



Office of the Tenant Advocate

OTA (CQ)

MISSION

The mission of the Office of the Tenant Advocate (OTA) is to advocate, educate, and create a legal protection system, technological support services and community-based programs for renters in the District of Columbia.

SUMMARY OF SERVICES

The OTA serves as the catalyst to stimulate government responses to renter concerns through access to relevant information regarding the legislative provisions enacted in the Housing Act of 1985 and the Sales and Conversion Act of 1980. The OTA also develops relevant outreach programs that serve to enhance community-based programs; reviews legislation and recommends changes to enhance the current protections afforded to all renters and serves as the compliance watchdog agency for all regulatory matters pertaining to the legal rights of renters.

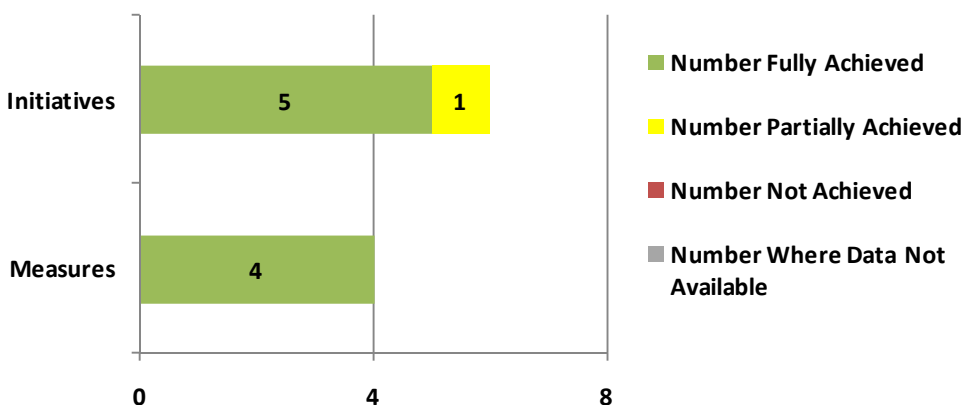
AGENCY OBJECTIVES

1. Protect the rights of tenants by resolving complaints relating to rent charges, living conditions, and other rental housing matters, or by referring complaints to contracted legal service providers.
2. Engage and educate the tenant community on legal and policy matters.
3. Improve enforcement by identifying statutory and regulatory gaps in tenant rights.

3 KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- ✓ Systematization of the tenant-complaint intake process.
- ✓ Development of the OTA website.
- ✓ Successful inauguration of annual tenant/tenant association summit.

OVERVIEW OF AGENCY PERFORMANCE





Performance Initiatives – Assessment Details

Performance Assessment Key:

-  Fully achieved  Partially achieved  Not achieved  Data not reported

OBJECTIVE 1: Protect the rights of tenants by resolving complaints relating to rent charges, living conditions, and other rental housing matters, or by referring complaints to contracted legal services.

 **INITIATIVE 1.1: Build internal litigation capacity.**

Fully Achieved. OTA hired its General Counsel and grew its referral base by 10%. OTA collected data from tenant complaints, analyzing by topic and forum. Through this analysis, OTA developed criteria for contracting out cases that cannot be litigated in-house due to resource limitations or a lack of expertise in a particular area, and established goals for the number of cases handled in-house in subsequent fiscal years.

 **INITIATIVE 1.2: Develop information systems for better tracking and data analysis.**

Fully Achieved. OTA completed all phases of the design and development of an electronic tracking system for the number of tenants who request litigation services, and the number of cases resolved either through referral or in-house litigation. Also in FY08, OTA completed Phase One in the development of a tracking system for the number and disposition of actions at the Office of Administrative Hearings.

OBJECTIVE 2: Engage and educate the tenant community on legal and policy matters.

 **INITIATIVE 2.1: Establish a Tenant Center.**

Partially Achieved. OTA completed Phase One - the design of the physical plant. OTA initiated phase two in process, completion of physical plant build-out, publication and literature research to stock the tenant center library of documents relevant to landlord/tenant legal matters with appropriate research technology.

 **INITIATIVE 2.2: Develop an agency website.**

Fully Achieved. Completed. See www.ota.dc.gov.

OBJECTIVE 3: Improve enforcement by identifying statutory and regulatory gaps in tenant rights.

 **INITIATIVE 3.1: Issue policy recommendations in key areas affecting tenants.**

Fully Achieved. Completed, resulting in three pieces of draft legislation referred to the Council: (1) to give tenants the ability to initiate actions in the Landlord/Tenant Branch of Superior Court; (2) to prohibit rent increases for non rent-controlled buildings with housing code violations; (3) developed proposed legislation to change the regulations implementing the Voluntary Agreements housing provider petition. The OTA also established a community-based working group who are charged with the responsibility to comprehensively review all housing-provider petitions.

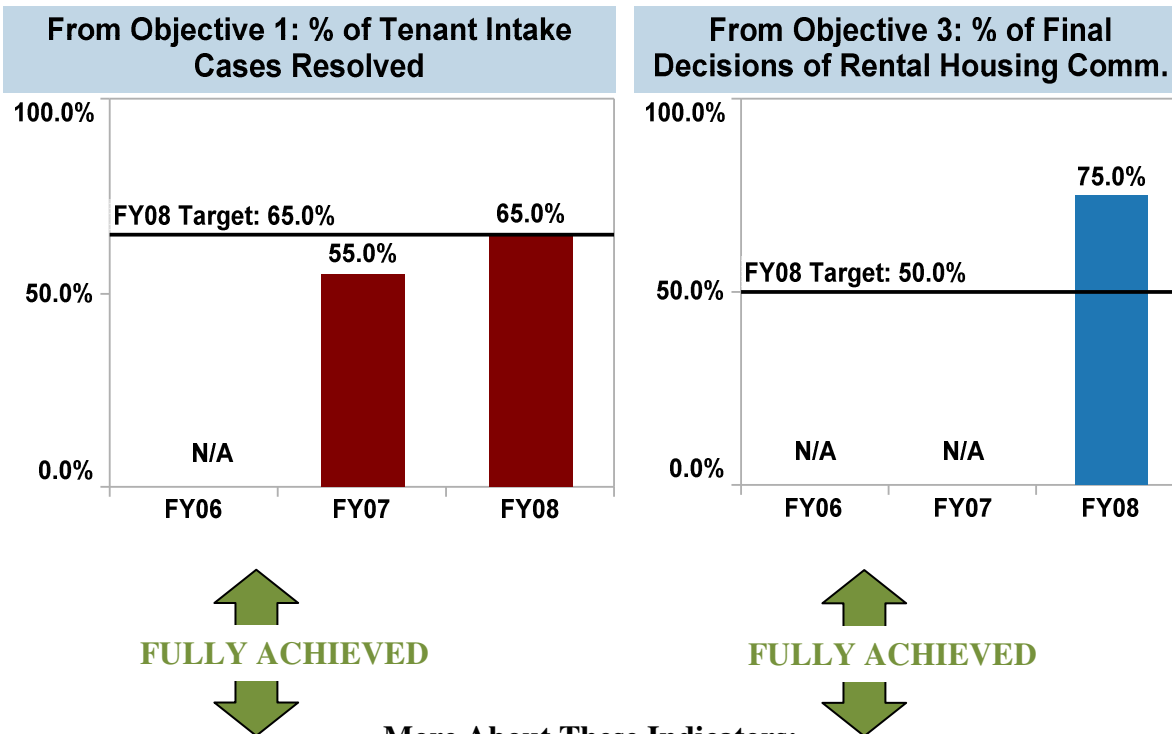


● **INITIATIVE 3.2: Track condominium conversion fees owed by property owners to the Housing Assistance Fund under the TOPA law.**

Fully Achieved. Completed - through the development of inter-agency coordination with the DHCD Conversion and Sales Administration. Funding resulted in \$2.4 million collected in FY 2008.



Key Performance Indicators – Highlights



More About These Indicators:

How did the agency's actions affect this indicator?

- Systematized the intake process, and moved from manual to virtual storage of data, intensive training of OTA staff, hiring a General Counsel to supervise advocate staff and upgrade the process through verification, and advice of all information presented to the tenants.

What external factors influenced this indicator?

- Moved into independent headquarter space that eliminated access to the DCRA database; OTA developed new methods to work with DCRA data.
- Information provided by tenants was sometimes faulty; OTA developed protocols to verify presented information and correct the record.

How did the agency's actions affect this indicator?

- Developed and implemented policy and procedures for the collection, review and recordation of historical and current decisions and orders of the Rental Housing Commission and the Office of Administrative Hearings.

What external factors influenced this indicator?

- Cooperation of the Rental Housing Commission and Office of Administrative Hearing staff.



Key Performance Indicators – Details

Performance Assessment Key:

- Fully achieved
 ● Partially achieved
 ● Not achieved
 ● Data not reported

	FY06 Actual	FY07 Actual	FY08 Target	FY08 Actual	FY09 Projection
OBJECTIVE 1: Protect the rights of tenants by resolving complaints relating to rent charges, living conditions, and other rental housing matters, or by referring complaints to contracted legal services.					
● % of tenant intake cases resolved through landlord action, assistance with petition filing, or case referral. N/A	N/A	55%	65%	65%	75%
OBJECTIVE 2: Engage and educate the tenant community on legal and policy matters.					
● % of identified tenant associations participating in tenant summit.	N/A	N/A	33%	40%	50%
OBJECTIVE 3: Improve enforcement by identifying statutory and regulatory gaps in tenant rights.					
● % of final decisions and orders of the Rental Housing Commission, 1985-2007, included in database.	N/A	N/A	50%	75%	85%
● % of final decisions and orders of the Office of Administrative Hearings, 2006-2007, included in database.	N/A	N/A	50%	50%	85%