



Olympia's Response to Homelessness
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Recent Changes to Landlord Tenant Act and other Renter Protections

Presenter:

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Housing Challenges in Olympia

- Very low vacancy rate (around 2 percent)
- Demand for housing outpaces production (TRPC projects gap of around 600 units a year)
- Rents are increasing faster than wages
- 46 percent of Thurston County Renters are cost burdened (2015 Department of Commerce study)
- 53 percent of Olympians are renters
- Governor's Office reports 90,000 new residents moved to state last year, only 40,000 units built

Why add Renter Protections?

- Most households in Olympia are now renters.
- Eviction is the primary cause of Homelessness in Washington State.
- 69 percent of black households in WA are renters.
- Black adults are 5.5 times more likely to be evicted in King County than whites.
- The *Losing Home* Study found that women are much more likely to be evicted for owing \$100 or less.

Upcoming Changes in Landlord Tenant Act (59.18)

- Focused on nonpayment of rent (to reduce evictions – leading cause of homelessness in Washington)
- **3 day pay or vacate now 14 days**
- Requires that payments first be applied to rent
- Limits evictions for non-rent charges
- Expands opportunities for tenancy reinstatement
 - Limits attorneys fees
 - Creates fund for tenants falling behind on rent

Links to Homelessness

- Private market rentals are the biggest housing provider for public housing 'vouchers'
- Examples include:
 - HUD 'Section 8' tenant-based vouchers
 - Rapid rehousing rent assistance (contracted through county)
 - Housing and Essential Needs (HEN)
 - Department of Corrections
 - DSHS
 - Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH)

Regional Renter Protections

- Tumwater, Lacey, County, and Olympia staff have been collaborating to discuss shared renter protection changes

Tumwater has assessed over ten concepts that could be implemented, some easily.

- Examples include:
 - Allow tenant to pay deposits over a series of months
 - Prohibit online bidding platforms
 - Add criminal conviction status protections in rental code.
 - Require first-in-time tenancy

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	Measures	Potential Positives	Potential Negatives	Notes or Needed City Resources	Potential
8	Require notification a set number of days prior to any rent increase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes the most impact • Best if cross jurisdictional 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potentially difficult to communicate or enforce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 90 days would best • Would need major communications strategy • Could be addressed as a potential code amendment as part of a new "Rental Housing Code" chapter in Title 5 "Business Taxes, Licenses and Regulations" 	<p>XX.XX.XXX Notice to increase rent A landlord is required to provide a written notice to a tenant at least 90 days prior to any increase in periodic or monthly housing rental rates for a fixed lease agreement including a notice to increase rent.</p>
9	Require a landlord to allow a tenant to pay the deposit and move in fees over a period of up to a number of months and allow tenants the ability to pay security and last month rent over a period of three months after moving in in lieu of upfront so there is less initial barrier to entry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would help address the economic issues • Very helpful for low or moderate income renters • Address month to month costs • Best if cross jurisdictional 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has this been challenged? • Potentially difficult to communicate or enforce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tied to term of lease • Payment period could be over three to four months • Would need major communications strategy • Could be addressed as a potential code amendment as part of a new "Rental Housing Code" chapter in Title 5 "Business Taxes, Licenses and Regulations" 	<p>XX.XX.XXX Deposit requirements A. Installment payments, security deposits, non-refundable move-in fees, and nonrefundable move-in fees for a tenant's dwelling unit; and (C) the tenancy. Landlords may not require a tenant to pay the same time as rent is due. All deposits shall be held in a separate account. B. Fixed-term tenancies for less than one year shall establish a tenancy for three months, non-refundable move-in fees, and a tenant screening at the inception of the tenancy. C. Month-to-month or two-month tenancies shall establish a tenancy for three months, non-refundable move-in fees, and a tenant screening at the inception of the tenancy, and the second tenancy. D. A tenant's failure to pay rent according to an agreed upon schedule shall constitute a breach of the tenancy to a ten-day notice to vacate unless otherwise agreed to in writing. [...]</p>

Potential Next Steps

- Direct staff to:
 - Cooperate with Tumwater, Lacey and County staff to ensure outreach to landlords and tenants about state changes that take effect July 28
 - Leverage outreach to collect information on local L/T conflicts, consider local changes
 - Collaborate with other jurisdictions to bring proposed local changes (could include list from Tumwater memo)



Questions?

For more information

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