THE HOUSING SPECIALIST™

Landlord Outreach & Housing Partnership Toolkit

Practical tools for approaching landlords and property managers, explaining your role, handling common questions, and building productive professional relationships.

Professional Resource #12 • 6 Pages • Fillable & Printable • Free
Housing Specialist Hub → Finding Housing Opportunities

Specialist / Organization Information

Housing Specialist Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Organization: _____ **Program:** _____

1. Outreach Preparation Checklist

Complete these steps before contacting landlords or property managers. Preparation protects professional credibility and saves time.

Before You Call or Email

- ■ Confirm the household's current housing-assistance status through authorized records (do not rely only on client statements).
- ■ Verify applicable rent limits, bedroom size, and any program-specific requirements for the household.
- ■ Review the listing carefully: address, rent amount, number of bedrooms, availability date, and contact details.
- ■ Prepare a short, accurate description of the household (size, program type) without sharing unnecessary personal information.
- ■ Have the correct organization name, your title, and a professional callback number ready.
- ■ Know which documents the landlord typically needs and which you are authorized to discuss.
- ■ Confirm you understand your employer's approved talking points and what you must never promise.
- ■ Have a system ready to record the outcome of the conversation (date, contact person, next step).

Professional Boundaries Reminder

Never promise payment dates, inspection outcomes, voucher approvals, or move-in timelines that have not been confirmed by the responsible agency. Always follow your employer's policies and applicable fair-housing requirements. Your role is to facilitate accurate communication — not to guarantee results.

2. Professional Outreach Scripts

Use these scripts as a starting point. Adapt the language to your organization while keeping the professional tone and boundaries.

A. Phone / Voicemail Introduction

"Good morning / afternoon. My name is [Your Name], and I work as a Housing Specialist with [Organization Name]. I am calling about the [bedroom size] apartment listed at [address or listing reference]. I work with households who have approved rental assistance, including programs such as CityFHEPS, FHEPS, or Section 8. I would like to confirm whether the unit is still available and ask a few brief questions about the application process. Is this a good time, or would you prefer that I call back?"

If leaving a voicemail: Keep it under 30 seconds. State your name, organization, the property you are calling about, and a clear callback number. Avoid discussing client personal details on voicemail.

B. In-Person / Viewing Introduction

"Hello, I'm [Your Name] from [Organization]. I am a Housing Specialist assisting a household that is interested in this apartment. They have [active rental assistance / an approved voucher]. I am here to help coordinate the process and answer any questions you may have about how the program works. Would you like me to walk through the typical steps?"

C. Professional Email Template

Subject: Inquiry regarding [Address / Listing] — Housing Specialist, [Organization]

Dear [Landlord / Property Manager Name],

My name is [Your Name], and I am a Housing Specialist with [Organization Name]. I am writing regarding the [X-bedroom] apartment at [Address] that is currently listed for rent.

I work with households who receive rental assistance through programs such as CityFHEPS, FHEPS, or Section 8. I would like to confirm the unit's availability and learn more about your application requirements and process.

I am happy to provide general information about how these programs operate and to coordinate any documentation that may be required. Please let me know a convenient time to speak, or feel free to reply with any questions.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
[Your Full Name]
Housing Specialist
[Organization Name]
[Phone] | [Professional Email]

Key Principles for All Outreach

- State who you are and who you represent immediately.
- Mention the specific property so the landlord knows this is not a general cold call.
- Be honest about the type of assistance without oversharing client details.
- Offer to explain the process rather than assuming the landlord already knows it.
- Always leave a clear, professional way for the landlord to reach you.
- Never guarantee that a particular household will be approved or that payment will arrive on a specific date.

3. Handling Landlord Questions

Landlords frequently ask the same core questions. Prepare accurate, consistent answers. When you do not know something, say so and offer to follow up with verified information.

Q: "How much rent does the program pay?"

Suggested approach: Explain that the exact amount depends on the household's approved subsidy and the responsible agency's determination. Offer to share general program information and to connect the landlord with the appropriate agency contact once an application moves forward. Do not invent a dollar amount.

Q: "How long does the approval take?"

Suggested approach: Be honest that timelines vary by program and by the completeness of the package. Provide a realistic range only if you have current information from the administering agency. Never guarantee a specific number of days.

Q: "When will I receive the first payment?"

Suggested approach: Payment timing is controlled by the administering agency after all required approvals are complete. Explain the general sequence (application → review → inspection if required → lease → payment authorization) without promising dates.

Q: "Who pays the security deposit?"

Suggested approach: This depends on the specific program and the household's circumstances. Some programs offer security-deposit assistance; others do not. Confirm the current status for the particular household before answering.

Q: "I don't usually take vouchers / government programs."

Suggested approach: Respond calmly and factually. In New York City, source-of-income discrimination is generally prohibited under the NYC Human Rights Law in covered housing transactions. You may share that information and offer to provide a link or contact for the NYC Commission on Human Rights. Do not argue or threaten. Document the conversation and follow your organization's fair-housing procedures.

Q: "Can you guarantee this tenant will pay their portion?"

Suggested approach: You cannot personally guarantee any tenant's future payments. You can explain that the household has been screened according to program rules and that the subsidy portion is paid by the administering agency once all conditions are met.

Q: "What if the unit fails inspection?"

Suggested approach: Explain that required inspections (when applicable) are conducted by the administering agency or its designee. If deficiencies are found, the landlord is typically given an opportunity to correct them. You can help coordinate communication but cannot override inspection findings.

Golden rule: If you are unsure, say "I want to give you accurate information. Let me confirm that and get back to you by [timeframe]." Then follow through.

4. Landlord Contact Tracker

Record every outreach attempt. Consistent tracking prevents duplicate calls, helps you follow up on time, and creates a clear record for your supervisor and case notes.

Date	Property / Address	Contact Name & Phone	Method	Outcome / Next Step	Follow-up Date

Method codes: P = Phone E = Email T = Text I = In-person V = Voicemail left

Tip: Transfer key outcomes into your employer's official case-management system. This tracker is a working tool, not a substitute for required documentation.

5. Property Verification Checklist

Before moving a unit toward a formal application, confirm the essential details. Incomplete or inaccurate information is a common cause of delays and rejected packages.

Property Basics

- ■ Full street address confirmed (including apartment / unit number)
- ■ Number of bedrooms and bathrooms matches household needs / program rules
- ■ Monthly rent amount confirmed in writing or by reliable source
- ■ Availability / move-in date confirmed
- ■ Landlord or authorized agent name and contact information recorded
- ■ Property management company name (if applicable) recorded

Program & Suitability Checks

- ■ Rent is within the applicable program payment standard / rent limit for this household
- ■ Unit size is consistent with the household's approved bedroom allocation
- ■ No obvious barriers to required inspection (when applicable)
- ■ Landlord is willing to complete required program documents
- ■ Any accessibility or reasonable-accommodation needs have been discussed
- ■ Location is acceptable to the household (or alternatives have been discussed)

Documentation & Next Steps

- ■ Landlord has received a clear list of required documents / forms
- ■ You have recorded who will submit what and by when
- ■ Client has been informed of the current status and next action
- ■ Follow-up date has been set and entered in your tracking system
- ■ Any potential fair-housing concerns have been noted and escalated if required

Notes / Outstanding Questions

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6. Weekly Outreach Review

Set aside 15–20 minutes at the end of each week to review your outreach activity. This habit improves results and demonstrates professional organization to supervisors.

This Week's Activity Summary

Metric	Number	Notes
New landlords / properties contacted		
Follow-up calls / emails completed		
Positive responses / units still active		
Units moved to application stage		
Units closed (rented / unsuitable / no response)		
Fair-housing concerns noted / escalated		

Reflection Questions

• Which outreach methods produced the best response this week?

_____

• Were there any questions I could not answer confidently? What do I need to clarify?

_____

• Did I follow up on every active lead within the timeframe I promised?

_____

• Are there any landlords who may be open to future partnership conversations?

_____

• What will I do differently next week?

_____

Professional Safeguards & Fair-Housing Notice

This toolkit is a professional education resource provided by The Housing Specialist™. It does not replace employer policies, official program guidance, or legal advice.

Confidentiality: Do not record sensitive client personal information on this working document beyond what is necessary for outreach tracking. Transfer required information into your organization's approved case-management system.

Fair Housing: New York City prohibits discrimination based on lawful source of income in covered housing transactions. If you encounter statements or conduct that may constitute source-of-income discrimination, document the facts and follow your organization's reporting procedures. You may also contact the NYC Commission on Human Rights (311 or 212-416-0197).

Boundaries: Never promise rental payments, inspection results, voucher approvals, or move-in dates that have not been confirmed by the responsible agency. Your professional credibility depends on accurate information and reliable follow-through.