



CARES Housing Voucher Program

P.O. Box 1603

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Information for Landlords on the Statewide CARES Housing Voucher Program

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 CARES Housing Voucher Program?

The CARES Housing Voucher Program is a program designed to help rehouse Vermont families and individuals experiencing homelessness. Tenants receive ongoing rental assistance or a “voucher” for at least 12 months, and up to 18 months. During that time, tenants work to increase their income and resources to be able to pay for their housing long-term. The CARES Housing Voucher Program is helping us decrease the number of Vermonters experiencing homelessness. The CARES Housing Voucher Program is funded by the federal Emergency Solutions Grant as part of the CARES Act and rental assistance is administered statewide by the Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity (CVOEO). As the program is tied to the limited CARES Act funding, it will operate from October 2020 – July 2022.

This program includes several benefits and supports for tenants, as well as landlords.

CARES 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 CARES voucher holders may benefit from:

- Ability to request a security deposit equal to three (3) months of total rent;
- Ongoing support and services to for tenants to increase income and household stability;
- Monthly rent for CARES vouchers, and not limited to the HUD Fair Market Rent (FMR) standards as required by other housing choice vouchers;
- Voucher portion of rent is either direct-deposited or mailed on the first of each month;
- Vouchers are guaranteed by CVOEO and backed by federal 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 CARES Housing Voucher Program, future tenants are encouraged to participate in the Rent Right program, a free series of classes and one-on-one coaching that provides tenants with the skills, materials, and confidence necessary to find housing and be a responsible tenant. Class content



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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 program, prospective tenants receive a Preferred Renter Certificate. If an applicant or current tenant has this certificate, the landlord will know they are invested in being a successful renter, are knowledgeable about resources, and connected to service providers, such as a financial coach. All classes are free and open to the community.

To learn more about Rent Right or to sign up for classes, please visit the Vermont Tenants website at www.cvoeo.org/retright

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 CARES 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 category:

- 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 is illegal.
- Discriminatory advertising or steering (i.e., showing only certain units to members of a protected class) is illegal.
- 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>

If you have any questions about the CARES Housing Voucher Program, please contact us at (802) 660-3455 or cares.hvp@cvoeo.org.