

Program Overview: The overall strategy of this landlord liaison pilot project is to increase the number of landlords willing to accept formerly unhoused tenants by reducing the perceived risk of this action through financial incentives for the landlord and coordinated supportive services for the tenant. Landlord financial incentives include a Sign-On Bonus, Building and Security Improvement Fund and a Risk Mitigation Fund, all of which are described below.

Funding Authorization and Program Partners: Funding for both landlord incentives and tenant support services are made available through MaineHousing grant assistance. Some security deposit funding is made available through the City of Lewiston HOME program, while other tenants support come from Program Partners. Program Partners include: City of Lewiston, TriCounty Mental Health Services (TCMHS), Lewiston Police Department, Project Support You, Angel's Wings, among others.

Program Goals: To increase the number of housing units in the community available to unhoused or at-risk of being unhoused residents; Increase the number of landlords willing to accept residents who are or recently, or at risk of becoming, unhoused; and provides the supports necessary to help facilitate a positive tenant-landlord relationship.

Target Geography: Lewiston; Citywide

Incentives Available & Eligibility Activities:

- 1) **Program Sign-on Bonus-** Upon request and approval, eligible Landlords may receive a direct payment of \$1,500 program Sign-On Bonus to be used at the discretion of the Landlord in exchange for participating in the program for one year. One Sign-On Bonus per Landlord.
- 2) **Building and Security Improvement Fund-** Up to \$5,000 may be available per unit for Landlords on a reimbursement basis to improve their units to ensure safety and/or meet code compliance and inspection requirements. Upon acceptance into the program, each unit will be inspected by Lewiston Code Enforcement, who will provide Landlords a written inspection report with an itemized list of actions to be taken in order for tenant placement. Code items listed on the inspection report are eligible for this funding and will receive priority. Once listed Code items are addressed, if appropriate, and if the maximum \$5,000 has not yet been reached, Landlords may add or improve eligible security features to their building. Eligible security items may include security lights, cameras and additional locks.
- 3) **Risk Mitigation Fund-** Risk Mitigation Funds are to be used to reimburse Landlords for tenant-caused damages in excess of what is able to be covered through security deposit funds. Landlords may receive a maximum \$3,500 for first unit/\$5,000 for each additional unit to cover costs associated with documented, eligible damages. Housing advocates shall be notified of the tenant departure (or at the time of the noticed damage to

apartment) and shall be present for the inspection of the unit to document reported damages.

- 4) **Intensive Case Management-** Each participating Tenant shall be matched with a Housing Advocate through the Immigrant Resource Center and/or Tri County Mental Health Services. The Housing Advocate shall coordinate and manage each participating Tenants' case management services and will work directly with Tenants to understand the LLP application process, lease terms, budgeting, tenant rights and responsibilities, rent-compliance and being a good neighbor and tenant. Housing advocates will meet weekly onsite with program Tenants. As needed, Housing Advocates will respond to any additional needs of either the program Tenant or Landlord, should issues arrive that are not able to be addressed during weekly onsite meetings with the program Tenant. Housing Advocates will work directly with Landlords and the program Tenant to build strong relationships and proactively assist with concerns or communication gaps that may arise.
- 5) **Housing Application Fees Assistance-** As per state statute, fees cannot exceed the actual cost of a background check, a credit check or other screening process. Eligible Tenants may receive support for this move-in expense.
- 6) **Security Deposit Assistance-** Upon request and approval, assistance with security deposit up to one-month's rent may be available for Tenant's, when required by standard lease. Upon completion of a successful tenancy where no tenant-caused damage has occurred beyond regular wear-and-tear, the Landlord shall return the total security deposit to the Tenant. If Tenant damage has occurred, security deposit funds are to be used for repair/replacement with any remaining funds returned to the Program. Tenants may be considered eligible for these remaining funds should the Housing Navigator and LLP Administrative Team deem this proper use of these funds.

Outstanding City Assessments & Code Enforcement Violations: Should any Lewiston property owned by the applicant have outstanding fees for water, sewer, personal property taxes, real estate property taxes or complaints issued through a Notice of Violation (NOV), the applicant may not be eligible for funding until the fees are paid in full and the complaints addressed. If the property owner is in a payment plan with the Treasurer's Office, is current and demonstrates a good paying record, participation in Lewiston's Landlord Liaison Program may be considered on this property.

Rental Registry: Should the property have three or more apartments for rent, the property owner and property must be registered with the City Rental Registry to receive funding.

Disclosure of Additional Sources of Funding: Each participating landlord must disclose if additional funding sources are currently assisting with building/unit code compliance, maintenance or safety issues. Any possible duplication of financial incentive or support for units/buildings participating in the LLP must be disclosed in the LLP application.

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Approval / Appeal Process: LLP program and incentive applications are initially reviewed for completeness and eligibility confirmation by the Program's Housing Advocate and Navigator staff. Approved applications are then submitted for approval of the larger LLP Team, consisting of staff from Lewiston Economic and Community Development and Lewiston Police Department, as well as staff from Tri-County Mental Health Services. Through communication with the Housing Advocate and Navigator staff, program applicants (both landlords and tenants) are notified of the status of applications and next steps.

Should a landlord or tenant be denied for enrollment in the program or for funding requests, an appeal may be submitted to the LLP Team via written request with supporting documentation within 30 days of notification of denial. **Appeals may be sent to the attention of LLP Team to the Third Floor of City Hall or via email to: jcrucet@lewistonmaine.gov.**

I certify that I have read and understand the above Guidelines for Lewiston's Landlord Liaison Program and agree to abide by these guidelines upon acceptance of my application for participation in this program.

Name of Applicant

Signature of Applicant

Date