



## Office of the Tenant Advocate OTA (CQ)

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### MISSION

The mission of the Office of the Tenant Advocate (OTA) is to advocate for the rights and interests of the tenants of the District, and to educate and inform tenants, tenant organizations and the people of the District about tenant-related laws, rules and policy matters.

### SUMMARY OF SERVICES

OTA provides education and outreach to the tenant community about laws, rules and other policy matters involving rental housing and tenant rights; represents the interests of tenants on legislative, regulatory and judicial matters; advises tenants on filing complaints and petitions regarding disputes with landlords; refers tenants who seek representation in administrative or judicial actions to attorneys or legal services and provides funding for representation in certain instances.

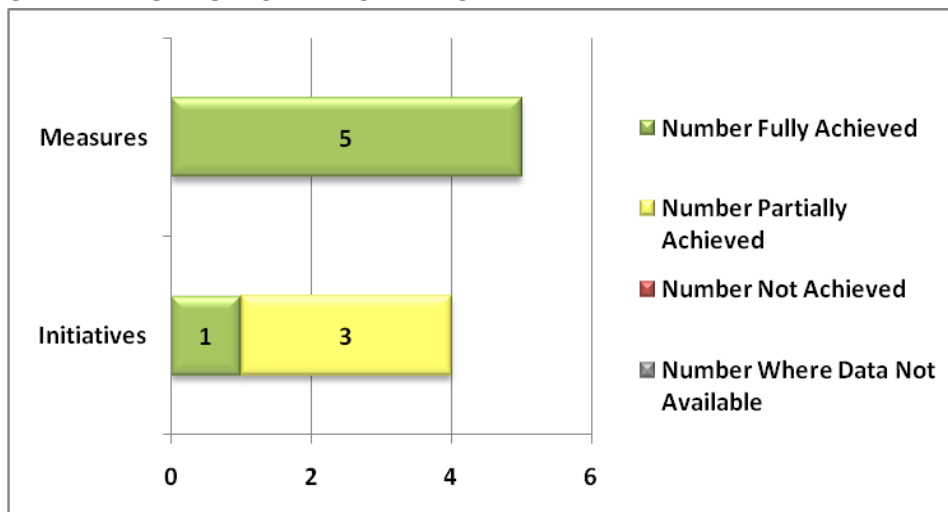
### AGENCY OBJECTIVES

1. Improve and enhance the agency's capacity to provide representation services to tenants involved in disputes with landlords.
2. Create and improve channels of communication between the agency and the tenant community.

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- ✓ Developed and implemented a streamlined system for meeting the emergency housing needs of District tenants who have been displaced through natural disasters, such as fire.
- ✓ Enhanced and improved its capacity to represent tenants involved in disputes with landlords by hiring two FTE's in the Legal Services Division.
- ✓ Implemented an online Rental Housing Case Database. This resource provides tenant attorneys and pro se tenant litigants with a valuable legal research tool.

### OVERVIEW OF AGENCY PERFORMANCE






## Performance Initiatives – Assessment Details

### Performance Assessment Key:


-  Fully achieved     Partially achieved     Not achieved     Data not reported

### OBJECTIVE 1: IMPROVE AND ENHANCE THE AGENCY'S CAPACITY TO PROVIDE REPRESENTATION SERVICES TO TENANTS INVOLVED IN DISPUTES WITH LANDLORDS.


#### **INITIATIVE 1.1: Establish internal litigation capacity by hiring three attorney FTEs within a new Legal Services Division.**

-  OTA has hired a supervisory attorney advisor, one attorney advisor, and one paralegal. An additional litigation attorney was removed from OTA's FY 2009 budget and added to FY2010. The position is expected to be posted by November 25, 2009.

#### **INITIATIVE 1.2: Develop criteria for the coordination of in-house representation and case referrals.**


-  OTA developed criteria in December 2008, which was tested on for-profit legal service providers in 2009. Upon feedback from the control group of legal service providers, the prototype case referral criteria proved successful, and hence will be fully implemented in FY 2010. No adjustment needs to the criteria have presented themselves at this date, but the review process is still ongoing.

#### **INITIATIVE 1.3: Develop a tracking system for in-house representation and case referrals.**


-  OTA completed development of a system to track all in-house litigation and referrals given to outside legal service providers. The system was beta-tested on in-house litigation between September and November of 2009. Cases handled by outside legal service providers are being integrated into the tracking system in FY 2010.

### OBJECTIVE 2: CREATE AND IMPROVE CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE AGENCY AND THE TENANT COMMUNITY.

#### **INITIATIVE 2.1: Create searchable database of rental housing case decisions.**

-  OTA has created three separate web links to archive the decisions of the DC Court of Appeals, the Office of Administrative Hearings and the Rental Housing Commission. The FY 2009 goal was to have 60-80 abstracts of relevant DC Court of Appeals decisions ready to be launched on the website by September 2009. The decisions were indexed, and this goal was achieved. Procurement of software to allow users to search for decisions is in progress.

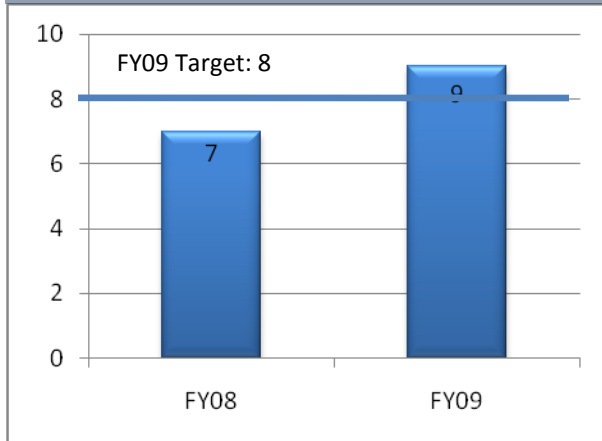
#### **INITIATIVE 2.2: Produce video instructing tenants about the tenant petition process.**

-  OTA completed Phases 1 and 2 of the project by developing a video script, determining contract requirements, and selecting a vendor. Phases 3 and 4, which include filming, editing and finalizing the video, will be completed in FY2010.



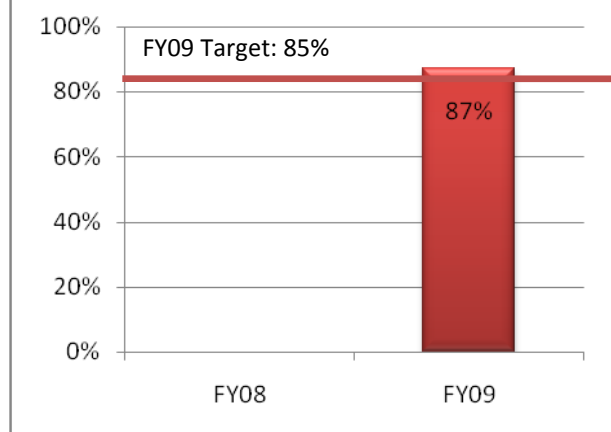
## Key Performance Indicators – Highlights

From Objective 1: Number of contracts with outside legal providers and their areas of expertise.



**FULLY ACHIEVED**

From Objective 1: Percentage of final decisions and orders of the Rental Housing Commission, 1985-2007, to be included in database.



**FULLY ACHIEVED**

### More About These Indicators:

#### *How did the agency's actions affect this indicator?*

- Encouraged successful and cost-effective practitioners, firms, and organizations to renew their contracts with the agency for FY 2009.
- Observed the tenant bar community to identify qualified legal service providers for future legal service contracts.
- Recruited legal service providers who were a good fit for the agency and met the needs of the agency's customers.

#### *What external factors influenced this indicator?*

- Increased awareness among tenant attorneys and advocates of financial support from the OTA for tenant cases, and the resulting increase in the number of inquiries into the basis for OTA funding.

#### *How did the agency's actions affect this indicator?*

- Hired a Paralegal Specialist with demonstrated skills in legal research.
- Allocated necessary staff time to convert decisions saved as graphic files into word searchable files.

#### *What external factors influenced this indicator?*

- OTA needed to secure the cooperation of the Rental Housing Commission. The approval was secured.
- OTA needed to secure OCTO approval for each amendment to the OTA web site. The approval was secured.



## Key Performance Indicators – Details

### Performance Assessment Key:

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

	Measure Name	FY2008 YE Actual	FY2009 YE Target	FY2009 YE Actual	FY2009 YE Rating	Budget Program
●	1.1 Number of contracts with outside legal providers and their areas of expertise.	7	8	9	112.50%	OFFICE OF TENANT ADVOCATE
●	1.2 % of tenant intake cases resolved through landlord action, assistance with petition filing, or case referral.	65	75	77.93%	103.91%	OFFICE OF TENANT ADVOCATE
●	2.1 % of final decisions and orders of the Rental Housing Commission, 1985-2007, to be included in database.	0	85	87.50%	102.94%	OFFICE OF TENANT ADVOCATE
●	2.2 % of final decisions and orders of the Office of Administrative Hearings, 2006-2007, to be included in database.	0	85	85%	100%	OFFICE OF TENANT ADVOCATE
●	2.3 % of identified tenant associations to be represented in tenant summit.	33	50	53.33%	106.67%	COMMUNITY SERVICES