

Seattle Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda

ISSUE: An estimated 25-33% of US adults have a criminal record and face significant, and often lifelong, barriers to housing. They are disproportionately people of color. Housing helps them access job programs and maintain employment, reunite with families, and comply with terms of release. Stable housing also has broad community benefits. It is a key strategy for ending homelessness, helps address racial disparities, and improves public safety by reducing recidivism.

1. Pursue a combination of local legislation, education, technical assistance, and fair housing enforcement to reduce barriers to housing for people with criminal records.

- 1a. Develop legislation to reduce barriers for people with criminal records.

- 1a(i) Prohibit advertisements for rental housing that make people with criminal records ineligible to apply.

- 1a(ii) Prohibit screen criteria that include an absolute exclusion of anyone with a criminal record or a broad category of criminal record, such as a felony.

- 1a(iii) Require consideration, prior to denial, of additional, verifiable information provided by the applicant regarding the criminal record and/or changed circumstances or good conduct since the time of conviction.

- 1a(iv) Prohibit denials based on records that cannot be reported under state law, such as crimes greater than seven (7) years since disposition or release, or juvenile records if the applicant is twenty-one (21) years old or older.

- 1a(v) Prohibit denials based on arrests older than one (1) year, except when currently pending charges are under active prosecution.

- 1a(vi) Prohibit denials based on warrants attached to a case where a final disposition has been entered. Allow exclusion of people with active warrants, either pending or adjudicated.

- 1a(vii) Require screening criteria to be based on a business justification related to the requirements of tenancy.

- 1a(viii) Provide for the enforcement of the above provisions.