

DATE: January 25, 2024

TO: Rental Housing Committee

FROM: Patricia Black, Senior Management Analyst
Anky van Deursen, Program Manager

SUBJECT: Rent Stabilization Division Annual Update of Outreach and Education Program

RECOMMENDATION

Provide the Rental Housing Committee with an annual informational update on the Outreach and Education Program of the Rent Stabilization Division, including summaries of the activities conducted in Fiscal Year 2022-23 and the activities planned for Fiscal Year 2023-24.

BACKGROUND

The Rental Housing Committee (RHC) has requested annual updates to stay informed of the Rent Stabilization Division's (Division) efforts to educate and inform the Mountain View community of the tenant protection laws applicable to rental units in the City, including the Community Stabilization and Fair Rent Act (CSFRA) and the Mobile Home Rent Stabilization Ordinance (MHRSO). This presentation provides an overview of tasks completed in Fiscal Year 2022-23 and offers a road map of activities to be implemented during Fiscal Year 2023-24. The RHC last received a similar presentation during its November 2022 meeting, which covered the activities completed by the Division in Fiscal Year 2021-22 with an outline of planned activities for Fiscal Year 2022-23.

ANALYSIS

The ability for community members to access protections available under the CSFRA and the MHRSO, and for landlords and park owners to understand their rights, responsibilities, and how to comply with the requirements, are dependent upon the community's knowledge of the laws. Effective communications and outreach are vital in ensuring rights and responsibilities are understood, implemented, and accessed accordingly. Therefore, the Division focuses significant staff time and effort on effectively executing a robust Outreach and Education Program.

Materials and communications provided by the Division, ranging from informative emails to detailed petition forms and workbooks, are created with the intent to maximize understanding

of these tenant protection laws and to do so as clearly as possible. Staff routinely assesses materials and outreach methods to increase engagement and accessibility, including language access in Spanish, Russian, and Mandarin, the three primary languages spoken by residents of Mountain View other than English.

Summary of Outreach Activities in Fiscal Year 2022-23

Program staff worked diligently to increase community awareness and understanding of the tenant protections in Mountain View. Staff focused outreach and education efforts on three primary objectives:

1. Developing consistent materials that clearly communicate tenant protections, programs, and services, such as informational flyers, emails, postcards, newsletters, targeted letters, and translations;
2. Increasing engagement to better inform the community, such as through community events, workshops, clinics, outreach campaigns for registration, compliance, and eviction prevention, targeted outreach to vulnerable and hard-to-reach communities, including tenants facing eviction, community members who speak a language other than English, tenants and landlords without access to the internet, and small property landlords; and
3. Improving program efficacy, efficiency, and compliance to increase transparency, such as through customer service surveys.

Please reference the Fiscal Year 2022-23 Quarterly Status Report (Attachment 1) for an overview of outreach and education activities performed during the fiscal year.

The Fiscal Year 2022-23 Outreach and Education Program highlights include:

- Updated the Quarterly Status Report (see Attachment 1) based on RHC recommendations to include (Objective 1):
 - Registration and fee compliance data (percentage of units registered and percentage of properties paid);
 - Average market rent and vacancy rates per unit for fully covered units based on unit size (studio, one bedroom, two bedrooms, three-plus bedrooms);
 - Annual termination data for CSFRA-covered units since the start of the CSFRA and quarterly look back for the current year;
 - Mobile home data, including petitions;

- Housing Help Center data; and
- Public inquiries over time.
- Conducted a targeted outreach campaign to landlords about registration requirements, program updates, noticing requirements, and compliance requirements (Objective 1):
 - Fee payment and registration after outreach and compliance enforcement education resulted in a significant increase in registration compliance (see Table 1).

Table 1: Registration Compliance for 2022 and 2023 Billing and Registration Cycles

	2022 Cycle	2023 Cycle	Percent Increase
Registration Compliance	42%	88%	110%
Annual Fee Payment Compliance	93%	95%	2%

- Responded to and provided one-on-one support for 2,954 public inquires (Objective 2):
 - A comparative analysis of the data between Fiscal Year 2021-22 and Fiscal Year 2022-23 highlights the following:
 - In Fiscal Year 2021-22, staff responded to 3,885 public inquiries, 2,531 of which were related to COVID-19 financial assistance and rent relief.
 - In Fiscal Year 2022-23, staff responded to 2,954 public inquires, 31 of which were related to COVID-19 financial assistance.
 - When COVID-19-related inquiries were removed from inquires, there was a 159.1% increase in public inquiries not related to COVID-19 and a 174.7% increase in landlord inquiries.
 - For the first time since the Division began tracking inquiry data in Fiscal Year 2017-18, landlord registration topped out as the inquiry topic with the highest number of contacts at 640 inquires received. This is a 1,629.7% increase in inquiries related to this topic and is likely correlated to the outreach campaign focused on registration and fee compliance implemented by the Division in Fiscal Year 2022-23.

- Created and distributed 3,122 targeted mailings to better assist hard-to-reach community members affected by the law (Objectives 1 and 2):
 - 296 banked rent increase follow-up packets mailed to tenants;
 - 1,097 termination notice follow-up packets mailed to tenants (copy to landlord);
 - 355 new property owner packets mailed to tenants;
 - 278 registration packet (hard copy of registration portal) mailed to small-property landlords with five or fewer units; and
 - 377 compliance letters for properties out of compliance with the CSFRA or MHRSO mailed to landlords and tenants.
- Organized and/or attended 63 outreach events and engaged 3,091 community members (Objectives 1 and 2).
- Held the second annual Summer Community Kickoff, a family-friendly housing-focused resource fair, in collaboration with our community partner organizations (Objective 2):
 - 500 community members learned about housing and support resources available in the community.
- Implemented customer service feedback surveys (Objective 3):
 - 97% of clients agreed that workshops and office hours provided helpful information.
 - 96% Help Center attendees agreed that staff was helpful and courteous.
 - 87% Help Center attendees agreed that they received the support they needed.
 - 100% tenant petitioners felt they were able to find the information needed to complete their petition.
 - Tenant Petitioner Testimonial: “Program staff went above and beyond to guide me through this process. I really appreciate all the assistance, and am grateful for their patience, thoroughness, and attention to detail. Thank you!”
- Tracked and compiled Outreach and Education Program data to further provide comparative analyses between fiscal years (Objective 3).

Fiscal Year 2023-24 Outreach and Education Program Plan

Fiscal Year 2023-24 continues the Fiscal Year 2022-23 communications goal of increasing community awareness and understanding of the tenant protections in Mountain View. This all-encompassing goal allows staff the flexibility to adequately address the programs we implement, including the CSFRA Rent Stabilization Program, the MHRSO Rent Stabilization Program, Tenant Relocation Assistance, the Housing Help Center, and the Mountain View Mediation Program.

Many of the core elements (the goal and objectives) outlined last year are carried over from Fiscal Year 2022-23 for consistency. Strategies are updated for Fiscal Year 2023-24.

Goal, Objectives, and Strategies

- Goal: Increase community awareness and understanding of the tenant protections in Mountain View.

Table 2: Fiscal Year 2023-24 Outreach and Education Program Objectives and Strategies

Objective 1: Develop consistent materials that clearly communicate tenant protections, programs, and services.	Objective 2: Increase engagement to better inform the community.	Objective 3: Foster transparency and trust in the community.
<p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and distribute materials to inform the public of tenant and landlord rights and responsibilities under local laws and regulations. • Redesign the website to improve navigation and functionality. 	<p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide multiple methods for responding to questions and concerns from, and providing information to, community members. • Deliver presentations, workshops, and community meetings. • Engage vulnerable and hard-to-reach community members. • Utilize multiple modes of communication. • Foster relationships with community organizations. 	<p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate updates and major changes to affected parties and the broader landlord/tenant community. • Evaluate outreach and education program outcomes.

Highlights of major tasks planned for the fiscal year include, but are not limited to:

- Developing and implementing an outreach campaign to inform the community of the regulations and requirements related to utility charges and ratio utility billing services (RUBS) starting in January 2024:
 - Including information in an annual invoicing insert and biannual newsletter;
 - Facilitating in-person and virtual workshops;
 - Conducting outreach to tenants on the impact of RUBS regulations; and
 - Conducting outreach to landlords on compliance with RUBS regulations.
- Implementing an outreach campaign to inform landlords of registration and fee payment requirements and related compliance and enforcement mechanisms. Activities include:
 - Including information in an annual invoicing insert and biannual newsletter;
 - Facilitating in-person and virtual Registration and Fee Payment Workshops;
 - Updating video tutorials and user guides;
 - Conducting targeted outreach to landlords on registration requirements, program updates, noticing requirements, and compliance requirements; and
 - Mailing compliance letters for properties out of compliance with the CSFRA or MHRSO to landlords and tenants.
- Redesign the website to help communicate important information more clearly and be easier to navigate.
- Engaging vulnerable and hard-to-reach community members:
 - Distributing accessible materials in Spanish, Mandarin, and Russian within the community and add high-touch locations, such as laundromats and grocery stores;
 - Connecting with the senior community via the Senior Center and Second Harvest Food Bank food distribution program to perform targeted outreach to better inform the community about applicable laws;

- Connecting with the Chinese-speaking community via the Multicultural Engagement Program and known community members to perform targeted outreach to better inform the community about applicable laws; and
- Developing realtor-specific trainings and materials.
- Evaluating Outreach and Education Program outcomes:
 - Comparatively analyzing Quarterly Status Reports, Housing Help Center data, and customer satisfaction surveys.

FISCAL IMPACT

Providing this informational update to the Rental Housing Committee has no fiscal impact.

PUBLIC NOTICING—Agenda posting and email to distribution list.

PB-AVD/KG/6/HSN/RHC

897-01-25-24M-1

Attachment: 1. Rent Stabilization Division Fiscal Year 2022-23 Quarterly Report