

Tenant participation in an Integrated Pest Management Program

Presented by Nancy Figueroa
Committee for Boston Public Housing, Inc





Tenant Participation

Who are we?

We are a non-profit private organization working with Boston Public Housing tenants. Our mission is to improve the quality of life for Boston' public housing tenants through organizing, advocacy, and services to achieve social, environmental, and economic justice.

Why is tenant participation important?

The definition of integrated pest management implies a group effort and partnership. Every partner plays a specific role. The tenants' role becomes crucial in helping landlords in:

1. Identifying conditions in the home that can contribute to pest infestation
2. Maintaining a clean and sanitary home
3. Prevention of infestation



Our method of education and outreach: Tenants Educate Tenants

We hire tenants as staff or use resident volunteers because:

- Tenants have an investment in the community they live in.
- Tenants are living in the same situation as their neighbors and can speak about how they were able overcome some of the barriers.
- Tenants are more likely to be available during the evenings and weekends for other tenants.
- There is a trust relationship that they already built

For this project we hired tenants as Community Health Advocates. They were trained on IPM methods and show the connection between healthy homes and healthy lives.



Tenant Participation

Issues Community Health Advocates have encountered:

- Tenants may not believe this program will work and are unwilling to listen because of past pest control methods
- Language barriers
- Cultural situations
- Access into units such as tenants changing their locks

Some of the ways we resolved these issues:

- Apartment walk through
- Hosting a community meeting
- Hosting focus groups
- Hosting a pesticide exchange program
- Conducting a door to door survey



Tenant Participation

As Community Health Advocates, we have done apartment walk through using a visual inspection list.

It contains questions like:

1. Do you see any visible signs of roaches?
2. If yes, in what rooms?
3. Evidence of leaks observed on: interior walls, exterior walls, ceilings, floors, around plumbing, kitchen sink?
4. Do you see any pesticides in the home? If yes, please list them.
5. Any clutter? If yes, in what room?
6. How would you rate sanitation in the home 0 (poor) - 10 (excellent)

A walk through has helped us have a one on one conversation with tenants. It helped us answer any concerns they might have about the new program and to explain how IPM is different from traditional pest control methods.



Tenant Participation

Host community meetings to:

- Introduce the program
- Let tenants know what the expectations are
- Let tenants know this is a partnership and we are working together and explain why we need access into every unit.
- Let tenants know what is new and why this will work

Host focus groups to:

- Identify what pesticides are being used
- Help spread the news of IPM by word of mouth
- Creates outreach and education materials, including posters, brochures and quick tips



Tenant Participation

Host pesticide exchanges:

- Helps getting tenants to buy into the IPM program.
- Allows for education of non-English speaking tenants. Identifies staff needed for better education to meet language or cultural differences

Conduct a door-to-door survey:

- Identifies tenants' perception of role they play in IPM
- Gear our education materials to meet those perceptions. For example, if a tenant states it is the landlord's responsibility to fix leaks, we then educate them that it is their responsibility to report them.



Create Outreach Materials

- Outreach materials should be simple, to the point and easily translated
- Using colors or color paper makes it more attractive and tenants are more likely to read them

ATTENTION RESIDENTS

@

**THE EXTERMINATOR WILL BE HERE TO SERVICE
YOUR UNIT ON : August 30, 2006**

**75, 85 Archdale Road - 2, & 6 Brookway Terrace
10 & 20 Brookway Terrace 105 & 95 Archdale Road**

“

Between 9:30 & 4:30 PM

In order for the extermination to be most effective, the exterminator has asked that you do the following:

- Please remove all items from under your sink, kitchen cabinets, and closets. You can put the items on your kitchen table.
 - If furniture is moveable, please move it away from the walls.
 - Please keep all objects, (furniture, clothes, etc.) Away from radiators. Keep a clear pathway to all radiators
 - Please have someone in your unit during extermination.
- The exterminator would like your comments on where your problems are. *If no one will be in your unit, please call the Management Office and we will assign a member of the staff to accompany them to your unit.***

Attention Torre Unidad Tenants

The Committee For Boston Public Housing

And

The Boston Housing Authority

Invites you to attend a

Community Meeting

Healthy Homes –Healthy Lives

Thursday, August 28, 2008

Community Room

2pm

Come and meet the Community Health Advocates. Learn about the new integrated pest management program which will help improve your health while eliminating pest in your home



Scenarios we encountered

Clutter: A tenant has lived in an apartment for over 15 years and has raised six daughters, who are grown up and left the apartment. The apartment has organized clutter. Mom is attached to every nick-knack they have given her through-out the years. She has an infestation of mice and the landlord can not get by the clutter to seal cracks.

Response: As a tenant, I listened to her and let her know I appreciate the sentimental value she has towards her belongings, I have been there myself. We talked it through and came up with a plan that she would return valuable items to family members and give some to charity. This allows some cleared space for repairs.

Pet food: A tenant has a couple of cats to get rid of mice. They continue to leave food and water out for them while they are out.

Response: I recommended they put the cats on a feeding schedule and zip lock the remaining food and dispose of water after the cats are fed.



Conclusion:

Tenants expected a quick fix to the pest infestation and are used to traditional methods of chemical sprays that kill quickly. Working with BHA and the contractor, all three partners agreed to have the same message.

- It takes time for the gel to work because it is a sterilizer, therefore it is most effective.
- We ask them do more housekeeping than the average person.
- We ask them to continue to report any cracks or leaks that can contribute to pest infestation.
- We ask them to allow access into their homes more than once to monitor the progress and to continue applying the gel.

Finally, we ask that tenants constantly communicate with management.