal.	$1,795 (One-time fee)
Embed Housing Locator and Restricted Portal into HomelessTrust.org	Build custom skinned locator to match look and feel of HomelessTrust.org; seamlessly embedded into existing design. Customize landlord benefits and listing form to coincide with embedded design.	$1,620 (One-time fee)
Caseworker and Agency Account Management	Set-up agency/caseworker search accounts, provide caseworker login credentials, individual and group user trainings, gather and track user confidentiality agreements (if required).	$800
Annual Maintenance Fee	Software and embedded locator maintenance; restricted portal system updates.	$1,200
Year One Total:		**$5,415**

Year Two (Annual Cost) $2,400

		Cost
Annual Maintenance Fee	Software and embedded locator maintenance; restricted portal system updates.	$1,260
Training, User Access and Support	Ongoing and remote individual user trainings, set-up and issue agency/approve caseworker login credentials, gather and track user confidentiality agreements (if required).	$1,200
Year Two Total:		**$2,400**

Housing R&R Coordinator

TBD via competitive process

Development of Housing R&R Coordinator RFP and Risk Mitigation Polices & Procedures

Funded by balance remaining under Apple Tree's Landlord Campaign contract and remainder under Apple Tree's Technical Assistance Contract.

Development of Rental Assistance P&P and Training

Funded under Apple Tree's Technical Assistance Contract.

Marketing

Deliverables

Branding of the REALL department

Logo, business cards, letterhead, PPTs, call to action ad – generic for use on multiple platforms as needed (two versions created for input; revisions to one design.)

WEBSITE

Design landing site that is four to five pages, deep, linked to HT website and contains all needed forms; copy for site, creation of reference guide to be housed on site (as well as hard copy), and liaison with partners at Miami-Dade County to create the site and launch with expediency.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Management of advisory committee and its meetings, location, food, agenda.

TOWN HALL MTG

Management of Town Hall meeting, coordination, location, food, agenda, liaison with partners to create agenda.

SPONSORSHIP

Research and meetings with possible sponsoring associations and partners. Recommending wise spend of dollars against expected returns.

ATTENDING LANDLORD PROMOTIONAL MEETINGS/SPONSORSHIP PROGRAMS

Attending events to promote REALL, the overall program and discuss how LLs can get involved.

Subtotal Fees: $31,462.50 (dollars already in approved budget.)

OOP Costs

- Business Cards: Up to $1500
- Table Top setup for sponsorships /banner – Up to $2,000
- Printed reference guides / magnets / brochures – Up to $3,500
- Stock photos: $250
- Food for Town Hall meeting/Committee meeting: Up to $750
- Sponsorships: Up to $4,000
- Online ad placement: $5,000
- Misc.: $339.50 (mileage, delivery fees, etc.)

Subtotal OOPs: $19,739.50

GRAND TOTAL FOR MARKETING: $51,202.00*

*These are not new dollars being requested rather the above is funded by the balance remaining under The M Network 2016-2017 Landlord Marketing contract.

EXHIBITS

CoCs Landlord Incentive Strategies

	Austin*	Central Florida CoC	Denver Region	Los Angeles County	Portland	Santa Barbara	Santa Clara	San Diego	Seattle (King Cty)	# of CoCs
TENANT POOL										
Target Population	Vet	CH/Vet	CH/Vet	Vet/All CoC	Vet	Vet	Vet	Vet	Vet	
INCENTIVES										
Risk Mitigation Pool (Damages; Lost rent, Eviction fees)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	9
Dedicated Housing Locator Staff	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	9
Helpline (Some are 24-Hour Hotline)			X	X	X	X			X	5
Holding Payments (up to one month's rent to hold unit or to pay for pro-rated lost rent days due to delay in move-in and rent payment start date)	X	X	X	X			X			5
Online Listing Tool	X		X	Social Serve (public listing)				Social Serve (public listing)		4
Alternative Screening Form/Agt	X		X			X			X	4
Security Deposits/Move-In Assistance (most reference other sources for deposits, i.e. RA program)				X			X	X		3
Leasing Bonus (Gratitude Payment)			X				X	X		3
Expedited HQS or Pre-Inspections Certification Good for 60 Days				X				X		2
Continuity Bonus (unit rented to new homeless tenant)							X			1

*Incentives offered through Austin's Veteran OneKeyATX (One Key At a Time) landlord campaign & Housing Our Heroes Mitigation Fund. Austin met functional zero in August 2016 and has now shut this campaign down. It is establishing the Re-House Austin Fund to support housing homeless families, youth and chronic homeless.

EXHIBIT A

Landlord Incentives and Samples of Policy

Risk Mitigation Pool (Damages; Lost rent, Eviction fees)

Financial assistance if tenant breaks lease prematurely, falls behind in rent, or causes damage not covered by security deposit.

Samples of policy:

- Damage claim payment not to exceed the maximum amount of $2000 minus the security deposit paid for the unit. Any amount paid to the owner by the tenant for damages must be reimbursed to the Housing Authority from the owner.

- Damage claims up to $300 if certain criteria met, otherwise claims up to $1,000 will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

- Limiting damages incentive to the first two years of the tenant's occupancy.

- Some communities offer funds to make minor repairs to permit a passing HQS inspection.

Dedicated Housing Locator Staff

- See Florida Housing Coalition's sample job description *(Landlord Collaboration Guidebook: Working with Landlords to Help Households Move Out of Homelessness)*

Helpline (Some are 24-Hour Hotline)

- A hotline specifically for landlords to request assistance with a tenant matter or mediation with the tenant.

Holding Payments

- Up to one month's rent to hold unit or to pay for pro-rated lost rent days due to delay in move-in and/or rent payment start date.

Alternative Screening

- Denver: requires landlords interested in offering housing in exchange for incentives to complete a "Risk Appetite" survey to regarding screening requirements.

- Austin: Landlord recruitment campaign to end veteran homelessness required interested landlords to complete an "Alternative Screening" form and submit it with its listing(s) via online listing tool.

- Seattle: Adopted same screening form as Austin with slight differences in recommendation relaxation of certain criteria. The Screening Agreement is a requirement to access landlord incentives.

Leasing Bonus (Gratitude Payment) & Continuity Bonus

- Leasing Bonus: An upfront bonus upon leasing (San Diego offers $500 for the first unit and $250 for each unit after that).

- Continuity Bonus: A bonus if the landlord re-rents a unit to a homeless household in the event that a previously placed homeless client leaves the unit.

EXHIBIT B

Apple Tree Perspectives Report on

November 2016 Miami-Dade CoC Landlord Recruitment and Retention Strategies and Marketing

Providers Workshop

On November 18, 2016, twenty-three (23) staff persons representing thirteen (13) CoC providers participated in a workshop to review barriers to placing their clients (participants) in affordable rental market housing, recruiting landlords and maintaining landlord relationships after tenancy occurs. The following barriers and concerns were identified as well action steps that may be taken to address them.

A. BARRIERS AND CONCERNS

1. Private Affordable Housing Market

    - *Limited Supply:* Insufficient supply of affordable housing, particularly for extremely low-income households (whether a fixed or earned income household).

2. CoC Policies and Grant Issues

    - *Order of Priorities and Resource Allocation*: CoC housing resources are driven by the Trust Order of Priorities and HUD policy. These policies place priority for placement on the most vulnerable Chronic Homeless. Greater CoC housing resources are directed at permanent supportive housing restricted to persons with disability. Less housing resource is available for non-disabled or less vulnerable households.

    - *Frozen PSH Scattered-Site Budgets*: CoC grant award amounts for scattered-site rental assistance are static, based on budgets submitted at time of initial application. Such awards cannot keep up with rent increases in the local housing market or HUD FMR.

    - *HUD FMR*: HUD's published FMRs do not reflect local housing market rents and place a further barrier in accessing affordable housing that is available.

    - *Non-Prioritized Sub-Populations Requiring Immediate Placement*: Certain sub-populations need immediate placement and are either not eligible for housing assistance or subject to the order of priorities and waiting list if disabled (domestic violence and court diversion).

3. HAND's Negative Impact on Landlord Participation

- *Landlord Experience to Date:* Landlords and property managers who used to willingly work with PSH providers have developed an aversion to CoC participants due to experience with HAND. While PSH provides guaranteed rent subsidy and on-going support, HAND RRH offers short-term rent assistance and nominal support. After the short-term assistance ends, tenants are unable to handle the full rent amount or unwilling to do so. Landlords then must evict. There also is little oversight or preventative efforts regarding tenant damage to unit.

4. Client as Tenant Obstacles:

- *Insufficient Income:* No to very little earned income to meet rent obligations. CoC efforts are not robust enough to increase households' income.

- *Lack of Personal Responsibility:*

  o Concerns regarding participants' acceptance or, or ability to assume, personal responsibility necessary to maintain housing. Participants unable to make rent or maintain the housing unit.
  o Better understanding how mental health issues may impact participants' behavior, including post-traumatic stress disorder is warranted.

5. Landlord Concerns

- *Government Programs:* Resistance to taking a government subsidy due to delays with inspections and start of rent payments

- *Participants as Poor Tenants:*
  o Participant will not be able to make rent payment
  o Criminal history.
  o Poor or no credit history
  o Concerns with damages (some providers offer extra security deposit or damage payment to place or keep a participant in the unit).
  o Landlord fear of participant's behavior toward staff and/or tenants; disruptive behavior.

B. ACTION STEPS

1. Educate Providers on Trust Efforts to Expand Dedicated Housing and Reduce Screening Barriers Through Referral Agreements

- *Provider Education:*

  o Trust efforts to generate access to mainstream affordable housing stock, including multi-family and Public Housing units targeting less vulnerable, non-CH as well as Section 8 vouchers.

  o The property owners/managers who have agreed to lower screening barriers as well as the screening terms between each one and the Trust (MOAs).

- *Consistent Application of Reduced Barrier MOA Terms*: Providers should ensure that owners/managers are consistently applying specific MOU terms to reduce barriers to their units, not just the properties and/or units subject to Trust MOAs under the MOAs. Also, providers can use these agreements to convince other owners/managers to agree to same terms when placing participants.

2. Address Programmatic Concerns with Rapid Re-Housing and Adverse Impact on Landlords

   - Review rapid re-housing program policies and procedures, client support efforts, housing stability outcomes and landlord retention for each program (HAND, Carrfour and Lotus House).

3. Improve Household Tenant Readiness

   - Improve CoC programmatic effort to increase households' earned income.

   - Address resistance to personal responsibility (identify underlying issues; possibility of mental health issues/PTSD).

   - Provide tenant education/counseling on tenancy obligations and responsibilities and expectations.

   - Ensure CoC program staff are trained and using client-driven engagement and trauma informed practices. Trust and open communication is necessary to surface and address issues affecting housing stability.

4. Implement Best Practices in Programming and Landlord Retention

   - Adopt best practices identified by high performing programs across the MD CoC system:

     o Dedicated Housing Specialists/Navigators focused on housing placement and landlord relations, independent of case management responsibilities.

     o Quarterly home visits.

     o More frequent housing inspections to ensure property owners make repairs and to avoid tenant damages or poor housekeeping.

     o Negotiating/talking points effective with landlords.

   - The Trust must maintain open dialogue with property owners/management companies to address system-wide concerns.

5. Adopt Landlord Incentive Strategies

    Providers indicated the following incentives would be worth exploring:

    - Risk Mitigation Pool
      Pool offers landlord reimbursement for repair costs beyond security deposit amount; lost rent in event that the participant breaks lease, eviction fees. The pool would have caps on funds available to a landlord.

    - Double Deposit Offer
      Some providers have found that offering an additional security deposit entices landlord to accept participant.

    - Dedicated Housing Locator and Contact Staff
      Providers should have dedicated housing locator/landlord contact staff, whose focus is on generating housing units, cultivating and maintaining landlord relationships and serve as first contact in event of participant tenancy issues.

    - Hotline for Emergencies After Office Hours
      Explore use of existing homeless helpline for this purpose.

    - Online Listing Tool
      An online listing tool, which is brief and available in mobile, would be valuable. Providers may maintain their own contacts, however, if they come across an available unit immediately available, but cannot use it for a client, they can list it for other providers to access. Also, willing landlords can be directed to listing tool during recruitment campaigns or by providers.

    - Reduction in Screening
      Access to landlord incentives would require some form of agreement to reduce barriers to tenancy.

6. Marketing Ideas

    - Utilize MOA partners to provide testimonials in support of working with the CoC.