

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR TENANT ASSOCIATIONS

This document is a guide to assist Tenant Associations in understanding the District's housing programs and tenant's rights and responsibilities. It also provides resources to address issues as they arise.

WHAT AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES DOES THE DISTRICT OFFER?

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:

- **Inclusionary Zoning Affordable Housing Program (IZ)** sets aside a percentage of affordable rental or for-sale units in new residential development projects of 10 or more units as well as rehabilitation projects that are expanding an existing building by 50 percent or more. Households interested in purchasing or leasing an IZ home must take the IZ orientation class with one of DHCD partner community-based organizations and complete the online registration form.

For more information, please visit the following link:

www.dhcd.dc.gov/service/inclusionary-zoning-affordable-housing-program

- **The Housing Production Trust Fund (HPTF)** is a special revenue fund administered by the Department of Housing and Community Development. The HPTF provides funding for the production and preservation of homes that are affordable to low-income households in the District in a wide variety of ways. The primary use of the fund is as “gap financing” that enables housing projects to have sufficient financing to provide affordable housing. The fund also provides other forms of assistance including:
 - pre-development loans to assist nonprofit housing developers in getting low income housing projects funded;
 - financing for site acquisition to provide locations to build affordable housing;
 - funding for the rehabilitation of single family homes.

Since 2001, the HPTF has helped produce over 9,000 affordable homes for low income District residents.

For more information, please visit the following link:

<https://dhcd.dc.gov/page/housing-production-trust-fund>

- **The Home Purchase Assistance Program (HPAP)** provides interest-free loans and closing cost assistance to qualified applicants to purchase single-family houses, condominiums, or cooperative units. HPAP also provides up to \$84,000 in down payment and closing assistance to eligible first-time home buyers.

For more information, please visit the following link:

www.dhcd.dc.gov/service/home-purchase-assistance-program



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- **Rent Control** is a provision under the Rental Housing Act of 1985 (DC Law 6-10), that protects low and moderate-income tenants from the erosion of their income from increased housing costs and provides eviction protections. Rent control sets a limit on how much a property owner can raise a tenant's rent within certain rental buildings each year. Under the Act, rent stabilization applies to any non-exempt rental unit and units must be registered with the Rental Accommodations Division (RAD) at the DC Department of Housing and Community Development either as subject to rent control or as exempt from rent control. For any unit that is not registered with RAD, rent control automatically applies.

For more information, please visit the following link:

<https://dhcd.dc.gov/service/rent-control>

DC HOUSING AUTHORITY:

- **The District Of Columbia Local Rent Subsidy Program (LRSP)** provides ongoing rental subsidies to help make housing more affordable to extremely low-income families – those with incomes equal to or below thirty percent of area median income. Administered by the District of Columbia Housing Authority, LRSP is designed so that households contribute thirty percent (30%) of their adjusted annual income toward the cost for housing. LRSP provides a monthly rental subsidy that covers the difference between the rent a family can afford to pay, and the cost of renting the unit within the District.

For more information, please visit the following link:

<https://www.dchousing.org/topic.aspx?topid=2>

- **Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP)** is a federally-funded program that provides rental assistance to eligible families or individuals to find their own housing (single-family homes, townhouse, and apartments) as long as it meets the requirements of the program. Participants pay a portion of the rent that is based on a percentage of the family's income (on average about 30 percent), and DCHA pays the rest of the rent directly to the property owner. If participants want to move to another location, they may apply to take their voucher with them to a new home, even out of state. The program includes rental assistance only.

For more information, please visit the following link:

<https://www.dchousing.org/topic.aspx?topid=2>

- **Project-Based Vouchers** are subsidy payments made by DCHA to specifically designated units through a long term contract with the owner/landlord at numerous apartment communities throughout DC. The subsidy is tied to the unit and if a participant wants to move the subsidy does not move with them. The program includes rental assistance only.

For more information, please visit the following link:

<https://www.dchousing.org/topic.aspx?topid=2&AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1>

WHAT SUPPORT DOES THE DISTRICT OFFER RESIDENTS TO EXIT HOMELESSNESS OR RESOLVE A HOUSING EMERGENCY?

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

- **The Permanent Supportive Housing Program (PSH)** provides a housing subsidy and supportive services to individuals and families exiting homelessness. Households within the District of Columbia are eligible to apply for the PSH program if they have experienced continuous homelessness for a year or more or have had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years. Additionally, individuals and families must have a diagnosed disabling condition. Each participant is assigned a caseworker who makes connections to resources such as behavioral health supports, substance abuse treatment, employment services, and financial literacy. To apply for the PSH program a vulnerability assessment survey must be completed at any District sponsored shelter facility or by a homeless service provider.

For more information, please visit the following link:

<https://dhs.dc.gov/service/solutions-ending-homelessness>

- **The Targeted Affordable Housing (TAH) Program** provides a permanent rental subsidy for families exiting homelessness. TAH is intended for households who need assistance obtaining and affording housing – most likely due to advanced age and/or disability – but are connected to community resources. TAH program participants do not require intensive case management from DHS in order to remain stably housed.

For more information, please visit the following link:

<https://dhs.dc.gov/service/solutions-ending-homelessness>

- **Rapid Re-Housing** is a research-based intervention designed to assist individuals and families quickly exit homelessness and return to permanent housing. The RRH program provides short- to medium-term rental assistance and services to help households regain housing stability. Participants in the program are assigned a case manager and offered assistance tailored to meet their unique needs, including assistance with identifying barriers, needs and strengths, developing goals, identifying resources and support, and connections to needed resources such as employment and job readiness training, behavioral health services, and financial literacy.

For more information, please visit:

<https://dhs.dc.gov/service/solutions-ending-homelessness>

- **The Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP)** provides one-time funding for income-eligible District residents facing housing emergencies caused by rental arrears. This program also supports security deposits and the first months' rent for residents moving to new apartments.

For more information, please visit the following link:

<https://dhs.dc.gov/service/emergency-rental-assistance-program>



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- **The Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP)** provides stabilizing services and resources for District families at imminent risk of homelessness aimed at preventing housing loss. Services offered may include diversion and mediation services, case management and/or care coordination, referrals to partners, rental assistance and other limited financial assistance.

For more information, please visit the following link:

<https://dhs.dc.gov/page/homeless-prevention-and-diversion-services>

- **Project Reconnect** is a shelter diversion and exit program that assists unaccompanied adults in quickly securing temporary or permanent solutions to homelessness outside of the shelter and the homeless services system. Dedicated to diverting unaccompanied adults from having to enter an emergency shelter system, Project Reconnect is client-centered and flexible as it focuses on client strengths. Available resources can be used to provide individuals with services that allow them to either maintain their current housing or secure suitable housing through friends and family. Overall, Project Reconnect seeks to reduce reliance on emergency shelters and focuses on early intervention by aiding individuals in crisis with the proper support before he/she experiences homelessness.

For more information, please visit the following link:

<https://dhs.dc.gov/page/project-reconnect>

DEPARTMENT OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH:

- **The Home First Rental Assistance Program** provides a permanent subsidy for individuals diagnosed with a severe mental illness. This voucher is a component of wraparound services provided to individuals with mental illness who have experienced homelessness.

For more information, please visit:

www.dbh.dc.gov

WHAT IS THE HOUSING FIRST MODEL?

Years of research and practical experience have led to homeless service interventions that are focused on moving people immediately from homelessness into permanent housing – an approach called “Housing First”. Housing First has the goal of providing the right dosage of housing assistance and supportive services needed for each individual or family to help them maintain that housing. It is based on overwhelming evidence that people experiencing homelessness can achieve stability in permanent housing when provided with the appropriate level of services. Housing First is a recommended approach by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness. All programs run by DHS adhere to a Housing First approach.

For more information, please visit the following link:

<https://www.usich.gov/solutions/housing/housing-first/>



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WHAT RESOURCES, RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND OPPORTUNITIES ARE AVAILABLE TO TENANTS AND NEIGHBORS?

- **The D.C. Tenant Bill of Rights** provides tenants with an overview of the basic rights of tenancy in the District. Except for rent control, all these rights apply to every tenant in the District.

For more information, please visit the following link: <https://ota.dc.gov/publication/tenant-bill-rights>

- **The Elderly and Senior Tenant Bill of Rights** is intended to provide tenants 62 years of age and older with an overview of the basic rights of tenancy in the District, as there are additional rights provided to this population.

For more information, please visit the following link: <https://ota.dc.gov/publication/elderly-and-senior-tenant-bill-rights>

- **The Guide to Eviction** provides information on the required judicial process for all evictions in the District.

For more information, please visit the following link: <https://ota.dc.gov/page/guide-eviction>

- **Protecting the privacy of tenants:** The District of Columbia is committed to protecting the privacy of residents. It is at the tenant's discretion to share details of their lease, including their source of income or rent levels. For individuals receiving assistance from District programs, local and federal privacy considerations apply. The Homeless Services Reform Act of 2005 requires that a client's "personal, social, legal, financial, educational, and medical records and information related to a client or any member of a client's family" be kept confidential. See D.C. Official Code § 4-754.11(a)(7).

In addition, federal regulations governing the use of HUD homeless assistance grants require that DHS ensures the "address or location of any housing of a program participant will not be made public, except as provided under a pre-existing privacy policy of the recipient or sub-recipient and consistent with State and local laws regarding privacy and obligations of confidentiality." See 24 CFR 578.103(b)(3).

For more information, please visit the following link:

<https://code.dccouncil.us/dc/council/code/sections/4-754.11.html>

WHOM CAN I CALL...?

- If you experience concerns for your personal safety or the safety of others, tenants should call 911.
- If you experience lease violations or non-emergencies such as noise, pets, smoking OR concerns with unit occupancy, tenants should call their property manager.
- If you have questions or concerns about your rights and responsibilities as a tenant, tenants should call the Office of Tenant Advocate at **(202) 719-6560** or DHCD's Rental Accommodations Division at **(202) 442-9505**.
- If you need assistance with community engagement, tenants may explore services with Community Mediation DC at **(240)-766-5311**. <https://communitymediationdc.org>

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WHERE CAN I GO FOR MORE RESOURCES?

GOVERNMENT RESOURCES

Office of the Tenant Advocate (OTA)

2000 14th Street, NW, Suite 300

North Washington, DC 20009

Phone: (202) 719-6560 www.ota.dc.gov

OTA offers legal advice, educational resources, emergency housing, legislative advocacy, and legal representation in public interest cases to District tenants.

Shelter Hotline: (202) 399-7093

Locations of Low Barrier/ Emergency Shelters

<https://dhs.dc.gov/node/127912>

The Shelter Hotline is available to answer consumer questions and provide transportation to shelter for those who need it. Emergency or low-barrier shelters are designed to keep people safe from extreme weather conditions. These beds are available on a first-come, first-served basis, to any homeless person.

Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) Housing Resource Center

1800 Martin Luther King, Jr., Ave., SE

Washington, DC 20020

Phone: (202) 442-9505

<https://dhcd.dc.gov/service/housing-resource-center>

The DHCD Housing Resource Center is available to assist residents in finding affordable homes within the District Monday through Friday from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm. In addition, residents can access DCHousingSearch.org from the DHCD Housing Resource Center. DCHousingSearch.org is a free listing service that provides easy access to information about housing opportunities within the District of Columbia.

NONPROFIT LEGAL RESOURCES

Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia

1331 H Street, NW, Suite 350 Washington, DC 20005

2041 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, SE, Suite 201

Washington, DC 20020

Phone: (202) 628-1161

www.legalaiddc.org

Legal Aid Society represents low-income tenants in eviction cases in the Landlord and Tenant Court and in administrative hearings to preserve housing subsidies and challenge unlawful rent increases. Legal Aid attorneys also assist clients living with deplorable housing conditions by representing them in affirmative suits to obtain repairs.

Legal Counsel for the Elderly (AARP)

601 E Street, NW, 4th Floor Washington, DC 20049

Phone: (202) 434-2120 (legal hotline)

www.aarp.org/LCE

Champions the dignity and rights of D.C.'s elderly tenants (60 years+) by providing free legal services to those in need. You do have to be an AARP member to receive this service.

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Neighborhood Legal Services Program (NLSP)

64 New York Avenue NE, Suite 180
Washington, DC 20002

4609 Polk Street NE Washington, DC 20019

Phone: (202) 832-6577 www.nlsp.org

NLSP provide the best possible legal assistance to low-income residents of the District of Columbia by preventing evictions & homelessness.

MEDIATION RESOURCES

Community Mediation DC

Phone: (240)-766-5311

www.communitymediationdc.org

Facebook: [@communitymediationdc](https://www.facebook.com/communitymediationdc)

Community Mediation DC provides a free community-led mediation process designed to allow all voices to be heard and to empower people to create their own solutions to conflict.

COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS THAT OFFER HOMEOWNERSHIP & HOUSING COUNSELING PROGRAMS

Housing Counseling Services (HCS)

2410 17th Street, NW, Suite 100 Washington, DC 20009

Phone: (202) 667-7006

<http://housingetc.org/homebuyers/>

Manna, Inc.

828 Evarts St NE Washington, DC 20018

Phone: (202) 832-1845

<http://www.mannadc.org/hoc/>

Greater Washington Urban League

2901 14th Street, NW Washington, DC 20009

Phone: (202) 265-8200

www.gwul.org/programs

Lydia's House, Inc.

4101 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave., SW Washington, DC 20032

Phone: (202) 373-1050

<https://www.lh4us.org/housing-programs-in-dc>

Latino Economic Development Corporation

641 S Street, NW Washington, DC 20001

Phone: (202) 588-5102

<https://www.ledcmetro.org/housing>