
Office of the Tenant Advocate

www.ota.dc.gov

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Table CQ0-1

| Description | FY 2015 | FY 2016 | FY 2017 | % Change |
|------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|
| | Actual | Approved | Proposed | from FY 2016 |
| OPERATING BUDGET | \$2,191,134 | \$2,907,415 | \$2,788,415 | -4.1 |
| FTEs | 15.9 | 18.0 | 18.0 | 0.0 |

The mission of the Office of the Tenant Advocate (OTA) is to provide technical advice and other legal services to tenants regarding disputes with landlords; to educate and inform the tenant community about tenant rights and rental housing matters; to advocate for the rights and interests of District renters in the legislative, regulatory, and judicial contexts; and to provide financial assistance to displaced tenants for certain emergency housing and tenant relocation expenses.

Summary of Services

OTA provides a range of services to the tenant community to further each aspect of its mission. The agency:

- Advises tenants on resolving disputes with landlords, identifies legal issues and the rights and responsibilities of tenants and landlords, and provides legal and technical assistance for further action such as filing tenant petitions;
- provides in-house representation for tenants in certain cases and refers other cases to pro bono or contracted legal service providers and attorneys;
- works with other governmental and non-governmental officials and entities, including the District Council, the Mayor's office, executive agencies, the courts, tenant stakeholders, advocates, and others, to promote better tenant protection laws and policies in the District;
- conducts educational seminars in a variety of contexts to inform tenants about their rights and other rental housing concerns; and
- provides financial assistance for certain emergency housing and relocation expenses to tenants displaced by fires, floods, governmental property closures, or at the discretion of the Chief Tenant Advocate.

The agency's FY 2017 proposed budget is presented in the following tables:

FY 2017 Proposed Gross Funds Operating Budget and FTEs, by Revenue Type

Table CQ0-2 contains the proposed FY 2017 budget by revenue type compared to the FY 2016 approved budget. It also provides FY 2015 actual data.

Table CQ0-2

(dollars in thousands)

| Appropriated Fund | Dollars in Thousands | | | | | Full-Time Equivalents | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------|------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|------------------|------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| | Actual FY 2015 | Approved FY 2016 | Proposed FY 2017 | Change from FY 2016 | Percentage Change* | Actual FY 2015 | Approved FY 2016 | Proposed FY 2017 | Change from FY 2016 | Percentage Change |
| GENERAL FUND | | | | | | | | | | |
| LOCAL FUNDS | 2,191 | 2,788 | 2,788 | 0 | 0.0 | 15.9 | 18.0 | 18.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| TOTAL FOR GENERAL FUND | 2,191 | 2,788 | 2,788 | 0 | 0.0 | 15.9 | 18.0 | 18.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| INTRA-DISTRICT FUNDS | | | | | | | | | | |
| INTRA-DISTRICT FUNDS | 0 | 119 | 0 | -119 | -100.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | N/A |
| TOTAL FOR INTRA-DISTRICT FUNDS | 0 | 119 | 0 | -119 | -100.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | N/A |
| GROSS FUNDS | 2,191 | 2,907 | 2,788 | -119 | -4.1 | 15.9 | 18.0 | 18.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |

*Percent change is based on whole dollars.

Note: If applicable, for a breakdown of each Grant (Federal and Private), Special Purpose Revenue type and Intra-District agreement, please refer to **Schedule 80 Agency Summary by Revenue Source** in the **FY 2017 Operating Appendices** located on the Office of the Chief Financial Officer's website.

FY 2017 Proposed Operating Budget, by Comptroller Source Group

Table CQ0-3 contains the proposed FY 2017 budget at the Comptroller Source Group (object class) level compared to the FY 2016 approved budget. It also provides FY 2014 and FY 2015 actual expenditures.

Table CQ0-3

(dollars in thousands)

| Comptroller Source Group | Actual FY 2014 | Actual FY 2015 | Approved FY 2016 | Proposed FY 2017 | Change from FY 2016 | Percentage Change* |
|--|----------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| 11 - REGULAR PAY - CONTINUING FULL TIME | 1,052 | 1,055 | 1,330 | 1,501 | 171 | 12.9 |
| 12 - REGULAR PAY - OTHER | 11 | 86 | 117 | 0 | -117 | -100.0 |
| 13 - ADDITIONAL GROSS PAY | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | N/A |
| 14 - FRINGE BENEFITS - CURRENT PERSONNEL | 248 | 266 | 359 | 392 | 33 | 9.2 |
| 15 - OVERTIME PAY | 9 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | N/A |
| SUBTOTAL PERSONAL SERVICES (PS) | 1,323 | 1,414 | 1,807 | 1,893 | 87 | 4.8 |
| 20 - SUPPLIES AND MATERIALS | 11 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 40 - OTHER SERVICES AND CHARGES | 610 | 429 | 576 | 490 | -87 | -15.1 |
| 41 - CONTRACTUAL SERVICES - OTHER | 322 | 319 | 375 | 390 | 15 | 4.0 |
| 50 - SUBSIDIES AND TRANSFERS | 0 | 0 | 119 | 0 | -119 | -100.0 |
| 70 - EQUIPMENT AND EQUIPMENT RENTAL | 0 | 20 | 20 | 5 | -15 | -75.0 |
| SUBTOTAL NONPERSONAL SERVICES (NPS) | 942 | 777 | 1,101 | 895 | -206 | -18.7 |
| GROSS FUNDS | 2,266 | 2,191 | 2,907 | 2,788 | -119 | -4.1 |

*Percent change is based on whole dollars.

FY 2017 Proposed Operating Budget and FTEs, by Division/Program and Activity

Table CQ0-4 contains the proposed FY 2017 budget by division/program and activity compared to the FY 2016 approved budget. It also provides FY 2015 actual data. For a more comprehensive explanation of divisions/programs and activities, please see the Division/Program Description section, which follows the table.

Table CQ0-4

(dollars in thousands)

| Division/Program and Activity | Dollars in Thousands | | | | Full-Time Equivalents | | | |
|--|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|
| | Actual FY 2015 | Approved FY 2016 | Proposed FY 2017 | Change from FY 2016 | Actual FY 2015 | Approved FY 2016 | Proposed FY 2017 | Change from FY 2016 |
| (1000) ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES | | | | | | | | |
| (1087) LANGUAGE ACCESS | 0 | 15 | 15 | 0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| (1090) PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT | 406 | 532 | 448 | -84 | 4.0 | 4.0 | 3.0 | -1.0 |
| SUBTOTAL (1000) ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES | 406 | 547 | 463 | -84 | 4.0 | 4.0 | 3.0 | -1.0 |
| (3000) LEGAL REPRESENTATION | | | | | | | | |
| (3015) IN-HOUSE LEGAL REPRESENTATION | 522 | 767 | 890 | 123 | 6.0 | 7.0 | 8.0 | 1.0 |
| (3020) LEGAL HOTLINE | 93 | 89 | 100 | 11 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 0.0 |
| (3030) LEGAL SERVICE PROVIDER | 250 | 300 | 290 | -10 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| SUBTOTAL (3000) LEGAL REPRESENTATION | 865 | 1,156 | 1,279 | 124 | 6.0 | 8.0 | 9.0 | 1.0 |
| (4000) POLICY ADVOCACY PROGRAM | | | | | | | | |
| (4010) POLICY ADVOCACY PROGRAM | 125 | 237 | 218 | -18 | 2.0 | 2.0 | 2.0 | 0.0 |
| SUBTOTAL (4000) POLICY ADVOCACY PROGRAM | 125 | 237 | 218 | -18 | 2.0 | 2.0 | 2.0 | 0.0 |
| (5000) OTA EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE | | | | | | | | |
| (5010) OTA EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE | 106 | 115 | 105 | -10 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 0.0 |
| SUBTOTAL (5000) OTA EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE | 106 | 115 | 105 | -10 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 0.0 |
| (6000) EMERGENCY HOUSING | | | | | | | | |
| (6010) EMERGENCY HOUSING | 397 | 546 | 370 | -176 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| SUBTOTAL (6000) EMERGENCY HOUSING | 397 | 546 | 370 | -176 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| (8000) CASE MNGT ADM AND COMM OUTREACH | | | | | | | | |
| (8010) CASE MANAGEMENT ADMINISTRATION | 223 | 233 | 238 | 5 | 3.0 | 3.0 | 3.0 | 0.0 |
| (8020) COMMUNITY OUTREACH | 69 | 75 | 115 | 40 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| SUBTOTAL (8000) CASE MNGT ADM AND COMM OUTREACH | 292 | 308 | 353 | 45 | 3.0 | 3.0 | 3.0 | 0.0 |
| TOTAL PROPOSED OPERATING BUDGET | 2,191 | 2,907 | 2,788 | -119 | 15.9 | 18.0 | 18.0 | 0.0 |

(Change is calculated by whole numbers and numbers may not add up due to rounding)

Note: For more detailed information regarding the proposed funding for the activities within this agency's programs, please see **Schedule 30-PBB Program Summary by Activity** in the **FY 2017 Operating Appendices** located on the Office of the Chief Financial Officer's website. "No Activity Assigned" indicates budget or actuals that are recorded at the division/program level.

Program Description

The Office of the Tenant Advocate operates through the following 6 programs:

Legal Representation – implements the agency’s statutory duty to represent tenants, at its discretion and as it determines to be in the public interest, in federal or District judicial or administrative proceedings.

This program contains the following 3 activities:

- **In-House Legal Representation** – provides agency clients with in-house legal representation in certain “high-impact” cases, and refers others to pro bono or contracted legal service providers and attorneys, or helps them find other representation;
- **Legal Hotline** – provides general advice regarding tenant rights in response to informal inquiries; provides a web-based “Ask the Director” forum and responds to Mayoral, Council, inter-agency, and community inquiries about tenant rights and rental housing law; engages the community in a regular “Live On-line Chat” through the agency website to discuss tenant rights and rental housing matters; and
- **Legal Service Provider** – provides funding to contracted non-profit legal service providers and attorneys, who qualify through the agency’s RFQ process, to enhance their capacity to provide tenants with appropriate legal assistance.

Policy Advocacy – implements the agency’s statutory duty to represent the interests of tenants and tenant organizations in legislative, executive, and judicial issues by advocating for changes in laws and rules. This division also tracks developments in rental housing legislation and regulations at both the local and federal levels, and keeps agency stakeholders apprised; develops legislative, rulemaking, and other policy recommendations, and coordinates policy discussions with governmental and community colleagues, including regular discussions with agency stakeholders; advises tenants, advocates, attorneys, governmental colleagues, and others regarding rental housing laws, and serves as the agency’s in-house statutory and regulatory expert; and provides support to community-based programs that inform tenants regarding their legislative and regulatory protections.

OTA Educational Institute – implements the agency’s statutory duty to provide education and outreach to tenants and the community about laws, rules, and other policy matters involving rental housing, including tenant rights under the petition process and formation of tenant organizations. This program also conducts informational presentations in various settings throughout the community; provides a formal series of educational and outreach forums; and develops educational material regarding rental housing laws, rules, and policies.

Emergency Housing – implements the agency’s statutory duty to provide emergency housing assistance to qualified tenants in certain situations by:

- Providing financial assistance to temporarily house tenants displaced by fires, floods, and government closures, and in other appropriate circumstances;
- Providing assistance to tenants regarding the packing, moving, and storing of personal possessions;
- Providing first month’s rent, and security deposits, utility deposits, and/or application fees, as applicable, for replacement rental housing; and
- Coordinating with other District agencies and community-based organizations to ensure that displaced tenants receive appropriate services.

Case Management Administration and Community Outreach – implements the agency’s statutory duty to advise tenants and tenant organizations on filing complaints and petitions, including petitions in response to disputes with landlords.

This program contains the following 2 activities:

- **Case Management Administration** – provides legal and technical assistance to tenants regarding rental housing disputes with landlords, including identifying legal issues and the tenant’s and the landlord’s respective rights and responsibilities, and assisting with follow-up action items, such as completing and filing tenant petitions and monitoring rental housing case hearings; and
- **Community Outreach** – provides outreach and educational programs regarding tenant rights and rental housing matters and sends “rapid response” letters to tenants affected by certain administrative actions to apprise them of their rights and of OTA’s availability to provide further assistance.

Administrative Services (Agency Management)– provides for administrative support and the required tools to achieve operational and programmatic results. This program is standard for all agencies using performance-based budgeting.

Program Structure Change

The Office of the Tenant Advocate has no program structure changes in the FY 2017 proposed budget.

FY 2016 Approved Budget to FY 2017 Proposed Budget, by Revenue Type

Table CQ0-5 itemizes the changes by revenue type between the FY 2016 approved budget and the FY 2017 proposed budget. For a more comprehensive explanation of changes, please see the FY 2017 Proposed Budget Changes section, which follows the table.

Table CQ0-5

(dollars in thousands)

| DESCRIPTION | DIVISION/PROGRAM | BUDGET | FTE |
|---|-------------------------|--------------|-------------|
| LOCAL FUNDS: FY 2016 Approved Budget and FTE | | 2,788 | 18.0 |
| Other CSFL Adjustments | Multiple Programs | 68 | 0.0 |
| LOCAL FUNDS: FY 2017 Current Services Funding Level (CSFL) Budget | | 2,856 | 18.0 |
| Increase: To support additional FTEs | Legal Representation | 106 | 1.0 |
| Decrease: To align personal services and Fringe Benefits with projected costs | Multiple Programs | -26 | 0.0 |
| Decrease: To offset projected adjustments in personal services costs | Administrative Services | -52 | -1.0 |
| Decrease: To align resources with operational spending goals | Multiple Programs | -95 | 0.0 |
| LOCAL FUNDS: FY 2017 Agency Budget Submission | | 2,788 | 18.0 |
| No Change | | 0 | 0.0 |
| LOCAL FUNDS: FY 2017 Mayor’s Proposed Budget | | 2,788 | 18.0 |
| INTRA-DISTRICT FUNDS: FY 2016 Approved Budget and FTE | | 119 | 0.0 |
| Decrease: To align budget with projected revenues | Multiple Programs | -119 | 0.0 |
| INTRA-DISTRICT FUNDS: FY 2017 Agency Budget Submission | | 0 | 0.0 |
| No Change | | 0 | 0.0 |
| INTRA-DISTRICT FUNDS: FY 2017 Mayor’s Proposed Budget | | 0 | 0.0 |
| GROSS FOR CQ0 - OFFICE OF THE TENANT ADVOCATE | | 2,788 | 18.0 |

(Change is calculated by whole numbers and numbers may not add up due to rounding)

FY 2017 Proposed Budget Changes

The Office of the Tenant Advocate's (OTA) proposed FY 2017 gross budget is \$2,788,415, which represents a 4.1 percent decrease from its FY 2016 approved gross budget of \$2,907,415. The budget is comprised entirely of Local funds.

Current Services Funding Level

The Current Services Funding Level (CSFL) is a Local funds ONLY representation of the true cost of operating District agencies, before consideration of policy decisions. The CSFL reflects changes from the FY 2016 approved budget across multiple programs, and it estimates how much it would cost an agency to continue its current programs and operations into the following fiscal year. The FY 2017 CSFL adjustments to the FY 2016 Local funds budget are described in table 5 of this agency's budget chapter. Please see the CSFL Development section within Volume 1: Executive Summary for more information regarding the methodology used and components that comprise the CSFL.

OTA's FY 2017 CSFL budget is \$2,856,468, which represents a \$68,053, or 2.4 percent, increase over the FY 2016 approved Local funds budget of \$2,788,415.

CSFL Assumptions

The FY 2017 CSFL calculated for OTA included adjustment entries that are not described in detail on table 5. These adjustments were made for an increase of \$59,428 in personal services to account for Fringe Benefit costs based on trend and comparative analyses, the impact of cost-of-living adjustments, and approved compensation agreements, and an increase of \$8,625 in nonpersonal services based on the Consumer Price Index factor of 2.3 percent.

Agency Budget Submission

Increase: In Local funds, the proposed budget of the Office of Tenant Advocate (OTA) includes a net increase of \$105,617 and 1.0 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) in the Legal Representation program due to reallocation of personal services resources from the Administrative Services program.

Decrease: OTA's proposed budget in Local funds includes savings in personal services across multiple programs in the amount of \$25,913, and a reduction of \$52,304 in the Administrative Services program. These adjustments are due to a reallocation of 1.0 FTE to the Legal Representation program and they also provide offsets to the increase in personal services costs in that program. The proposed budget in Local funds additionally reflects a net decrease of \$95,453, across multiple programs based on reduced cost projections for professional services fees and contractual services.

The proposed budget for Intra-District funds was reduced by \$119,000 due to the termination of a Memorandum of Understanding agreement with the Office of Disability Rights in FY 2016.

Mayor's Proposed Budget

No Change: The Office of the Tenant Advocate's budget proposal reflects no change from the agency budget submission to the Mayor's proposed budget.