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APPLICANT ACCESS AT THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE COUNTY OF LYCOMING

The Challenge

The Housing Authority of the County of Lycoming, located in Lycoming, PA, manages 675 Section 8 vouchers and 435 Public Housing units. While the Public Housing waiting list never closes, the Section 8 program list has been closed the past 2 years with plans of opening in the near future. Due to the constant flow of Public Housing applications, the paper application process and manual keying of data caused serious bottlenecks for the agency. Frequently behind on application data entry, the Leasing and Marketing Director of Lycoming County, Mike Bolsar, had to routinely come in on Saturdays to key applications into the software system. Lycoming's four page application required five minutes or more to input the application into the Applicant List module, and often longer depending on the total number of members within the household. At the backlog's highest point, the agency's input process was backed up three to four weeks behind schedule.

KEY RESULTS

- Applicants appreciate the option of applying online
- **Time saved from not manually entering applications** has resulted in the housing authority being up to date on all applications
- **Time Savings:** 2 hours a week/ Nearly 100 hours a year
- **Annual Savings:** \$6,000

The role of Applicant Access

Lycoming County implemented Applicant Access in July 2009 to begin accepting applications for their Public Housing program (the Section 8 list has been closed since their purchase of the program). Currently, they receive 5 online applications a day on average, eliminating the need to manually key 25 applications per week. Even with the introduction of the online application, Lycoming still accepts 10 to 15 paper applications each week. They hope to eventually phase out the paper applications all together in the near future, largely in part due to the fantastic feedback that they've received from fellow Tenmast client Lebanon County, PA. Lebanon County has experienced a tremendous amount of success since moving to their exclusive online application process in October of 2007 (see Lebanon County Housing Authority Case Study).

Lycoming County applicants have given the agency great feedback in regards to Applicant Access, citing that they love the ability to apply online and the time and effort that they save by not having to come to the office to drop off their applications. Bolsar says applicants enjoy having the option to apply either online or via paper applications, and the housing authority relishes the time and money that it saves all while offering a higher level of service to their applicants. Bolsar states that "It is much quicker. It takes half the time, if not less" to process their applications after the implementation of Applicant Access. Lycoming County staff members can now easily manage the few remaining paper applications that are submitted to the office without having to worry about getting behind on their work. This is great for both the agency and applicants: employees have shorter turnaround times for applications, and applicants are advised their position on the waiting list in a much timelier manner. Luckily for Bolsar, he no longer finds himself having to come in on Saturdays to key in applications, and the rest of the employees can focus their time on other tasks.

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In addition to the time that they're regularly saving with their Public Housing applications, Lycoming also expects a much more efficient and less stressful experience when they reopen their Section 8 waiting list. Instead of having to accept hundreds of paper Section 8 applications all at once and managing unruly crowds, applicants can submit their application over the internet and the housing authority can download all the applications into the Applicant List module without the countless hours of manual data entry.

The screenshot displays the 'Step 2: Household Members' form for the Lycoming County Housing Authority. The form is titled 'Head of Household' and includes the following fields:

- Social Security Number:** * 123 - 12 - 1234 (Example: 123 - 12 - 1234)
- First Name:** * John
- Middle Initial:** A
- Last Name:** * Doe
- Birth Date:** * 08 / 12 / 1981 (Example: 01 / 30 / 2005)
- Gender:** * Female Male
- Birthplace:** * (Example: City, County, State)
- Race:** * White African American American Indian / Alaska Native Asian Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander

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

Return on Investment

Lycoming County estimates that they are saving \$500 a month in labor costs thanks to the reduction of time spent inputting application data into the Applicant List program. The \$6,000 annual savings easily covered the year one purchase price of the Applicant Access program, and the agency stands to save even more money in years 2 and 3 as the support & maintenance contract goes down, and as they migrate toward a 100% online application submission program.

For more information on Applicant Access or to see an online demonstration, please contact Dan Wright at dwright@tenmast.com or call 877.359.5492 ext. 241.

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