

Tenant Screening Ordinance

December 16, 2025



Olympia Housing Action Plan

Strategy 2: Make it easier for households to access housing and stay housed.

2a: “Identify and implement appropriate tenant protections that improve household stability”

Council Process

November 2024:
LUEC discussion on
income to rent
ratios

May 2025: LUEC
discussion on
tenant screening
policies

March 2025: Council
study session on
tenant protections

July/Aug 2025:
community survey
on tenant screening
policies

Sept 2025: Council
study session on
tenant screening
policies



Community Engagement

Community survey for
landlords/property managers and
renters/community service providers

- Open for three weeks in July-August
- **283 total respondents**
(160 landlords/property managers and 123 renters/community service providers)

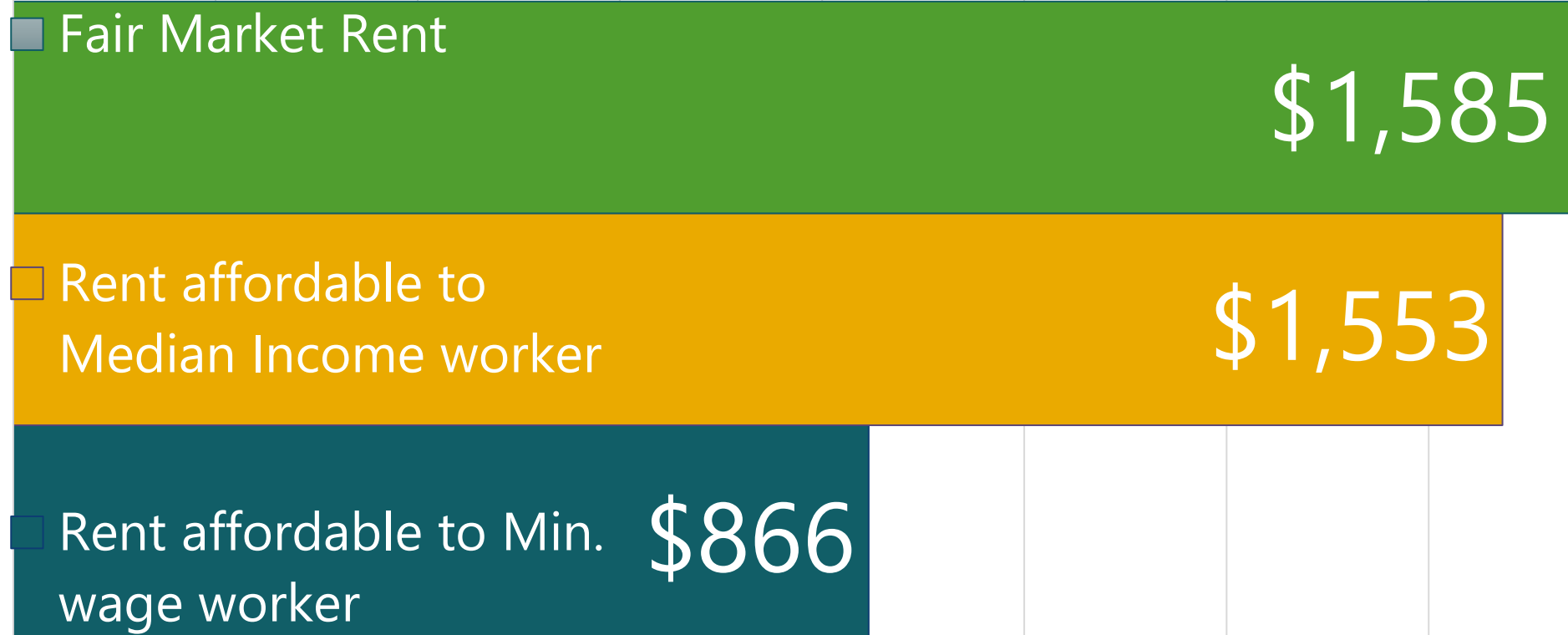


Council Direction

- Draft an ordinance restricting income to rent ratios and preventing landlords from rejecting an applicant for failure to provide a Social Security number on a rental application
- Educate landlords on discriminatory impacts of overly restrictive tenant screening policies (specifically criminal, credit and rental history)



Use of Income to Rent Ratio



Source: ['Out of Reach'](#) (2025), National Low Income Housing Coalition

Ordinance language

- Prohibits landlords from requiring applicants to demonstrate more than 2.5 times the amount of monthly rent to qualify for a rental unit
- Allows applicants to use total household income to qualify
- Allows landlords to request a co-signer or guarantor if the applicant does not meet the income requirement
- Allows landlords to review an applicant's positive rental history if the applicant does not meet the income requirement

Based on policies enacted in:

- Tacoma, WA
- Portland, OR
- Minneapolis, MN
- State of Colorado

Alternative documentation to Social Security numbers

- **Examples of documents to establish identity:** birth certificate, driver's license, Individual Tax Payer Identification Number (ITIN), non-immigrant visa, Certificate of Naturalization (INS I-550)
- **Examples of documents to establish rental history:** reference from former landlord, copy of lease from former residence
- **Examples of documents to establish credit history or ability to pay rent:** current paystubs, bank records, ITIN, paid utility bills



Use of Social Security numbers

- 69% of landlords/property managers surveyed require applicants to provide a Social Security number
- 57% of landlords/property managers surveyed reported they do not have an alternative process for applicants who don't have a Social Security number



Ordinance language

- Landlords may request but not require applicants to provide a Social Security number for screening purposes
- Alternative documentation must be allowed to establish eligibility
- Landlords may not reject or offer different terms to an applicant who does not provide a Social Security number
- Landlords may not threaten, intimidate or harass an applicant due to their immigration/citizenship status

Based on policies enacted in:

- Tacoma, WA
- Portland, OR
- Kenmore, WA
- Redmond, WA
- King County, WA

Implementation

Proposed effective date: April 1, 2026

Enforcement by City or by tenant (aligns with existing Rental Housing Code)

Options

1. Adopt the ordinance as drafted
2. Modify the ordinance
3. Do not adopt the ordinance and direct staff on next steps



Thank you

