

Volunteer Housing Coach Job Description

A Volunteer Housing Coach (VHC) is to be a support person in housing matters, particularly as that pertains to the matched client's actual housing. Our strategy is to have VHC be an ongoing support person with a good handle on the CFL/SIT program and resources. A VHC will be patient, unflappable, with a good sense of appropriate boundaries and eager to meet those from a different culture on equal terms of respect and admiration. The idea is not to take over the housing issues but to resolve any conflicts mutually in a way that empowers the tenant to understand the process and, hopefully, be able to handle it another time.

Certain tasks need attention but in general the VHC is a friend keeping in contact regularly just to check in and be a support to a new immigrant Mainer coming to grips with a new housing culture.

SIT is also mindful that, when a loan is granted many months before repayment begins, dealing with other concerns can make it easier to ignore and forget that repayment is an obligation by law as well as a moral responsibility. While the VHC will not be responsible for seeing that the SIT borrower/tenant performs his/her obligations to the lender, the VHC will be made aware of the borrower's repayment terms once they are established.

A VHC will be matched to a SIT borrower once the applicant has been approved.

The first formal task will be on learning that the matched client has found an apartment to accompany the client to the apartment and meet the landlord/property manager. SIT will work with the tenant to ensure that the lease provisions are understood before the lease/at-will agreement is signed. The VHC will receive a copy of the lease once it has been signed.

Subsequent VHC tasks will include

- Helping take pictures of the conditions of the apartment rooms and appliances before the tenant moves in.
- Visiting at the beginning of the tenancy and going through the Manual *Welcome to Your New Home* which outlines keeping an apartment in good shape.
- Helping as needed when there is conflict or misunderstanding/ non understanding between the tenant and the landlord.
- Help the tenant with minor apartment issues or questions that don't necessitate landlord involvement.
- Helping the tenant prepare for moving out of the apartment when the lease ends in such a way as to maximize the tenant's chances of getting the security deposit back.

Becoming a SIT VHC should only take a few hours a month after the initial time spent meeting the client and getting him/her/them settled in. CFL and SIT stand ready to support a VHC whenever needed.