

## Landlord Incentive Program for Homeless Individuals

### **I. Introduction**

The City of Morgantown works with community non-profits and social service agencies to help individuals experiencing homelessness get back on their feet and reintegrate into society. While the number of homeless services provided to our community are plenty, many social service agencies struggle when trying to help their clients into permanent housing as they become ready to move on to the next chapter in their life.

In 2020, we completed a housing study that showed a lack of available housing options for very low- and low-income renter households. The lack of available housing serving these lower income households can contribute to renters living in substandard units, being in a cost burdened housing situation, or even possibly becoming homeless again.

In an effort to assist our community partners specializing in homeless housing services and the people that they serve, the City of Morgantown created the Landlord Incentive Program for Homeless Individuals, or LIP. The LIP can get people off the streets, out of shelters and into a place to call home.

### **II. Purpose**

The purpose of the LIP is to provide financial incentives to landlords who rent to individuals experiencing homelessness who are also participants in housing programs offered through the West Virginia Coalition to End Homelessness and/or Bartlett Housing Solutions.

Occasionally, there is hesitation from landlords to be willing to rent to individuals who are experiencing homelessness. Whether it be from a landlord's poor past experiences or simple misconceptions and stereotypes about homelessness, this hesitation often will lead to a lack of viable housing options for those that need it most. The LIP is created to not only offer incentives to landlords, but also provide some comfort in having financial support should damage to a unit occur.

### **III. Benefits**

The LIP is set up to provide benefits to the landlords who work with housing agencies while also supporting those in our community most in need of housing.

#### **a. No advertising Costs**

Working with the LIP gives you access to a pool of ready-to-rent tenants. All that you need to do is contact the West Virginia Coalition to End Homelessness and/or Bartlett Housing Solutions when you have a vacant and eligible unit, and they'll match you with a client that is looking for housing.



**b. Leasing Bonus**

Landlords will receive a \$500 leasing bonus funded by the City of Morgantown for each unit newly leased to an individual experiencing homelessness.

**c. Application Expense Reimbursement**

Financial reimbursement of up to \$25 funded by the City of Morgantown may be paid directly to landlords to cover applicant costs, such as credit report and application fees.

**d. Damage Claim Reimbursement**

Up to \$1,500 is available to reimburse landlords for damage to units in excess of the security deposit. This damage claim reimbursement is funded by the City of Morgantown.

**e. Security Deposit Assistance**

The West Virginia Coalition to End Homelessness and Bartlett Housing Solutions are often able to help their clients pay for any necessary Security Deposits.

**f. Case Management**

The West Virginia Coalition to End Homelessness and Bartlett Housing Solutions provide case managers for all of the individuals they house, conduct regular home visits, ensure that they are keeping their apartment clean and that they are getting the support they need to be successful.

**g. Giving Back**

By helping to house some of our community's most vulnerable population, you are playing an integral role in helping individuals make a better life for themselves, and also making your community a better place to live for all of Morgantown's residents.

**IV. Eligibility Requirements**

The City of Morgantown encourages all landlords that are interested in participating in the program to contact the West Virginia Coalition to End Homelessness (Galiana at 304-476-4717) and/or Bartlett Housing Solutions (Adam at 304-282-2278). There are a few requirements landlords should be aware of to be considered eligible for the LIP funded by the City of Morgantown.

**a. Lease Terms**

Initial lease terms must be at least 12 months in length and accept at least some amount of rental payment through housing vouchers.



**b. Location**

Units must be located within the municipal boundaries of the City of Morgantown to be eligible for the benefits of the LIP.

**c. Unit Inspection and Accommodations**

Units must pass inspection and provide any necessary accommodations required by the West Virginia Coalition to End Homelessness and/or Bartlett Housing Solutions.

**d. Rental Registration**

Units must be registered with the City of Morgantown's Code Enforcement Department and have no outstanding violations. The intent of the rental registration is to ensure the condition, maintenance and occupancy of rental is safe, sanitary, and suitable.

**V. Program Implementation**

While the LIP is funded by the City of Morgantown, we rely on our community partners, non-profits and social service agencies to help implement the program. They have staff who are trained and have the expertise in working with individuals who are or have recently experienced homelessness. All landlords will work directly with the West Virginia Coalition to End Homelessness and/or Bartlett Housing Solutions. Those agencies will request drawdowns from the LIP fund at the City when new units are leased, application costs need reimbursed, or if damages occur beyond what is covered by the security deposit. Payments will be made from the West Virginia Coalition to End Homelessness and/or Bartlett Housing Solutions.