City of Seattle

Edward B. Murray, Mayor

Department of Construction and Inspections

Nathan Torgelson, Director

MEMORANDUM

To: Councilmembers

From: Nathan Torgelson, Director

Date: July 17, 2017

Subject: Report to Council on Outreach Outcomes related to the Move-in Fee Legislation

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This report to Council is submitted to the City Clerk in accordance with the requirement in Section 12 of Council Bill 118817 (Ordinance 125222), which states:

> *The Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) shall, in coordination with the Office for Immigrant and Refugee Affairs, Department of Neighborhoods, and the Office of Civil Rights, conduct outreach and prepare educational materials to better inform limited English proficient communities and immigrant and refugee communities of the protections and responsibilities of tenants and landlords under these regulations. SDCI shall report to the City Council on the outcomes of this outreach and educational work within six months of the effective date of the ordinance introduced as Council Bill 118817.*

This report presents the actions to date on outreach to limited English proficient communities and immigrant and refugee communities about new move-in fee regulations and other aspects of the Council bill.

Organization and Planning

Outreach regarding the move-in fee legislation is being conducted and funded within the framework of the outreach workplan (attached) submitted to Council in response to Green Sheet 144-2-A-3. The Green Sheet added $50,000 GSF in 2017 to SDCI to support coordinated outreach efforts and prepare educational materials to better inform tenants and landlords of their rights and responsibilities under Seattle's rental regulations. The workplan includes a strong emphasis on outreach to limited English proficient communities and immigrant and refugee communities. Council approved the workplan in May, at which point the $50,000 GSF became available to execute the workplan detailed below.

The goals of the overall outreach effort, including outreach on the move-in fee legislation, are:

- Provide high-quality information to renters and landlords

- Utilize small outreach events and existing media channels
- Reach historically underrepresented communities, such as immigrant and refugee communities, and young people
- Develop a single City message about renter rights and landlord responsibilities that crosses departments
- Improve cross-department coordination on outreach

Progress Report

Because outreach on the move-in fee legislation is proceeding as part of the broader coordinated outreach, the progress and outcomes detailed below are presented in the context of the workplan goals.

Providing high-quality information to renters and landlords

SDCI consulted with stakeholders to inform the outreach strategies early in 2017, including representatives of immigrant and refugee communities specifically. Stakeholders, especially those representing communities with limited English proficiency, reported that the City's existing print materials and websites for renters were overly reliant on dense text and felt technical and overwhelming. In response, SDCI developed the concept of telling the story of renting in Seattle as tenants would experience it. We are putting this concept into practice in the following ways:

- SDCI contracted with a graphic design firm to produce three infographics: *Moving-In*, *Being a Renter,* and *Moving-Out* for a 360 degree view of renting in Seattle. The *Moving-In* infographic includes information on move-in fees as well as SOCR's first in time ordinance. The *Moving-Out* brochure will include information on deposit returns.
- These infographic brochures will distill the most important information and use images to illustrate the renting process. *Moving-In* (attached) is at an advanced draft stage and will be shared with stakeholders for feedback before going to final print. The material is designed for easy print access online and can be used as building blocks for an eventual renters' handbook.
- The information incorporates roles of multiple departments, such as the fair housing laws enforced by SOCR.
- The brochures will be translated into top tier languages and all brochures will clearly state that immigration status is not a consideration for accessing City services.

SDCI is also developing a *Renting in Seattle* web portal in accordance with Green Sheet 144-3-A-1. The web portal design is following the story-telling concept and organizing information as a tenant or landlord would look for it with helpful infographics to illustrate. Users will be able to find information about move-in fees or any other subject they might need quickly, and drill

down further for more detailed data, eventually being directed to the appropriate City web site where appropriate.

- SDCI and Seattle IT led a cross-department team in developing the requirements and basic framework for the web portal, which includes content on move-in fees and deposit returns.
- Resource assignments for building the web portal are currently under review by Seattle IT.
- After the cost of building the web portal is finalized, some of the remaining budget is planned for hiring a project manager with a web design background to gather and edit site content, to steer design and accessibility, and to ensure consistency.
- SDCI is currently working on its own departmental website, highlighting move-in fees as a new regulation. We are also breaking down complex information into topic- related smaller bites, so users can find what they need quickly and find links to more in-depth detail when required improving accessibility.
- Translated materials will be readily identifiable and easily located.

Use small outreach events and existing media channels, especially to reach historically underrepresented communities

- SDCI staff has attended ten community events to date in 2017, focusing on the elderly, refugee and immigrant community and service providers of low-income renters. Move-in fees have been a focal point of the outreach events. Other information important to renters is also presented. Events were conducted at:

    - Seattle and King County Public Health
    - Housing Affordability & Livability Open House
    - South Seattle Home Fair
    - Salvation Army – William Booth Center
    - Seattle Office for Civil Rights
    - 2-1-1 Community Information Line – Crisis Clinic
    - Goodwill Training & Education
    - Phinney Neighborhood Center
    - SHAG/SEED Community Conversation at Rainier Court
    - Hilltop House Senior Community with Tenants Union

- SDCI and DON signed a contract for 2017 for ongoing outreach coordination through the Community Liaison program. The Community Liaisons will provide valuable cultural context and interpretation services.

- SDCI completed an initial Racial Equity Toolkit to identify and prioritize RSJI goals for the proposed Tenant/Landlord Resource Center, with an emphasis on outreach to underserved communities.
- Using the 2017 City of Seattle and Seattle Housing Authority Joint Assessment of Fair Housing study, SDCI identified neighborhoods in the City most populated by immigrants, refugees, and African Americans, who were identified in the study as the most vulnerably housed community members. SDCI outreach efforts will emphasize and prioritize these specific neighborhoods and groups, identifying community organizers as well as service providers for outreach and engagement.
- SDCI is compiling a comprehensive directory of agencies and service providers in the City in consultation with OIRA, that serve immigrants and refugees with an aim to offer educational workshops on City rental programs in coordination with DON and SOCR.
- In response to stakeholder feedback that identified children as often the principal communicators in families with limited English proficiency, SDCI has begun a discussion with Seattle School District. Encompassing, 91 schools and 47,000 students, the Seattle School District presents a significant opportunity for meaningful engagement with households to increase awareness of City programs. We are proposing to present to school counselors and family support workers who provide direct support to students and families. We are additionally connecting with the School and Community Partnership department and staff on the international program team.

Develop a unified and single City message about renting in Seattle & Improve cross-department coordination on outreach

- SDCI, SOCR, DON, OIRA, OH, HSD, CSB, and Seattle IT continue to meet bi-weekly to coordinate on web portal design, outreach materials, and planning for the Tenant/Landlord Resource center. OIRA and DON Community Liaisons have been particularly helpful in the planning and implementation of outreach to limited English proficiency communities and immigrant and refugee communities.
- SDCI and SOCR scheduled two workshops for landlords on move-in fees and first-in-time requirements, which were fully attended and waitlisted. Two additional workshops will be scheduled for fall and winter.
- OIRA is partnering with SDCI to identify the most effective approaches for ethnic media campaigns and purchasing print ad space bundled with other City departments for maximum exposure. The ethnic media campaign will include information on move-in fees specifically.

Next Steps

SDCI in coordination with City departments and stakeholders will continue following the attached workplan, with the goal of a comprehensive City message for limited English proficiency communities and immigrant and refugee communities.

This work also comprises the first steps in the expanded proposal for a Tenant Landlord Resource Center, submitted to Council in response to SLI 144-1-A-1. The proposal includes a sustained outreach effort, video(s) narrated in several languages, and a translated renter's handbook as additional steps to reach limited English proficient communities and immigrant and refugee communities.

Renting in Seattle

MOVING IN

Whether you are moving to the city or within it, there is a lot to know about renting in Seattle

Finding a place

Unlike some other big cities, it isn't necessary to pay a third party to find somewhere to live in Seattle. Most people use Craigslist and other free rental search sites and apps available online. It can be competitive, so get creative and use social media and your social network to get the word out. Post and search on local community boards in the neighborhood where you want to live. For some affordable housing search options call 2-1-1 Community Information Line or check out:

Seattle.gov/housing/renters/find-housing



Immigration status is not considered for access to City services.

Seattle

SEATTLE.GOV I (206) 615-0808

Applying to rent

- Seattle's *First in Time* rule means a landlord must accept the first qualified renter to submit a complete application.
- Criteria used to screen tenants and minimum qualifications to apply must be in writing.
- A landlord can only charge the actual cost of a screening report.
- If a landlord requires a 'holding deposit' to reserve a unit while an application is considered, a written receipt with terms must be provided. The holding deposit must be refunded in full if the application is turned down and if accepted, applied toward move-in costs.





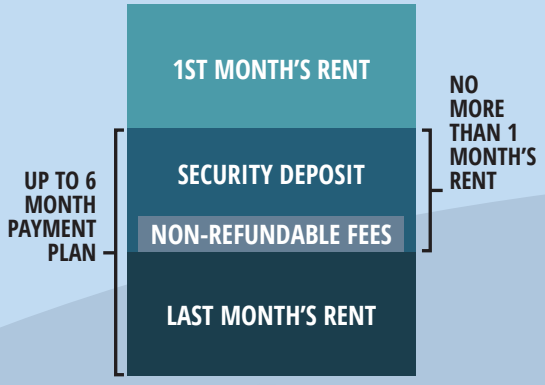




Fair Housing for All

Seattle's fair housing laws protect renters against discrimination based on protected classes such as race, disability, gender identity, and more. It is illegal to deny renters housing because of a Section 8 voucher or government benefits like Social Security. People with disabilities can ask landlords for reasonable accommodations for parking spaces, service animals, or changes in processes so everyone can benefit from the housing opportunity. Discrimination can occur at any point in the rental process from finding a place to moving out. Learn more about your rights at:

seattle.gov/civilrights/fair-housing

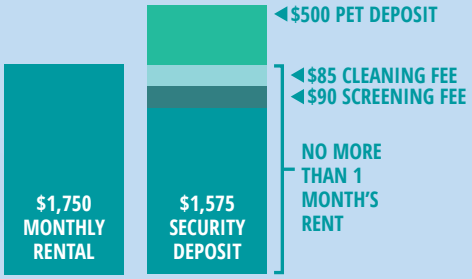






Mary is a single person household. The rental she applied for is $1,000/month.

The landlord can charge Mary a $45 screening fee (average cost) and $955 security deposit.



Anna and Lisa and their two children are a four-person household. The rental they applied for is $1,750/month. They also have two cats.

The landlord can charge a $45 screening fee per adult for a total of $90, a cleaning fee of $85, a security deposit of $1575 and a $250 pet deposit per pet for a total of $500.

Move-in Fees and Deposits

There are limits to what a landlord can charge for fees and a security deposit. Fees are non-refundable while deposits are fully refundable. Fees can only be charged for renter screening and/or cleaning. They cannot exceed 10% of one month's rent unless actual screening costs exceed 10%. The security deposit and fees combined cannot exceed a total of one month's rent. A landlord can charge an additional pet deposit per pet up to 25% of one month's rent. Pet deposits cannot be charged for assistance animals.

Renters can choose to pay their move-in fees, deposit and last months' rent in installments depending on the length of the rental agreement or by mutual-agreement with the landlord. Landlords cannot refuse to accept installment payments.

Move-in Checklist

- A landlord must provide a written checklist detailing the condition of the rental unit before collecting a security deposit.
- Renters should carefully review the list for accuracy and make changes where needed before both parties sign and date it.
- When a renter moves out, the landlord will rely on the original checklist to determine if damage has occurred.
- A landlord must also provide a copy of *Information for Tenants*, a summary of landlord-tenant rights and obligations produced by the City of Seattle.



Keys to success

Seattle's rental market is competitive, be prepared with your information and documents when applying to rent.

It is really important to understand the terms and conditions of your rental agreement before you sign it:

- How long is the term?
- How does your rental agreement end?
- Do you have an option to renew?
- Do you pay utilities or other charges?
- What are the rules for having guests?
- Get advice if you need help understanding.

Make sure you have a copy of your rental agreement in a safe place so you can refer to it when needed.





Seattle

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Immigration status is not considered for access to City services.

Available in: English | Amharic | Spanish

Help is at hand

For move-in fees/deposits – call SDCI at 206 615 0808 or visit **www.rentinginseattle.gov**

For discrimination/fair housing complaints – call SOCR at 206 684 4500 **www.seattle.gov/civilrights**

For problems with your rental unit – call SDCI at 206 615 0808 or visit **www.seattle.gov/dpd/codesrules/makeacomplaint/**

For move-in assistance resources or free legal assistance dial 211 (Community Information Line) or visit **win211.org**

Interpretation is always available.

Is my unit registered?

As of 2016, all rental units are required to be registered with the City of Seattle. Exceptions include owner-occupied rentals and some other types of housing. You can find out if your unit is registered or needs to be at **seattle.gov/RRIO** (click on the "renters" tab).

City of Seattle

Edward B. Murray, Mayor

Department of Construction and Inspections

Nathan Torgelson, Director

MEMORANDUM

To: Monica Martinez Simmons, City Clerk
Councilmember Lorena González, Chair, GESCNA Committee

From: Nathan Torgelson, Director

Date: March 27, 2017

Subject: Green Sheet 144-2-A-3 with Proviso Requesting Work Plan

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This workplan is submitted to the City Clerk in accordance with the proviso in Green Sheet 144-2-A-3, which states:

> This green sheet adds $50,000 GSF in 2017 to SDCI to support coordinated outreach efforts and prepare educational materials to better inform tenants and landlords of their rights and responsibilities under Seattle's rental regulations. Seattle's rental laws are complex and can be difficult to navigate. SDCI would coordinate with the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs, Department of Neighborhoods, and the Office for Civil Rights to coordinate outreach efforts and develop materials that address the range of policies, regulations and services administered by the City and partner agencies and organizations. This would include focused outreach to communities with limited English proficiency and immigrant and refugee communities.
>
> ***Proviso:*** *Of the appropriation in the 2017 budget for Seattle Department of Construction's (SDCI) Code Compliance BCL, $50,000 is appropriated solely for SDCI to conduct outreach and prepare educational materials to better inform tenants and landlords of their rights and responsibilities under Seattle's rental regulations with a focus on communities with limited English proficiency and immigrant and refugee communities. Furthermore, none of the money so appropriated may be spent until the Director of SDCI files a specific work plan for this funding with the City Clerk. The Director of the SDCI should also send a copy of the work plan to the Gender Equity, Safe Communities & New Americans Committee Chair.*

This workplan lays out a plan and budget for an outreach and education campaign related to City rental housing regulations and services. The outreach is intended to deliver a coordinated message about programs that span multiple City departments. This workplan was developed in coordination with SOCR, DON, OIRA, OH and HSD.

Overall Concept

The goals of this outreach effort are to:

- Provide high-quality information to renters and landlords
- Utilize small outreach events and existing media channels
- Reach historically underrepresented communities, such as immigrant and refugee communities, and young people
- Develop a single City message about renter rights and landlord responsibilities that crosses departments
- Improve cross-department coordination on outreach
- Work in concert with related resources and efforts, including the tenant-landlord web portal and the education grant for landlords from 2016

The workplan has five main parts:

1. Early action to get the word out on the new "Move-in Fee" legislation
2. Build key information needed for coordinated outreach
3. Outreach to renters, with the DON Community Liaison program facilitating outreach to historically underrepresented communities
4. Outreach to landlords
5. A media campaign about City programs for renters with emphasis on ethnic and student media news coverage and advertising

Workplan and estimated Budget

Early action outreach on new Move-in Fee / Deposit Return Legislation

Item	Timeline	Who	Estimated Budget
Email to 19,000 landlords using RRIO contact list (view at http://eepurl.com/cxvIYj)	January 2017	SDCI	$0
Initial info and FAQ's on website	January, February 2017	SDCI	$0
Translate City-required "Information for Tenants."	April 2017	SDCI	$3,000
Infographic(s) & Translation	May 2017	SDCI (vendor for graphic design)	$12,000
Subtotal			**$15,000**

Information Tools Needed for Coordinated Outreach

Item	Timeline	Who	Estimated Budget
Web Portal	June 2017	Seattle IT	$0 ($65,000 in separate funding from 2017 GS 144-3-A-2))
Brochure / infographic on City programs with translations	May 2017	SDCI (vendor for graphic design)	$8,000
Boilerplate Presentation tool for outreach staff on citywide programs	May 2017	All	$0
Subtotal			**$8,000**

Outreach to Renters with the DON Community Liaison Program

Item	Timeline	Who	Estimated Budget
Contract with DON Community Liaisons for 12 outreach events	April 2017	SDCI	$12,000
Shared Outreach calendar on SharePoint	April 2017	SDCI	$0
Opportunistic outreach events	Ongoing	All	$0
Subtotal			**$12,000**

Outreach to Landlords

Item	Timeline	Who	Estimated Budget
Grant to landlord education organization	February 2017	SDCI	$0 ($50,000 in through 2016 Q1 Supplemental Budget)
Coordinate with landlord orgs on training	Ongoing 2017	SDCI & SOCR	$0
Opportunistic outreach events	Ongoing	All	$0
Email communication to 19,000 landlords / managers	As needed	SDCI	$0
Subtotal			**$0**

Media Campaign

Item	Timeline	Who	Estimated Budget
Press release and news story about City programs	April 2017	All	$0
Pitch story to major media	May 2017	Dept. media Contacts	$0
Contract with DON CLs to help as spokespeople to ethnic and student media	May 2017	DON	$3,000
Create ad copy for ethnic media	Ongoing	OIRA & contracted graphic design services	$4,000
Advertising budget for ethnic and student media	As needed	SDCI / OIRA	$8,000
Subtotal			**$15,000**

TOTAL – All components	**$50,000**