



# applicant.access

## APPLICANT ACCESS AT THE LEBANON COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY

### The Challenge

Lebanon County Housing Authority currently manages 541 Section 8 vouchers and 405 Public Housing units. Their Public Housing list never closes and the Section 8 list has remained open for the past several years. Before switching to online applications, applicants were responsible for filling out 5 page paper applications that were available at the Housing Authority office, as well as several other locations throughout town. Applicants could drop them off in person, but they also had the option of mailing the applications to the agency. Once an application was received, it took about 5 minutes on average for an employee to manually enter the data into the Applicant List module. Once an app was entered into the system, the employee would spend another 5 minutes to print an acknowledgement letter, stuff it into an envelope and mail it off. Bryan Hoffman, the Executive Director at Lebanon County, estimated that the entire process to input an application into the system and produce the acknowledgement letter easily took a total of 10 minutes.

If the lengthy data entry process wasn't enough, Lebanon County often dealt with problems resulting from incomplete applications. Hoffman advised, "We had people that would forget to add their address on the application. We would have to call them and write down their information." He described the incomplete applications as, "a nightmare," and "virtually impossible" to deal with. When Lebanon County decided to open its Section 8 list following several years of being closed, they were sure that there had to be a "better way" to do things and were determined to avoid the "horror stories" they had heard from other housing authorities.

### KEY RESULTS

- Incomplete applications plagued employee work schedules
- Accepting only online applications has resulted in a **more efficient housing authority**
- Applicant Access seen as a **way to calm down a chaotic situation**
- Applicants no longer locked into housing authority business hours
- **Time Savings:** Eliminating 25% of a regular clerk employees work per week eliminates labor costs up to \$7,500
- **Annual Savings:** \$9,000

## The role of Applicant Access

Lebanon County began using Applicant Access in October of 2007. Deciding to only accept online applications, they have yet to encounter any problems of applicants having access to a computer. “Everybody has access to a computer somehow,” Hoffman says. Lebanon County offers access to public computers for use at their office: “We tell our applicants if they don’t know how to use one, or are intimidated, they can come in and we will sit down with them and help,” Hoffman says. Lebanon County also uses local resource centers like the social security offices: “The social security offices really enjoy it. When people come in, they can ask them if they have signed up for housing and if they say no, they show them how to sign up,” Hoffman says.

Lebanon County sees Applicant Access as a tool to “disarm” a potentially chaotic situation. Before using Applicant Access they never knew for sure if they had received everyone’s application. Applicants would come in and ask about their spot on the waiting list and Lebanon County couldn’t find their name: “We never knew if we had messed up, or they had. But now no one can say they signed up and aren’t on the list. We can just say ‘what’s your confirmation number’ and that takes care of it,” Hoffman says.

Hoffman describes the best feature of Applicant Access to be its costs savings: “For the Housing Authorities you clearly save money, no question.” He estimates that in employee savings alone they are saving \$7,500. That total climbs to over \$9,000 annually when you factor in postage, paper and envelopes for applications the agency no longer mails out to potential applicants. Hoffman estimated that a Lebanon County employee typically spent 10 hours a week (25% of their work week) manually keying data and processing applications.

Lebanon County acknowledges the program benefits not only to the housing authority, but their applicants as well: “Applicants are no longer locked into our office hours to apply. It is truly one thing that is good for the business and customers both,” Hoffman says. He believes that Applicant Access is one of the rare products that can be beneficial to both the business and customer because it

offers several benefits to both. Lebanon County knows their applicants have enjoyed Applicant Access because they haven’t had any negative feedback in regards to the program.

Lebanon County has also benefited from the customization options Applicant Access has to offer. Previously, if the housing authority wanted to amend their existing application, there was a significant amount of money lost due to the previously printed copies that were distributed within the community as well as their office. With Applicant Access they do not have to worry about cost, all they have to do is call Tenmast, request their changes, and the updates are taken care of with nothing going to waste. Lebanon County has truly excelled using the new program. “I can’t think of one down side,” Hoffman says, describing the program as more efficient and more accurate than their previous process.

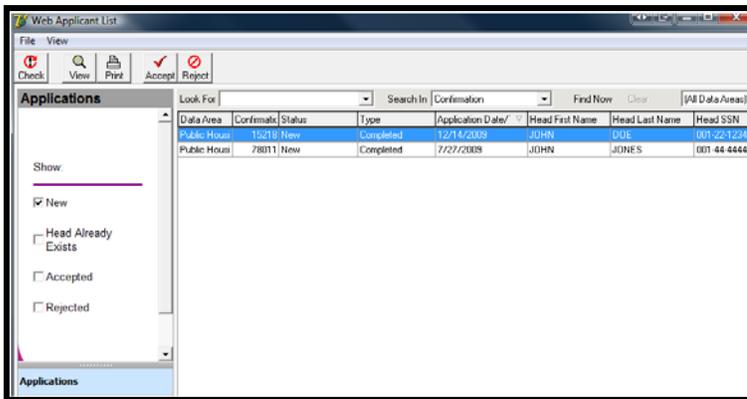
The screenshot shows a web-based application form titled "Step 5: Household Information" for the Lebanon County Housing Authority. The form is part of a multi-step process, with a sidebar on the left listing steps 1 through 9. Steps 1 through 4 are marked with green checkmarks, indicating they are completed. Step 5, "Household Info", is the current step. The form contains two main sections: "Household Income" and "Bedrooms". The "Household Income" section includes a text box for "Household's Total Gross Monthly Income" and a small red asterisk next to it. The "Bedrooms" section includes a text box for "Preferred Number of Bedrooms" and a small red asterisk next to it. At the bottom of the form, there are "Back" and "Next" buttons.

Online Applications are available using our Applicant Access program. The applicant can be basic or detailed to meet the needs of your agency. Waiting lists can be turned on/off as needed.

## Return on Investment

Lebanon County has realized a great deal of savings in both time and money from the elimination of manually entering application data. Eliminating 25% of a regular clerk employees work per week can eliminate labor costs up to \$7,500 annually. Factoring in postage and material expenses that were used to mail out applications contributed another \$1,500 in expenditures annually to the application process. Combined, Lebanon County is saving over \$9,000 a year which easily covered the original purchase of the system, as well as the subsequent year's maintenance contract for the application.

**For more information on Applicant Access** or to see an online demonstration, please contact Dan Wright at [dwright@tenmast.com](mailto:dwright@tenmast.com) or call 877.359.5492 ext. 241.



The screenshot shows a software window titled "Web Applicant List". It features a menu bar with "File" and "View", and a toolbar with icons for "Check", "View", "Print", "Accept", and "Reject". Below the toolbar is a search area with "Look For" and "Search In" dropdowns, and "Find Now" and "Clear" buttons. The main area contains a table with columns: "Data Area", "Confirmat", "Status", "Type", "Application Date", "Head First Name", "Head Last Name", and "Head SSN". Two rows are visible: one for "Public House 15218" with status "New" and application date "12/14/2009", and another for "Public House 78011" with status "New" and application date "7/27/2008". A left sidebar has a "Show:" section with checkboxes for "New", "Head Already Exists", "Accepted", and "Rejected".

Data Area	Confirmat	Status	Type	Application Date	Head First Name	Head Last Name	Head SSN
Public House	15218	New	Completed	12/14/2009	JOHN	DOE	001-22-1234
Public House	78011	New	Completed	7/27/2008	JOHN	JONES	001-44-4444

Easily manage your applications through our Web Applicant List module (included with Applicant Access Purchase). Web Applicant List allows you to import applications at the click of a button, alleviating the need for manual data entry.

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