

# Housing Locator Overview

## What is a Housing Locator?

**A Housing Locator** is an individual dedicated to cultivating relationships with landlords to sustain and increase the supply of affordable housing, while creating tools and systems to simplify and increase access to those affordable units for housing seekers with low-incomes and/or traditionally high-barriers to housing.

**To do this work effectively**, the Housing Locator partners closely with social service agencies that support households with their housing search (eg. IFC, DSS), with landlords and non-profit agencies that offer affordable units (eg. DHIC, Empowerment, INCHUCO), and with agencies that are providing or supporting voucher and subsidy programs (Orange County Housing Authority [OCHA], IFC, Compass Center, the HOME Committee, etc). While landlord relationships are at the core of this work, these partnerships are essential to best serving our community members. Our vision is for this work to be a **complementary capacity-builder** to partner organizations.

In our experience with local private landlords, we have learned that being a third-party agency allows us to grow private housing opportunities across multiple different types of subsidies and programs. This position's core purpose is to build tools and systems of support to bolster and coordinate efforts for system-wide landlord engagement that sustain/increase the stock of affordable housing in Orange County.

## Why do we need one?

A Housing Locator is an individual dedicated to finding suitable units for housing seekers with low-incomes or traditionally high-barriers to housing. It is a...

### 1. **Stated community need**

- Of 30 individuals from 20 organizations in Orange County who directly work with individuals on finding and securing housing (60% RR):
  - **77%** do not have the capacity to cultivate landlord relationships at all
  - **83%** say that if they could have support in any area, it would be in finding affordable units

### 2. **Key piece of our homelessness services system**

- Orange County Partnership to End Homelessness [Gaps Analysis](#)

### 3. **Evidence based, cost-efficient practice to increase housing opportunities**

- Case Studies throughout [Atlanta GA](#), [King County WA](#), [Palm Beach CA](#), [Chicago IL](#)

## OC Housing Locator Position

Goal: To increase the accessibility of existing affordable housing opportunities to those who need them by creating and sustaining systems for:

### 1. Robust data collection of affordable private-rental units accessible through an Affordable Housing Database

- Populated through landlord outreach, data entry from online listings in collaboration with the CEF Housing Taskforce, and a crowdsourced housing opportunities form
- Will be available online at [tinyurl.com/ochousinglist](https://tinyurl.com/ochousinglist)
- Able to generate vital statistics around affordable housing

### 2. Person-centered support to retain and build Landlord partnerships

- Prompt customer service including navigation of various rental assistance programs
- Tenant retention support and rapid tenant referrals when units become available
- Short and long term relationship follow-up and opportunities for feedback

### 3. Capacity building for service providers and Advocates supporting housing seekers

- Housing-focused trainings
- Guides and resources to address barriers to housing (accessing IDs, credit history, criminal background, transit concerns, etc...)
- Referrals to Housing Locator for:
  - Direct unit referrals
  - Landlord support
  - Coordinated services between agencies
  - Housing Plan development

## Next Steps

### See a unit?

Gather some information about it and submit via the Housing Opportunities referral form.  
[tinyurl.com/ochousing-newlisting](https://tinyurl.com/ochousing-newlisting)

### Know a landlord?

Virtually introduce the Housing Locator to discuss how they can support affordable housing opportunities.

### Questions/Ideas?

Feel free to reach out to me directly at [leahw@communityef.org](mailto:leahw@communityef.org).