updated 3/10/2021

UNITED WAY OF CENTRAL MARYLAND S.T.E.P. PILOT SYNOPSIS

Strategic **T**argeted **E**viction **P**revention

CORE COMPONENTS OF THE S.T.E.P. MODEL

The STEP Program is an innovative public-private partnership that proactively targets rental assistance to at-risk households in vulnerable communities. Objective data is used to identify priority zip codes or "hot spots" with high rates of COVID, evictions, and structural/racialized poverty. In order to move funds quickly and efficiently, the program bundles delinquent accounts for bulk eviction prevention, with as many as 65 past-due accounts being addressed with a single lump-sum payment. The process is landlord-driven, meaning that landlords collect documents from tenants and submit them to UWCM for review. The 10-week pilot launched on December 4, 2020. Large landlords with 200+ units were invited to participate in the pilot, which focused on class C and D apartment communities in order to reach concentrations of low-income renters. Households with at least one senior and/or child were eligible.

LANDLORDS AGREED TO

- Forgive 20% of past-due rent
- Waive late fees and court fees
- Dismiss any active court case
- Not file for eviction for a uniform length of time (regardless of the amount of settlement)

"When the pandemic hit, we knew a more proactive strategy was required. This innovative program provided relief to housholds who would have faced catastrophe had they been evicted."

- John Riehl, Obrecht-Riehl Properties

TOPLINE OUTCOMES OF THE 10-WEEK PILOT

- **22** landlords participated, representing **91** apartment communities
- **935** households were served
- **2,898** individuals served, including **1,566** children
- **$4M** in rental assistance provided
- Average of **$400K** and **94** households per week
- At peak (first week of January), **$200K** and **50** households per day
- Average of **$4,278** of assistance per household (roughly the equivalent of 4 months of rent)
- Program was run by **3 staff** and **2 volunteers**

THE BLUEPRINT FOR SUCCESS – LESSONS LEARNED & BEST PRACTICES

- Program complemented ongoing tenant-based, individual-household programs
- Race equity data was used for determining how communities were prioritized (as a result, **82%** of those served were Black/NonHispanic, **6%** were LatinX.)
- Outreach conducted to eligible accounts even before they asked for assistance
- Landlords were involved in program design and consulted throughout the pilot
- UWCM served as neutral 3rd party between landlords, tenants, and government
- UWCM could connect with tenants who had closed themselves off to landlords and government
- 211 was able to assist tenants to address barriers, answer questions, or refer to other programs
- Bulk eviction prevention increased the program's appeal and bargaining power
- Settlement summaries from UWCM were sent directly to tenants to ensure accountability

For more information or questions, contact Scott Gottbreht at Scott.Gottbreht@uwcm.org

United Way of Central Maryland