

Newcomer Housing: One Size Doesn't Fit All

A Case Study on Refugee
Housing Technology Solutions

A CASE STUDY BY



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CONTENTS

Overview	3
The Need: One Size Doesn't Fit All	4
ReHome's Background	4
ReHome's Model	5
Refugee Housing Solutions X ReHome Marketplace Partnership	9
Case Studies of ReHome Marketplace Matches	11
Conclusion	14





Overview

In a housing context where applicant competition is high, a renter's ability to provide an attractive renter profile and application to landlords is imperative. For many refugees and other newcomers, they may face challenges to securing housing compared to other renters because landlords often require certain items in the application which those newer to the U.S. may not initially possess, such as traditional photo identification documentation (ID), a credit score, and/or a U.S. job and rental history, compared to other hopeful tenants. Thus, creating solutions to enable refugees and other newcomers to attain affordable and stable housing is critical.

Refugee resettlement agencies and other organizations such as, but not limited to, ethnic community-based organizations (ECBOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) who support refugee and newcomer integration efforts are often a bridge from their clients to the landlord to provide housing. However, securing housing often takes extensive time and energy, with housing coordinators making dozens — if not hundreds — of calls to secure housing for newcomers.

This resource explores dynamic partnerships and technology solutions created to secure and support stable housing for refugees and newcomers through an innovative technology solution to effectively and efficiently make housing matches between landlords and hopeful tenants.

The Need: One Size Doesn't Fit All

When newcomers arrive in the United States, affordable housing stability is critical on their journey towards self-sufficiency. Often, the rental housing market is difficult for newcomers to navigate due to a variety of factors such as application requirements with specific forms of photo identification, credit score, U.S. job and rental history which individuals newer to the U.S. may not yet have. According to Refugee Housing Solutions' (RHS) December 2024 [Enhancing Refugee Housing Solutions Annual Needs Assessment report](#), 56% of respondents reported increased difficulty attaining housing compared to the previous year. Online rental applications require an applicant to provide a credit score, months of paystubs, rental history, photo identification, and more before considering an applicant as a potential tenant. According to RHS' July 2024 [Incentivizing Landlords to Rent to Refugees survey](#), respondents (landlords and property managers) reported income verification (23.5%), credit reports (22.2%), and rental history (21.7%) as a few of the most-cited screening requirements. It should be noted, refugees and other newcomers often acquire these documents (i.e. U.S.-issued photo identification, a credit score, paystubs), but these take time to establish and thus in the interim may exclude newcomers from certain rental properties if a landlord is not aware of other forms of supplemental verification for a rental application.

However, when landlords and property managers accept supplemental forms of verification, newcomers may be able to find stable and affordable housing — and the property managers gain reliable tenants. [ORR-eligible populations](#) and other newcomers can often provide alternative rental application documentation or assurances to show they will be successful tenants. These may include third-party financial support until employment is found, letters from organizations that are assisting them, and documents provided by the U.S. government upon arrival, such as identification documents.

Landlords who are willing to accept supplemental rental application documents for tenants also open the opportunity to a large market of high-quality tenants. Data reveals that three quarters of refugees resettled in the U.S. remain in the state where they are originally resettled, making it clear that refugees and newcomers are staying in communities for the long term.¹ Additionally, in RHS' July 2024 [Incentivizing Landlords to Rent to Refugees survey](#), of the 74.8% of participants who reported having rented to a refugee or other newcomer to the United States, more than half of them reported a positive experience (the next highest percentage reported "neutral" experience).

However, it is important to ensure landlords understand that by accepting alternative forms of supplemental rental application documents, they do not change the overall criteria for selecting tenants as to avoid violating Fair Housing laws. For more information on this, property managers and landlords can review the [Fact Sheet on Renting to Refugees and Other Eligible Newcomers](#).

Additionally, partnerships like the one between Refugee Housing Solutions and ReHome, an online marketplace and technology start-up specialized for newcomer tenant housing matches, create attainable housing solutions as well as guidance for landlords and property managers who are eager to provide housing, have stable renters, and follow Fair Housing laws.

ReHome's Background

Co-founder and Executive Director of ReHome Joe Landis's involvement in supporting resettled refugees grew out of his hometown roots in Lancaster, PA. In 2017, the British Broadcasting Network dubbed Lancaster, PA the "Refugee Capital of the USA" when the area resettled more refugees per capita than anywhere else in the United States. While working as the Housing Specialist for his local resettlement agency, Landis saw how the disconnect between newcomer tenants and welcoming landlords causes the risk of homelessness after arriving in the U.S. He used his time studying for a Master's degree in city planning from MIT to launch ReHome to fill that gap.

¹ [Office of Refugee Resettlement 2021 Annual Survey of Refugees Key Findings](#). U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. 2021.

Co-founder and Director of Technology Zachary Moring is from Austin, TX, a major hub for resettlement in one of the top states for welcoming refugees. A shared interest in innovation brought both Zachary and Joe to [IDEA Con](#), the largest annual start-up conference at Boston University, where Zachary was completing a Master's in data science. His work on ReHome builds on more than seven years of experience managing national-scale data systems.

Both co-founders are experts in the refugee system and have more than 12 years combined experience in Jordan and the U.S. working with refugees and the systems that support them. Both are motivated to see their local communities and communities all over the U.S. work together to welcome newcomers instead of seeing the division happening in national and local politics.

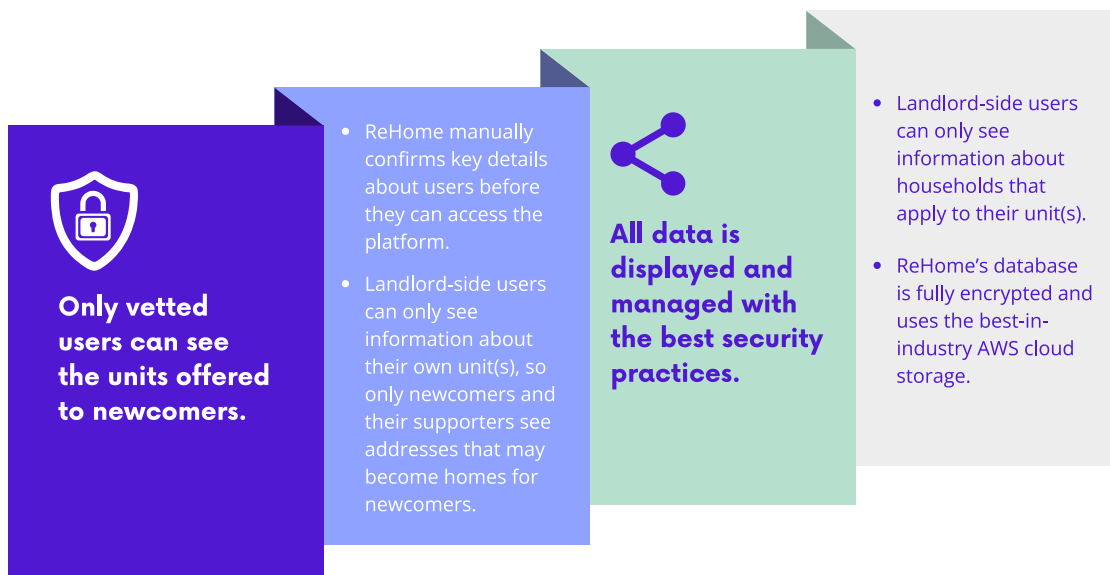
The inspiration for ReHome came during the height of Operation Allies Welcome in 2021 as the collision of U.S. housing challenges impacted the welcoming infrastructure due to a lack of affordable housing and the need for creative and innovative solutions. To address this, ReHome was created as a specialized marketplace platform to strengthen the welcoming rental market for the good of all. The ReHome Marketplace is a free one-stop-shop for landlords to get matched with newcomer tenants.

Through extensive field testing as part of a ReHome pilot in 2023, the platform was built with insight from resettlement agencies in 2024 and transitioned to a 501(c)3 nonprofit model. Alongside their field testing and research, ReHome utilized academic tools and mentorship through MIT, including MIT's flagship entrepreneurship accelerator [delta V](#) and MIT [thesis research](#).

ReHome's Model

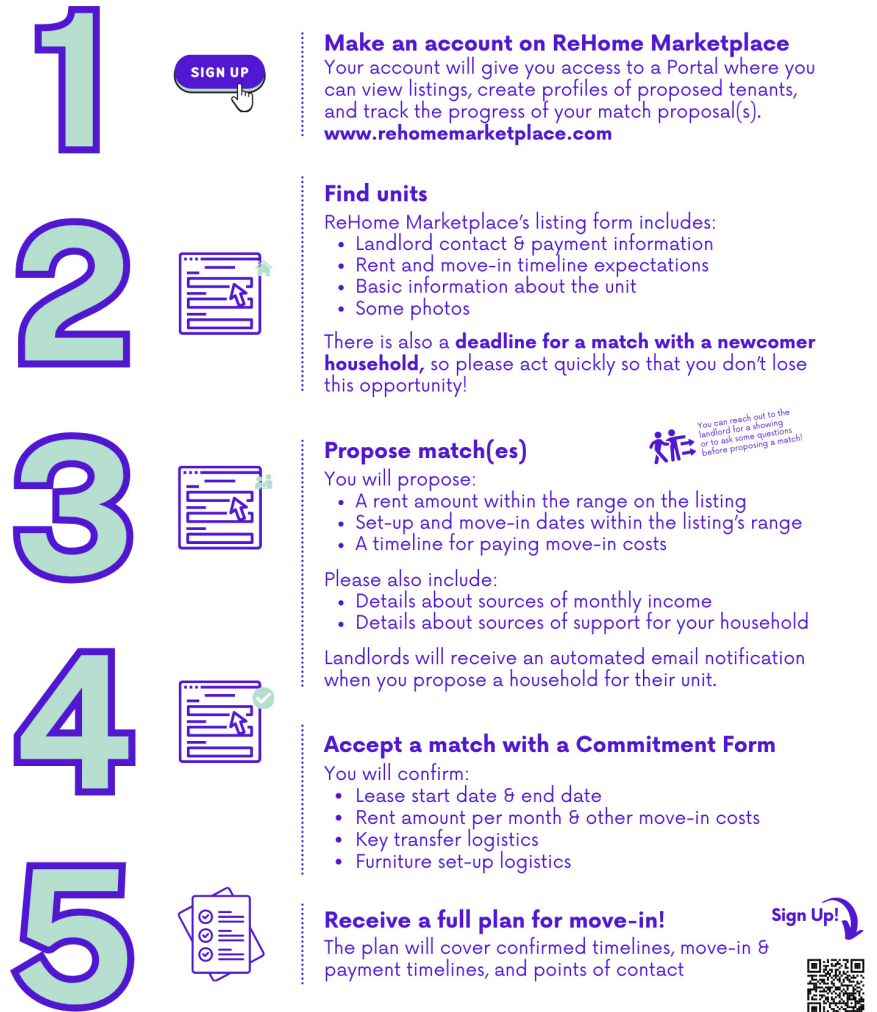
ReHome's online platform, ReHome Marketplace, is a hub of opportunities for refugees, newcomers, and other ORR-eligible populations in need of housing.

A Secure Platform



TENANT USER INTERFACE

Tenant users make a profile with family size, income, and other supports. They can then search for housing that is suitable for them and their situation. In most circumstances, this involves social services agencies, community-based organizations, or volunteers in the community managing an account and assisting newcomer tenants in this process.



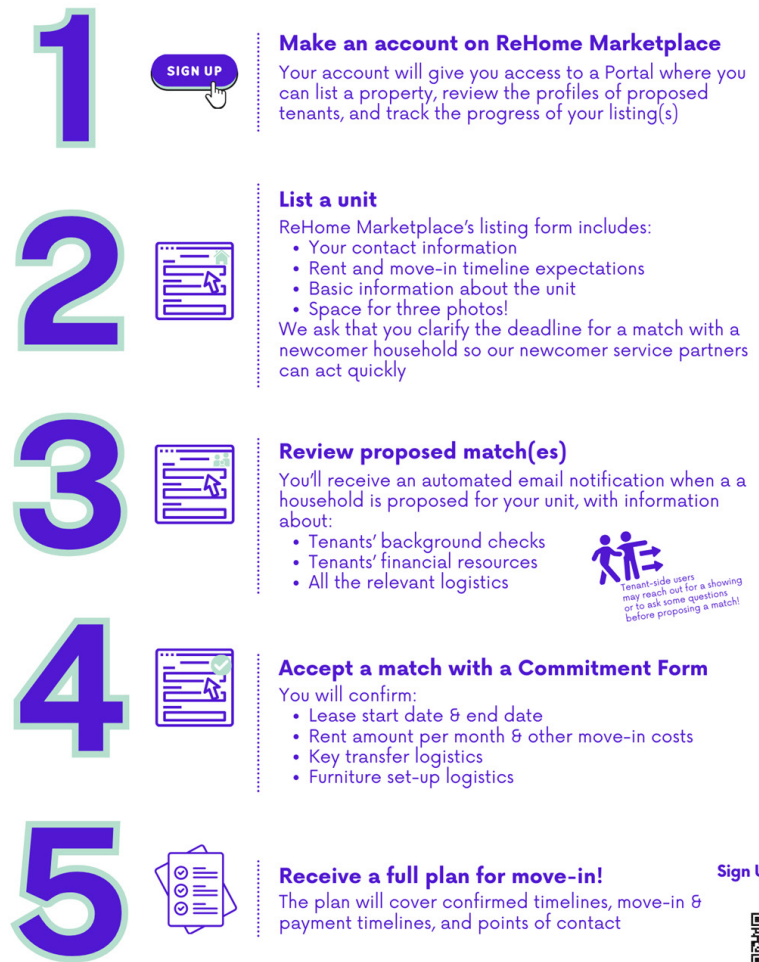
All the Right Connections in One Place



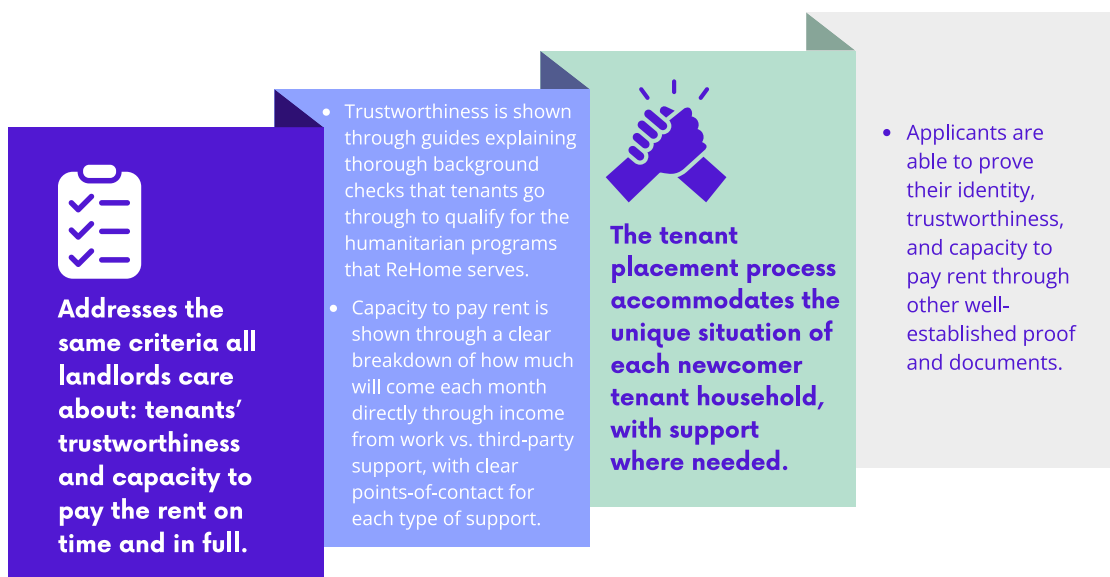
LANDLORD-HOUSING PROVIDER USER INTERFACE

Landlords, housing providers, and property managers create an account and list their units similar to how they might on other housing search software. They can list rent amounts, pictures, utilities, etc. A key difference between listing on ReHome Marketplace and listing elsewhere is that landlords can offer a range for the rent price. ReHome data shows that more than 50% of first-time users of the platform have offered a range that goes under market rate for their area, but this is **not** a requirement.

The platform sends a notification to the opposite side of a potential match when an application is submitted or when housing that fits their profile is listed.

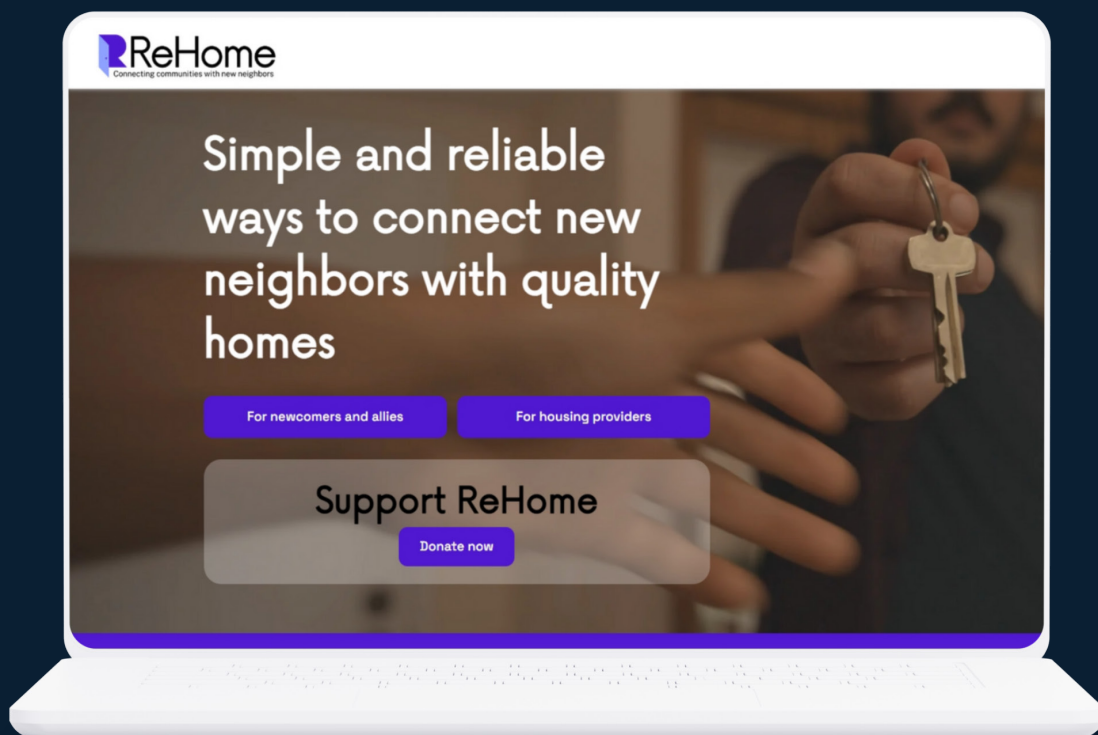


An Easy Pathway to a Match that Works for Both Sides



When either the tenant or landlord user confirms interest in a proposed tenant household or unit, landlords and tenant-side users are asked to agree on the match details together. This happens through one shared page on the platform where details can be seen clearly on both ends, and where changes can be proposed and accepted. Once both sides click the “commit” button, they can use that page as the basis for the lease they use.

ReHome’s goal is to create efficient and effective housing matches for both the housing provider and tenant. The aim is for anyone interested in newcomer housing to create an account on the platform to ensure a speedy and seamless match.

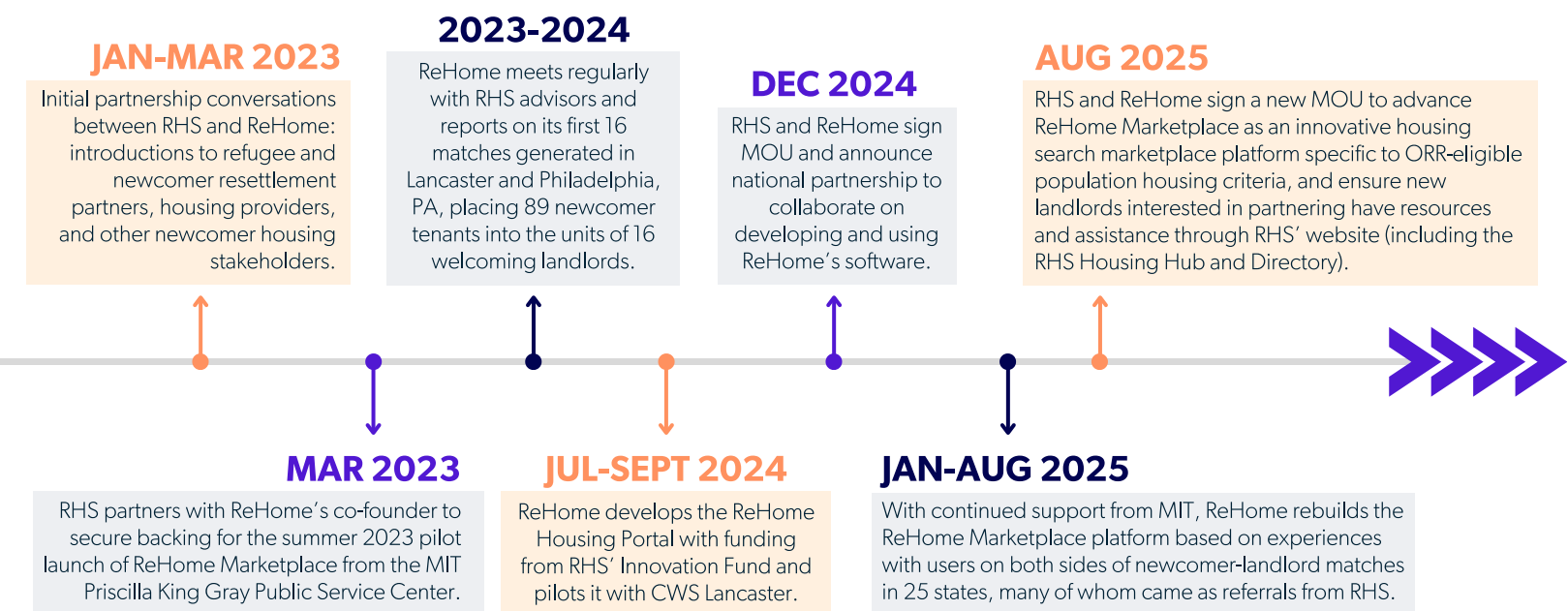


Refugee Housing Solutions X ReHome Marketplace Partnership

Refugee Housing Solutions (RHS) and ReHome Marketplace began their collaboration and partnership in the early stages of ReHome's inception as both sought creative and innovative housing solutions for newcomers arriving to the U.S. Since RHS' launch in 2022, a housing search and technology solution to match refugees and other ORR-eligible populations to newcomer-friendly and flexible landlords had been a priority. Thus, goals quickly aligned when RHS connected with ReHome Marketplace in early 2023.

RHS supported ReHome with connections within the refugee and newcomer landscape as ReHome developed initial versions and beta testing of the ReHome Marketplace. This included engagement with national and local resettlement agencies for feedback as well as landlord and property management contacts at the national and local levels for data user insight when designing a tool like ReHome Marketplace.

Partnership History



RHS and ReHome's partnership has evolved over the years, moving from advising to an intertwined referral system that integrates RHS' programing with Rehome's services to meet housing needs.

RHS' **Trusted Housing Partners** seeks to support landlords and property management companies with the initial conversations and questions they may have about renting to refugees and other newcomers, as well as myriad of support mechanisms available to understand the newcomer housing landscape. These topics include clarifying the unique circumstances newcomers may find themselves in and how housing providers can adapt to best work alongside these tenants. If a landlord is willing, RHS will add the housing provider's information to its [Housing Hub and Directory](#), a central database of housing support services and resources for different locations across the U.S. It helps newcomers and other people involved in resettlement find important local housing information. Likewise, newcomers and organizations assisting ORR-eligible populations will have connections to these trusted housing partners through the Directory.

Through the Trusted Housing Partners program, RHS is in communication with landlords and housing providers across the country and may list housing providers on the Housing Hub and Directory.

The partnership with ReHome Marketplace adds unique value to the Trusted Housing Partners program because once RHS makes contact with a landlord with available units and agrees to sharing their information, they are connected to ReHome. A meeting is set up through RHS with ReHome, and ReHome works with the landlord/housing provider to set up an account through ReHome's services in addition to the support they receive through RHS.

Benefits of Refugee Housing Solutions X ReHome Marketplace Partnership for Landlords, Housing Providers, Newcomers, and Their Supportive Organizations

- Visibility of listings from welcoming landlords.
- Use of RHS' Housing Hub and Directory as the key reference source for community organizations involved in newcomers' housing success as they integrate into U.S. communities.
- Housing providers and hopeful tenants receive resources and support in the housing search process.
- RHS expertise and available resources in multiple languages.
- Efficient and effective housing technology solutions.

RHS' Trusted Housing Partner program is in its pilot phase, but thus far it has been able to intake 15 landlords and property managers, making available over 1,000 units in the past six months. ReHome Marketplace has experienced recent success of more than 50 real-time rental matches during the last six months amongst its network of more than 175 users across 25 states.

Case Studies of ReHome Marketplace Matches

PHILADELPHIA, PA

The case of a single parent household who arrived as a U.S. Refugee Admissions Program client and the welcoming landlord who matched with them.

In July 2024, Christina, a small-scale, first-time landlord in Philadelphia, signed up as a ReHome Marketplace user when her tenants submitted their two months' notice. Her first tenants were newcomers to the U.S., and she wanted to continue to use her rental unit as such. She created a listing on ReHome Marketplace, reporting back to ReHome that it was easier to complete that sign-up and listing process than it had been on other popular housing search engines. ReHome Marketplace better aligned with her values as a landlord and presented an opportunity to match for free with quality tenants without the hassle of dealing with spam on social media listing platforms. In her own words: **"When I heard about ReHome Marketplace, one of the selling points was that it was with refugees and that they would have somebody supporting them and guiding them, and that it was something that I could still reach out about through the website after they moved in."**

She removed her listings from other platforms and set a "rent by" date as a deadline to match with newcomer tenants through ReHome before reactivating the listings on other sites.

After ReHome vetted Christina, ReHome notified an already existing ReHome Marketplace user in Philadelphia about the opportunity. This user worked at a Philadelphia-area refugee resettlement agency and was responsible for more than 10 rental placements (refugee families looking for first or second housing) per month.

After a week went by without the first user identifying potential tenants for the household, ReHome activated connections with another resettlement agency in the area who did not yet have a user on the platform. As soon as this agency heard about the opportunity, their housing placement specialist responded with a high level of interest because they had a client household with a single mother who needed to move out from living with relatives but did not want to live too far from that support. Christina's rental unit was just a few blocks away.

Christina and the resettlement agency agreed for the housing placement specialist to tour the unit before the previous tenants moved out. They all agreed the unit would be a great match for the family, and the support staff worked with the tenants to complete a rental application through ReHome, proposing a move-in on the same day the turnover from the previous tenants moving out was completed.

The tenants were able to meet Christina's application requirement with the support of a Rent Guarantee Program offered by a local resettlement agency that agreed to cover the full rent amount if the household were ever not able to pay on their own.

The same day the unit was move-in ready, the tenants moved in. Christina received the full security deposit and first month's rent from the resettlement agency, and the family has made their rent payment on time ever since.

Listen to the story of this match [here!](#)

Note: Some of the details that the resettlement agency representative mentions about the refugee resettlement system have since evolved.

Case Studies of ReHome Marketplace Matches

LANCASTER, PA

The case of the former U.S. Refugee Admissions Program client of a local CWS affiliate office who needed help with his next housing search 1.5 years into rebuilding his life in the U.S.

CWS Lancaster is a local refugee resettlement office and provides wrap-around services for refugees and other newcomers. A representative at the office reached out to ReHome in April 2025 with news that her client, Peter, needed assistance locating a new home after his roommate had decided to move out. Peter arrived to the U.S. one and a half years prior, was working steadily, and had been paying his half of the rent on time every month. However, he needed to move out because he could not afford to cover the other half of the rent left behind by his roommate.

First, through its network in PA, ReHome identified a local volunteer, Daniel, who was fluent in both English and Peter's native language and could go to tours with Peter and help him communicate with landlords.

Second, ReHome introduced Peter to a landlord who had listed a one-bedroom unit on ReHome Marketplace just a week before. The landlord was more than happy to evaluate Peter's trustworthiness and dependability as a tenant based on a reference from his previous landlord, a letter from CWS Lancaster explaining that the tenant had job placement support if he ever needed to supplement his income, and the written promise volunteers would be available if needed for communication or other support.

The deciding factor for the landlord committing to the match was a positive review: **"I heard through [my friend] that it's easy to get matched with tenants this way — he's had great tenants through you,"** the landlord shared with ReHome.

Many months into his new lease, Peter is thriving; he is progressing in his English language learning, has maintained the same job, and is able to meet his monthly financial commitments, including rent. Based on the foundation of secure housing, he has been able to successfully continue rebuilding his life as an integrated member of the Lancaster, PA community.



Case Studies of ReHome Marketplace Matches

LANCASTER, PA

The case of a family in need of housing in June 2025.

In April 2025, a group of former resettlement case managers in Lancaster formed a new refugee community support initiative called Lancaster Refuge to directly help U.S. military allies whose lives had become endangered in their home countries. Lancaster Refuge works with a nonprofit called No One Left Behind that ensures these families can rebuild their lives in security in U.S. communities. Their work is a great example of the continually growing role of direct community sponsorship in the U.S.

ReHome has been able to offer value to the organization through its expertise in locating housing and working with providers through its ReHome Marketplace, and has assisted six families who were brought to the U.S. through Lancaster Refuge so far.

ReHome Marketplace facilitated a one-bedroom apartment listing from a local landlord who supports the cause of No One Left Behind. At the time of match, the tenants were in the process of starting new employment, but through ReHome's Tenant Profile the landlord was able to view that their employment was secured and would bring in an estimated \$5,000-\$6,000 per month. Thus, the landlord determined the family met his criteria through their projected income, in addition to the financial support they would receive from Lancaster Refuge and other support mechanisms in the area. The couple moved into their new home in July 2025 with both adults working and an income to fully cover their monthly rent.

ReHome received permission from all individuals mentioned in case studies to use their stories and names (if used).

Conclusion

These case studies represent a larger sector of tenants utilizing innovative technology solutions like ReHome Marketplace and its partnership initiatives like those with Refugee Housing Solutions.

ReHome's services for both newcomers and housing providers are essential for these two groups to match together and create successful tenancies — ensuring housing stability for newcomer renters and often long-term tenants for landlords. Innovative and creative housing solutions are a critical component in increasing affordable housing stock and the ability to attain affordable and stable housing.

As RHS and ReHome Marketplace look ahead to how this collaboration may continue to evolve through the Trusted Housing Partners program pilot, they aim to increase dignified affordable housing for refugees and other newcomers across the United States to create thriving and flourishing communities through safe and stable housing.

References

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FEEDBACK

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Help us improve our offerings by completing this [short form](#).

You may also scan the QR code to access the form on another device.



Refugee Housing
SOLUTIONS

www.refugeehousing.org

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