

Landlord Engagement Guide



Understanding Your Audience

Case Managers and Landlord (or Property Managers) both have a part to play in a client's journey toward housing stability. However, as the Case Manager, it is critical that you understand what goals and values you share with a landlord and what goals and values are unique to your respective roles.



While a *landlord's* highest priority is the success of the *property*, the *case manager's* priority is the success of the *client*.

This does not make the two goals exclusive. There are smaller, shared goals within these two categories. For example, both landlords and case managers want to ensure that a client pays rent on time. When you work together with the landlord, you are more likely to see success in both of your goals.

Framework for Building Relationships

A strong professional relationship with your client's property manager or landlord will be the cornerstone of your collaboration with them as you support your client.

Engagement

Engagement here refers to your level of engagement with both the client *and* the property manager or landlord. It includes:

- Home visits
- Awareness of client goals
- Listening to build trust
- Validating client and landlord concerns
- Advocating for clients with property management
- Keeping the focus on housing



How it impacts your relationship with the landlord:

High levels of engagement show the landlord that you understand their values and the risks they feel they are taking by housing your client. Your engagement communicates that you want to partner with them to manage those risks while working toward your shared goals.

Communication



Communication moves you toward your shared goals and encourages a collaborative approach to challenges.

You can communicate with property managers regarding:

- Rent being paid on time
- General progress toward program goals*
- Lease violations and eviction notices
- Maintenance and repair requests
- Your own time, availability, and schedule if meetings are needed

*Client's privacy is critical when giving these updates.

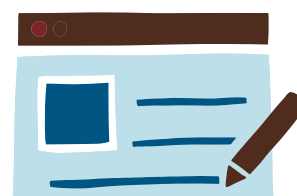
Characteristics of Good Communication

Concise Clear Purposeful Respectful Accessible Consistent

Documentation

Documentation is a necessary part of case management. Protect yourself, your client, and your relationship with their property manager by documenting:

- When, where, and how long you spoke about a topic
- Client goals and actions taken that show progress
- Observations about the client, the unit, and the property
- Lease violations and actions taken to amend them



More documentation resources!

Enroll in our course "[Writing Effective Case Notes](#)" for more tips on good case documentation.

Approach

Your approach to the relationship with the property manager will set expectations for engagement and determine the overall tone of your joint collaboration. Property managers and landlords across our community have identified these three qualities as most important to them.

Proactive	Respectful	Realistic
Property managers will be more excited and willing to work with your client when you are holding the responsibility of keeping your client on track with the terms of their lease, their rent payments, and their progress toward independent living.	Communicate respect for a property manager's time and involvement by being specific and reliable about times, needs, and expectations. Property managers likely have multiple properties to visit, several meetings, and fires popping up along the way. Communicate clearly about changes as early as possible.	Don't make promises you can't keep. We ultimately don't know whether a client will be successful in an individual unit or with independent living. We do know that we are here to support them and that we will do everything we can along the way.

Tips from Property Managers

- Introduce yourself immediately (within a day or two) after being assigned a new case or client and provide contact information so that the property manager can reach you if they need you.
- Visit the property within the first month after your client moves in.
- Communicate deadlines ahead of time; the sooner the better!
- Ask the property manager the best way to communicate with them. For some, email or phone is preferred, while others might prefer a quick in-person chat.

Addressing Common Concerns

Awareness and preparation are the best ways to minimize the common challenges that clients face. Solving are more likely to learn from a situation and build independence when they lead in the problem-solving. Your role as the case manager is to understand the impact that the situation has on the client and their relationship with their property manager, and do your best to support them through it.

Issue	Action	Impact
Housing Stability & Independent Living	Housing Stability Planning We talk about stability planning often because it is one of your most important roles as a case manager. You can communicate progress toward program goals to landlords to help them better plan for the renewal or end of your client's lease.	Landlords' jobs are easy when there is less tenant turnover, so they want your client to succeed in their unit too! Stability Planning supports your client's long-term potential to remain housed.
Unit Damages	Prevention The best way to address unit damages is the keep them from happening. Clients may not have a full understanding of how to maintain their unit, or there may be factors preventing them from doing so. Clear expectations and life skills coaching can prevent major issues. Regular home visits can help you identify issues early, before they become major concerns.	Damages to units are costly to landlords. Regardless of the reason for the damages, landlords are unable to tolerate damages past a certain point, so this will lead to eviction. Your communication and engagement are key in mending the trust and respect that can be lost when unit damages occur.
Hoarding Behaviors	Mental Health Support paired with regular check-ins Hoarding behavior can stem from a variety of factors. If you see signs of hoarding behavior, refer your client to mental health services who can help them identify the root cause and work toward coping strategies. Check-in with the client regularly and offer support as well.	While your concern with hoarding behavior may focus more on your client's well-being, property managers are more concerned about potential damages, fire hazards, and building codes. Work with the client to address these major physical concerns while you work with them on their mental health goals.
Unauthorized Guests* <small>*Our community is seeing more evictions for unauthorized guests than any other issue.</small>	Clear, upfront expectations paired with regular check-ins From the moment you begin looking at units, be clear with your client that allowing unauthorized guests puts their housing jeopardy. Reassure them that their care for their guest is valid, and offer supports if you can. Check-in with them regularly to ensure no violations.	Landlords are not only bound by the legal requirements of the lease in this situation, they also report that other issues like damages and violent interactions seem to stem from having unauthorized guests.
Eviction	Eviction Prevention Plan (EPP) Begin this plan as soon as your client receives lease violations or an eviction notice. Meet with the landlord and client, and make a detailed plan for righting lease violations, mending the relationship, and moving forward without further issues.	Eviction is a long and frustrating process for landlords too. They don't want to evict your client! But they do need to protect their property. Clear and open communication throughout the EPP can make this a smoother process and potentially draw in more landlord support.

Escalating Challenging Issues

Finally, know that you are not alone when it comes to working with property managers and landlords in our community. You are encouraged to contact our Landlord Engagement team when you encounter:

- A property manager with multiple units potentially becoming available
- Detailed questions about incentives or community-wide initiative programs (like DRTRR)
- Escalating conflicts with a property manager that you do not feel confident resolving

Email: landlordinfo@housingforwardntx.org

Ready to continue your learning?

