

JOHS Provider Conference

June 6, 2025

Notes from Session: Improving Case Manager Housing Search: The Community Hub Training

Presenters: June Kissel (Sp?) (Housing Connector)

Moderators:

Notetaker: Alexa Smith-Rommel

Note: Q&A was ongoing for this session so I haven't split notes into Session // Q&A.

-Main Points from Session Overview/Presentation (high level; detail not required):

Context

- Barriers to clients: Affordability, credit scores, criminal barriers, property debt, finances, rental history, past evictions. Housing connector is addressing these by centralizing all units in MultCo who agree to partner with Housing Connector and thus reduce their screening criteria. One-stop shop of 485+ units with this reduced criteria. This program is "one size fits most", not all.
- The Connector is intended to reduce burden for frontline workers, prevent situations where clients get excited for housing that is actually inaccessible to them, and allow workers to dedicate their time to clients more efficiently.
- Objective of the training: Get folks access to the hub.
- Connector provides \$5k damage mitigation; emergency rental assistance; customer service for challenges ("stability team"). Property partner provides reduced screening criteria. Community partner would provide retention support to clients in collaboration with stability team.
- Reduced criteria has a range. For ex:
 - Accept any credit score/waive history
 - Accept past debt under \$3k
 - Less verifiable income
 - Waive proof of history
 - Accept some eviction history
 - Criminal history is case-by-case

- Accountability – relationship between community partner and Housing Connector is key as HC acts as an intermediary to get issues resolved with property managers.
- Reach – priority at the moment is tri-county. Rural is next, but currently honing in on counties and also balancing funding limitations.
- Limitations – criminal is case by case depending on the property and Housing Connector is an important ally in this. Many clients are early in their recovery and have felonies within the last 7 years (typical bar) so again, communication with HC is important to try to problem-solve.
- Instability is widely defined: unsafe, doubling up, concerned about or cannot afford rent currently or in the immediate term.
- Tool: There is a checklist for workers to use (see PPT file).
- Some barriers that may not be flexible: excessive housing debt that is in their name exclusively (\$3k+).
- The hub is a space where workers can keep track of clients and create documents such as renter profiles, letters of supports, and move-in forms.
- NEXT STEPS - they hold feedback sessions and open house events for case managers.

Tool

- ***Renter profile -> Unit search w/ Community Hub -> Unit Viewing -> Housing application with Letter of Support -> Move In Form.***
- Renter Profile: First ensure there is an ROI; then form is fairly standard and asks about barriers/needs. Letter of Support is essential because without it, property will run a regular background check.
- Best to use on desktop computer but they are working on mobile.
- Unit Match: Can scroll through all clients signed up and can filter by client, see what units fit their criteria, and then see granular information about the criteria that the properties are or aren't waiving. Shares property contact information. Can then print out a list of potential units for viewing.
- Unit viewing: Strongly encouraged! Better for participant, avoids future issues, and builds relationship with property manager.
- Housing app includes 1) Letter of Support from Housing Connector, 2) Subsidy Letters/Promissory notes (include utilities). Renter profile will auto generate letter of support. Give 10 business days before Housing Connector starts following up directly with the property manager.
- Move In Form ensures client receives support services; must be submitted within 30 days. Includes move in date and rent \$.

Housing Stability Team

- Quarterly stability trainings are available on website related to engagement with housing stability team at Housing Connector.
- Goal: ensure people are housed for 2 years. Not case management, but offering communication safety net. Mediator between property and case workers.
- Reach out to this team if challenges arise for tenants. For ex - maintenance requests taking a long time, challenges impacting stability in housing
- This team holds emergency rental assistance support.
- Responsibility of worker is to respond to stability team when a ticket is opened, indicating there is a problem with the property management (late rent, etc). Can then help problem-solve, including emergency rental assistance if absolutely needed.

Questions/Answers (summarization):

- Is RRH a de-qualifier? A: No! Clients not in the priority pool for RRH who need immediate re-housing are absolutely qualified and should pursue this tool/resource.
- What about those just released from prison? Currently, no but talking to the Transformative Justice Coalition of Oregon.
- Technically those who are actively in housing but might be experiencing a change in need do not qualify.
- Latinx friendly? Working with Latino Network and trying to get resources translated to Spanish.
- Tenant's rights? Good relationship with fair housing but no attorneys on staff.

-Main Discussion Points not captured above:

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-Takeaways or Follow-Ups for JOHS (expectations/priorities/recommendations/etc):

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