

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Housing Maine's homeless: How you may help

It is part of MaineHousing's mission to end homelessness in the state, and I want to take this opportunity to thank our many



Lauren Bustard
HCV Program Director

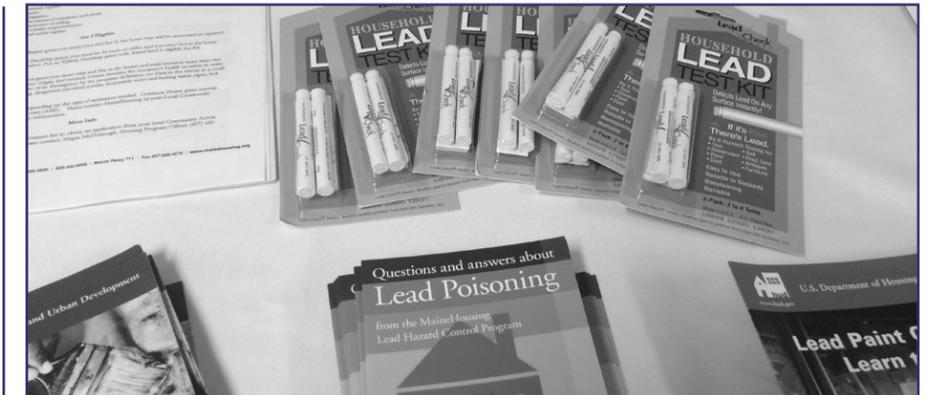
Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program landlords who have worked with us to ensure that all Mainers have a safe and decent place to live.

I think we can all agree that everyone deserves housing and that everyone should have a second chance, but I know

that some landlords have been hesitant to rent to applicants coming out of shelters because of the perceived challenges they bring with them. If you are one of those landlords, I'd like to tell you about some of our programs that provide support to HCV tenants as they transition into permanent living situations.

Our **Home to Stay** program was initiated in 2013. With this model, individuals and families are referred to the HCV program through participating shelters. Housing navigators at the shelters determine that these tenants need longer term subsidy in order to make the transition to permanent housing successfully and assist the tenants in developing an individual housing

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MaineHousing's "Lead Poisoning Guide" is available online at www.mainehousing.org. Other items about how to check for lead are distributed at our landlord forums.

MaineHousing, landlords can make homes lead safe

MaineHousing's Lead Hazard Control Program was developed to provide grants and deferred/forgivable loans to assist homeowners and landlords to make their homes and apartments lead safe.

The program is a collaborative effort between MaineHousing, the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, Maine Early Childhood Division, Maine Department of Environmental Protection, and certain Maine Community Action Agencies.

The program's primary purpose involves:

- Reduction of lead poisoning in children by reducing lead-based paint hazards;
- Development of improved identification of lead based paint hazards;
- Development of cost effective lead-based paint hazard control activities;

- Implementation of statewide training and education on lead-based paint hazards.

How does this program help Maine landlords? A landlord may be eligible to participate in this program under the following conditions:

- The building was constructed prior to 1978;
- As a set aside, one-half of the units needing abatement are occupied by tenants at or below 50% of area median income (AMI);
- Units must have a minimum of two bedrooms;
- If the per unit intervention costs exceed \$10,000, the landlord will need to pay the difference from another funding source.

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Mainely Landlords

Your rental property is an investment. Don't let it go up in smoke.

For help implementing a smoke-free policy for your rentals, contact the Smoke-Free Housing Coalition of Maine at (207) 874-8774 or info@smokefreeforme.org



LANDLORD FORUM

Thursday, September 22
from 5:30-7:30 p.m.
Norway Town Office

Guest Speaker:
Eric Grainger, a hoarding specialist from Shalom House

Also:
MaineHousing staff to answer questions, vendors & prizes!

Join Us!

MaineHousing does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, physical or mental disability, age, familial status or receipt of public assistance in the admission or access to or treatment in its programs and activities. In employment, MaineHousing does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, age, physical or mental disability or genetic information. MaineHousing will provide appropriate communication auxiliary aids and services upon sufficient notice. MaineHousing will also provide this document in alternative formats upon sufficient notice. MaineHousing has designated the following person responsible for coordinating compliance with applicable federal and state nondiscrimination requirements and addressing grievances: Louise Patenaude, Maine State Housing Authority, 353 Water Street, Augusta, Maine 04330-4633, Telephone Number 1-800-452-4668 (voice in state only), (207) 626-4600 (voice) or Maine Relay 711.

HCV Director: How landlords may help Maine's homeless

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stability plan to ensure that tenants are able to access the resources they need to be successful. The navigators also provide other kinds of support to ensure that success. Tenants receive renter education through a course called Rent Smart that teaches them about personal budgeting, understanding lease obligations, housekeeping and general unit maintenance, being a good neighbor, and how to maintain open communication with their landlords.

The navigators assist participants with the housing search and lease up process. They then provide support for them during the 12 months following lease up to ensure that any issues that arise during their tenancy can be addressed to avoid problems that could lead to eviction. Due to the hard work of shelter and HCV staff, 82% of the participants in this program have remained in their original units following the completion of their first year's lease agreement.

There is a major national effort to address veteran homelessness underway, and Maine has made good progress through a number of initiatives, including HCV Veteran Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) vouchers. These vouchers pair intensive case management through Veterans Administration (VA) with our HCV rental assistance. VA case managers work closely with veterans to find and maintain housing, and are there to assist them indefinitely with any housing-related issues.

Both these programs provide support beyond what we are able to offer through our HCV staff, who have significantly higher caseloads. However, we are in the process of implementing an exciting new approach to case management with our staff here at MaineHousing. With the assistance of consultants from the University of Southern Maine, we have developed a new model in which staff will be trained to assess new HCV participants and to provide a greater level of support to those participants who are identified as needing more assistance to maintain



Lowes representatives talk to landlords at our May outreach event.

May Landlord Outreach Event: Thank you!

Thanks to those landlords who joined us for our event in May in Rockport. We received positive feedback on our speaker, Elaine Bourne from Community Mediation Services, who spoke about practical ways to resolve conflict with and between tenants. She also provided information on the services Community Mediation Services offers landlords to assist them in managing conflict situations in order to maintain tenancies and avoid evictions. Almost everyone left with a door prize. As usual our friends at Lowes (pictured above) offered some impressive bling!

housing stability. By the beginning of 2017, all HCV staff will be fully trained on the new model.

Another resource we offer free to landlords and tenants in the HCV program is mediation and conflict coaching through Community Mediation Services. This assistance from a neutral trained facilitator can help landlords and tenants come to agreements that prevent tenant evictions.

I am optimistic about our ability to end homelessness in Maine, but it will certainly take community support to do so, especially from landlords across the state. By helping to house our homeless voucher holders, landlords are playing an integral role not only in helping individuals and families take charge of their lives, but also in making their communities better places to live.

Congratulations!

MaineHousing welcomes two new property owners to the Owner Excellence Program: **Jeff Foss of II Rent Property Management, LLC**, with 13 units in Madison and Skowhegan, and **John Pedersen**, with three units in Randolph and Whitefield.

For more information on the Owner Excellence Program, contact HCV Inspections Manager Barbara Brann at bbrann@mainehousing.org or (207) 624-5725.

Interested but still unsure? Please give me a call at 624-5712 so that we can talk more about what we offer to help these participants maintain stable housing and begin to rebuild their lives.

'Fall invaders' soon will be looking for warm homes

By Matt Allen
Bug Busterzzz

Whether we want to admit it, fall will be here before we know it. That means it will be time to move our focus from bees, ticks, and mosquitoes and start thinking about the fall invaders. Ladybugs, fleas, box elder bugs, stink bugs, and rodents are some of the more prevalent pests we deal with in this region in the fall. They are all going to be looking to relocate to a warmer climate (your home!) and avoid the harsh winter temperatures outdoors.

Fleas

Fleas are small blood-sucking insects that can be brought into your home most commonly on pets or rodents. They are dark, reddish-brown in color, approximately 1/16 – 1/8-inch long, and are excellent jumpers. While fleas do need to feed to reproduce, adult fleas are able to live for long periods without feeding.

Rodents

Mice and rats are rodents that are large pest problems in the fall. Most rodents tend to be active at night. Because most of their activity is at night, it can be difficult to identify what is in your home. Some signs to watch for: grimy rub marks at the base of walls, signs of gnawing, and droppings (mouse droppings are about 1/4-inch long while a rat's will be 1/2 - 3/4-inch long).

Rats eat and contaminate food along with causing damage to homes and transmitting disease. They will make a home anywhere they have access to food and shelter and need a hole as small as 1/2-inch in diameter.

While mice are much smaller than rats, they are just as damaging to a home. They are excellent climbers and can scale vertical walls as long as they are rough or textured. They will eat just about anything and require very little water. They are known

for chewing up furniture and wiring. In addition to structural damage, they can also spread diseases to humans and pets.

Ladybugs

Ladybugs are beetles that can come in a wide variety of colors. The adults will try to get into the home before the first frost of the season. They have a tendency to emit an unpleasant odor when irritated. Some people do find they have an allergic reaction such as sneezing due to exposure to the ladybugs. While they do not cause any damage to homes, pets, or humans, they can still be a nuisance due to the large numbers that can invade a home.

If you find yourself having to deal with any of these pests or any others, call Bug Busterzzz Pest Control & Wildlife Services at (207) 649-1596. We will create a plan to eradicate the problem and prevent it from happening again!

Together, MaineHousing and landlords can make homes lead safe

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- Landlord agrees to maintain tenant income eligibility for a period of five years after the abatement activity.

Applications for abatement services will be reviewed by the community action agency covering the location in Maine. Factors in prioritizing projects include the presence of children under the age of 6 and documented venous elevated lead levels of > 5 ug/dl.

All landlords, whether participating in this program or not, should consider seeking out the services of a certified lead abatement professional to eliminate lead in their units.

If a landlord, property maintenance staff or contractor is working at a property known to have lead-based paint and will be disturbing more than six square feet of contaminated surface, they must be Lead-Safe Certified under the EPA's Lead-Based Paint Renovation, Repair and Painting (RRP) Rule. Failure to comply could result in heavy government fines and civil liability.

For more information on RRP and the Lead Hazard Control Program, please view, email, or call the resources in the box.

For More Information

The EPA's Lead-Based Paint Renovation, Repair and Painting (RRP) Rule: www.epa.gov/getleadsafe .

MaineHousing's Lead Hazard Control Program: mainehousing.org and query "lead".

Questions: Daniel Drost, Manager of Housing and Compliance, at ddrost@mainehousing.org.

For program applications, contact the following community action agencies:

- Aroostook County Action Program, Presque Isle, (207) 764-3721
- Penquis Community Action Program, Bangor, (800) 218-4942
- Community Concepts, Inc., South Paris, (207) 743-7716