FamilyPromise

Keys to Good Tenancy Best Practices

Overview

Keys to Good Tenancy is a curriculum created by the National Association of Realtors in conjunction with Family Promise. The curriculum was created using feedback from Family Promise Affiliates, National Staff, and the Family Promise Guest Advisory Council, who reviewed the program and then piloted the program on their own.

The goal of the Keys to Good Tenancy program is simple. To help the families gain the knowledge and skills they need to be good tenants so that they can make the transition from homelessness to a stable home environment. Successful completion of the program requires that both the participants and facilitators are committed to this goal.

The goal of this best practices document is to help you gain the commitment from both the facilitators and the participants to ensure success. This document utilizes feedback that was received from the Affiliates that piloted the program as well as facilitators. We hope that this will serve as a resource for Affiliates using this curriculum in the future.

Thanks to the Pilot Affiliates!

- Family Promise of Coastal Alabama, Inc.
- Family Promise of Colorado Springs
- Family Promise of Davie County
- Family Promise of Gainesville, Florida, Inc.
- Family Promise of Greater Modesto
- Family Promise of Hall County
- Family Promise of Lawrence
- Family Promise of Moore County
- Family Promise of the Lower Cape Fear
- Interfaith Hospitality Network of Athens

Content

Planning

Picking Participants

First question to ask is for whom are you hosting these trainings for. Determining who will be the participants will help with the other planning and scheduling. While this program can be utilized for different audiences and mixed groups, below are some of the standard audiences and notes.

Current Guests or People in Prevention Programs	• Can be integrated into an existing case management program • These are also participants who would benefit from the introductory aspects of the training, including finding rentals
Graduates	• This is a larger base to reach out to and they already have Family Promise connections • They have likely already rented a home, but may benefit from the second part of the training • If there is required case management after graduation, this can be an included aspect
Community Members	• Since the volunteers from this training are from a local Realtor group, they may know of other housing providers that can get involved. This can help you deepen your ties to the realtor, but also get your name out into the community and help more people
Other Non-Profit Partners	• This is another way that you can work with partners and open potential funding opportunities • This helps to increase the size of the training group and share resources to create a more robust program • If there are already life skills trainings in your community, this is also an easy way to plug in

Scheduling

Determining when you are going to start offering this training is half of the battle. Before diving right in, consider some of the following points.

- *Keep in mind your stakeholders availability:* With multiple schedules to coordinate between the students, the realtors, and your staff, stay away from busy seasons where many people are on vacation.
- *Know your busy times of year:* Stay away from the times of year where your organization has grants due or other large commitments.
- *Don't limit yourself:* You don't need to rush the program, leave enough time to recruit students and facilitators to get the most out of the program.
- *Understand your area's real estate climate:* You may live in an area where all the apartment leases end at the same time or where there are a lot of students moving at the end of the summer. Understand these trends so you can avoid times when there is limited housing stock or a diminished pool of Realtors.

One-on-One vs. Group Training Sessions

This training can be offered one-on-one as part of case management, in a classroom setting, or a combination of both. Consider the following pros and cons when determining your course of action.

	Pros	**Cons**
One-on-One	• Easier to schedule • Can base lessons off needs of individual	• Participants don't have opportunity to learn from their peers with discussions • Individual sessions require larger time commitment from the facilitator if training multiple families
Group	• Discussions are productive since students can share their experience and bounce ideas off each other • Not as large of a time commitment for the facilitators	• More schedules to coordinate • Space requirements • The group needs to go at the same pace

Choosing the Modules

The curriculum consists of 8 modules focusing on different aspects of being a Good Tenant, from budgeting and planning to moving in.

While the modules are set to run from 1 to 8 over the course of the program, the exact order, pace, and even use of all 8 can be modified based on your group. Use the skills, timing, and needs of your participants to determine which modules are right for you. Here are some options to consider when choosing which modules to use and when.

- Module 1: Introduction and Setting Goals
- Module 2: Finding a Place to Rent
- Module 3: Understanding Your Lease
- Module 4: Moving Day
- Module 5: Household Budgeting
- Module 6: Cleaning, Organization, and Maintenance
- Module 7: Being a Good Neighbor
- Module 8: Renter's Rights

- *Integrate into an existing program:* If you already have a life skills curriculum consider using these modules as a supplement and fit them as appropriate.
- *Skip modules based on participant experience:* For example, if all your participants are already in a rental you can skip over the modules on finding a place to rent.
- *Be flexible and use the participant feedback:* Once you start the program, use the group to determine the pace. You may find that some of the modules speak to the group more than others and deserve more discussion, while you may be able to speed through others.
- *Utilize the skills of the presenters:* Your trainers may have different skill sets or topics that interest them. For example, you may have a Realtor that has budgeting skills. Use that to your advantage and host the budgeting module when that Realtor is available.

Recruiting

Who should Lead?

Now that you have the training scheduled and you know what you want to talk about, it is time to determine who will be leading the training.

This training was developed in conjunction with the National Association of Realtors, so it is encouraged to recruit your local Realtors to lead the training, but it can be led by any trained volunteer with some background knowledge. The Affiliates that piloted the program also utilized their Case Managers to support the program when Realtors weren't available.

In general, they found that tag teaming the teaching was most beneficial. This could mean multiple Realtors, but also could mean involving both the Case Manager and the Realtor. Having multiple Realtors allows each Realtor to select their strong points and areas of knowledge to present on. It also helps with scheduling because there are different options. Having a Case Manager involved as well allows the training to be hosted one-on-one as necessary. It also takes some pressure off the Realtor from dealing with issues of sensitivity that they may not be fully prepared to handle.

Recruiting and Engaging Realtors

Second only to scheduling, this was one of the most challenging and time-consuming tasks for the Affiliates that piloted the program. Below are some of the tips they used.

Outreach Tactics

- Reach out to people who already have ties to Family Promise such as donors, board members or existing volunteers to lead the trainings. Even if they can't do the training, they may have connections that can.
- Having an existing relationship with a local group of Realtors showed the most successful results, but this is not always possible. Look to existing touch points with local groups of Realtors and see if you can nurture the relationship going forward. Did some Relators donate to a fundraiser or help volunteer at an event? Use this to begin fostering a relationship going forward and build their engagement.
- Do outreach to your local Board of Realtors and offer to present the program's success at a future meeting. Most boards have multiple committees that you can speak with such as those for education, property management, and community outreach. These more targeted groups may be a better fit than the entire board.
- If you can't present at a Board Meeting, see if you can get on one of their email lists to reach a larger base with your message and contact.
- Do targeted outreach specifically to Realtors who have Property Management experience. While it is not necessary to have this experience, they have a better understanding of why this is important and may be an easier sell.

Education

- Educate the realtors that housing is housing and that their mission, to get people into housing is the same as Family Promise. Share stories of your families' successes in housing and remind them what a home means. Let them know that this is a way to expand affordable housing opportunities.

Tips from a Realtor:

- Start out with a small partnership and then allow it to grow.
- Recognize the work that the volunteers are doing and don't forget to thank them!
- Emphasize that this is a logical connection. Both realtors and Family Promise are looking to house people!
- Show the impact of the program and tell stories to engage your audience.
- Connecting with a board is better than working with one individual realtor, because this allows people to speak to their strengths and determine their own level of commitment.
- Identify Realtors based on the modules you are looking to lead and people who have public speaking skills.
- Don't be shy to point out that you have 1000+ supporters who care about what companies share their mission

- Don't let the content and materials scare away potential Realtors. Let them know that even though the theme is preparedness for rentals, they do not need to work in that field to help facilitate the training. Additionally, that the long-term goal, is not staying in a rental, but home ownership.
- If this is a new audience that you are reaching out to, you may need to educate them on Family Promise as an organization and family homelessness as an issue. According to a survey of Family Promise Volunteer nationwide, their top motivations for volunteering are to serve children and families and the importance of the Family Promise mission. Sharing the mission can be very motivating.

Training Volunteers

Especially since the Realtors will be working directly with guests and graduates of your program, it is important that they go through the sensitivity and volunteer trainings you offer. Having a Case Manager or other Family Promise staff member on site during the trainings, helps if there are any questions of a sensitive nature. It is also helpful for the volunteers to run the session multiple times to get an understanding of the content.

Leading

Facilitating Modules

While we have covered some best practices for facilitating the modules, such as offering it in different settings, tag teaming with Case Managers and Realtors, and choosing modules based on the group, there are some additional best practices we wanted to share.

- It is important to put the lesson into practice and have an interactive class. This can be through discussions and questions or even activities.
- Engaging the participants is important to getting people to return and complete the entire session. This should be a time for the guests to share their stories, ask questions, and discuss with others.
- Some of the topics can be hard to have open discussions around, especially within a specific time frame so it is important to set expectations around timing and focus.
- Encouraging students to do homework prepares them for the next session.

Resources

Links to the Resources:

- Facilitator Guides
- Student Guides
- Pre-Assessment
- Post Assessment
- PowerPoint with Modules 1-8

Initially, the materials that were created for this program were just the Facilitator and Student Guides. Piloting the program, Affiliates found that having a PowerPoint or some sort of visual would help their program. So, we created a PowerPoint!

This is a living training and the guides are just a jumping off point. You can use the PowerPoints that were created, or you can create your own. You can also add activities that you think would benefit the program to break up the discussions.

For example, one Case Manager created a "Lease Scavenger Hunt" to give the participants an opportunity to practice reading a lease. She gave them prompts such as, "The first one to find the late fee gets a point," "Find the day your rent is due," or "How many days' notice do you have to cancel your lease and move out?" Remember to share the resources and activities you prepare with us!