About JOIN

Mission Statement
JOIN exists to support the efforts of individuals and families experiencing homelessness to transition into permanent housing. Our efforts are directed at individuals sleeping outside or in their car in the Portland Metro area. Our service provision is not dependent on age, gender, race, ethnicity, faith, culture, language, sexual identity, specific diagnosis, or identifiable issue.

Equity Statement
JOIN is committed to preserving the dignity, humanity, and uniqueness of each person that we work with on their path back to housing stability. To achieve this, we will:
- Strive to ensure that all of our programs and services are equitable in both access and outcomes regardless of a person’s race, ethnicity, faith, culture, language, disability, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or family status.
- Operate with the knowledge that certain communities are significantly over-represented among those experiencing homelessness in Portland/Multnomah County and that there are disparities in outcomes for members of those communities.
- Pursue effective strategies and devote dedicated time and resources at every level of our organization to address disparities.
JOIN’s efforts are performed in service to the vision of a community where outcomes cannot be predicated based on a person’s perceived identity.

2018 Service Achievements
- JOIN helped 1,377 individuals transition from homelessness to permanent housing, including 161 families with children.
- 83% of the households we helped into housing retained their housing for at least 12 months.
- JOIN’s Retention Team made more than 10,525 friendly visits to people in their new homes.
- JOIN provided 6,018 instances of landlord or system advocacy.
- JOIN delivered more than 1,500 food boxes to people in their homes.
- JOIN serves an average of 80-100 individuals each day in our Day Space.
- The racial and ethnic breakdown reveals that of the total people housed, 47.4% are Black/African American, 40.6% are White, 7.6% are Latino/Hispanic, 6% are Native American, and 3.2% are Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander.

JOIN HOUSING MODEL:
The most basic, simplified version of how we get a person into housing.

1. Outreach Worker meets a person who is homeless
2. Outreach Worker helps that person overcome barriers and find an apartment
3. Person moves into their housing; a warm handoff between the Outreach & Retention Worker introduces the next phase
4. Retention Worker is available for ongoing support to the household
5. Household and Retention Worker develop an ecomap, building a network of support— independent of JOIN
Origins of the Landlord Recruitment and Retention Team

In 2009, the Veteran’s Administration Secretary, Eric Shinseki, upon the direction of President Barack Obama, set forth the audacious goal of ending veteran homelessness by 2015. Portland joined the national effort by funding several new initiatives to secure housing for veterans experiencing homelessness.

With support from the City of Portland and Multnomah County, JOIN created the Landlord Recruitment and Retention Program (LRRP) in July 2015. The LRRP team was tasked with ending homelessness among veterans by reducing barriers to private market housing.

In 2017, JOIN expanded LRRP to support the broader community of individuals and families experiencing homelessness, including those living outside, in shelters, and in organized camps. Through the expansion, LRRP became an increasingly utilized resource within JOIN and throughout our multi-agency collaboratives.

The LRRP team connects the private housing sector to the public response to end homelessness.

LRRP Team Structure

- **Coordinator**
  - Leads the team, organizes trainings.
  - The Coordinator manages relationships with community partners, landlords, and property managers.

- **Master Lease Specialist**
  - Provides property management for JOIN’s master lease properties. Please refer to page nine for additional information.

- **Data Specialist**
  - Monitors rental market vacancies, assists with housing applications, and tracks outcomes.

- **Recruitment Specialist**
  - Recruits landlords and property managers to grow the network of private market rentals.
Landlord Recruitment & Retention Program (LRRP) Model

1. Identify a Landlord or Property Manager for a partnership
   - Introductions through a JOIN Worker
   - Canvassing potential properties
   - Referrals from other Landlords & Property Managers
   - Networking events

2. Building a relationship with a Landlord or Property Manager while making the business case for working with JOIN
   - Lunch meetings
   - Scheduled check-ins
   - Provide stewardship and thanks
   - Be responsive
   - Offer mediation services

3. Figure out the best partnership between JOIN, LRRP and the Landlord/PM
   - Signed partnership agreement
   - Directory of open apartments, shared with JOIN Workers & clients
   - Master Lease agreements

4. LRRP shares vacancies and open units with JOIN & our service partners
   - Housing workers who receive information: JOIN Outreach, InReach, Mobile Housing Team (Families), Veterans’ System (VA, SSVF)
   - Supporting friends with additional documentation or advocacy in applications

5. A JOIN Friend lives in your rental unit

6. Successful partnerships lead to more successful partnerships... referrals!

The Business Case for Working with JOIN:
- Working with JOIN reduces your burden and risk
- You won’t experience as much turnover in units because tenants have extra support from JOIN Retention Workers
- We help tenants avoid forceable evictions
- Risk mitigation funds available
- JOIN Workers regularly assist clients on move-outs; we also are willing to help restore damaged units

Key:
LL/PM = Landlord or Property Manager
LRRP = Landlord Recruitment & Retention Program
Step 1: Identify a Landlord or Property Manager for a partnership:
How to find rentals for the prospective renters you serve

We work with landlords and property managers throughout the Portland metro region, and meet them through a variety of means:

- **Introductions through a JOIN worker** (or anyone that may have a good relationship with the landlord and/or property manager)
- **Canvassing**— look at OneApp, Craigslist, Zillow, Apartments.com, etc. for rentals that meet the area and/or price range that your renters are interested in
- **Working with industry trade groups**, professional associations, POC community leaders, and faith communities
- **Referrals** from other landlords and/or property managers that you are currently working with
- **Networking events**— host landlord appreciation events, attend educational opportunities that would interest area landlords, become a member of landlord associations, join business associations of interest to landlords in your area, etc.

Rentals that are friendly to people on a fixed income, have flexible income requirements and/or are friendly to accepting payments from voucher programs (for example, Section 8 Housing Choice vouchers)

Rentals that are accepting of the varied journeys people experience on their way to exiting homelessness including the ability to overlook past background barriers

Rentals that can serve a specific population including places that are accommodating of large families and individuals with mobility challenges

Reference Documents:
- LRRP Recruitment Packet
Step 2: Building a relationship with a Landlord or Property Manager by making the business case for working with JOIN

JOIN is actively recruiting landlords and property managers to assist with extending housing opportunities to people experiencing homelessness in our community. The Landlord Recruitment and Retention Program (LRRP) partners with participating landlords and property managers in the community, providing support, and forming partnerships to engender safe and stable housing opportunities for homeless members of our community. For our partner landlords and property managers, we offer the following benefits:

- **Guaranteed Rent/Deposit:** JOIN and our partnering agencies assist prospective tenants with move-in costs—this includes security deposit and first month’s rent
- **Pre-screening:** We offer assistance with filling your vacant units with people who are eager to succeed, and pre-screen them using Pacific Screening
- **Proactive Support:** Supportive services are provided for tenants being housed; we provide ongoing case management. Case managers conduct regular home/office visits to ensure that tenants are stabilized in their new environment, and provide assistance with job placement and benefits acquisition. For tenants who encounter financial difficulty, assistance with eviction prevention is offered
- **Renters Insurance:** If required, one year of renters insurance will be provided for prospective tenants. We believe this approach allows both tenant and agency to work with landlords and property managers to identify and solve any issue/conflict that may jeopardize the tenant’s housing stability. LRRP provides renters insurance for all of our master lease renters and can provide renters insurance for one year where landlords require this coverage
- **Neutral Mediation:** If problems arise related to the tenant’s housing stability, landlords and property managers may contact the tenant’s case manager for assistance, and are provided a 24-hour call number, staffed by LRRP, to call for assistance with mediating issues/concerns. Please note, this partnership recognizes landlords/property managers, tenants, and agencies as equal partners and all as valuable customers; therefore, mediation is done through neutrality, respecting and valuing the importance of all parties
- **Tenant Education:** All prospective tenants receive ongoing education—this includes topics such as personal budgeting, housekeeping and being a good neighbor
- **Risk Mitigation Funds:** LRRP offers a risk mitigation fund to our partner landlords of up to $3,000 per tenant where tenancies don’t work out. Mitigation funds are provided for participating landlords/property managers where tenancies do not work out. Landlords/property managers may access risk mitigation funds for documented damages to a unit beyond the tenant’s security deposit. Said funds may also be applied toward eviction and court fees, as well as restoring damaged units
LRRP and Equity

JOIN has been committed to actively targeting and addressing equity, inclusion, and racial disparities for our service users, staff, and community since 2013. Our commitment and efforts were strengthened when we identified working toward becoming an anti-racist organization as one of our main objectives in our new strategic plan in the fall of 2016. JOIN recognizes that anti-racism is a process more than a destination. As an organization we are committed to the long-term work of moving toward anti-racism and reducing disparities.

In 2018, the following wording was added to the LRRP formal Partnership Agreement for Landlords and/or Property Managers:

JOIN has a deep commitment to equity and inclusion and is striving to become an anti-racist organization. To that end, JOIN has a zero tolerance policy for discriminatory or oppressive behavior, language, or symbolism based on race, ethnicity, faith, culture, language, disability status, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, citizenship or immigration status, or family status. This expectation applies to JOIN staff, the people JOIN serves as well as our community partners. The landlord/property manager will comply with these expectations in all their interactions with JOIN staff, partner agencies, and tenants. The landlord/property manager will work with JOIN staff to address any issues of discriminatory or oppressive behavior, language, or symbolism quickly and consistently.

We see this work of housing through an equity lens as having many benefits. Beyond the alignment with our values and belief in the moral imperative to dismantle racism and oppressive systems, we can make the case that an anti-racist framework has a positive impact on landlord and property management’s outcomes as well. Being culturally responsive to serve this population effectively directly correlates with tenant satisfaction and longevity.

A disproportionate number of prospective tenants we serve identify as people of color and come from marginalized communities.
Step 3: Develop an agreement between JOIN LRRP and the landlord/property manager

We offer three levels of partnership between JOIN LRRP and a landlord/property manager: partnership agreement, conventional rental agreement, and master leases.

Partnership Agreement
The formal Partnership Agreement offered by the LRRP team at JOIN has the following agreements between the landlord/property manager and the organization:

- Guaranteed response to landlord/property manager within 2 business days between the LRRP contact, team email and phone contact, 24-hour landlord hotline and dwelling.ly, our new JOIN-landlord communication app
- Eviction prevention assistance, mediation and renters insurance for up to 1 year, if required
- Risk mitigation fund of up to $3,000 per renter for when tenancies don’t go as planned— can be used for property damage, intensive clean-up, court costs and more
- Creation of a modified screening criteria to be agreed upon between both parties to help renters gain access to the rental property
- The landlord/property manager agrees to provide LRRP copies of necessary paperwork and communicate tenancy difficulties that arise
- Agreement to follow JOIN’s equity guidelines and all applicable Fair Housing standards

Conventional Rental Agreement
This is an arrangement we use for landlords and property managers who are unable to sign a formal partnership agreement, but still want to work with JOIN. We refer qualified renters that match your established rental criteria. We create a directory of open apartments/rental properties—shared with JOIN workers, clients and partner agencies.

- LRRP has the ability to pre-screen renters through Pacific Screening
- Many of the people we work with have a voucher that covers most or part of their rental amount monthly
- Many of the people we work with have an established job, a solid plan to gain employment. JOIN works with an employment specialist) and/or support of a retention worker to aid in connecting them to established community resources that can help in covering their monthly needs as a renter
- Many challenges discovered in a background check of our renters stem from the housing crisis (especially no-cause evictions from the recent housing bubble), systemic racism and/or other Fair Housing challenges present in Portland (a city with a long history of racism, exclusion, and gentrification) and mental health challenges that can be managed with help of our Retention, InReach, Mobile Housing Team (MHT) and/or Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) teams

Reference Documents:
- Landlord Partnership Agreement
- Landlord Intake Form
Master Leases
In a master lease arrangement, an agency (for example, JOIN) is the entity that a landlord rents to. With the landlord’s knowledge and consent, JOIN then subleases the unit to a client and takes on the administrative burden.

JOIN currently holds master leases for three Single Room Occupancy (SRO) units, with three additional pending negotiation, and eleven scheduled to finish construction including one Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible unit; in single-family homes, we master lease four 3-bedroom homes and one 2-bedroom home.

Pros:
- Creates unique opportunity for housing for those with the most difficult to overcome housing barriers
- Allows access to hard to find rentals including those for large families and low cost units for single individuals
- Opportunity to create intentional communities within SRO buildings
- Property management with a trauma informed, strengths based focus

Cons:
- Liability falls on the organization to follow all applicable housing laws
- Deposits, if required, must be kept in a separate account
- Possible difficulties with accounting for income
- Can require a large financial obligation
- Creating a maintenance response plan
- Covering property damage from your residents
- Having to enforce notices including and up to eviction if necessary

How to Create a Successful Master Lease Program

1. Develop a good relationship with an attorney specializing in landlord/tenant law, real estate law and/or contract law
2. Review proposed rental contract with attorney from the landlord/property owner you are working with and create a contract that benefits the property as well as your organization
3. Designate a person in your organization to oversee the master lease program and collect rents, provide property management duties, and maintenance (depending on your contract)
4. Develop protocol for your organization to do required duties of having master lease properties including how to collect rents, what to do about fees/notices, what furnishings/appliances/utilities are included, and how to choose renters
5. Be diligent in following the protocol to minimize risk to your organization while ensuring successful tenancies with your renters
Step 4: LRRP shares vacancies and open units with JOIN and our service partners

We have an entire network of renters eager to succeed! LRRP shares vacancy information with JOIN housing workers as well as our community partner organizations, which include:

- **InReach**, a multi-agency team of housing workers dedicated to serving in shelters and organized camps such as Dignity Village and Right to Dream Too, which previously had limited access to housing support connected to their shelter. Partner agencies on this team include: JOIN, YWCA, El Programa Hispano, NARA, Catholic Charities Housing Transitions Program, and Urban League

- **Mobile Housing Team**, a multi-agency team serving homeless families through a coordinated access intake queue. Partner agencies include JOIN, NARA, NAYA, SEI, IRCO, El Programa Hispano, Latino Network, PHFS, and Human Solutions.

- **The Veterans’ System** (VA, SSVF)

As we coordinate with housing workers and their clients, we offer the following services to support cases:

- Pre-screening residents using Pacific Screening
- Assistance completing applications, sourcing needed documentation, assisting caseworkers with letters of support
- Reasonable Accommodation letters, Individualized Criminal Assessment Requests, and Denial Appeals
- Assistance with community resources if necessary including Fair Housing Council of Oregon, Oregon Community Alliance of Tenants, and legal services available through Urban League and El Programa Hispano
- Offering to help landlords sign up for LRRP Partnership if they are not already connected with our program

LRRP also offers trainings to housing workers to empower their knowledge of housing issues:

- Reasonable Accommodation and Individualized Criminal Assessment Letter Writing
- Housing Search
- How to Rent an Apartment 101
- Move-outs and Evictions

It is important to consider how the rental properties you refer residents to will be furnished.

- JOIN has a relationship with Community Warehouse to help provide furnishings for our friends
- The SRO units we master lease are furnished
- The LRRP program also provides washer and dryer sets, lawn mowers, and more to ensure successful tenancies – be sure to keep a record of inventory
Step 5: A JOIN friend lives in your rental unit

“We started working with JOIN in 2015. As ‘mom and pop’ landlords we were concerned about the risks of accepting tenants transitioning into housing, and had never worked with any kind of housing vouchers or subsidies. JOIN walked us through all the steps and provided a valuable sounding board when dealing with any issues that arose. Their landlord support services and tenant screening process gave us the confidence to rent our unit to a wonderful family, and we have since worked together on other placements as well.”

-Nicholas P.
JOIN Partner Landlord

Ways to connect with JOIN once a friend lives in your rental unit:

1. Connect with your resident’s Outreach or Retention Worker
2. Call or email the LRRP Team, including our 24-hour landlord hotline
3. Risk mitigation funds are available when tenancies don’t work the way we hope
4. Check out our new landlord/worker communication app coming soon, dwelling.ly

Reference Documents:
- LRRP Partnership Agreement Grievance Policy
- LRRP Contact Info for Landlords
- Damage Claim Form
- Resource Guide for Landlords / Multnomah Co.
Step 6: Successful partnerships lead to more successful partnerships

2018 Program Data Snapshot:

- 65 people found housing directly from LRRP referrals
- 128 new properties, landlords and/or property managers were recruited to work with JOIN and our partner agencies
- 8 landlords and/or property managers signed formal partnership agreements with LRRP
- 7 new master lease agreements were signed for 4 single family homes and 3 single-room occupancy (SRO) units

We hope that working with you is a positive part of your business. We would appreciate any referrals to colleagues in the property management industry. Thank you!

Have questions that aren’t answered today? Please refer to the contact information in your handouts or feel free to reach out to the Landlord Recruitment and Retention Program team at LRRP@joinpdx.org

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