

A Newsletter for Housing Owners

METRO HRA

Housing & Redevelopment Authority

VIEWS



GO GREEN WITH ASSISTANCE CHECK

For your convenience, we are offering a secure, online service called AssistanceCheck. This convenient service allows you to contact us and make requests online rather than in-person, by phone or by mail. Some of the services offered include:

- Update your contact information
- Reschedule inspections
- View and print required documents
- View and print Housing Assistance Payment statements

You should have received a letter in the mail with your account PIN and easy setup instructions.

When using AssistanceCheck, be sure to include enough information to help us serve you better:

- Client name
- Address of the property
- Other important details

If you need help setting up your account or have questions, contact Tammy Prigge at 651-602-1525 or Mary Dooher at 651-602-1445.

You can also access owner information at www.metrohra.org.

LANDLORD LOYALTY CLUB at HOUSINGLINK- Join Today

Landlord Loyalty Club Benefits

- Answer Line to call, email, or text questions if you have a problem with a renter, need a referral to a vendor, or want answers to questions.
- Forums to ask and answer questions, and to interact with other landlords.
- Education with real estate credits. Want to become a better landlord or need real estate credits? We've got you covered with relevant class options at no cost.
- Special content, resources and social events throughout the year, just for members of the club.

Details about joining can be found here:

<http://www.housinglink.org/List/landlord-loyalty-club>

SPRING 2017

DIRECT DEPOSIT

Metro HRA encourages all landlords to enroll in the direct deposit system as a convenient option for receiving your monthly Housing Assistance Payment (HAP).

By offering direct deposit:

- Landlords have monthly HAP deposited directly into their bank account
- We eliminate delays due to mail or lost checks

To request a direct deposit enrollment form or to make a change in your direct deposit arrangement, please contact Lona at Lona.petersen@metc.state.mn.us or 651-602-1565.

UPDATE YOUR ADDRESS

The HRA requires your address to ensure correct information is reported for tax purposes. To report a change in physical address, please contact Lona at Lona.petersen@metc.state.mn.us or 651-602-1565

BETTER LANDLORD CONNECTIONS



HRA welcomes new outreach coordinator and creates ombudsman program for renters

Introducing Abdiaziz Ibrahim, the HRA's new outreach coordinator and program ombudsman.

In his new role with the HRA, Abdiaziz will focus his work

on resident success and landlord/tenant relationships. Specifically, he will fill these roles:

- Ombudsman Services, being a liaison between tenant and landlord to ensure good relations
- Tenant education to create better renters
- Financial literacy to help families create budgets and build their wealth
- Housing Search Assistance for families having difficulty placing their voucher with their housing search

Abdiaziz might be familiar to many of you – he has been working with as an HRA coordinator since September 2015. Abdiaziz has been in your shoes. He was a property manager for both Common Bond Communities and Real Estate Equities. Abdiaziz was also a housing case manager, helping refugee families find housing and integrate into their new communities. This work involved landlord outreach, tenant education, landlord/tenant mediation, conducting inspections and securing the necessary resources for families to secure housing.

SUPPORTING RESIDENT SUCCESS

The HRA will be offering tenant education and financial literacy classes and provide housing search assistance for families having difficulty placing their vouchers.

Tenant education classes focus on:

- How to manage money resources wisely to pay rent on time every month
- How to choose adequate, safe and affordable housing
- How to communicate effectively with neighbors and property managers
- How to maintain a home
- How to navigate the rental process including screening, lease agreements, security deposits and moving out

Financial Literacy classes curriculum covers:

- Income, spending, and saving
- Reducing debt, building assets
- Building and maintaining good credit
- Consumer protection, financial products, and institutions

Housing Search Assistance

Abdiaziz will also assist families with their housing search. He will counsel and advise applicants and participants on their best housing options in the market. Specifically, he'll help:

- Conduct background check and assist families with credit and background repair
- Arrange apartment viewing and interviews with landlords
- Provide community services information and referrals to program participants
- Assist families with securing resources to obtain housing
- Conduct Pre-HQS inspections

These changes are part of the HRA's ongoing efforts to help residents be successful and to be a support to our landlords.

We are here to support you, our partner in housing. Abdiaziz is only one call away! Please reach out to Abdiaziz if you are needing assistance with a family. He is here to help you.

PHONE: 651-602-1596

EMAIL: abdiaziz.ibrahim@metc.state.mn.us



LANDLORD APPRECIATION

Thank you for your participation in the Metro HRA rent assistance program. By partnering with the Metro HRA, you help stabilize families while receiving a steady flow of rental revenue. Please spread the word to other property owners and managers about the positive benefits of working with residents who receive rent assistance through Metro HRA or other housing programs.

Thank you for partnering with the HRA – you make it possible to house families. **We can't do it without you.**

The TOOL BOX By Joseph Kummer

There is no time like the present to make a few adjustments to your maintenance schedule and get more organized and more equipped to keep your property in the best possible condition.

- Use a phone app. When you have an app or apps on your phone for notes, calendars, reminders, you can virtually carry your entire office with you. Jot things down as they come up rather than waiting until you can pull out pen and paper or sit in front of a computer.
- Use an online calendar system. There are a variety of organizational programs that can be used to remind you of important events that are coming up. Use the calendar to track changing batteries or filters, drain cleaning, or property visits. Pair the computer program with a smartphone app, and you'll be unstoppable.
- Get a camera. Smartphones and digital cameras have the ability to capture images and video. Having photos can be a great way to avoid disagreements about damages and security deposit disposition.
- Start maintenance programs. If you have never put your property on a maintenance schedule, now is the time. It's good to have a regular diet of onsite visits viewing the condition of your property, winterization, preventative maintenance, improvements, upgrades, and modernization. Set those visits in your calendar, and stick to them.
- Put some money away. Starting a savings account for those big-ticket items like carpet, furnaces, appliances, and cabinets.
- Safety first. Making your property as safe as possible to avoid accidents and insurance claims is incredibly important. Conducting ongoing safety inspections and addressing issues right away makes good business sense.
- Make more visits. Let's face it, we are all strapped for time. However, scheduling time to drive by your property is essential in ensuring your property is being properly maintained. Keeping in touch with your resident shows you care and is usually rewarded with someone who takes better care of the property.
- Have a supply stash. It doesn't hurt to replenish that material list you should have. It saves trips to the store, shortens the time spent disrupting the tenants, and works very well in emergencies when the store is closed.
- Educate your tenants. The most overlooked asset in maintaining the property is the tenant themselves. Go through the property on a regular basis teaching them and showing them what to do in case of an emergency, demonstrating how things work, where things are, and how it operates will keep your property from more damage, and help you strengthen your lease in case there is a problem with misuse or neglect.

MOVE-IN INSPECTION NOTICES

At the time of an initial/move-in inspection, the HRA sends scheduling notices to owners only. The tenant does not receive a copy of the scheduling notice. If the tenant is already in the unit, please notify them of the date and time of the inspection.

Our relationship is a partnership — we want your property to pass your inspection, but we need your help. Please have your units ready for inspection by 8 a.m. on the day of the move-in inspection.

Your unit should be turned, cleaned and inspection ready. If it is not ready at the time of the inspection, it may fail, causing a significant delay in your housing assistance payment.

VENDOR NUMBERS

All correspondence you receive from the Metro HRA should now include a number specific to you which is called your "vendor number." Please keep your vendor number handy and use it on all correspondence to the Metro HRA to ensure we can quickly identify you and provide you with the best possible service.

ENERGY STAR

Consider buying ENERGY STAR products next time you replace an appliance. It's good for you and good for the environment. Go to www.energystar.gov for more information.

IS THERE SOMETHING YOU WOULD LIKE TO KNOW?

Attend one of our upcoming owner briefings located at 390 North Robert St., St. Paul, MN 55101

Tuesday August 15, 2017 at 10:00 am

Thursday October 12, 2017 at 10:00 am

If there are topics you would like to see addressed in upcoming issues of the newsletter, please e-mail them to Mary D at mary.dooher@metc.state.mn.us.

Join us! In an effort to build stronger relationships between the HRA and participating landlord, the Metro HRA is hosting an owner workshop on Monday, June 19 at the Brookdale Library from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Doors open at 9 a.m. for registration and a light breakfast. Program will begin at 9:30.

Housing Choice Voucher Program staff and speakers from partner organizations will make presentations on the following owner-related topics:

- Lead-Based Paint
- What Makes a Good Landlord
- Helping Families Succeed
- Legal Aid Q&A
- Does it Fail?

Space is limited; register today. <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/owners-workshop-tickets-34583122049>

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) became federal law in January 2006. VAWA prohibits the eviction of certain persons if the grounds for such action are an instance of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking. This means that you cannot terminate a lease because of an abuser's actions toward a tenant or their family. All owners, whether participating in the Section 8 voucher program or not, must comply with this law. For the full text on the law visit: <http://www.ovv.usdoj.gov/domviolence.htm>

Are you familiar with the "Right of Victims of Domestic Abuse to Terminate the Lease," Minnesota State Statute 504B.206? This state law allows a tenant to terminate their lease if they are a victim of VAWA. The statute can be found at: <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=504B.206>

OWNER WORKSHOP JUNE 19

