

## Indoor Insanity 5K on tap January 18



The Maine Indoor Air Quality Council is sponsoring the Indoor Insanity 5K, a fundraiser to prevent lung cancer through the installation of radon mitigation systems in low-income Maine households.

Join the Indoor Insanity on Sunday, January 18, at the Colby College Field House in Waterville.

The event will be indoors, with no ice underfoot or frigid gusts in one's face or snow to avoid. Participants will be running in circles – 25 times in fact! – and will have to jockey for position amid other runners. Walkers are welcome, and there will be a dedicated lane for them. Also a Kids Fun Run is planned!

There will be music, camaraderie, and lots of running!

To minimize injury and “traffic jams”, runners can pick their preferred heat based on their average personal running speed.

- Heat # 1 - for the fastest runners (15-20 minutes 5K): Field will be limited to 30 runners. First come, first served sign ups;
- Heat #2 - for the intermediate runners (20-27 minute 5K): Field will be limited to 75 runners. First come, first served sign ups;
- Heat #3 - for runners of any level willing to take on the chaos.

The race will be professionally chip-timed for accurate individual lap and finish times.

The cost to register is \$25. Please register by midnight January 7 to receive a T-shirt. (Long-sleeved performance T's given to fund raisers; short-sleeved cotton T's for race-only participants.) Prizes will be awarded to top fund raisers.

Register at: <https://runsignup.com/Race/ME/Waterville/IndoorInsanity5K>.

Maine State Housing Authority (“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.



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## Mainely Landlords

# Mainely Landlords

For landlords with tenants who have Housing Choice Vouchers from MaineHousing

Fall 2014

[www.mainehousing.org](http://www.mainehousing.org)



## MaineHousing launching new Owner Excellence Program

MaineHousing’s Housing Choice Voucher Program is happy to announce the launch of the new Owner Excellence Program in 2015.



This initiative will recognize and reward owners who have exceptional property management skills and demonstrate a high level of dedication to their properties and their tenants.

Membership benefits include:

- Paid membership fee to your local landlord organization
- Self-certification of minor Housing Quality Standards fail items
- Exclusive inspection scheduling and consolidation inspections for multiple units
- Participation in the Security Deposit Program
- Owner Excellence Program seal on [MaineHousingSearch.org](http://MaineHousingSearch.org) advertisements

- Invitation to meet with MaineHousing staff twice a year
- An Owners’ Manual
- Recognition in *Mainely Landlords* newsletter

Owner Excellence Program participants:

- Have been an active property owner/manager with the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program for the past 12 months
- Follow Maine laws regarding security deposits
- List their units on [MaineHousingSearch.org](http://MaineHousingSearch.org)
- Are registered or in the process of registering for MaineHousing’s Direct Deposit Program and Partner Portal
- Are in good standing with utility companies for landlord-provided utilities, including no tenant complaints regarding utilities
- Provide valid proof of ownership for all HCV Program units

Owner Excellence Program participants **DO NOT:**

- Owe MaineHousing any outstanding money

And **DO NOT HAVE:**

- A history of abatements
- A history of Fair Housing violations
- Any serious complaints on file with MaineHousing in the last 12 months
- A history of failure to enforce the lease or follow the HAP, or fail to manage a unit
- A history of or pending foreclosure(s) for any HCV Program unit
- Any liens or owed back taxes on any HCV Program unit

MaineHousing will kick off the program by sending an application to landlords who have had a lease with an active tenant in the HCV program for the past year and who have not had any abatement of their housing assistance payment in the last 12 months.

## Changes in inspections effective October 1

With the approval of the new Housing Choice Voucher Administrative Plan, two MaineHousing policy inspection items have been expanded upon and a new inspection item has been added. These items will affect inspections beginning October 1, 2014. They are:

Hard-wired with battery back-up smoke detectors must be installed on all floors including the basement and enclosed

interior common hallways in apartment buildings with 3 or more units.

Double-key deadbolt locks are not allowed to be installed in any egress door of a unit or common areas of the building that provide mutual access.

All units and buildings must be clearly and properly numbered.

353 Water Street  
Augusta, ME 04330-4633



## Your tenant may be eligible for fuel assistance; must show lease

This is the time of the year when low-income renters or homeowners apply for heating assistance under the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). MaineHousing assisted more than 40,000 households with heating benefits last year.



For more information about LIHEAP, please visit [www.mainehousing.org](http://www.mainehousing.org) and select "energy."

Low-income households who pay more in rent to cover heat as well as those who pay their own heating costs can apply for LIHEAP and receive a determination of eligibility. Applications are taken by appointment at the nine community action agencies statewide from mid-August until April 30, 2015. In most cases, the benefits are sent directly to the household's selected fuel dealer. Low-income tenants who pay a higher rent to cover heating costs directly receive the benefit.

MaineHousing typically receives its LIHEAP funding in mid-November and begins distributing benefits shortly thereafter.

Landlords play a crucial role in ensuring the LIHEAP application process goes smoothly because they give their tenants a signed and dated rental/lease agreement, a document renters are required to show at their LIHEAP appointment. Landlords: the agreement must include the following information:

- Landlord name
- Tenant name
- Property address
- Rental amount
- Total number of people in the residence as well as a list of all names
- Name of person who is responsible for paying the electricity and heating costs
- Type of fuel that is used for heating the property
- Signatures of both the landlord and the tenant
- Agreement must be dated

If for any reason there is not a rental/lease agreement in effect at the time of application, or the current agreement does not contain the required information, the community action agency will provide the tenant with a Verbal Rental/Lease Agreement for completion by the landlord.

New this heating season are changes in the federal law regarding the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The change has to do with what is called the Full Standard Utility Allowance and only applies to people living in subsidized housing whose rent payment includes electricity. When meeting with the Department of Health and Human Services to re-certify for food supplement benefits, these tenants now need to show that they actually received more than \$20 in LIHEAP assistance in the 12 months to claim the deduction or they face a significant decrease in food supplement benefits. MaineHousing is distributing \$21 to each eligible tenant. In order to do that, the tenants need to make an appointment with a community action agency and apply for LIHEAP a couple of months before their food benefit certification appointment or by the end of April, the deadline to submit LIHEAP applications, if their appointment is next summer.

### Free educational series to focus on healthy housing

MaineHousing, and Augusta Housing and Waterville Housing authorities are joining together to present a Healthy Housing seminar series for landlords and property management professionals.

The goal is to promote improved housing stability through collaboration and education.

This free educational series will run from fall 2014 through spring 2015 and will cover a wide range of topics such as: understanding radon law; identifying and mitigating lead-paint hazards; creating smoke-free housing; eliminating bed bugs; and identifying and addressing Life Safety Code deficiencies in existing apartment buildings.

Our kick-off seminar, "Biohazard and Disaster Preparedness", will be Wednesday, November 5, from 2-5 p.m. at the Augusta City Center lecture hall, 16 Cony Street, Augusta. This training, facilitated by 24 Trauma Rescue, will help housing professionals better understand the biohazards created by incidents such as suicide, crime scenes, unattended deaths, hoarding, meth labs, and others, plus learn about the legal requirements relating to clean up.

24 Trauma is a New England-based emergency response and full-service disaster restoration company with more than 20 years' experience.

Free registration can be completed by emailing Amanda Bartlett at [abartlettaha@roadrunner.com](mailto:abartlettaha@roadrunner.com).

## Why an owner should join an apartment owners association

As an apartment owner, you may ask yourself whether it's worth it to join an apartment owners association. It is. The benefits are too numerous not to, including having a say on landlord-related legislation, vendor relationships, and forms.

One of the biggest things the apartment owners associations do is give an apartment owner a voice, whether it is with local town councils, the state legislature, or various government agencies. Apartment owners associations can be active in effecting legislation. Landlords are impacted by many issues such as heat and other utility costs, taxes, repair and maintenance, and even local jobs. Involvement in legislation helps inform the public and our elected officials about issues impacting the ability to provide both safe and affordable housing. Associations also can ask for clarifications in laws so that both tenants and landlords understand them. It is easier to comply with a law that is clear.

Associations, too, will fight laws that place an undue burden on landlords. By having a voice at the legislature, apartment owners can make sure that the laws that get passed are reasonable, balancing both the benefits to tenants and the burdens on landlords.

**By Dan Bernier,  
Attorney for Central Maine  
Apartment Owners Association**

Apartment owner associations also keep current on Maine laws. We are seeing constant changes in landlord/tenant law whether it is in regard to bed bugs, radon, therapy pets or a host of other issues. An apartment owners association can keep its members informed of the changes in the law so a landlord does not get blindsided.

Going forward, one of the things that apartment owners associations are working on is developing a way for apartment owners to screen tenants. This needs to be done carefully so no laws are violated, but some way to know if a tenant has been evicted in the past would be helpful. This is still a work in progress. Containing the frequency of evictions will benefit not only the apartment owner but also good tenants. Good tenants must shoulder the cost of evictions indirectly through higher rents charged to cover those costs, and by having to deal with disruptive neighbors.

To assist with the eviction process, some apartment owners associations will offer forms such as eviction notices and leases that their members can use. This is important as Maine law has unique

features that can't be found on cookie-cutter forms. Often when someone just goes online and downloads an eviction notice from some national website, the eviction notice will not comply with Maine law. If the eviction is contested, the landlord could lose the eviction proceeding because these leases often contain provisions not allowed under Maine law. An association that will maintain a set of forms that are updated to comply with Maine law is a major benefit to apartment owners.

By pulling landlords together, apartment owners associations can help apartment owners save money. Associations develop relationships with vendors frequently used by landlords, such as hardware stores, cleaning and construction services, and others to secure discounts. Associations also negotiate with oil dealers, and arrange special rates with attorneys for evictions and forming LLCs.

Most apartment owner associations have annual meetings, education seminars, and other opportunities to network and collaborate with other landlords. Joining your local apartment owners association helps add your voice to the voices of the many others who have already joined, making all stronger.

### Prepare your units for winter using this checklist

Getting your property ready for winter is very important and some of the following tips could potentially save you money:

- Install storm windows and doors, if applicable. If exterior storm windows are installed, be sure that a least one window in each bedroom is left so that it will open in case of an emergency.
- Wrap pipes in foam insulation to protect against freezing.
- Have the furnace or boiler professionally serviced. This will allow the furnace to run efficiently and effectively, saving on heating costs.
- Make sure all windows and doors are air tight by installing weather stripping.
- Reduce risk of fire by having the chimney cleaned.
- Install new batteries in all smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors.
- Make sure windows properly close and lock. Inspect for damaged caulking or cracks.
- Check pipes, vents, walls, ceilings, floors, under sinks, and in basements for gaps, cracks or holes. Fill them with insulating foam sealant or silicone.