



Market
Public Housing

Portfolio
1,500 units
2,500 rental assistance vouchers

Client Since
2006

Highlighted Product
RENTCafé PHA

The Benefits
Streamlined housing application submissions by replacing paper forms with an online app that saves staff time and reduces errors.

About Everett Housing Authority
www.evha.org

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“ RENTCafé PHA eliminates paperwork from the application process. ”

Ashley Lommers-Johnson, Executive Director

The Company

For the last seventy years, Everett Housing Authority (EHA) has served the city of Everett, Washington and the surrounding area. EHA currently provides Section 8 rental assistance to more than 2,500 families and individuals throughout Snohomish County. EHA also manages and develops affordable housing properties funded with a variety of subsidies including HOME, Low Income Housing Tax Credit, Rural Development and more.

Compliance with all of these funding sources is critical to EHA's mission as a PHA. Documenting renter eligibility and producing periodic reports is an administrative burden shared by all PHAs. EHA has found a technology solution using RENTCafé PHA to address many of its challenges.

The Challenge

Streamlining Leasing Workflows

The PHA industry relies on complex processes that can quickly become burdensome to staff, management, and clients.

The paperwork required to join a waiting list for housing assistance was time-consuming for applicants and EHA staff. EHA also relied on inefficient processes for recertifying current applicants and communicating with landlords.

The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development had also directed PHAs to facilitate voucher portability for residents moving to communities outside of the PHA's jurisdiction.

The Solution

RENTCafé PHA

RENTCafé PHA eliminates the paperwork from many tasks performed by public housing agencies. Renters can apply for housing assistance online. Residents can complete annual recertifications without meeting PHA staff in person. Those and many other processes are streamlined with RENTCafé PHA.

The Story

Gaining Online Efficiency

In 2016, EHA opened its waiting list to a relatively narrow population segment: applicants who were formerly homeless and had an income within a specific range. Within 10 days



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EHA had more than 3,600 applications.

Initial applicants arrived at EHA’s office looking for forms to fill out. EHA instead provided online access to RENTCafé PHA, and applicants soon realized they could submit their information online at their convenience. “RENTCafé is really slick. Many of our applicants did everything on their handheld device without even needing to access to a computer,” said Ashley Lommers-Johnson, executive director for EHA.

Available 24/7 on an EHA web portal, RENTCafé PHA transforms housing subsidy processes for applicants, residents, and staff. “The first thing we did with RENTCafé PHA was implement the application portal, and it was highly successful,” said Lommers-Johnson.

EHA has plans to grow its use of RENTCafé PHA to take advantage of everything the solution has to offer. “We’ve created something similar to an Apple Genius Bar® in our office with computers and scanners available to applicants. This setup, using RENTCafé PHA as the centerpiece, is a lot less labor intensive having housing specialists meet with applicants to sort out paperwork,” said Lommers-Johnson.

Online conveniences are also available to current residents. “We have implemented online recertifications through RENTCafé PHA, and it’s been very successful,” said Lommers-Johnson. Recertifications are necessary for EHA clients to ensure continued eligibility for housing assistance through the agency’s programs. Residents can log into RENTCafé PHA before a set due date (usually annually) to upload documentation of household financial status. That online transaction replaces the need to meet with staff to go over paperwork.

Solving Portability

EHA sees an opportunity to use RENTCafé PHA as a technical solution to the complex challenge of voucher portability. Lommers-Johnson recently described his vision for a scenario that enables a public housing agency to maintain a relationship with a resident even after they move to another PHA’s jurisdiction. At the core of this proposed solution is RENTCafé PHA.

“The issue of portability is complex because of the coordination involved between public housing authorities. PHAs serving the residents’ former and new communities have to work together to track the residents’ vouchers to make sure everything stays in



Client Success

Everett Housing Authority



compliance with HUD regulations and to ensure proper reporting," said Lommers-Johnson.

"I see RENTCafé PHA as a replacement to the complicated paperwork associated with voucher portability. Instead of working with another PHA to track the voucher, we can simply maintain our relationship with the resident through the online access afforded by RENTCafé PHA," said Lommers-Johnson. "RENTCafé PHA could make it easy for us to maintain relationships with our voucher holders even if they move far from the area."

Everett Housing Authority has also implemented [Yardi Aspire](#), [Yardi Job Cost](#)

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