

PROTECTIONS FROM TENANT HARASSMENT

Section 22.618.3(d)(2)ii.c. of House LA, which establishes the Protections from Tenant Harassment Program, is designed “to fund non-profit organizations and City services to monitor and enforce protections against tenant harassment and other tenant rights, and to inform tenants of such protections and support them in exercising their rights.”

Recommendation: As close to 70% of Program funds as possible should be spent directly by the City of Los Angeles.

Los Angeles Housing Department

LAHD should create a Tenant Anti-Harassment (TAH) division as part of its Regulatory Compliance and Code Bureau. TAH should employ Investigators, similar to Code Enforcement, to assess reports of harassment and make written determinations about whether conduct that violates the City’s Tenant Anti Harassment Ordinance occurred. TAH should work in conjunction with the RSO, CE, and Compliance divisions. TAH should refer identified harassment to the City Attorney or nonprofit grantees for enforcement.

City Attorney

The City Attorney shall establish a division or unit dedicated to bringing criminal or civil lawsuits under Tenant Anti-Harassment Ordinance (TAHO).

Recommendation: As close to 30% of Program funds be spent on programs led by nonprofit organizations.

Legal Services Provider Grants

LAHD should award grants to LSPs, as defined in the Eviction Defense/Prevention Program, to support them enforcing TAHO. Grants should last 3 years, but grantees should get wind-down funds if they don’t receive another 3 year grant. The grant should provide funding to the Legal Service Provider to 1) provide full-scope legal representation to tenants in filing lawsuits against landlords for violations of TAHO; and 2) provide limited-scope services to tenants, such as advice & counsel, assistance with filing complaints, and providing referrals.

Community Based Organization Grants

LAHD should award grants to Community Based Organizations (CBOs), as defined in the Eviction Defense/Prevention Program, to support education about and enforcement of TAHO. Grants shall similarly be 3 years with wind-down funds available. The grant should provide funding to the CBO to 1) educate tenants about TAHO via clinics, workshops, and online resources; 2) assist tenants with filing complaints; and 3) support tenants experiencing harassment as they assert their rights. CBOs should work to partner with LSP grantees to coordinate efforts. The Department should explore modeling the CBO grants after the REAP/UMP Outreach Contractor program.