

# How Can Rental Housing Owners Support Resident Housing Stability?

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## KEY TAKEAWAYS

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Rental housing owners and operators have a financial interest in tenant stability.

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Property owners can help limit the occurrence of evictions by

- using transparent processes when establishing tenancy;
  - employing inclusive and accessible communication;
  - connecting tenants to resources;
  - allowing flexibility in terms, processes and payments; and
  - prioritizing eviction diversion.
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Eviction has profound and long-lasting impacts on renters and their families. While the affected household largely bears the costs of an eviction, property owners and operators also have a financial interest in tenant stability, as eviction increases unit turnover costs and is unlikely to recoup back rent.

The COVID-19 crisis and the ensuing economic impacts led many rental housing owners to reevaluate standard rental practices that may inadvertently increase the likelihood of eviction. Now, with owners losing the benefits of emergency rental assistance and forbearance terms, they must determine the “new normal” for tenant stability practices. Of key concern is the right balance of resources to support residents and how to fund those supports.

This fact sheet highlights principles and promising practices to help guide property owners and operators as they seek financial stability of their properties while limiting eviction’s occurrence and enduring harmful impact.

## HOW WE DID IT

The Urban Institute and [Enterprise Community Partners](#) convened a working group of mission-aligned owners and operators of rental properties to gain insight into how they reduced the occurrence and impacts of eviction. [Stewards of Affordable Housing for the Future](#) and [Housing Partnership Network](#) supported the working group.

Our work helped us understand how to create a solid foundation for owner-renter relationships and support a safety net in advance of any tenancy issues, such as nonpayment of rent or lease violations.

We identify five principles to guide owner and operator actions and decisionmaking, along with practices that owners could pursue to support these principles. Research has yet to demonstrate a clear link to housing stability for many of these practices. We offer practices based on the lived experience of owners participating in the working group as those with potential for further study.

## PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES FOR STRENGTHENING TENANT STABILITY AND EVICTION PREVENTION

1. **Remove barriers for tenants in their housing search and use transparent processes when establishing tenancy.**
  - » Review tenant screening practices periodically using best practices to minimize harm
  - » Provide clear and transparent leases
  - » Educate tenants about terms of residency
  - » Implement just-cause eviction and standard operating procedures
2. **Use clear, accessible, and equitable communication through all stages of a tenancy.**
  - » Employ frequent and proactive communication among owners, managers, and tenants
  - » Use culturally appropriate and inclusive communication
  - » Use trauma-informed methods of communication
3. **Proactively connect tenants to resources and encourage communities of support, to help tenants stay stable throughout their tenancy.**
  - » Proactively connect tenants to resources
  - » Support strong tenant communities
4. **Allow flexibility in terms, processes, and payments for renters to reduce the likelihood of eviction.**
  - » Provide sufficient filing notice
  - » Allow lease modifications
  - » Consider using payment plans, waiving late fees, and reducing arrears
5. **Commit to procedures that prioritize eviction diversion options in the case of nonpayment or late payment.**
  - » Engage in mediation
  - » Offer mutual rescission

### READ THE FULL REPORT

*Preventing and Mitigating Evictions after the COVID-19 Crisis: Principles and Practices for Rental Housing Owners*

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