

Who Does What? Improving Rent Collection By Coordinating Roles

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Synopsis

- ❑ **Common Ground Overview**
- ❑ **Rent Administration Philosophy**
- ❑ **Distinct Roles**

Common Ground Overview

- Common Ground was founded in 1991.
- We own 11 properties and manage 2, comprising 2,659 units of supportive housing, in New York City, Rochester, and Connecticut.
- We operate 123 scatter-site apartments, 386 units of transitional housing, and conduct street outreach in Brooklyn, Queens, and Manhattan.
- Our partners, CUCS, The Actors Fund, Good Shepherd, Bronxworks, and The Door provide onsite social services.
- Common Ground properties have robust staff, including 24 hour contract security, and onsite Rent Administrators.

Common Ground Overview

- Mix of low income and formerly homeless populations. Roughly 60% formerly homeless.
- All tenants have leases, must have some income, and pay rent.
 - Low Income pay a set rate at move in; increases upon renewal
 - Formerly Homeless pay 30% of their income or PA shelter allowance.
- Numerous subsidies, including Section 8 vouchers, Building Based Section 8, Project Based Vouchers, PRAC, OMH, DOHMH, and HASA.
- Also utilize LIHTC and HOME funding. Rent Admin staff are very involved in recertification.

Rent Administration Philosophy

- ❑ Belief in the inherent value that people need to pay rent and be responsible for their actions.
- ❑ Supportive Housing should be as independent as possible, but at the same time, we recognize the need to make paying rent an accessible activity.
- ❑ Separation of responsibilities between property management and social services – i.e. case manager doesn't collect rent.
- ❑ Strive to ensure that all parties concerned know what is going on, primarily the landlord and service providers; in some cases subsidy providers, family members, etc...
- ❑ Engage in a consistent, recurring process for all tenants.

Distinct Roles between Property Management and Social Services

Distinct Roles

Property Management

- Generate leases, distribute monthly rent bills
- Collect Rent
- Enter into Payment Plans
- Issue Late Letters
- Institute court process
- Facilitate Monthly Arrears Meetings w/ service provider

Social Services

- Work to secure entitlements for all clients
- Engage in budgeting, including Money Mgmt.
- Describe consequences & help clients make informed decisions
- Provide support in understanding legal docs

Comprehensive Information Sharing

- **Constant communication between Rent Administrator and Case Managers about individual client information.**
 - CC: social services on all documents
 - Provide pertinent information to social service staff
- **Summary information and reporting to senior SSP staff.**
 - Arrears Reports, lease expiration listings, recertification updates, legal summaries and goals.
- **High level analysis to determine overall collection rates, percentage of tenants in process, building trends**

Scatter Site Rent Collection

- **CG Finance Department sends scatter site bills to Director and Operations Manager on 28th of each month**
- **OPS Manager involved in bill review for accuracy and all aspects of tent collection**
- **Use a multiple level case conference practice, modeled after HASA to work on these issues.**
- **Follow-up primarily handled by OPS Mgr unless its a benefits issue, which it often handled by entitlements and the case mgr.**
- **Bringing formal rent collection practices there as part of the "makeover"**

Consistent, Recurring Processes

Consistent, Recurring Processes

- ❑ **“Regular” no-pay process with added steps**
- ❑ **Always provide an opportunity for tenant to repay arrears and return to good status**
- ❑ **Recurring activities**
 - ❑ **Late Letters issued on same day to all tenants**
 - ❑ **Follow up with 5 Day Demands**
- ❑ **Use court as a tool, not simply for eviction**

Internal & External Processes

Internal

- ❑ Payment Plans
- ❑ Small Balance letters
- ❑ Meetings
- ❑ Late Letters
- ❑ 5 day demands
- ❑ Rep Payee

External

- ❑ Notice Of Petition
- ❑ Stipulation
- ❑ One Shot Deal
- ❑ Adult Protective Services
- ❑ Guardianship
- ❑ Chronic no pay

Dashboard & Rent Metrics

- ▣ **Arrears Report**
- ▣ **Management Index**
- ▣ **Dashboard**