

Independent Perspective #1905 with Kristen Lazarony

Transcript

00:00:00 Speaker 1

Welcome to Independent Perspective, a public affairs presentation of Western New York Independent Living.

00:00:05 Speaker 1

I'm your host, Tracy LeBlanc, Chief Community Engagement Officer at Western New York Independent Living.

00:00:11 Speaker 1

Affording housing is a topic that is top of mind in any economic climate, but more so when inflation is high and monthly expenses become more difficult to manage.

00:00:22 Speaker 1

The team at Independent Living of the Genesee Region works to assist community members with advice and assistance related to securing housing or shelter.

00:00:32 Speaker 1

Joining us today to talk about housing programs and services in the Genesee County area is ILGR Rapid Rehousing Coordinator Kristen Lazarony.

00:00:43 Speaker 1

Welcome to the program, Kristen.

00:00:45 Speaker 2

Hello.

00:00:46 Speaker 1

Let's start the discussion with an overview of what issues you're currently seeing in the Genesee region when it comes to housing.

00:00:53 Speaker 2

In Genesee County, housing instability isn't just about homelessness, it's about how people get back to housing once they lose it.

00:01:01 Speaker 2

Over the past few years, renters have been hit by rising costs, limited affordability, and affordable units.

00:01:10 Speaker 2

So, a surge in eviction after COVID protection ended really struck up people being able to afford their housing.

00:01:16 Speaker 2

Many households fall into homelessness not because of long-term issues, but because of a short-term crisis, their job loss, an illness, an eviction.

00:01:26 Speaker 2

And most of the time it's something they can't recover from.

00:01:29 Speaker 1

One of the programs you offer is the Rapid Rehousing Program.

00:01:33 Speaker 1

What exactly is that program and how can it help someone in need?

00:01:36 Speaker 2

So Rapid Rehousing is a proven housing intervention designed to help people exit homelessness quickly and return to permanent housing as fast as possible.

00:01:45 Speaker 2

It's not meant to be long-term or an ongoing subsidy.

00:01:49 Speaker 2

Instead, it focuses on speed, stabilization, and self-sufficiency.

00:01:54 Speaker 2

And Rapid Rehousing is built on the idea that most people who experience homelessness can stabilize with short-term help rather than years of assistance.

00:02:05 Speaker 1

How is eligibility for the Rapid Rehousing Program determined?

00:02:09 Speaker 2

So, the consumer has to be homeless by HUD's definition, so they have to be

00:02:15 Speaker 2

either living outside, they need to be living in a car, or they need to be housed by the Department of Social Services.

00:02:21 Speaker 2

So, once we determine that, then we go into what's called a VI-SPDAT, and we screen them.

00:02:27 Speaker 2

They need to score between four and 10 points in order to be eligible for the program.

00:02:31 Speaker 2

As long as they're eligible, they go on a waitlist, and then we wait for our coordinated entry team to send us a referral when there's open funding to place that person into a house or an apartment, and then we're able to pay their rent.

00:02:46 Speaker 1

Great.

00:02:48 Speaker 1

What is the process for a landlord to get involved with housing programs at ILGR?

00:02:53 Speaker 2

So, we do landlord outreach.

00:02:56 Speaker 2

So, if we see landlords that are posting on like Facebook Marketplace or Zillow, we'll call them and we'll reach out and explain our program.

00:03:05 Speaker 2

They're also welcome to do the same.

00:03:07 Speaker 2

So, we try to put some advertisement out and like in the paper and the Pennysaver and it'll explain the program to landlords.

00:03:15 Speaker 2

We've had Landlord Outreach breakfast so landlords can join us. We discuss the program and then we also can offer them like a one-month bonus rent for accepting the program and for joining. So, we do ask that if you're a new landlord um that you take on that bonus month rent because we encourage you know we're thanking you for taking the program and encouraging you to help individuals being housed.

00:03:45 Speaker 1

There are two warming centers that just opened in the area as well.

00:03:48 Speaker 1

What can you tell me about those?

00:03:50 Speaker 2

So, Batavia opened what's called a Cold Night Cafe and that's located at the Batavia First Presbyterian Church, and it opens when weather is 32 degrees or below.

00:04:02 Speaker 2

And then the second one is in Perry and that's in Wyoming County and that one is located at the Brick Presbyterian Church and that's on 6 Church Street in Perry and if you want to

00:04:15 Speaker 2

find out if they're open,

00:04:16 Speaker 2

it's the same phone number for both, and that's 585-340-1355.

00:04:23 Speaker 2

And that also would go for the Orleans County Warming Center as well.

00:04:29 Speaker 2

And anybody can stay there.

00:04:32 Speaker 2

They just do not accept children.

00:04:35 Speaker 1

If someone's interested in more information about housing programs and services at independent living of the Genesee region, how can they get more information?

00:04:44 Speaker 2

They should call our front desk, so our main number, and it's 585-815-8501, extension 400.

00:04:52 Speaker 2

If there's landlords that are interested in the program, they should call as well, and they should ask to speak with myself.

00:04:59 Speaker 2

Great.

00:05:00 Speaker 1

Well, thank you, Kristen.

00:05:01 Speaker 1

That's all the time we have.

00:05:02 Speaker 1

Thank you for joining us.

00:05:04 Speaker 1

You've been listening to Independent Perspective, a public affairs presentation of Western New York Independent Living.

00:05:10 Speaker 1

Our guest today was Kristen Lazarony, Rapid Rehousing Housing Coordinator at Independent Living of the Genesee Region.

00:05:18 Speaker 1

And I have been your host, Tracy LeBlanc.