



Tenant File Maintenance and Record Keeping

It is a primary duty of the building manager to ensure that all tenant files are maintained in accordance with the housing owner's standard operating procedures. Many supportive housing owners use multi-sectioned tenant files. Each section has a distinct purpose and set of documents that must be included, in compliance with lenders, funders, government monitors and/or inspectors, such as HUD or the local Housing Authority. In general, the tenant's file should include:

- Rent-up Information-screening and application documents
- The leasing agreement
- Any pet agreement(s)
- The initial Housing Authority inspection checklist
- Any lease addendum or rent amendments
- Unit Inspection Notices and Unit Maintenance Records.
- Incident Reports,
- Tenant Complaints,
- Memos and Letters from Management.
- Legal and Late-Rent Notice-late rent notices and
- All legal correspondence and documents.

The supportive housing tenants' services file should be a separate and confidential file. Building managers and related staff should not have access to these files. For example, the tenants' service or case management plan, record of services utilization, or disability information is confidential. These files must be securely maintained and accessed only as authorized by applicable law, guidelines, regulations, agency policy, and by consent of the tenant.

Supportive housing managers are encouraged to file all new documents promptly in the tenant's file. Documents should be securely fastened in the proper section of the file. The importance of this responsibility revolves around three primary areas:

1. Management should be able to review files in a sensible and standard manner, with the information clearly arranged.
2. These files may be subpoenaed and therefore may be subject to court review.
3. These files may be audited by outside agencies. If they are not properly maintained with all relevant documentation, the organization may be subject to external reprimands, including regulatory, compliance and/or funding difficulties.

Note: This document is included within the *Housing Operations* section of CSH's *Toolkit for Developing and Operating Supportive Housing*, which is available at www.csh.org/toolkit2. This document has been adapted from CSH's *Supportive Housing Property Management Operations Manual*, which is available at www.csh.org/publications.



Sample File Maintenance System

Note: The sample file maintenance system is adapted from information generously provided by Lakefront SRO Corporation in Chicago, Illinois.

Side 1: Current Year and Current Lease

- Current Lease
- Lease Addendum (where applicable)
- Release of Information (HUD forms)
- Subsidy Rider (where applicable)
- 50059 (current annual and all current interim)
- Income Verification
- Medical Expense Documentation
- Banking Statements
- Low-Income Lease Rider
- Zero Income Verification (where applicable)
- Tenant Certification
- Capital Assets/Students
- Lease Addendum for Drug-Free Housing
- Family Responsibility Lease Addendum (where applicable)
- Moderate Rehab Lease Addendum (where applicable)

Side 2: One-Time Documents (move-in documents)

- Tenant Profile Form
- Air Conditioner Rider
- Telephone Rider
- Unit Inspection Form
- Furnishings Form
- Initial Notice of Annual Recertification
- Building Rules
- Audit Checklist
- Section 8 Housing Assistance Payments Form

Sides 3 and 4: Old Re-certifications and Leases

- Oldest on bottom, most recent on top
- Staple each year's information together, separate from the other years.

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Side 5: Internal Property Management Papers

Billing Notices
Adjustments to File
Security Interest Forms

Side 6: Applicant Information (application documents)

Tenant Application
Picture ID
Birth Certificate
Social Security Card
Tenant Alien Card and Information (where applicable)
Declaration of Citizenship (where applicable)
Marriage License/Divorce Papers (where applicable)
Medical Card
Homelessness Verification
Things You Should Know Form
Income Verifications (employers, etc.)
Previous Landlord Verifications
HUD 9887A form (where applicable)
Credit Check
Tenant Screening Sheet

Suggestions for Organizing Tenant Files

1. Staple lease packets together for old re-certifications before putting into the middle of the folder. This way we know which forms go together.
2. If the tenant's copies of the forms come to Management, return them to the tenant.
3. Don't put duplicates of forms in the files.
4. Fold up long forms so nothing sticks out over the end of the file. Not only does this look better but the forms last longer and are more legible, and the unit numbers are visible.