

# HOME FAMILY HOUSING VOUCHER PROGRAM

## APPENDIX L. INFORMATION FOR LANDLORDS

**A safe and stable home is the foundation for individual and family wellbeing. Landlords play an important role in our Vermont community by providing opportunities for people to establish stable footing in their housing and move towards economic independence. We are grateful for your participation.**

### **What is the HOME Family Housing Voucher Program?**

The HOME Family Housing Voucher is a program designed to help house Vermont families experiencing homelessness. Tenants receive ongoing rental assistance or a “voucher” for at least 12 months, with extensions available up to June 2024. During that time, tenants work to increase their income and resources to be able to pay for their housing long-term. The HOME Family Housing Voucher Program is intended to decrease the number of families with dependent children experiencing homelessness and hopefully end child homelessness. The HOME Family Housing Voucher Program is funded by the Housing Opportunity Grant Program operating within the Home Together, Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness and the Vermont Plan to End Homelessness and administered statewide by the Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity (CVOEO). The program will operate from January 2022 to June 2024.

### **HOME Family Housing Voucher Program Benefits**

Landlords of all types are participating in the program – ranging from people who own just a few units, to larger property holders, and both for-profit and non-profit housing providers. Landlords who agree to rent to HOME Family Housing Voucher holders may benefit from:

- Ability to request a security deposit equal to two (2) months of total rent;
- Ongoing support and services for tenants to increase or maintain household stability;
- Voucher portion of rent is mailed on the first of each month;
- Vouchers are guaranteed by CVOEO and backed by state funding; and
- Access to administrative support staff at CVOEO during regular business hours to answer voucher-related inquiries or payment issues.

### **Preferred Renter Certification: Tenant Education at CVOEO**

As part of the HOME Family Housing Voucher Program, participants are encouraged to participate in the Preferred Renter Certificate program, a free series of workshops and one-on-one financial coaching that provides tenants with the skills, materials, and confidence necessary to find housing and be responsible tenants. Class content includes tenant rights and responsibilities, strategies for overcoming barriers, how to organize a housing search, building a budget, building or repairing credit, strategies for saving for an apartment, and more. After completing the workshops and meeting with a financial coach, participants receive a Preferred Renter Certificate which shows that they are invested in being a successful renter, are knowledgeable about resources, and connected to service providers. All classes are free and open to the community. To learn more about the Preferred Renter Certificate program or to sign up for classes, please visit the Vermont Tenants website at <https://www.cvoeo.org/learn/renters-workshops>.

### **Retention Services**

CVOEO also provides support for HOME Family Housing Voucher tenants who are facing housing instability due to issues with their current tenancy and/or conflicts with their landlords. Timely interventions include addressing conflicts, facilitation of landlord/tenant communication and positive relationship building, one-on-one coaching support and tenant education, and referral to community partners, as needed.

Landlords are welcome to refer tenants for issues such as, but not limited to, poor or deteriorating landlord/tenant relationship, disputes with the landlord, and non-compliance issues with the lease. We encourage referrals early on, before a problem becomes a crisis or results in a termination of tenancy notice.

To refer a tenant, you call the Housing Retention and Stability Coordinator at 802-660-3455 x 111 or fill out this short referral form: <https://forms.office.com/r/iHHRzqfmbP>.

### **Discrimination is Illegal**

Fair housing is the right to rent, buy, or finance housing free from discrimination. Voucher-holding tenants and prospective tenants (and any Vermonter who receives public assistance) are a “protected class” under Vermont Fair Housing Laws. This means that a landlord may not refuse to rent to someone simply because they would be paying a portion of their rent with a HOME Family Housing Voucher, or any other voucher.

The following actions are discriminatory (and subsequently illegal) if they are taken because of a person’s membership in a protected class:

- Any action that makes a dwelling unavailable or that discriminates in the terms, conditions, or privileges of rental or in the provision of services or facilities on the basis of any prohibited classification;
- Discriminatory advertising or steering (i.e., showing only certain units to members of a protected class); and
- Even if a person is not denied housing, conduct that makes it difficult or unpleasant for a person belonging to a protected class to live in a dwelling is illegal.

Landlords play a critical role in helping to end housing discrimination. We want you to be an informed partner in this work.

For more information, visit <https://www.cvoeo.org/fhp> and the “Guide to Fair Housing Law for Landlords and Property Managers” here:

[https://www.cvoeo.org/client\\_media/files/HAP/VTT\\_Definitive\\_Guide\\_and\\_Illustrated\\_Guide.pdf](https://www.cvoeo.org/client_media/files/HAP/VTT_Definitive_Guide_and_Illustrated_Guide.pdf)

If you have any questions about the HOME Family Housing Voucher Program, please contact us at (802) 660-3455 or [home.fhvp@cvoeo.org](mailto:home.fhvp@cvoeo.org).