

Family Success Program Evaluation and Research Summary

This report examines the results of a three year pilot program aimed at reducing eviction for non-payment of rent in affordable rental housing. Four affordable rental apartment communities offered the Family Success Program between August 2006 and November 2009 and the program enrolled a total of 77 participants over the study period.

As of the end of the study period, only fifteen, or 19% of all program participants had failed to fulfill the program requirement to complete a new one year lease beginning in the month of enrollment. Given the typical turnover rate in rental apartments, this alone is a fairly substantial return for communities using the program. Many tenants exceeded the one year requirement and have continued to renew leases until the present. The full financial benefit to property owners of reducing turnover is dramatic, and may not be fully realized until many years later, when the last tenant whose eviction was prevented decides to move out of the property. In this study, it was demonstrated that a single apartment complex where only 33 evictions were prevented had saved nearly \$135,000 by the end of the study period. At that point, twelve participant families were still living in the building, continuing to accrue benefit to the property every time they sign new annual leases.

This report recommends extending the Family Success Program to other management companies and tracking results in order to parse causes for success. It is clear that there is a financial incentive for affordable or market rate communities to incorporate this sort of program. Replication of this idea is good for families and it is good for the bottom line of property owners.

- Renee A Klitzke, Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota