

Improving landlord retention and recruitment for the Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP) requires a comprehensive strategy



Across America, more than 5 million people in 2.2 million low- to moderate-income households rely on the Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP) to obtain affordable housing assistance. However, the HCVP may be at a critical turning point in its history. In recent years, a renewed focus on voucher mobility has risen, due to studies from Raj Chetty and others on how moving to opportunity areas impacts families with children. HUD is working to better optimize the HCVP to not only provide economic relief for low- to moderate-income households, but also use its vouchers to help families with children move to neighborhoods proven to provide better outcomes in terms of health, education and lifetime earnings.

At the same time, relationships between housing authorities and private landlords have been on the decline in recent years. HUD estimates that the voucher program lost 80,000 HCVP landlords between 2009 and 2016. In 2018, HUD formed a landlord task force to address the loss of these indispensable partners. Surveys of landlords who have left the program reveal some key challenges:

- Administrative burdens
- Complicated Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspection processes
- Poor landlord/tenant relationships
- Fair market rents (FMRs) that lag behind rapidly changing markets

Facing tight budgets and limited resources, HCVP executives must be proactive about recruiting and retaining landlords. Housing authorities must turn the tide of landlords opting out of the program and recruit new landlords within their jurisdictions, especially in opportunity areas—neighborhoods that provide the opportunity for children in HCV households to attend higher-quality schools and live in safer neighborhoods.

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LANDLORD RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION REQUIRES A FOCUSED STRATEGY

Success in recruiting new landlords and retaining current landlords within HCVP will not happen by accident. To achieve these objectives, housing authorities need concerted strategies, informed by their unique community demographics and needs, and a means to effectively measure the effectiveness of those strategies.

CGI recently had the opportunity to work with a large housing authority facing this challenge. Over several years, the housing authority found that voucher holders were taking considerably longer to lease up; at the same time, the success rate for new voucher holders decreased. They began an initiative aimed to recruit new landlords who previously did not consider voucher tenants and to improve relationships with current landlords, encouraging those landlords to retain current tenants and consider opening more units to voucher residents.

The housing authority wanted to take a **comprehensive approach** to landlord engagement. They had previously conducted landlord surveys and had even implemented loyalty

payment and bonus payments for new landlords. Housing authority leadership recognized the value that a targeted, data-driven approach to comprehensive recruitment and retention could deliver. They engaged CGI to help enable their vision by:

- Conducting a detailed analysis of supply and demand factors
- Evaluating innovative programs and best practices in other HCV programs
- Developing a landlord recruitment, retention and marketing strategy tailored to the housing authority's participant, stakeholder and landlord community

Public housing authorities each face unique challenges, and their landlord recruitment, retention and marketing strategies must be informed by the realities of the local housing market.

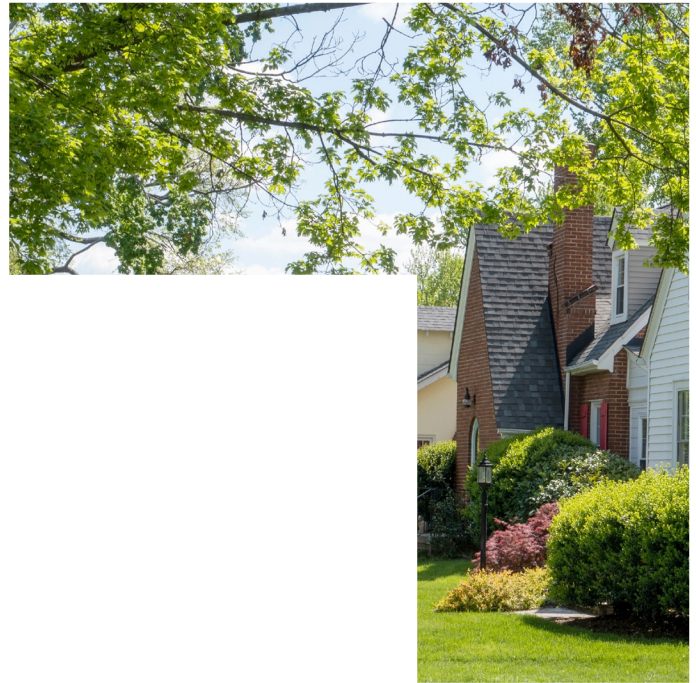
DOES YOUR HOUSING AUTHORITY NEED A TARGETED STRATEGY

As communities continue to face affordable housing shortages and new pressures mount for tenant mobility, housing authorities will need to develop new approaches to meeting participant needs. Success of HCVP and mobility initiatives relies upon the ability to recruit and retain landlords willing to participate in these programs. Analysis of key metrics will enable housing authority leaders to determine if the time is right for a more proactive, data-driven strategy for engaging landlords. Measures to consider include:



- Success rates
- Number of participants asking for extensions
- Number of landlords canceling Requests for Tenancy Approval (RTAs)
- Trends in the number of landlords leaving and joining the voucher program year over year

If metrics are trending in the wrong direction, it may be time to take a proactive approach in order to ensure continued access to quality housing for your participants. Experience shows that a comprehensive approach to recruitment, retention and marketing to the landlord community will reap greater results than a piecemeal approach.



About CGI

Founded in 1976, CGI is among the largest IT and business consulting services firms in the world. We are insights-driven and outcomes-based to help accelerate returns on your investments.

Across hundreds of locations worldwide, we provide comprehensive, scalable and sustainable IT and business consulting services that are informed globally and delivered locally.

CGI assists the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Public Housing Authorities in advancing the availability of safe, affordable housing opportunities for Americans. CGI supports public sector housing leaders in meeting their operational challenges through a catalog of operations outsourcing, information technology and domain-specific consulting services.

Learn more about CGI's services in support of public housing authorities at:

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