

ANNUAL  
CONFERENCE  
& SHOWCASE  
**OCTOBER 27 - 29**

VIRTUAL  
**2020**

Hello  
Landlords!

Communications: Integrated Campaign



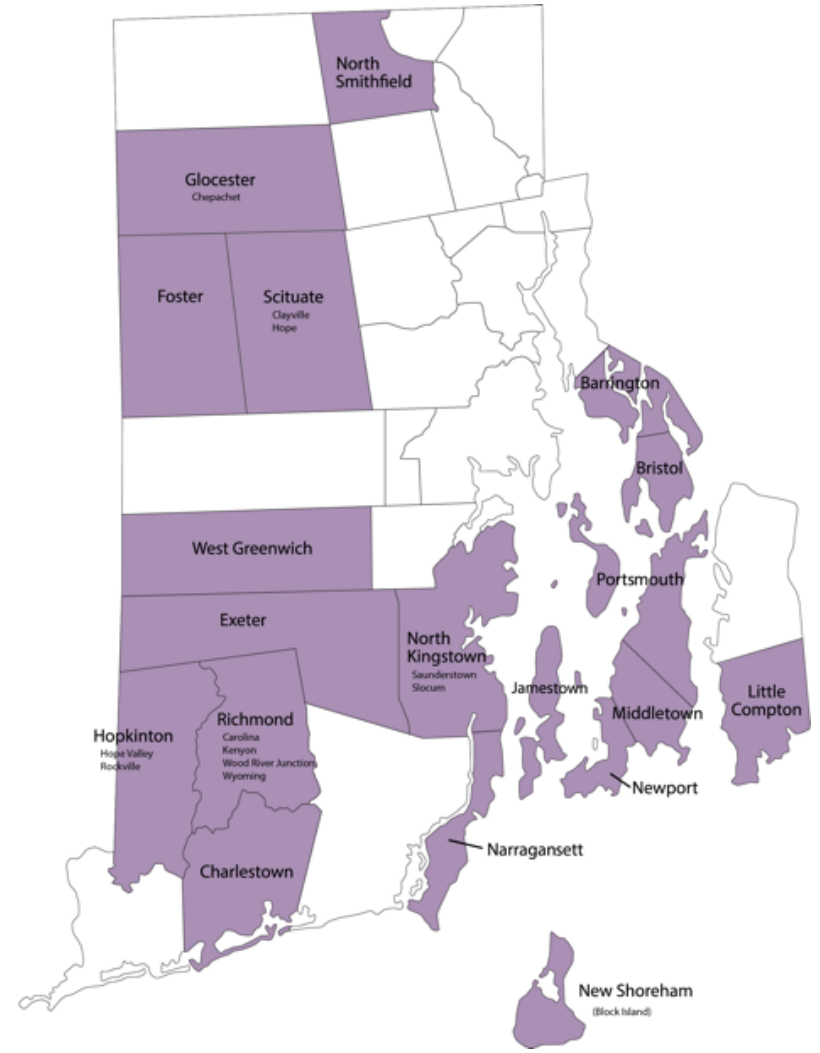
# “Hello Landlords!” Campaign



- Starting in early 2019 - Integrated campaign to increase landlord participation in the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program
- Encompassed market research, branding, advertising, and events

# Why “Hello Landlords!”?

- HCV Program – provides rental assistance (previously known as Section 8)
- Jurisdiction of 19 Rhode Island municipalities
- Challenges for tenants with vouchers to find available apartments



# Getting feedback to get focused

- Landlord focus groups & surveys
  - ✓ Unaware of the Program
  - ✓ Market rents higher than HUD Fair Market Rents
  - ✓ Preconceived notions about the program
- Research into other PHAs and HFAs on what we could replicate



Thank you for partnering with RIHousing by renting to families who received assistance through the Housing Choice Voucher Program.

Now more than ever, Rhode Islanders need a safe place to live.

**WE NEED YOUR INPUT**

RIHousing is interested in learning what financial incentives might encourage landlords to continue [renting to participants in the Housing Choice Voucher \(HCV\) Program](#), or might encourage landlords to lease additional units through the program.

**We greatly appreciate your input and feedback.**

**Take our short survey today.**

*Your responses will be confidential. Thank you for completing this survey.*

If you have any questions, or would like to learn more about the HCV program, please contact [landlords@rihousing.com](mailto:landlords@rihousing.com).

# Time to make a change

Information wasn't getting across to landlords



## COMMITMENT MADE

Use agency resources to expand landlord participation

– joint commitment between Leased Housing and Policy/Communications

# Comprehensive outreach plan to increase landlords



## • Highlight key features of program:

- ✓ Guaranteed rent
- ✓ Support for landlords and tenants
- ✓ Dispelling myths

# PLAN AND ROLL OUT: “Hello Landlords!” Brand

- Strong identity, bright, appealing
- Less bureaucratic, more engaging and supportive
- RIHousing and HCVP are ‘not what you think’



# PLAN AND ROLL OUT: Outreach/Marketing Materials

**rihousing** | HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM  
Frequently Asked Questions

**What is the Housing Choice Voucher Program?**  
The Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program, formerly referred to as Section 8, is the federal government's major program for helping eligible households rent safe, healthy and affordable homes by paying some or all of a tenant's rent and utility costs. Administered by public housing authorities (PHAs), the program assists low-income individuals and families in being able to afford renting in a privately owned, market rate rental unit. RIhousing serves as a PHA for 19 communities in Rhode Island and administers housing choice vouchers in those municipalities.

**How does the HCV Program work?**  
Once a tenant is issued a voucher, they search for a unit that meets their needs and where the owner agrees to rent to them. The HCV Program pays a portion or all of a tenant's rent, to help make their housing costs more affordable. Tenants typically pay between 30% - 40% of their income for rent and utilities, and RIhousing pays the rest.

**How much rent can I charge?**  
It is up to property owners to determine the asking amount of rent for their units. Under program guidelines, the rent must be reasonable when compared to similar units in the area where the unit is located. If a unit's rent is considered unreasonable, the tenant will be unable to rent it with their voucher. Please note that landlords cannot charge tenants with a voucher more than they would charge a tenant without a voucher.

**Can I screen tenants with a voucher?**  
Yes, landlords are encouraged to screen tenants with vouchers as they would screen any other tenant. It is illegal to discriminate against any tenant due to race, ethnicity, sex, gender, marital status, presence of children or disability.

**Will RIhousing inspect my unit?**  
Yes, all units that are rented with a housing choice voucher must be inspected before a tenant can move in. Currently, all units must be vacant at the time of inspection, which ensures that all aspects of the unit can be fully inspected. This rule also ensures that appropriate social distancing can be in effect for inspections. After that, so long as the unit passes inspection, units are inspected every two years for as long as the tenant lives there. Units are inspected to ensure that they are safe, sanitary and up to code.

**Can I evict a tenant if they have a voucher?**  
Yes, landlords can evict a tenant with a voucher in accordance with state and local laws. It is extremely rare that participants in RIhousing's HCV Program are evicted. Landlords are encouraged to contact RIhousing if they are having any issues with a tenant.

For more information, visit:  
[RIhousing.com/Landlords](http://RIhousing.com/Landlords)

## STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

### For Participating in the HCV Program

- 1 Find a Tenant**  
Eligible tenants are issued a voucher and will contact property owners directly. Property owners can list their available rental units with RIhousing on [housingchoice.org](http://housingchoice.org). To do this, or for more information, contact Ingrid Sullivan at (401) 277-2582 or [landlord@rihousing.com](mailto:landlord@rihousing.com).
- 2 Approve a Tenant**  
Property owners are encouraged to screen potential tenants based on tenancy history, including factors such as:
  - Past rent and bill-paying history
  - History of caring for property
  - Respecting the rights of others to peaceful enjoyment of the property
  - Compliance with essential conditions of tenancy
 It is a property owner's responsibility to screen individuals/family suitability as a tenant. Property owners should screen participants in the Program as they would any other tenant. Security deposits are the tenant's responsibility, but the amount charged cannot exceed one month's rent.





# PLAN AND ROLL OUT: Outreach/Marketing Materials

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## Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP)

*Being a Landlord: Know*

### How does the program work?

**LANDLORD**

**TENANT**  
Annual Income: ~\$10,000  
Monthly Income: ~\$750

**PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY**

RENT \$1,000

Tenant pays 30%-40% of their income towards rent. RIHousing pays the remainder.

PowerPoint

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PARTNER WITH RIHOUSING'S HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM

## HAVE A VACANT RENTAL UNIT ?

We are offering landlords:  
\$2,000 for the first apartment rented with the program,  
\$500 for each new unit thereafter.

**SIGN UP TODAY!**

[RIHousing.com/Landlords](https://rihousing.com/Landlords)

**What is the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program?**

- Federally funded program administered by RIHousing
- Provides rental assistance to eligible families
- RIHousing pays a portion of each tenant's monthly rent
- The landlord is paid directly and promptly every month

Social Media

**rihousing**

We are offering landlords:

**\$2,000** for the first apartment rented with the program,  
**\$500** for each new unit thereafter.

## HAVE A VACANT RENTAL UNIT?

**SIGN UP TODAY!**

# PLAN AND ROLL OUT: Website & e-Blasts

**Hello Landlords!**

*A Quarterly e-News for Property Owners* - January 2020

As we begin 2020, we're excited to share this inaugural e-newsletter for property owners with you! We hope you find it informative and helpful in your role as a landlord. Please share any thoughts, suggestions for future topics, or questions you'd like answered as we plan for future editions.

**HCV Program Overview**

RIHousing serves nearly 1,430 families through the [Housing Choice Voucher Program \(HCVP\)](#) across the state of Rhode Island.

Housing Choice Vouchers are provided to qualifying families who can then choose and lease affordable, privately-owned rental housing.

RIHousing seeks property owners to partner and make their rental properties available to HCVP participants.

**We Need You!**

As the need far exceeds the supply, RIHousing is in need of property owners who would like to partner and rent their available units to HCVP voucher holders.

If you have an available unit(s) or would like more information on the program, please contact Knijla Sallman, Housing Stabilization Coordinator at 401-277-1562 or [ksallman@rihousing.com](mailto:ksallman@rihousing.com).

**Landlord Resources**

**► Available Units? Get the Word Out!**  
Don't forget you can advertise your vacant unit(s) on [HousingSearchRI.org](#) for free! It's an online housing locator created to help tenants find housing and property owners fill vacancies.

**► It's getting cold outside: Weatherizing your property**  
It's that time of year again. It's a season where property owners should consider weatherizing their property to prevent costly repairs in the future. Check out the [weatherization topics and resources provided by the U.S. Department of Energy](#).

Buyers Owners Renters **rihousing** Partners About Us Mortgage Login Español

## Landlords

Thousands of property owners in Rhode Island are Housing Choice Voucher Program landlords. The Housing Choice Voucher Program not only provides needed housing for thousands of families, but offers financial rewards for property owners, including direct deposit and rents that are guaranteed.

**Have a vacant rental unit or want to learn more? Sign up today.**

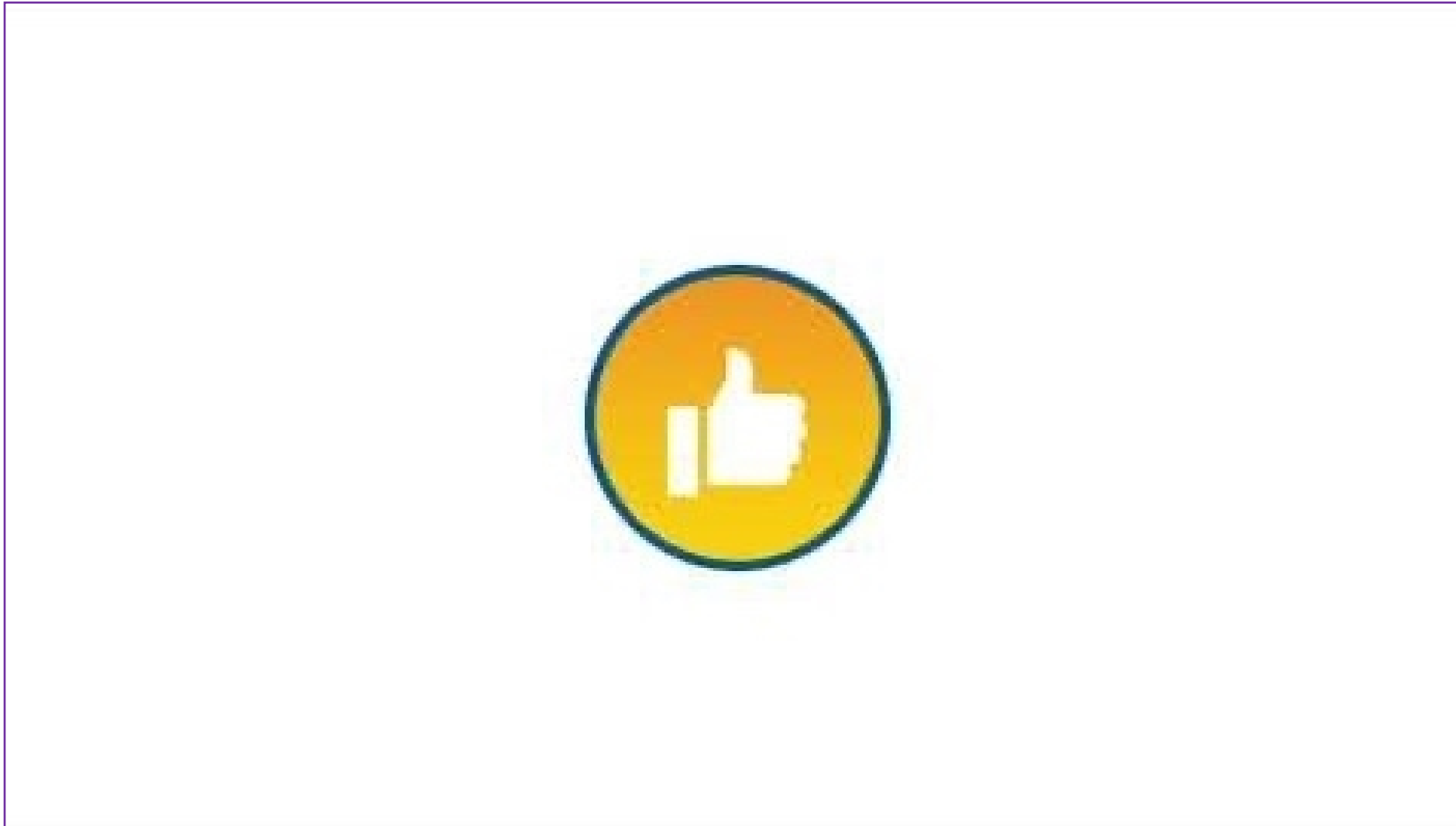
**Learn More About How to Become a RI...**

### What is the Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP)?

- Federally funded program administered by RIHousing
- Provides housing assistance to eligible families
- Enables families to obtain safe, healthy homes
- Subsidy provided for a portion of each tenant's monthly rent

- ✓ Promoting additional resources
- ✓ Regular COVID-19 communications
- ✓ Surveys

# PLAN AND ROLL OUT: **Landlord Video**



# PLAN AND ROLL OUT: Informational Sessions & Events

**rihousing**  
**Are you a Landlord?**  
 RIhousing wants to work with you.  
 Join us for a special event.  
 Wednesday, November 6, 2019  
 5:30 - 7:30pm  
 Eleven Forty Nine  
 1149 Division Street  
 Warwick, RI 02818

Interested and want to know more?  
 Knijia Sailsman  
 401-277-1562  
 ksailsman@rihousing.com

RIhousing.com



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**Landlord Information Session**

Join us for an information session to learn how RIhousing partners with landlords across the state.

Come out and meet our staff and learn more!  
*Light refreshments served.*

We'll provide an overview of:

- Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program
- Program incentives
- Answers to frequently asked questions about the program

[Watch to learn more about becoming a HCV Program Lanlord!](#)

[Learn more](#)

# Outcomes

- High marks for new design and creativity
- Had to create special [landlords@rihousing.com](mailto:landlords@rihousing.com) email and increased support from staff
- Leasing **increased 8.4%** between January 2019 to summer 2020 – 130 units – new and current landlords

# Impact of COVID-19

Event cancellations, but...

- Increased email and mail communications
  - E-newsletters
  - Mailings
  - Updates to website
  - Online “live” chat event
  - Upcoming landlord webinar



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**With a Landlord Live Chat**

Hi! How can we help you today?  
Please let us know what we can help you with today.

• Questions about the Housing Choice Voucher program?

• Looking to find a tenant during this health emergency?

• Would you like to learn more about HousingSearchRI?

Whatever your housing-related question is – we will be here to chat.

**TUESDAY**

**APRIL 21, 2020**

**10 AM - 12 PM**

Join us for our first-ever live web chat on Tuesday, April 21. RIhousing staff will be available to answer any questions or concerns you may have about being a Housing Choice Voucher Program landlord.

As this is a first for us, please be patient as we try and respond to as many questions as we can using this new technology.

You can access the chat on your phone, tablet, or computer at:

[www.RIHousing.com/Landlords/](http://www.RIHousing.com/Landlords/)



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Now more than ever, Rhode Islanders need a safe place to live.

There are many families struggling to find an apartment. If you have a vacant apartment, this is one way you can help.



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**Hello Landlords!**

Thank you for your participation as a landlord in the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program, providing a safe and affordable place for your tenants to live. HUD recognizes the challenges that both tenants and landlords face during this difficult time. The HCV program remains a reliable source of rental income for landlords, while providing a stable home for participants.

As the CARES Act Eviction Moratorium ends on July 24, 2020, HCV landlords can play a crucial role in reducing housing instability. Many local or state eviction moratoria and other tenant protections may still be in effect, so it is important for you to be aware of the laws in your jurisdiction. Also, as a reminder, all HCV tenants have the option of repaying unpaid rent in a lump sum by July 24 and cannot be charged late fees or interest for rent due in the months of April, May, June, and July of 2020.

# Questions?

**Stacy Wasserman** | *Project Manager*  
RIHousing  
[swasserman@rihousing.com](mailto:swasserman@rihousing.com)