

+ 2022 Edition

Gold Star Landlord Program

Tulsa Authority for Economic
Opportunity

Table of Contents

- OVERVIEW 3**
- GOLD STAR LANDLORD REQUIREMENTS..... 3**
 - OVERVIEW 3
 - TULSA HEALTH DEPARTMENT’S SAFE AND HEALTHY HOMES PROGRAM 3
 - AFFORDABLE HOUSING LISTING WEBSITE 4
 - EARLY SETTLEMENT MEDIATION PROGRAM 4
 - ABODE INITIATIVE 5
 - COMPLYING WITH FEDERAL , STATE, AND LOCAL LAWS 5
- GOLD STAR LANDLORD INCENTIVES..... 6**
 - OVERVIEW 6
 - ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION 6
 - PRIORITIZED PROCESSING OF APPLICATIONS TO THE CITY OF TULSA’S EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM 6
 - SUPPORT OF TULSA AUTHORITY FOR ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY STAFF 6
 - AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST FUND’S LANDLORD INCENTIVES 7
 - TENANTS WITH THE HOUSING STABILITY CERTIFICATE..... 7
- ADMINISTRATION AND OVERSIGHT 8**
 - APPLICATION..... 8
 - CONTRACT AND COMPLIANCE..... 8
 - MONITORING..... 8
 - CORRECTIVE ACTION 9
 - REPORTING NON-COMPLIANCE 9
 - PROHIBITION AGAINST RETALIATION..... 10
- DISCLAIMER 10**
- CONTACT INFORMATION..... 11**
 - TULSA AUTHORITY FOR ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY..... 11

Overview

The Gold Star Landlord Program provides incentives and rewards for landlords and property managers who engage in the best rental practices. This free and voluntary program is part of the Affordable Housing Strategy to make the City of Tulsa an economically thriving, inclusive community with quality housing opportunities for all its residents.

Gold Star Landlord Requirements

OVERVIEW

To participate in the Gold Star Landlord Program, landlords and property managers must meet the following requirements:

- Participating in the Tulsa Health Department's Safe and Healthy Homes Program
- Listing available rental units on the City of Tulsa and Housing Solutions' Affordable Housing Listing Website
- Using the Early Settlement Mediation Program prior to filing an eviction for a reason other than criminal activity
- Participating in the Abode Initiative
- Complying with federal, state and local laws

There is no cost to participate in any of the requirements and each comes with its own rewards and incentives for participation.

TULSA HEALTH DEPARTMENT'S SAFE AND HEALTHY HOMES PROGRAM

To participate in the Gold Star Landlord Program, landlords and property managers will be required to participate in the Tulsa Health Department's Safe and Health Homes Program. Through this free program, the Tulsa Health Department (THD) provides a courtesy inspection for the minimum acceptable level of public health and safety according to the Title 55 Property Maintenance Code. The code is intended to provide requirements addressing the public health, safety and welfare as they relate to the use and maintenance of existing structures. By requiring participation in THD's Safe and Healthy Homes Program, the City of Tulsa will ensure that the rental properties of landlords and property managers participating in the Gold Star Landlord Program are safe for renters.

To enroll in the Safe and Healthy Homes Program, landlords and property managers must:

- Request an initial meeting with the Tulsa Health Department by contacting Felix Ngouan at fngouan@tulsa-health.org;
- Enroll their rental properties in the Safe and Healthy Homes Program;
- Sign a consent form to participate in the Safe and Healthy Homes Program; and
- Allow a courtesy inspection of any vacant units.

Landlords and property managers must continue to meet requirements in the Safe and Healthy Homes Program to remain Gold Star Landlords, including requesting inspection of vacant properties prior to a new tenant's occupancy as the units become available.

Through the Safe and Healthy Homes Program, landlords and property managers will receive additional

incentives, including:

- Courtesy safe housing inspection of vacant properties
- Certificate of participation and decal for door or window
- Safe and Healthy Homes logo to display on website or social media
- Listed as a community partner on THD's program website
- Courtesy phone conference to discuss complaints or repairs before an order is mailed
- Free lead testing available if property is eligible
- Rodent survey of property, bait station if needed
- Registry with mosquito program, trap site, and survey during season
- Free landlord education opportunities on fair housing, the Oklahoma Residential Landlord Tenant Act, and property maintenance code available twice a year
- Registry with City of Tulsa Working in Neighborhoods (WIN) Nuisance Abatement program

For landlords signed up for the Safe and Healthy Homes Program, the Tulsa Health Department offers a free lead based paint hazard inspection and risk assessment. For qualifying homes, the Tulsa Health Department can remove lead based paint hazards from the home. Typical treatments may include repainting interior or exterior walls, covering the outside of home with siding, or window replacement.

For more information, please visit: <https://www.tulsa-health.org/housing>.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING LISTING WEBSITE

To participate in the Gold Star Landlord Program, landlords and property managers must list all available units on the City of Tulsa and Housing Solutions' Affordable Housing Listing Website: <http://www.affordablehousing.com>.

The Affordable Housing Listing Website is a free resource where landlords and property managers can advertise available units online to fill vacancies quickly, save costs, and connect with tenants and community organizations. Landlords can create an account and list their vacant units at no cost.

This resource is not only for housing that uses subsidized rent programs, like Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers. The website features unique search tools that helps tenants with a wide range of incomes to find housing that is within their budget. Through the Affordable Housing Listing Website, landlords and property managers can fill vacancies quickly and help tenants to find housing opportunities that are affordable for them.

For more information, visit: <https://info.affordablehousing.com/outreach>

EARLY SETTLEMENT MEDIATION PROGRAM

The Early Settlement Mediation Program, sponsored by the Oklahoma Supreme Court and Tulsa County, provides free mediation for landlords and tenants to resolve disputes.

Prior to filing an eviction against a tenant for any reason other than violations of Section 132(D) of the ORLTA, Gold Star Landlords will be required to apply to the Early Settlement Mediation Program to receive free mediation of the dispute from a mediator certified by the Oklahoma Supreme Court.

Gold Star Landlords may only file an eviction without first seeking mediation from the Early Settlement Mediation Program if the eviction is for violations of Section 132(D) of the ORLTA which states:

Any criminal activity that threatens the health, safety or right of peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other tenants committed by a tenant or by any member of the tenant's household or any guest or other person under the tenant's control or is a danger to the premises and any drug-related criminal activity on or near the premises by the tenant or by any member of the tenant's household or any guest or other person under the tenant's control shall be grounds for immediate termination of the lease.

Landlords will be required to participate in the mediation program in good faith. Landlords will be required to notify tenants that, as a Gold Star Landlord, they are required to participate in the Early Settlement Mediation Program before filing an eviction, except for violations of Section 132(D) of the ORLTA, through the attached notice.

The Gold Star Landlord Program will provide training opportunities for landlords and property managers to get the most out of mediation. For more information on the Early Settlement Mediation Program, visit: <https://www2.tulsacounty.org/services/early-settlement-center-for-mediation>.

ABODE INITIATIVE

The Abode Initiative engages with landlords and property managers to increase quality housing opportunities in Tulsa. The Abode Initiative provides support and resources for landlords and property managers through regular email updates on opportunities and resources in the City of Tulsa, including educational webinars. Landlords and property managers can contact the Abode Initiative directly for assistance and will receive regular updates on resources and opportunities.

Landlords and property managers will be automatically added to the Abode Initiative's email list when they apply to the Gold Star Landlord Program.

COMPLYING WITH FEDERAL , STATE, AND LOCAL LAWS

Landlords and property managers participating in the Gold Star Landlord Program will be required to comply with federal, state, and local laws, including but not limited to:

- The Fair Housing Act: Landlords and property managers participating in the Gold Star Landlord Program agree to follow the Fair Housing Act and not engage in discriminatory practices based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability or familial status.
- The Oklahoma Residential Landlord Tenant Act (ORLTA): Landlords and property managers participating in the Gold Star Landlord Program agree to comply with the ORLTA, such as notice requirements.
- Tulsa Fair Housing Ordinance: Landlords and property managers participating in the Gold Star Landlord Program agree to follow the Tulsa Fair Housing Ordinance and not engage in discriminatory practices based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, familial status, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

To participate in the Gold Star Landlord Program, landlords will provide a copy of their lease to the Housing Solutions' Landlord Tenant Resource Center to receive a free review. The Landlord Tenant Resource Center will provide the landlord with a scorecard showing what provisions are compliant with the law and what provisions violate federal, state, or local laws. Landlords will be required to remove any provisions that violate the law before being admitted to the Gold Star Landlord Program. The Landlord Tenant Resource Center will provide technical assistance for landlords at no cost, as well as referrals for additional services as needed.

The Gold Star Landlord Program will provide training opportunities on federal, state, and local laws to help Gold Star Landlords maintain the best rental practices.

Gold Star Landlord Incentives

OVERVIEW

In addition to the rewards provided by the required programs, the Gold Star Landlord Program provides additional incentives and benefits, including:

- Advertising and promotion
- Prioritized processing of applications to the City of Tulsa's Emergency Rental Assistance Program
- Support of Tulsa Authority for Economic Opportunity staff
- Landlord incentives funded by the Affordable Housing Trust Fund
- Referral of tenants' with the Housing Stability Certificate from the Housing Solutions' Landlord Tenant Resource Center

ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION

Participating landlords will receive a logo to display on their website and promotional materials identifying them as a Gold Star Landlord.

The City of Tulsa will maintain a website showing the landlords and property managers currently participating in the Gold Star Landlord Program: <http://www.cityoftulsa.org/landlords>

PRIORITIZED PROCESSING OF APPLICATIONS TO THE CITY OF TULSA'S EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Participating landlords will receive prioritized process of their tenants' applications to the City of Tulsa's Emergency Rental Assistance Program, which provides rental and utility assistance to Tulsa residents. The City of Tulsa has partnered with Restore Hope Ministries, a local nonprofit with over 45 years of experience in homeless prevention, to distribute the funds as fast and efficiently as possible. Applications from tenants who rent from Gold Star Landlords will receive prioritized process from Restore Hope.

This is not a guarantee of assistance and approval of the application is still subject to the Emergency Rental Assistance Program's eligibility guidelines.

For more information on the City of Tulsa's Emergency Rental Assistance Program, please visit: <http://erap.restorehope.org>.

SUPPORT OF TULSA AUTHORITY FOR ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY STAFF

The Tulsa Authority for Economic Opportunity will provide assistance to participating landlords with accessing resources and services that landlords need, including arranging direct referrals where possible. The Tulsa Authority for Economic Opportunity will notify participating landlords of resources and opportunities as they become available, such as educational events.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST FUND'S LANDLORD INCENTIVES

The City of Tulsa's Affordable Housing Trust Fund will fund landlord incentives via grants to agencies to provide direct landlord assistance. Incentives can be used for risk mitigation, repairs, unpaid rent, unpaid utilities in the tenant's name or to cover vacancy payments related to unit preparation. Incentives cannot be used for fines or fees. Landlord incentives funded by the City of Tulsa's Affordable Housing Trust Fund will only be available to landlords participating in the Gold Star Landlord Program.

Landlord Incentives funded by the Affordable Housing Trust Fund include Landlord Guarantee Funds: The Affordable Housing Trust Fund has given grants to several agencies to create Landlord Guarantee Funds, which provide incentives for landlords who rent to tenants through their programs. Through a Landlord Guarantee Fund, agencies will reimburse landlords for unpaid rent, utilities, vacancy payments, and damages caused by the tenant beyond ordinary wear and tear. The Landlord Guarantee Funds are only available to Gold Star Landlords who rent to tenants receiving services from the agencies. Current agencies with Landlord Guarantee Funds include:

- Domestic Violence Interventions Services, <http://www.dvis.org>
- Housing Solutions, <http://www.housingsolutionstulsa.org>
- Tulsa CARES, <http://www.tulsacares.org>
- Tulsa Day Center, <http://www.tulsadaycenter.org>

The Affordable Housing Trust Fund is regularly adding new incentive programs exclusively available to Gold Star Landlords. For a complete list of incentive programs currently funded by the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, visit: <http://www.cityoftulsa.org/landlords>.

TENANTS WITH THE HOUSING STABILITY CERTIFICATE

The Housing Solutions' Landlord Tenant Resource Center offers a tenant education program. While the program will be available to all tenants, it will primarily target tenants with a history of eviction or justice involvement to teach tenants skills that will help them maintain housing stability. Through the Landlord Tenant Resource Center, tenants will also be able to connect with resources they need to maintain housing stability in the future, including emergency rental assistance programs. Tenants who complete the program will receive a Housing Stability Certificate.

Through the Housing Solutions' Landlord Tenant Resource Center and community partners, tenants who have received a Housing Stability Certificate will be referred to Gold Star Landlords to apply for housing. For more information about the Housing Stability Certificate, visit: <http://www.tulsaltrc.org>.

Administration and Oversight

APPLICATION

To participate in the City of Tulsa's Gold Star Landlord Program, landlords will complete an application and email it to: goldstar@cityoftulsa.org.

The application will required to provide the following information:

- The name of the legal owner of the rental property;
- A contact person for owner of the rental property, including mailing address, phone, and email address;
- The name of the property manager for the rental property, if there is one;
- A contact person for property manager of the rental property, including mailing address, phone, and email address; and
- The addresses for the rental properties.

CONTRACT AND COMPLIANCE

After a landlord has submitted an application, the landlord will receive a welcome email and an onboarding packet with instructions for how to meet each of the requirements for participation. The onboarding packet will also include additional information about available rewards and incentives.

To become a Gold Star Landlord, landlords and property managers must do the following:

- Tulsa Health Department's Safe and Healthy Homes Program: Request an initial meeting with the Tulsa Health Department to enroll in the Safe and Healthy Homes Program, including signing a consent form and allowing a courtesy inspection of vacant units.
- Abode Initiative: Landlords and property managers will be automatically added to the Abode Initiative's email list when they apply.
- City of Tulsa and Housing Solutions' Affordable Housing Waitlist: Create a free owner account at <http://www.affordablehousing.com> and list any available vacant units on the website.
- Early Settlement Mediation Program: Watch a brief training video on participation in the Early Settlement Mediation Program.
- Compliance with Federal, State, and Local Laws: Provide a copy of their lease to the Housing Solutions' Landlord Tenant Resource Center, which will review the lease free of charge to ensure it complies with the law. The Landlord Tenant Resource Center can also provide technical assistance and referrals to help landlords have a lease that follows the best rental practices.

The landlord will sign an agreement with TAEO certifying that they have complied with the requirements and will continue to do so, in order to receive the rewards and incentives associated with the Gold Star Landlord Program.

MONITORING

The Tulsa Authority for Economic Opportunity periodically reviews the compliance of landlords and property managers participating in the Gold Star Landlord Program.

During the periodic review, the Tulsa Authority for Economic Opportunity will contact Gold Star Landlords to:

- Update the contact information for the landlord and property manager;
- Update the addresses of the landlord or property manager's rental properties in the City of Tulsa; and
- Provide an opportunity for feedback to the Tulsa Authority for Economic Opportunity on the Gold Star Landlord Program.

As part of the periodic review, the Tulsa Authority for Economic Opportunity will also contact community partners to ensure that landlords and property managers participating in the Gold Star Landlord Program are meeting all requirements. For example, contacting the Tulsa Health Department to confirm a landlord and property manager is in good standing with the Safe and Healthy Homes Program.

CORRECTIVE ACTION

If a landlord is not complying with the requirements, the Tulsa Authority for Economic Opportunity will send the landlord a written notice that the landlord must take corrective action or they will be removed from the Gold Star Landlord Program. The landlord will be provided with a period of time during which corrective action must be taken, which will be based on the nature of the non-compliance. Based on the nature of the non-compliance, a landlord may be temporarily removed from the program and placed on probation until corrective action is taken.

Tulsa Authority for Economic Opportunity staff will provide assistance to the landlord as necessary to help them become compliant. If the landlord takes the corrective action within the amount of time specified, the landlord will continue to be a participant in the Gold Star Landlord Program. If the landlord does not take the corrective action within the amount of time specified, the landlord will be removed from the Gold Star Landlord Program and will no longer be eligible for incentives associated with the program.

Landlords who have been removed from the program may reapply to participate after 60 days. A landlord who has been removed from the program for non-compliance may be required to show that they have taken corrective action before being readmitted to the Gold Star Landlord Program.

REPORTING NON-COMPLIANCE

Tenants and community partners will be able to submit reports to the Tulsa Authority for Economic Opportunity that a participating landlord is not meeting the requirements of the Gold Star Landlord Program. Reports may be made by email to goldstar@cityoftulsa.org and should include:

- The name of the landlord or property manager;
- The rental property address; and
- A description of the landlord's non-compliance.

The Tulsa Authority for Economic Opportunity will investigate reports to determine whether a participating landlord is meeting requirements, for example contacting the Tulsa Health Department to confirm the landlord is participating in the Tulsa Health Department's Safe and Health Homes Program.

Upon investigation, the Tulsa Authority for Economic Opportunity will determine whether the landlord has failed to maintain compliance. If the landlord has failed to maintain compliance, the Tulsa Authority for Economic Opportunity will take the corrective action outlined above. If the landlord has maintained compliance, the Tulsa Authority for Economic Opportunity will not take any further action.

PROHIBITION AGAINST RETALIATION

A landlord is prohibited from retaliating against a tenant for making a complaint to the Tulsa Authority for Economic Opportunity regarding the landlord's compliance with the Gold Star Landlord Program requirements or for reporting unsafe housing conditions to an enforcement authority, including the Tulsa Health Department or Working in Neighborhoods. Prohibited retaliatory actions include raising rent, decreasing services, threatening or filing an eviction against a tenant for making a complaint.

This does not prohibit a landlord from raising rent, pursuing an eviction, or taking other actions in good faith as permitted by law for reasons other than a tenant making a complaint to the Tulsa Authority for Economic Opportunity of an enforcement authority.

If Tulsa Authority for Economic Opportunity staff determine that a landlord has retaliated against a tenant for making a complaint, the landlord will be removed from Gold Star Landlord Program and will no longer be eligible for incentives associated with the program.

Landlords who have been removed from the program for retaliation may reapply to participate after 1 year.

Disclaimer

Reference to landlords and property managers as "Gold Star Landlords" is for the information and convenience of the public confirming only their participation in the Gold Star Landlord Program and does not constitute an endorsement or recommendation of any person, firm or corporation or of any particular service or rental property.

Contact Information

TULSA AUTHORITY FOR ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Applications and Complaints

goldstar@cityoftulsa.org

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