

2017 - 2018 Seattle City Council Statement of Legislative Intent

Ready for Notebook

Tab	Action	Option	Version
144	1	A	1

Budget Action Title: SDCI Tenant Landlord Resource Center

Ongoing: No

Primary Sponsor: Herbold, Lisa

Councilmembers: Johnson; O'Brien

Staff Analyst: Aly Pennucci

Date		Total	SB	TB	LG	BH	LH	RJ	DJ	MO	KS
	Yes										
	No										
	Abstain										
	Absent										

Statement of Legislative Intent:

This Statement of Legislative Intent (SLI) requests that the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections' Code Compliance Division develop a proposal, with resource needs identified, to launch a public facing tenant landlord resource center, in coordination with the Office of Housing (OH), the Department of Neighborhoods (DON), the Human Services Department (HSD), the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (OIRA), and the Customer Service Bureau. In addition, the interdepartmental group should work with tenant and landlord organization (such as the Tenants Union, Solid Ground, Rental Housing Association and Washington Multi-Family Housing Association) to ensure that a Seattle Tenant Landlord Resource Center is coordinated with and supports their work and does not duplicate efforts. The proposal should be informed by a review of tenant landlord resources and services provided by other cities, such as Oakland or Boston. Identified resource needs should be considered for inclusion in the first quarter supplemental budget requests.

Background:

Since 2013, several changes have been made to local residential rental laws. These changes, along with a multitude of other local rental laws that predate 2012, contribute to a complex regulatory environment for tenants and landlords. Adding to this complexity, laws that apply to both tenants and landlords are administered and enforced by multiple departments, including SDCI, OCR, and, when needed, the Seattle Police Department (SPD).

Both SDCI and OCR also engage in community outreach and education related to the laws that they administer. In addition, other departments play a role in outreach and education related to rental laws. OH provides information for tenants about resources that can assist with finding an affordable apartment; information to help understand the laws that protect tenants; and a list of resources for property managers, primarily focused on responsibilities and best practices for managers of affordable rental units. HSD contracts

with community organizations that provide a variety of landlord and tenant related services. And OIRA and DON have worked with these departments to conduct outreach and develop education materials.

While in general both landlords and tenants are aware that they have certain rights and responsibilities when an oral or written rental agreement has been established, in many cases neither party is aware of exactly which of those rights and responsibilities flow from local regulations, and the complexity of the regulatory environment can seem daunting. Providing clear and easily accessible information and assistance for both tenants and landlords on their rights and responsibilities under local and state law would help minimize violations of these rental laws, strengthen tenant-landlord relations, and help connect both parties with the resources they may need.

Responsible Council Committee(s): Planning, Land Use and Zoning Committee

Date Due to Council: March 31, 2017