



Office of the Tenant Advocate OTA (CQ)

MISSION

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 for certain emergency housing and tenant relocation expenses as defined in the Housing Assistance Fund statute.

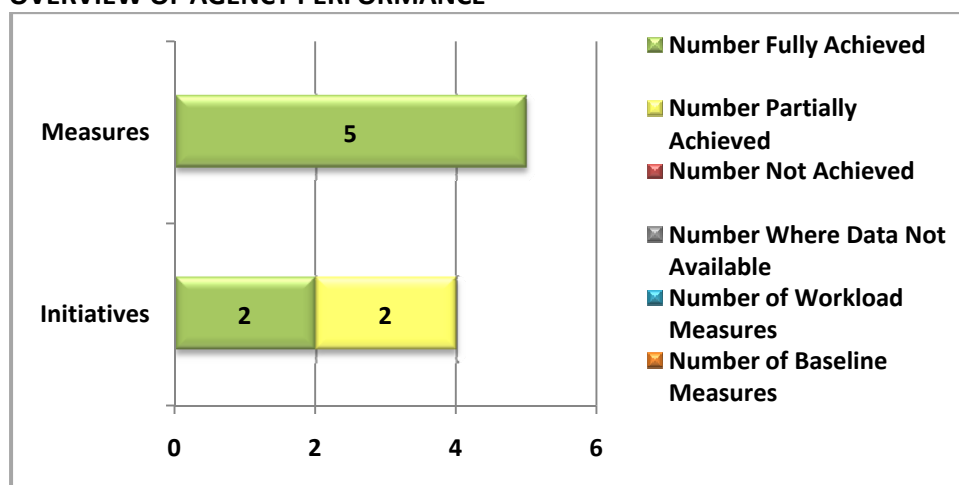
SUMMARY OF SERVICES

OTA provides a spectrum of services to the tenant community to further each aspect of its mission. (1) OTA conducts educational seminars in a variety of contexts to inform tenants about their rights and other rental housing concerns. (2) OTA advises tenants on resolving, or filing complaints and petitions regarding, disputes with landlords; provides in-house representation for tenants in certain cases; and refers other cases to *pro bono* and/or contracted legal service providers and attorneys. (3) OTA works with other governmental entities, tenant stakeholders, and others to promote better tenant protection laws and policies in the District. (4) OTA provides financial assistance for emergency housing and tenant relocation expenses under certain circumstances in order to fulfill the agency's mandate under the Housing Assistance Fund law.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- ✓ Served 2,261 cases through the complaint intake process—a 23% increase from Fiscal Year 2009 and a 61% increase from Fiscal Year 2008.
- ✓ 100% of all Housing Assistance Fund cases were resolved through relocation assistance; and 100% of households eligible for housing assistance by the OTA were provided services within 24 hours.
- ✓ Agency has significantly expanded online database of rental housing case decisions; now includes 700 searchable Office of Administrative Hearings decisions, Rental Housing Commission decisions, and abstracts of Court of Appeals decisions.

OVERVIEW OF AGENCY PERFORMANCE





Performance Initiatives – Assessment Details

Performance Assessment Key:

-  Fully achieved  Partially achieved  Not achieved  Data not reported

OBJECTIVE 1: ENSURE THAT EACH CLIENT RECEIVES QUALITY LEGAL SERVICES “IN-HOUSE” AND FROM CONTRACTED LEGAL SERVICE PROVIDERS.

- **INITIATIVE 1.1: Expand OTA’s case intake form to require that the OTA intake advocate memorialize and itemize (1) any advice given to the client, and (2) all action items agreed to by the client and the intake advocate.**

OTA has expanded case intake procedure so that each client leaves the intake interview with a document specifically tailored to his or her particular case. This document, known as the Tenant/Advocate Summary Form, provides the client with the specific advice given (during intake interview by Case Management Specialist) as well as documents any action items for both the client and OTA. Case review and assessment based on information provided in these documents have taken place periodically, in an effort to ensure that information provided to a client is standardized as it relates to certain issues.

- **INITIATIVE 1.2: Develop and implement a new contracting process for outside legal service providers and attorneys.**

OTA created a new request for qualifications, and refined contracts terms for all legal service providers to include language access requirements ensuring compliance with district statutes, monthly descriptions of all clients and the actions taken, this has allowed OTA to provide more accurate information regarding its overall client base upon request.

OBJECTIVE 2: INFORM THE TENANT COMMUNITY ABOUT TENANT RIGHTS AND RELATED ISSUES.

- **INITIATIVE 2.1: Expand searchable database of rental housing case decisions.**

The agency has significantly expanded online database of rental housing case decisions; now includes a total of 700 searchable Office of Administrative Hearings decisions, Rental Housing Commission decisions, and abstracts of Court of Appeals decisions. These online documents are searchable by case number, name, date, case title, as well as any text within the document itself.

- **INITIATIVE 2.2: Produce educational videos informing tenants about rental housing legal issues.**

OTA produced a series of short videos, featuring Case Management Specialists, addressing “nut and bolt” rental housing issues such as leases, renters insurance, inspections, and security deposits.

OBJECTIVE 3: PROVIDE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR CERTAIN EMERGENCY HOUSING AND TENANT RELOCATION EXPENSES AS DEFINED IN THE HOUSING ASSISTANCE FUND LAW.



- INITIATIVE 3.1: Develop an “emergency assistance” electronic tracking system.**
 OTA has developed and implemented an Emergency Housing Assistance electronic tracking system to memorialize and track each request for emergency housing and tenant relocation assistance. The tracking system stores key information, including: identifiers for the tenant, property, and housing provider; the circumstances of the request; OTA action items and agency expenditures; the housing status of each client through temporary and permanent relocations; and other key information. Data is electronically searchable; emergency housing assistance reports are more easily produced. This tracking system has been used over the course of the fiscal year with great success.

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