



Tacoma Tenants Organizing Committee
tacomatenants@gmail.com
@TacomaTenants
www.tacomatenants.org

Since April 2018, the Tacoma Tenants Organizing Committee, led by displaced Tiki Apartment residents, have been organizing for a range of tenant protections. On November 20th, the Tacoma City Council unanimously passed a Rental Housing Code, effective Feb 1, 2019 which includes:

1. The **notice to vacate requirements** will help to mitigate the ever-growing crisis tenants are facing when their buildings are being sold, renovated, or demolished. The Tiki tenants took the lead in advocating for more time for tenants facing this plight, and more instances (such as the Merkle Hotel) have since come up to affirm how crucial this extended notice of 120 days is. The proposed code also includes a **60-day notice for any other termination of tenancy**, and while a Just Cause protection is still needed, this additional time will make a huge difference for tenants facing no cause eviction.
2. The \$2000 **relocation assistance** funds (half from the City and half from the property owner) that will be made available to low-income tenants facing displacement due to demolition, rehabilitation, or change of use will help ease the burden of moving into a new home after being forced out. The additional time for notice to vacate, along with relocation assistance, will go a long way in preventing homelessness. Relocation assistance will also be available if a building is considered “unfit or derelict” (will be fully paid by the landlord).
3. **Notice of enforcement activity** will give tenants the opportunity to know whether or not a potential landlord has an open enforcement action for violating City code, including housing discrimination laws. Tenants have the right to this information which should be readily accessible before they enter into a rental agreement. This measure will also serve as a deterrent to landlords who have unsafe and unhealthy living conditions in their properties.
4. The 60-day **notice to increase rent requirements** gives tenants more time to make arrangements before rent is increased (took effect Dec 6, 2018). We will also be advocating for statewide implementation of rent control.
5. The **distribution of tenant rights and responsibilities** (provided by the City and made available by the landlord when entering a rental agreement) helps ensure that tenants are aware of their rights.
6. **Retaliation is prohibited**, which means that landlords cannot take adverse action in response to tenants exercising their rights, including the right to organize. Currently, many tenants do not report the need for repairs out of fear of reprisal from the landlords, and this protection would help prevent that.
7. **Installment payments permitted** requires landlords to agree to receive upfront move-in costs over an extended period of time. This high cost is one of the main barriers many households face when they have to move to a new home, and having this option will ease the process of moving and help prevent homelessness.
8. It is a **violation of fair housing for a landlord to discriminate based on a tenant’s source of income**, for example a Section 8 voucher.
9. There is a strong **enforcement** mechanism for this code, including a significant fine per day, per unit. This helps to ensure that landlords follow the laws to avoid penalty.

More information available here: www.cityoftacoma.org/rentalhousingcode