

Research Results - 5/28/13

1. Have you gone or are you trying to go paperless? If so, how are you doing it? (what kind of equipment, programs, etc are you using?) Looking for some guidance to get started.

Mesquite – Yes, HAPPY Housing Pro and iDIA system.

Tatum – we are going pre-application and not doing the application and checks until almost time to make an offer. This is saving on paper, time and cost.

Edinburg – Bought high speed scanners/copiers when the old gets obsolete.

Luling – We are in the process of scanning our tenant folders

Longview – We have recently considered new software such as HAPPY to go paperless. Regardless of your method, be sure to invest in adequate storage to house the software and/or the data.

Schertz – Not gone paperless yet; however, have thought about it since the amount of paper/forms seems to have increased exponentially. But have also thought about so many of the drawbacks. We really just need a very good legal HUD approved requirement/purging schedule so that we do not shred documents that they will need. Or a really user-friendly, cost effective "paper-less" system.

Central Texas Housing Consortium (Temple, Belton) – We started using a software called Docuware several years ago in an effort to reduce the mountain of binders full of dividers and reports we had to store.

The process involves scanning documents to our computer server for storage. This can be done in soft copy by "print to file" directly from our desktop computers. If we have hard copies we need to save, we use a scanner to place them on the server as pdf documents. We then dispose of the hard copies.

We started using Docuware in our Accounting Department first. We thought they would be somewhat resistant, but they love it. Instead of spending lots of time digging through binders if they need to reference an old invoice, report, etc., they simply do a search on Docuware and the document pops up on their computer screen. You configure your search parameters when you set up the program for the various items to be saved.

We now use Docuware to store our housing applications after they are completed on-line using Tenant PI. We are slowly working toward having all resident files in Docuware, so we would be virtually paperless at that time.

There are other software products available – we chose Docuware because of the service our local vendor could provide because we do not have an in-house IT person.

You will need a license for each user in addition to a computer and scanner. We use our in-house server for storage but I think storage in the "cloud" is becoming more common.

If you would like to discuss the process in detail, I would suggest you talk with Cathy Barnes in our office. She was instrumental in getting the program up and running. Her number is 254-773-2009, ext. 202.

Weatherford – is interested in paperless, but we are trying to get it to fit within our budget. HAPPY offers the ability to go paperless with housing pro.

New Boston – Yes, we've been working on paperless for the last two years. It's my five-year goal. We scan all of our current residents, move-outs, denials, etc. Our legal docs, contracts, etc are already scanned. We take online applications through our software company. I only wish we could get electronic signatures with our tenant software.

Kingsville – Implementing ACH through Lindsey Software for Section 8 Payments to Landlords and for Payroll Checks and some monthly recurring checks.

Wichita Falls HAPP – We are looking at paperless in 2 years will be using Housing Pro Software.

Beeville – We are going paperless. If anybody has questions please call me, I want to help.

Tarrant County – We went paperless two years ago. We use Happy Software as our housing software. We have 4 heavy duty high capacity scanners for the clerks and each housing counselor has a small scanner on their desk. Our housing inspectors uses IPAD for their HQS inspections. The IPADs are time saver. Last month we started online Interims and annual re-certification process. We only print documents that needs to be signed by the program participant.

We are a HCV only program and we serve about 2700 families (including port ins).

2. Do you have problems getting tenant participation at resident council/other resident meetings? What do you do to draw them to meetings?

Yes 11

Oh yes, we have a heck of a time getting resident participation. I tried food. That didn't work. Would love to hear what others have found successful!

We have only met with a small committee of about 8 or 9. We invited everyone but only a few RSVP. We provided a small meal.

We have found it almost impossible to get tenants to participate in any thing or return surveys. We have planned parties with food and door prizes and that didn't work very well. The elderly will come to some meeting for resident input . Families don't.

We have a lot of problems getting them to participate. Food, door prizes, etc will sometimes work.

On our FSS Program, We have tried everything(they can bring children, food, little gifts, good presenters, verify of topics and finally threatening letters. They are required participate to receive escrow funds. Even that is not enough. If they do not want to participate, they will not. If our numbers get any lower HUD will not look at us fondly. I would like some fresh ideas, also.

Our elderly site (Section 8 new construction) has a strong resident council, however our Public Housing Site lacks interest to keep a council in place.

Both properties entice residents with snacks, meals and door prizes.

Yes, we have problems with resident attendance. Always have.

Thursday. Elderly/handicapped @ 10:30. Nice showing, but tenants that needed the information did not attend. Family area @ 6 pm. Dismal failure. 3 people showed. A resident board member with his own complaints (none of which should have been addressed in front of others, his wife (she screamed and cussed me) and their daughter. So much for resident meetings. Letters,

sodas, water, cookies, information about upcoming REAC. Guess I'm the only one that cares about our score.

We are beginning to offer informational meetings. This month a home health agency will be giving free blood pressure and O2 saturation screening with a brief explanation of qualification for home health. Also, we will have an insurance representative briefly discuss renters insurance. The home health rep will serve coke floats.

We couldn't get residents to attend until we started having bingo now we have an average of 20 residents that attend.

Bring and announce food and beverages

I have had a terrible time getting tenants to participate. I have been trying to get a resident council together since I've been here but have little to no interest. I would love to hear everyone's tips.

Yes, I don't try any more.

We have 40 PHA Units. Tenants aren't interested in anything having to do with resident council or even just getting together for a party. (Local singing group contacted me and wanted to perform a concert for tenants. They did all of the advertising and contacted all tenants. Only 1 tenant showed up).

We have experienced cycles of good participation to very little. Our participation used to run 35-45 on regular months & 75-95 on Holidays. It depends on the individual Residents & their interests, passions & health. We have lost many of the Residents that used to be very active & the new group seems to stay at home or be more active with outside/family activities. We even have problems at times getting them to the free luncheons. Had to advise them that we might suspend the luncheons if we do not get more participation. This last month we finally got our old number out. We even have them RSVP, but a few months ago, 25 signed up & only 5 showed up. We will have to revise our Luncheon & activities even more now due to lack of funding.

Part of the issue I believe is caused by the opening of the Senior Center in our Community that is great: lots of fun, food & activities, trips, dances, etc. However, they even have had a recent decline in participation when they increased the cost/or now charging a minimal fee to the Seniors. (\$2-3 for lunch, etc).

FEED THEM !

Yes have very little participation in events.

Our Resident Advisory Board meets monthly. I serve lunch from local restaurants. One member is elected from each neighborhood by that neighborhood tenants. This gives them a sense of responsibility and the lunch really helps. I pay for the lunch out of Resident Participation Funds. I figure if I didn't have anything for them to eat, they wouldn't show up and if they don't show up, we won't have a RAB.

We had a Hot Dog social and explained the council meetings are the residents chance to be heard and a chance to have input on annual plan. We have had one meeting since the social and had 15 residents show up and elect a board. This was a huge improvement as far as numbers compared to past attempts, we will see if it continues.

They just don't want to attend. I tried everything?????

I have tried everything. I cannot get one tenant for resident council or draw them to a meeting. Not even with pizza!

Yes, problems with getting people to meetings. Trying to do a lot of outreach with a new ROSS coordinator and proving food and door prizes as incentives. Encouraging their attendance by stating that attendance can be counted as part of their community services requirement.

I have given up, they do not care to participate. I used to know on their doors and the seniors will not come. The young may be at work.

yes, the only thing we have found is to have a meal but we do not have the funds to do so.

Last Christmas I offered three cash drawings of \$50.00 each...we had a packed community room. Otherwise no luck on getting anyone to participate in anything. I can barely get enough board members willing to serve.

Yes. No one wants to serve or make decisions. We tried serving food. Didn't help. They don't want the responsibility.

Yes. We send out flyers letting them know the purpose and how their participation contributes to the Annual Planning process.

We have problems getting resident to attending anything. I have maybe 1/3 of my families attend meetings.

The Resident Council has meetings each in one of the tenant's homes and they have a good time, they eat and discuss things they would like to see happen for the tenants.

We have different events for the month, fun, games, dinners and they pay dues each month.

The residents got together and had a fish fry; good participation; even the community was invited. Each resident donates per event. Just had a Cinco de Mayo party.

Food and prizes always brings tenants to meetings...this can be costly, so we don't do it often!!

I have previously encouraged participation at resident council meetings by creating door knocker type flyers and putting specific information on them pertaining to the council's role, their role, their benefit from participating, contact information and other tid bits. One more thing...light refreshments may also draw people to the meetings. If there is a common issue that people would like to resolve together, that is a big draw as well.