

# AGENDA ITEM REQUEST FORM

Department: Rent Program

Department Head: Nicolas Traylor

Phone: 620-6564

Meeting Date: August 23, 2017

Final Decision Date Deadline: August 23, 2017

**STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE:** The Richmond Fair Rent, Just Cause for Eviction, and Homeowner Protection Ordinance became effective on December 30, 2016. In accordance with Section 11.100.060(m) of the Ordinance, the City Manager and his designees took those steps necessary to implement the Ordinance, including establishment of the Richmond Rent Program, which opened to the public on January 3, 2017. The Rent Program has now been in operation for approximately eight months. As such, the presentation of a Mid-Year Progress Report is prudent to keep the Rent Board informed of the Program's status.

## INDICATE APPROPRIATE BODY

- |   |   |  |  |   |
|---|---|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> City Council               | <input type="checkbox"/> Redevelopment Agency                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Housing Authority     | <input type="checkbox"/> Surplus Property Authority          | <input type="checkbox"/> Joint Powers Financing Authority |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Finance Standing Committee | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Safety Public Services Standing Committee | <input type="checkbox"/> Local Reuse Authority | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: <u>Rent Board</u> |   |

## ITEM

- |   |  |                                 |
|---|--|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Presentation/Proclamation/Commendation (3-Minute Time Limit) |  |                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public Hearing   | <input type="checkbox"/> Regulation  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contract/Agreement   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rent Board As Whole                          |                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grant Application/Acceptance                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Claims Filed Against City of Richmond                   |                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution   | <input type="checkbox"/> Video/PowerPoint Presentation (contact KCRT @ 620.6759) |                                 |

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** RECEIVE an update from Rent Program staff members regarding progress to date in implementing the Richmond Fair Rent, Just Cause for Eviction, and Homeowner Protection Ordinance and providing community education – Rent Program (Nicolas Traylor/Paige Roosa 620-6576).

AGENDA ITEM NO:

**H-1.**



# AGENDA REPORT

**DATE:** August 23, 2017

**TO:** Chair Gray and Members of the Rent Board

**FROM:** Nicolas Traylor, Executive Director  
Paige Roosa, Management Analyst

**SUBJECT:** MID-YEAR PROGRESS REPORT REGARDING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FAIR RENT, JUST CAUSE FOR EVICTION, AND HOMEOWNER PROTECTION ORDINANCE

## **STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE:**

The Richmond Fair Rent, Just Cause for Eviction, and Homeowner Protection Ordinance became effective on December 30, 2016. In accordance with Section 11.100.060(m) of the Ordinance, the City Manager and his designees took those steps necessary to implement the Ordinance, including establishment of the Richmond Rent Program, which opened to the public on January 3, 2017. The Rent Program has now been in operation for approximately seven months. As such, the presentation of a Mid-Year Progress Report is prudent to keep the Rent Board informed of the Program's status.

## **RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

RECEIVE an update from Rent Program staff members regarding progress to date in implementing the Richmond Fair Rent, Just Cause for Eviction, and Homeowner Protection Ordinance and providing community education – Rent Program (Nicolas Traylor/Paige Roosa 620-6576).

## **FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact related to this item.

## **DISCUSSION:**

### Background

Section 11.100.060(m) of the Richmond Fair Rent, Just Cause for Eviction, and Homeowner Protection Ordinance requires that the City take necessary steps to

## ITEM H-1

implement the Ordinance prior to the appointment of the Rent Board and their hiring of an Executive Director. The City Council appointed all five members of the Rent Board at their meeting on March 21, 2017. In April, May, and June, 2017, the Rent Board met in closed session on numerous occasions to discuss and interview candidates for the Executive Director position. Ultimately, the Rent Board selected Nicolas Traylor for the position, and he began his employment with the City on July 13, 2017.

### Purpose

At their first meeting on April 5, 2017, the Rent Board received a progress update from interim Rent Program staff members regarding implementation of the Ordinance and launch of the Rent Program. The Mid-Year Progress Report is intended to further orient the Board to the accomplishments, challenges, and future milestones of the Rent Program, as well as solicit feedback from the Board and members of the public.

The Mid-Year Progress Report contains status updates and future aspirations for the following elements of the Rent Program:

- Employment and onboarding of permanent Rent Program staff members
- Proposed revisions to the Fiscal Year 2017-18 Rent Program Budget
- Developing a process to hear Rent Adjustment Petitions, Excess Rent Complaints, and Unpaid Permanent and Temporary Relocation Payment Complaints
- Conducting additional Community Education Workshops and other outreach events
- Further developing the Rent Program website ([www.richmondrent.org](http://www.richmondrent.org)) and streamlining the process to submit forms online
- Providing direct customer service to Tenants, Landlords, Property Managers, and other members of the community
- Staffing and supporting the Rent Board in their leadership of program development and establishment of additional policies

These elements are further detailed in the Mid-Year Progress Report (Attachment 1).

### **DOCUMENTS ATTACHED:**

Attachment 1 – Mid-Year Progress Report

# **RICHMOND RENT PROGRAM MID-YEAR PROGRESS REPORT**

---

**AUGUST 23, 2017 SPECIAL MEETING OF THE RENT BOARD**

Nicolas Traylor

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR | CITY OF RICHMOND RENT PROGRAM  
440 CIVIC CENTER PLAZA, SUITE 200, RICHMOND, CA 94804

[WWW.RICHMONDRENT.ORG](http://WWW.RICHMONDRENT.ORG)

## PURPOSE AND CONTENTS

---

At the inaugural meeting of the Richmond Rent Board, held on April 5, 2017, the Board received a [progress update](#) from interim Rent Program staff members regarding implementation of the Fair Rent, Just Cause for Eviction, and Homeowner Protection Ordinance and launch of the Rent Program, which opened to the public on January 3, 2017. Eight months into the Program's development, this Mid-Year Progress Report is intended to further orient members of the Rent Board and public to the accomplishments, current focus areas, and prospective endeavors of the Rent Program, as well as solicit feedback from the Board and community.

To achieve this goal, the Mid-Year Progress Report contains updates on the following aspects of the Rent Program:

1. Employment and onboarding of permanent Rent Program staff members
2. Considering revisions to the adopted [Fiscal Year 2017-18 Rent Program Budget](#)
3. Developing a process to hear Rent Adjustment Petitions, Excess Rent Complaints, and Unpaid Permanent and Temporary Relocation Payment Complaints
4. Conducting additional Community Education Workshops and other outreach events
5. Further developing the Rent Program website ([www.richmondrent.org](http://www.richmondrent.org)) and streamlining the process to submit forms online
6. Providing direct customer service to Tenants, Landlords, Property Managers, and other members of the community
7. Staffing and supporting the Rent Board in their leadership of program development and establishment of additional policies

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

---

The Rent Program would like to recognize the following City staff members and volunteers, who provided critical leadership, policy development, and administrative support to the launch and early development of the Richmond Rent Program:

Gabino Arredondo  
Saidy Brizuela  
Shasa Curl  
Sherry Drobner  
Mariah Fairley  
Miguel Flores  
Trina Jackson  
Shané Johnson  
Sue Kadlec

Bill Lindsay  
Jorge Morales Martinez  
Brenda Ogutu  
David Padilla  
Sofia Perez-Leon  
Paige Roosa  
Moises Serano  
Daniel Tu  
Lynn Tu

Mike Uberti  
Coreyana Whatley  
Alex Walker-Griffen  
Andrea Zuniga

## 1. PROPOSED RENT PROGRAM STAFFING PLAN

---

The Rent Program is currently staffed by three full-time employees (FTEs), including an Executive Director, Management Analyst, and Administrative Student Intern, in addition to three part-time Administrative Student Interns. The demands of the program exceed the capacity of current staff. As such, the Executive Director is working closely with the Human Resources Department to solicit applications for the following anticipated positions, which already exist within the City's job classification schedule:

- [Administrative Aide](#) (1 FTE)
- [Associate/Administrative Analyst](#) (1 FTE)
- [Management Analyst I/II](#) (2-3 FTEs)
- [Senior Management Analyst](#) (1 FTE)

In addition to recruiting applicants for the above positions, staff members are collaborating with the Human Resources Department to bring the following new job classifications before the Personnel Board and City Council for establishment:

- Hearing Examiner (1 FTE)
- Rent Board Staff Attorney (1 FTE)

Each of the following roles is described in greater detail below.

### Administrative Aide (1 FTE)

Under direction of the Executive Director and Senior Management Analyst, the Administrative Aide shall support the day-to-day administrative operations of the Rent Program, including the maintenance of time, cost, and operating records of departmental unit work, managing contracts, maintaining office and departmental unit stocks, and regularly updating and monitoring the Rent Program Progress Log, as well as providing clerical support to the front office, including data entry and verification. The Rent Program Progress Log is used to track all phone calls, walk-ins, voicemails, emails, and form submissions to the Rent Program. This tool allows staff to maintain records of cases which are resolved and those requiring additional follow up.

In addition, the Administrative Aide shall participate and assist with special events, including community engagement workshops, meetings of the Richmond Rent Board (acting as assistant Rent Board Secretary), and orientations for new Rent Boardmembers.

### Assistant/Associate Administrative Analyst (1 FTE)

Under direction of the Executive Director, the Assistant/Associate Administrative Analyst shall provide analytical and administrative support to the Executive Director and Senior Management Analyst and serve as the Secretary to the Rent Board. In this capacity, the Assistant/Associate

# ITEM H-1 ATTACHMENT 1

Administrative Analyst shall be charged with compiling, publishing, and circulating the Rent Board Agenda Packets and maintenance of the Rent Program website.

In addition, the Assistant/Associate Administrative Analyst shall manage the administration of the hearings process as described in the Fair Rent, Just Cause for Eviction, and Homeowner Protection Ordinance. Related tasks include:

- Mailing initial and subsequent notices to petitioners and respondents;
- Scheduling formal hearings and mediation sessions;
- Communicating with petitioners and respondents;
- Assisting in the preparation of a hearings manual and protocols; and
- Maintaining accurate records of all hearings and decisions for internal use as well as public investigation.

## Management Analyst I/II (2-3 FTEs)

Under direct supervision of the Senior Management Analyst, the Management Analysts shall be first and foremost responsible for counseling Tenants, Landlords, Property Managers, Attorneys, Relators, and other members of the public on the requirements of the Fair Rent, Just Cause for Eviction, and Homeowner Protection Ordinance. Management Analysts shall also be trained mediators, able to offer informal and formal mediation services to Tenants and Landlords to resolve disputes.

In this role, Management Analysts shall exercise considerable independent judgement in the management of multiple cases involving complex local and State laws and regulations, as well as conduct technical research and analysis in a capacity distinct from that of the Administrative Analyst classification. Related tasks include:

- Conducting legal research and maintaining working knowledge of related local, State, and Federal housing policy;
- Producing staff reports for consideration by the Rent Board and City Council;
- Identifying violations of State and local housing law, mediating conflicts, and proposing viable options for consideration;
- Drafting courtesy compliance, warning, and violation letters;
- Referring cases of noncompliance to the Staff Attorney;
- Issuing recommendations to senior staff regarding agency operations;
- Appropriately handling sensitive information; and,
- Providing direct services to a diverse population with varying degrees of literacy and computer skills.

**Proposed Management Analyst Focus Areas**

In addition to their role as Housing Counselor and mediator, each Management Analyst shall have a defined focus in one of three areas:

- (1) Legal Research and Housing Policy: Working with the staff attorney to ensure Rent Program staff and outreach materials are current on all related housing policies; drafting related agenda reports for the Rent Board, and assisting the Senior Management Analyst with policy research.
- (2) Compliance and Enforcement: Investigating cases of noncompliance and requests for exemption and developing compliance letter templates in partnership with the Staff Attorney. In select instances, and under direction from the Executive Director, attending small claims court for minor lawsuits. This task includes carefully reviewing all Enrollment Forms and working with the Executive Director and Senior Management Analyst to input data into the City's database of Rental Units.
- (3) Outreach and Community Engagement: Preparing content for community engagement events, coordinating the planning of events, producing outreach materials, including a Rent Program Administrative Guide, FAQs, LEAP Digital Literacy learner web series, producing postcards and flyers for community events, maintaining Rent Program social media accounts.

**Senior Management Analyst (1 FTE)**

The Senior Management Analyst shall manage the daily operations of the Rent Program and work under the direction of the Executive Director to prepare and monitor the Rent Program annual operating budget and expenditures; conduct policy research as directed by the Executive Director, Staff Attorney, and Rent Board; and draft reports concerning agency operations, internal policy development, and Rent Board policies. Furthermore, the Senior Management Analyst shall recommend and implement solutions to streamline operations (e.g. systems involving online form submissions and other IT solutions.) The Senior Management Analyst shall supervise the Management Analysts, Administrative Aide, and other assigned staff.

The Senior Management Analyst shall also work with the Executive Director to develop and review Rent Board agendas and reports, as well as prepare the Annual Report on the Status of Rental Housing, as required per the Fair Rent, Just Cause for Eviction, and Homeowner Protection Ordinance.

**Hearing Examiner (1 FTE)**

With support from the Assistant/Associate Administrative Analyst, the Hearing Examiner shall adjudicate petitions, complaints, and applications filed by Tenants and Landlords by scheduling hearings, sending notices, conducting investigations, drafting and issuing subpoenas for parties and documents, conducting administrative hearings, and issuing recommendations, decisions, and



# ITEM H-1 ATTACHMENT 1

addenda. In select cases, the Hearing Examiner may mediate rent decrease and Excess Rent Complaints and other rent control-related disputes that are distinct from separate cases. The Hearing Examiner may be assigned to special projects, including drafting technical reports for consideration by senior staff, the Rent Board, and City Council.

## Staff Attorney (1 FTE)

Acting independently from the City Attorney, and under direction of the Executive Director, the Staff Attorney shall have two major functions: (1) advising the Rent Board and the Executive Director on all legal matters, and (2) Represent the Rent Program and Rent Board in litigation. Specific tasks include, but are not limited to:

- Preparing and publishing written reports concerning relevant issues;
- Advise the Board about legally appropriate outcomes concerning the adoption of new regulations;
- Attend Rent Board meetings to advise the Rent Board;
- Serve as the Rent Board's trial and appellate counsel, defending the Board's actions if they are challenged in court;
- Litigating the legitimacy of the Fair Rent, Just Cause for Eviction, and Homeowner Protection Ordinance and related policies and regulations;
- Representing the Rent Board as a plaintiff in civil actions;
- Reviewing agency correspondence (e.g. courtesy compliance, warning, and violation letters)
- Working with Management Analysts to resolve cases of noncompliance; and,
- Reviewing outreach materials prior to dissemination.

## Executive Director (1 FTE)

The Executive Director is the Rent Program department head, reporting to and taking direction from the Rent Board. The Executive Director is responsible for directing the overall operations of the Rent Program on behalf of the Rent Board and working closely with other department heads in the City to ensure effective interdepartmental coordination and delivery of City services. The Executive Director shall prepare and present the annual Rent Program operating budget to the Rent Board and the annual Rental Housing Fee to the City Council, as well as preparing the Annual Report on the Status of Rental Housing as required per the Fair Rent, Just Cause for Eviction, and Homeowner Protection Ordinance.

The Executive Director shall provide critical direction to support staff in the development of the Rent Program's database of Rental Units and potential, future, rent-tracking system in partnership with other City departments.

## **ITEM H-1 ATTACHMENT 1**

Furthermore, the Executive Director shall maintain working relationships with various stakeholders to serve as a Rent Program ambassador in the community. Beyond working closely with stakeholders and community organizations, outreach may also include participation at conferences and collaboration with other jurisdictions with eviction and rent stabilization policies.

## 2. Proposed Revisions to FY 2017-18 Budget

---

One of the first endeavors of the Executive Director, once retained, was completing a thorough review of the adopted budget to develop proposed revisions based on program needs. The staffing plan outlined above will require revisions to the adopted [Fiscal Year 2017-18 Rent Program Budget](#). **The final budget amount, and corresponding fee amounts necessary to cover the costs of the Program, are unchanged by the proposed amendments.** What has been revised is the staffing structure. The staff structure was revised based on a job function analysis. The job function analysis outlines what tasks must be performed by which position(s) in order to best operate the Rent Program.

Perhaps the two most significant proposed changes to the staffing model and budget is the addition of an in-house (City employee) Hearing Examiner and Staff Attorney. The Hearing Examiner position will be paid for by line items budgeted for Hearing Services and Mediation Services. The costs incurred by the Staff Attorney position shall be covered for by the line item for Rent Program Legal Counsel (\$142,798 would be used from the \$160,000 budgeted for Fiscal Year 2017-18).

The Fiscal Year 2017-18 adopted budget accounts for two Management Analysts supported by professional service contracts and a partial staff position; however, the demands of the Rent Program are anticipated to require three Management Analysts to adequately counsel tenants, landlords, and other community members on the requirements of the Ordinance, in addition to conducting assigned duties in defined focus areas, including legal aspects of the program, community engagement and outreach, and investigations and compliance efforts. This additional staff member (who is anticipated to be fluent in Spanish) shall reduce the need for contract translators and a part-time code enforcement officer.

By employing a greater number of staff members who are able to conduct a wider variety of functions, the Program will be better able to adapt to the needs of a department still in the early stages of development. Furthermore, since the Rent Program is a start-up program, it is anticipated that there will continue to be a greater demand for counseling, outreach and compliance services than would be needed or required for an established program.

After meeting with the Human Resources Department, it was determined that the Administrative Aide position was more appropriate for the job functions we would need a clerical staff person to perform as opposed to an Administrative Trainee staff member. As such, it is proposed the Administrative Trainee be replaced by the Administrative Aide position. These revisions are summarized in Table 1.

# ITEM H-1 ATTACHMENT 1

**Table 1. Proposed FY 2016-17 Budget Modifications**

Description of Proposed Change	Adopted FY 17-18 Budget	Proposed Revised FY 17-18 Budget	Proposed Cost Source (FY 17-18)
Addition of Hearing Examiner staff position	Contract Hearing Examiner(s)	Staff Hearing Examiner (may be 0.6 FTE)	Mediation Services Contract: - \$35,000 <sup>1</sup>  Hearing Examiner Contract: - \$80,000
Addition of Staff Attorney position	Contract legal services	Inclusion of 1 Staff Attorney	Legal services contract (\$142,798 needed; \$160,000 budgeted).
Addition of one Management Analyst I/II (to serve as housing counselor)	2 Management Analysts I/II	3 Management Analyst I/II	Salary savings incurred by unutilized professional services (e.g. legal services). Reduction or elimination of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• -0.5 FTE Code Enforcement Officer<sup>2</sup></li> <li>• Contract with relocation service provider (-\$10,000)</li> <li>• Translation services (-\$17,000)<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>
Replacement of Administrative Trainee position with the Admin Aide position	Administrative staff include 1 Assistant/Associate Admin Analyst and an Admin Trainee	Administrative staff include 1 Assistant/Associate Admin Analyst and an Admin Aide	Salary savings associated with the delay in retaining full time staff. <sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Includes a \$25,000 reduction assuming the contract with Carlos Alarcon is approved for mediation services.

<sup>2</sup> It is proposed that the 0.5 FTE Code Enforcement Officer be deleted for two reasons: (1) the compliance work that is needed can be performed by one of our Management Analysts as part of their work assignment, and (2) a Code Enforcement Officer would have to be assigned to the Rent Program from Code Enforcement, which could complicate or confuse supervision and reporting.

<sup>3</sup> It is anticipated that the staff member hired as a result of these budget modifications would be fluent in Spanish, thus reducing the need for translation services.

<sup>4</sup> The pay differential between the Administrative Trainee and Administrative Aide is approximately \$1,451 per month (salary Step IV), excluding benefits. Meanwhile, it is anticipated that additional Management Analysts and a Senior Management Analyst will not be retained for the next 2-3 months, resulting in savings of greater than \$25,000 per month, excluding benefits.

### 3. Administration of Petitions and Complaints

---

The Rent Program began accepting [Rent Adjustment Petitions](#) and [Excess Rent Complaints](#) in late January, 2017. As of August 16, 2017, 104 complaints and petitions have been filed, including 49 upward individual rent adjustment petitions submitted by Landlords seeking a fair rate of return, as granted by Section 11.100.070 of the Ordinance.

The Ordinance requires adopted Rent Board regulations provide for a process in which final decisions on petitions and complaints be reached within 120 days of the date of filing. Rent Program staff are continuing to work towards achieving this requirement. Interim staff members contracted with Management Partners to create a flowchart that outlines the petition process and clarifies requirements of property owners before a petition can be heard.

While the petition process has been established on paper, the Rent Program cannot begin to hear cases until the appropriate Rent Regulations are in place. To decrease the current (and growing) backlog of over 100 cases, the Executive Director is in the process of hiring a contract mediator to begin resolving the rent decrease, rent overcharge and rent refund petitions and complaints. While the mediator shall work to decrease the backlog of petitions and complaints, staff members will be working in parallel to develop a Hearing Examiner job classification in the City of Richmond and hire a permanent Hearing Examiner. To date, staff have accomplished the following:

- Interviewed a professional mediator to perform Hearing Examiner/Mediator role until permanent Hearing Examiner is hired
- Drafted a new classification for a Rent Program Hearing Examiner
- Draft a new classification for a Staff Attorney (as potential backup and support to the Hearing Examiner) in addition to regular Staff Attorney duties

The Human Resources department has estimated that it will take at least until December before both of these positions will work their way through the Personnel Board and the City Council. During the four-month period between now and the end of December, the contract mediator will do their best to resolve as many cases as possible and the Board will have an opportunity to approve the rent increase/decrease Regulations. Our goal is mitigating the current backlog, while giving the Board breathing room necessary to approve the applicable Regulations.

#### Passing Key Fair Return Regulations

The Rent Board has approved several regulations to help clarify the Rent Ordinance. Key to the implementation of the Rent Ordinance are the individual rent adjustment increase and decrease regulations. These regulations must be approved in order for the Rent Program to begin hearing landlord and tenant rent adjustment petitions. To speed up the process of drafting and approving the rent adjustment petitions, staff is in the process of contracting with two national experts in the

## **ITEM H-1 ATTACHMENT 1**

field of rent control, to draft the rent adjustment petitions, including fair return and capital improvement petitions. The importance of drafting these regulations cannot be understated.

Rent adjustment regulations are among the most complex and extensive of all of the regulations the Board will consider. In order for the Board to have ample time to review draft Rent Regulations, the Executive Director recommended that the Board meet for a Special Meeting in September. Due to scheduling conflicts, not all of the Board members would have been able to attend the Special meeting. Additionally, the contract rent control experts will need at least one month to produce a sufficient number of Regulations to review. Therefore, staff members recommend the Board meet an additional time in October for a Special meeting to review and begin approving the Regulations. Given the importance of the rent adjustment regulations, the Board should use this Special meeting in October to thoughtfully review the proposed regulations and hopefully come to an agreement on a substantial proportion of all requisite regulations. To cover the extensive list of regulations that may be before the Board for the Special meeting, staff propose that this meeting be an all-day retreat.

## 4. Community Engagement and Outreach

---

Community engagement, education, and outreach are critical to increasing compliance and community awareness of the requirements of the Rent Ordinance and related policies. Currently, the Rent Program has 1,219 subscribers to the Rent Program listerv.

In addition to the development of the [Rent Program website](#) and Rent Program Brochure (in [English](#) and [Spanish](#)), in the first eight months of the Rent Program, interim staff hosted or attended the following workshops, festivals, and events:

### Community Education

#### Workshops

January 18, 2017

March 29, 2017

[July 12, 2017 \(Tenant-Focused\)](#)

[July 27, 2017 \(Landlord-Focused\)](#)

### Group Computer

#### Support Sessions

March 21, 2017

March 30, 2017

### Festivals/Events

Cinco de Mayo (May 7, 2017)

Juneteenth (June 17, 2017)

National Night Out (August 1, 2017)

In the coming months, permanent Rent Program staff will continue and extend these efforts. Tasks shall include, but are not limited to:

- Mass mailing to Landlords and Tenants to solicit enrollment on the Rent Program website and provide education on the requirements of the Rent Ordinance
- Development of a community engagement calendar of targeted events
  - *Examples: California Landlord 101, Addressing Habitability Issues, Navigating the Rent Program Website*
- Publishing the Rent Program Manual for Tenants and Landlords
- Development of additional informational materials (FAQs, factsheets, etc.)
- Creation and maintenance of social media accounts
- Targeted community outreach to various stakeholder groups

## 5. Rent Program Website Updates

---

### CURRENT STATS

As of August 17, 2017, the Rent Program website has received over 8,800 online form submissions, including:

- 1,225 [Enrollment](#) forms (equates to roughly 7,800 units, or roughly 30% of the estimated total Rental Units in the City)
- 64 [Agent Authorization](#) forms
- 35 [Excess Rent Complaints](#)
- 56 [Excess Rent Refund](#) forms
- 21 [Notice of Change in Terms of Tenancy](#) forms
- 1,154 2016 AGA Notification of Rent Increase forms
- 1,681 [2017 AGA Notification of Rent Increase](#) forms
- 676 Notice of [Termination of Tenancy](#) forms
- 8 [Permanent Relocation Payment](#) forms
- 63 [Petitions for Maximum Allowable Rent Increase or Decrease](#)
- 5 [Unpaid Permanent Relocation Payment Complaints](#)
- 1 [Unpaid Temporary Relocation Payment Complaints](#)
- 3,872 [Proof of Service](#) forms

An important task in the coming months for permanent staff will be to review form submissions thoroughly for compliance with all requirements of the Rent Ordinance and related policies.

### EFFORTS TO STREAMLINE THE NOTICE FILING PROCESS

At their meeting on July 19, 2017, the Rent Board adopted [Regulation 17-04](#), which sought to clarify noticing requirements for Rental Units in the City. As part of this item, the Board heard concerns from the public and directed staff to explore solutions for streamlining the process for Landlords to file notices of rent increases, termination of tenancies, and change in terms of tenancy notices with the Rent Board prior to service on the Tenant.

These concerns prompted Rent Program staff members to implement changes to the website in an effort to streamline the process. These changes are summarized in Table 2.



**Table 2. Summary of Website and Form-Filing Process**

SUMMARY OF CHANGE	ORIGINAL PROCESS	REVISED PROCESS
One CivicPlus form may now include multiple notices	Landlords or authorized agents would need to complete a separate CivicPlus online form submission for each notice of rent increase, termination of tenancy, or change in terms of tenancy served to a Tenant.	Like the enrollment form, if all Rental Units are on the same APN, the Landlord or authorized agents may list up to five (5) Rental Units on the online form, or, if there are more than five Rental Units receiving the notice, the Landlord can upload an Excel file with all of the requisite fields.
A Proof of Service form is uploaded with the notice filed with the City	Landlords would need to comply with the following process: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Fill out online notification form (one form for each notice)</li> <li>2. Serve notice on the Tenant</li> <li>3. Fill out online Proof of Service form (one form for each notice)</li> </ol>	Landlords must upload a <a href="#">Proof of Service</a> along with the notice filed with the City. Completion of a separate, online Proof of Service form is no longer necessary.

The Rent Program website is constantly evolving. As such, the Rent Program welcomes feedback from members of the community regarding how to continue to improve systems and communication. Furthermore, considering the number of Landlords and Tenants who may not have access or the ability to complete and submit forms online, it is proposed that a paper form option be made available.

### COMPUTER SUPPORT SESSIONS

Since January, Rent Program staff members have hosted over 140 computer support sessions to assist Tenants, Landlords, and Property Managers with the completion of online forms. The average amount of time spent on a computer support session is approximately 50 minutes, which equates to over 116 hours of individual, one-on-one assistance provided by Rent Program staff members.

## 6. Tenant/Landlord Counseling

---

### CURRENT STATS

As of August 16, 2017, the Rent Program has received 5,121 inquiries, including:

- 1,878 Phone Calls
- 899 Voicemails
- 1,099 Emails
- 1,245 Walk-ins

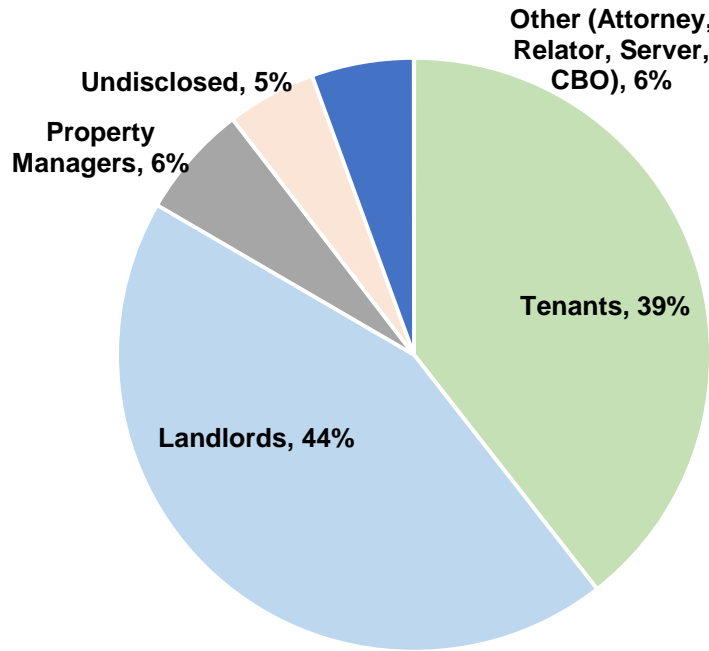
Approximately 9.2 percent of these cases are unresolved, meaning that additional follow-up is necessary to compel compliance with the Rent Ordinance.

The following charts illustrate the composition of Tenants, Landlords, Property Managers, and other community members who visit and call the Rent Program. Approximately 44 percent of individuals who call the Rent Program office, the largest percentage of any category, are Landlords. Conversely, the largest percentage of individuals who visit the Rent Program office are Tenants (49 percent).

A substantially greater proportion of individuals who visit the Rent Program office indicate that Spanish is their preferred language, compared to individuals who call the office (33 percent versus two percent.)

On June 21, 2017, the Rent Board directed staff to negotiate and execute legal services contracts for representation of Landlords and Tenants in a total contract amount not to exceed \$155,494 for Fiscal Year 2016-17 and Fiscal Year 2017-18. A [Request for Qualifications and Proposals](#) was posted on the Rent Program website and disseminated during the week of August 14<sup>th</sup>. Proposals are due no later than Friday, September 8, 2017, at 12:00 PM.

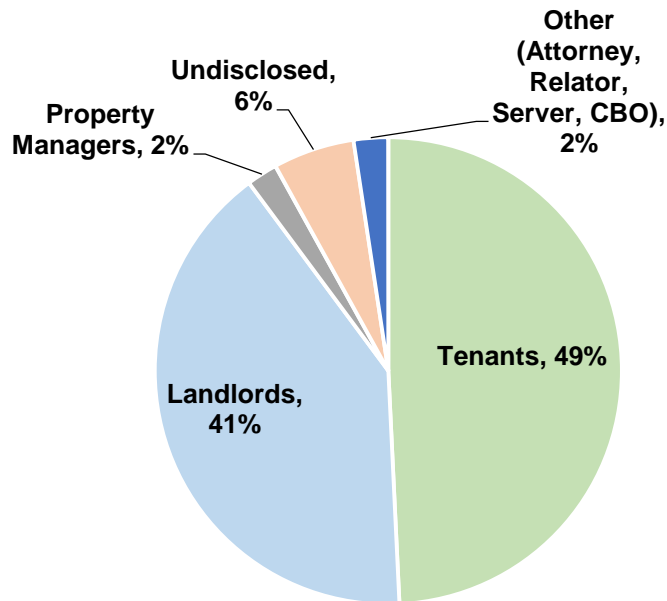
**Figure 1. Proportion of Calls to the Rent Program placed by Tenants, Landlords, Property Managers, and Other Individuals**



n = 1,904

Source: City of Richmond Rent Program, August 2017

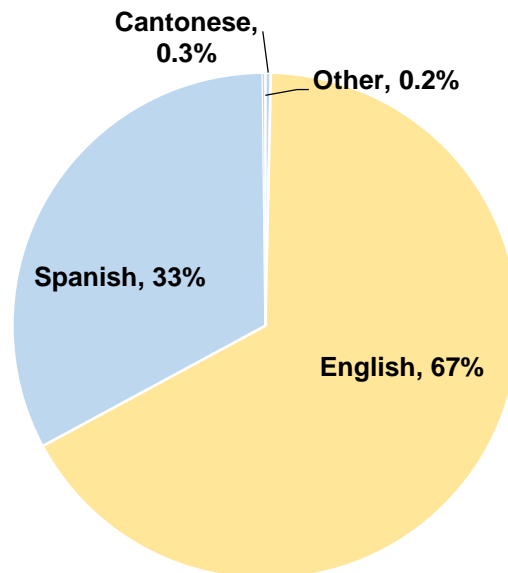
**Figure 2. Proportion of visits to the Rent Program office made by Tenants, Landlords, Property Managers, and Other Individuals**



n = 1,259

Source: City of Richmond Rent Program, August 2017

**Figure 3. Proportion of Individuals Who Visited the Rent Program office who prefer to speak English, Spanish, Cantonese, and Other Languages**



n = 1,174

Source: City of Richmond Rent Program, August 2017

## 7. Supporting the Rent Board

---

The Richmond City Council appointed all five members of the Rent Board at their meeting on March 21, 2017. Since then, the Rent Board has met at least once per month to accomplish the following “critical path” items:

- Adoption of [amended Fiscal Year 2016-17 and 2017-18 Rent Program Budgets](#)
- Approval of the [2016-17 and 2017-18 Residential Rental Housing Fee Study](#)
- Approval of contracts for Legal Services
- Interviewing and selecting an Executive Director
- Adoption of Rent Board Regulations, including:
  - [Regulation 17-02](#), regarding Rent Adjustment Petitions and Excess Rent Complaints
  - [Regulation 17-03](#), Regarding Rental Units Exempt from the Rent Control and Just Cause for Eviction Provisions of the Fair Rent, Just Cause for Eviction, and Homeowner Protection Ordinance
  - [Regulation 17-04](#), regarding the filing with the Board of notices of rent increase and termination of tenancies and enrolling Rental Units with the Board
  - [Regulation 17-05](#), establishing the 2017 Annual General Adjustment

Rent Program staff members recommend the Board continue to essential policy decisions in the near future, including:

- Determining metrics to establish fair rate of return standards
- Procedural requirements in order to Withdraw Units from the Rental Market pursuant to RMC 11.100.050(a)(7)
- Banking of Annual General Adjustment rent increases
- Written Warning Notice requirements prior to an eviction for Breach of Lease, Nuisance, or Failure to Give Access and the relationship to the Crime Free Lease Addendum
- Recommending amendments to the Relocation Ordinance (RMC 11.102)

Given the significance of these policies, staff members have delayed the presentation of proposed regulations for the Board’s consideration to ensure adequate time for thorough review by legal counsel and subject matter experts.