

**COMMITTEE ON HOUSING**  
ROBERT C. WHITE, JR., CHAIR  
COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

January 21, 2025

Johanna Shreve  
Chief Tenant Advocate  
Office of the Tenant Advocate  
899 North Capitol Street, NE  
Suite 620  
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Chief Tenant Advocate Shreve:

The Committee on Housing has scheduled a performance oversight hearing on the Office of the Tenant Advocate for Thursday, January 30, 2025, at 9:30 AM. The hearing will be held in hybrid fashion, but we request your attendance in person if possible.

Once the hearing schedule is finalized, we will use the Council's Hearing Management System (HMS), <https://lims.dccouncil.gov/hearings>, as the preferred mechanism for witness registration and the receipt of written testimony. Witnesses who need assistance are also welcome to contact us at [housing@dccouncil.gov](mailto:housing@dccouncil.gov) or 202-727-8720.

To ensure a productive oversight hearing, it is the Committee's preference that you arrive in time to listen to any public testimony provided with respect to the Office prior to providing your own testimony. In addition, Council rules require that you submit your written testimony to the Committee at least 48 hours prior to the commencement of the hearing. Please limit your testimony at the hearing to 10 minutes.

It is the practice of the Committee to send each agency a series of written questions in advance of an oversight hearing. Please review the attached list of questions and file responses no later than the close of business on **Tuesday, January 28**. If you anticipate that you will not be able to provide a complete set of responses by that date, please let us know as soon as possible, and be prepared to submit a partial set of responses and attachments that includes, at minimum, the 21 high-priority questions marked with strings of asterisks (\*\*\*). We anticipate that these questions will be especially relevant to questioning during the hearing. Should you need to provide a partial initial response in this manner, we will be in touch regarding a deadline after the hearing for your submission of an updated, complete set of responses.

Please file your responses by email to [housing@dccouncil.gov](mailto:housing@dccouncil.gov). Please provide an electronic version of your answers with text responses in a single document, with clearly marked attachments where necessary. If the documents are too large to send by e-mail, please contact us to coordinate. Please do not submit sensitive, non-public, or personally identifiable information, as all responsive materials will be available to the public via HMS.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Committee on Housing at [housing@dccouncil.gov](mailto:housing@dccouncil.gov). Thank you in advance for your timely response.

Sincerely,

Robert C. White, Jr.  
*Councilmember, At-Large*  
*Chair, Committee on Housing*  
*Council of the District of Columbia*

## GENERAL QUESTIONS

**1. *Please provide the agency's mission statement.***

**Response:** 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 create and operate a Tenant Hotline. In FY 2009 the Agency created the program that provides emergency housing for tenants who have been displaced by fires and government closures.

**2. *Please list any statutory mandates that the agency lacks sufficient resources to fully implement.***

**Response:** N/A

**3. *\*\*\* Please list all reporting requirements in the District of Columbia Code or Municipal Regulations that the agency is required to complete in FY 24 and FY 25, and their mandated due dates. For each report whose due date has passed, list the date reporting was completed. If the agency did not produce the report on the mandated timeline, please explain why.***

**Response:** D.C. Official Code § 42-3531.07(5)(B) requires the OTA to provide an annual report to the Council by February 1st of each year. The agency's annual report for 2024 is in progress and will be submitted in mid-February.

**4. *Please list and describe any regulations promulgated by the agency in FY 24 or FY 25, to date, and the status of each.***

**Response:** N/A

**5. *Please explain any significant impacts on your agency of any legislation passed at the federal or local level during FY 24 and FY 25, to date.***

**Response:** Yes, to the extent that the agency still receives questions about the Council's "inflation mitigation" legislation, which lowered the statutory rent increase caps for rent controlled units in FY 23 and FY 24.<sup>1</sup> Last year, we noted the impact of this legislation on the agency – specifically our creation of a "rent increase calculator" which remains on our website; and the involvement of all branches of the agency in helping to explain how the caps apply. The rent caps become moot after April 30, 2025, which is the end of the current Rent Control Year. Thereafter, we anticipate a continuing impact on the agency,

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<sup>1</sup> Act 25-151; Law 25-42; Act 25-435; Law 25-169; Bill 26-1; and Bill 26-3.

mainly due to relevant rent increase grievances for the remainder of the three-year statute of limitations.

**6. \*\*\* Last year, the agency identified 3 goals using the Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound (SMART) framework.**

**a. What is the status of each of these goals?**

**Response:**

***SMART Goal 1: Finalize a rulemaking for publication in consultation with OAG regarding OTA billing and lien authority for the Emergency Housing Assistance Program (EHAP)***

**Timeframe:** FY 2025

**Status:** Over the past year, (1) we assembled an intra-agency team to review and build upon previous efforts to develop regulatory guidelines based on OAG consultations and advice (OAG is authorized to defend OTA liability determinations against housing provider challenges at OAH and thus is an essential partner in this project); (2) after discussions with DOB regarding systematic data-sharing regarding relevant housing code violation reports, we determined that a case-by-case approach to such data sharing would likely be more effective and time-efficient; (3) we determined how the agency will finesse the statutory threshold for landlord liability so that we capture instances of landlord dereliction rather than relatively innocent actors; (4) we identified issues that regularly arise during tenant hotel stays to address in the rulemaking; and (5) we re-established an OAG contact who will respond to questions and more fully engage the project when a draft rulemaking is ready for review.

***SMART Goal 2: City-wide lease clinic***

**Timeframe:** FY 2025

**Status:** At last year's budget hearing, Chairperson White and Director Shreve agreed to expand this SMART Goal from a university event to a city-wide Lease Clinic. The clinic will consist of a presentation on residential lease rights in the District followed by a clinical session for tenants to receive individual attention from an OTA attorney-advisor regarding any legal issues they may have regarding their tenancies. Tenants will be encouraged to register in advance and to bring their leases with them and any additional pertinent documentation. We are also considering holding several other similar presentations and legal clinics at multiple locations during the calendar year.

***SMART Goal 3: Legislation to address unfair and non-transparent housing provider utility billing practices***

**Timeframe:** March 2025

**Status:** The Policy Branch researched utility billing laws both in the District and in other jurisdictions, and met with stakeholders and other advocates to discuss common utility billing issues. Some of the problems and solutions to be identified in our proposal were discussed at an OTA mini-Summit in September 2024 focusing squarely on utility billing concerns. The Branch is nearing completion of a comprehensive memo including a narrative list of the utility billing problems that we are aware of through client intake and otherwise; relevant best practices from other jurisdictions; and a legislative recommendation for each problem. The Branch is also developing comprehensive draft legislation based on the memo. The agency looks forward to submitting the memo and legislation to the Committee in March 2025.

- b. For any goal that is not on track for completion, please provide an explanation as to why.*

**Response:** N/A

- c. Does the agency propose to update or replace any of its SMART goals for 2025?*

**Response:** N/A

- d. What changes to its practices does the agency anticipate making to better achieve its SMART goals in 2025?*

**Response:** N/A

- 7. What other metrics does the agency regularly use to evaluate its operations? Please be specific about which data points are monitored.*

**Response:** The OTA conducts an annual quantitative evaluation of the services provided to tenants, through the review and analysis of its intake data. Within the Legal Branch, the OTA conducts individual interviews with team members in order to improve operations. Prior to the pandemic, OTA further conducted a qualitative evaluation of our services through the dissemination and review of customer satisfaction surveys. With the necessary funding, we could re-introduce such surveys as part of a new electronic intake system.

- 8. Please describe any new initiatives or programs that the agency implemented in FY 24 and FY 25, to date, to improve its operations. Please describe any funding utilized for these initiatives or programs and the results, or expected results, of each initiative.*

**Response:** See response to Question #6 above regarding the city-wide lease clinic SMART goal. The agency also upgraded its telephone intake system. We used operational funding in the amount of \$4,500 for this purpose.

**9. \*\*\* What are three areas, programs, or initiatives within your agency where you see the most opportunity to make progress toward racial equity?**

**Response:** As we stated last year, we believe the most opportunity to make further progress is to double down on the approach we have taken to date. Regarding hiring practices, we hire without regard to race or ethnicity, except that we strive to maintain a staff that reflects the demographics of the District. Additionally, we have relied on improvements suggested in the agency’s Language Access assessments to better ensure that our services are as accessible as possible to any low-English and non-English speaking resident of the District. Regarding outreach and education opportunities, E&O has focused on direct on-the-ground outreach activities in Wards 7 and 8; canvassing buildings with housing code violations; forming and training tenant associations; and attending community walks and other outreach events.

The OTA developed additional courses to help communities sustain their tenant organizations and continued to utilize public spaces such as DC public libraries to provide in-person training, focusing on Ward 7 and 8 communities.

**10. In the past year, what are 2 ways in which the agency has addressed racial inequities internally or through the services you provide?**

**Response:** As we stated last year, the OTA’s statutory mandate is to offer its services to the District’s tenant community without consideration of race or ethnic background. Placing resources where they are needed, however, is a different story. That is why the OTA has targeted underserved communities in particular through its community outreach: 34% of the OTA’s ward-specific events in FY 24 were in Wards 7 and 8. Additionally, the inclusion of OTA’s contact information on Notices of Past Due Rent per D.C. Official Code § 42–3505.01(a-1)(2) ensures that all tenants facing eviction for non-payment of rent – many cases coming from underserved communities – are aware that the OTA is available to assist them.

**11. \*\*\* Please provide a current organizational chart for the agency, including the number of vacant, frozen, and filled positions in each division or subdivision. Include the names and titles of all senior personnel and note the date that the information was collected on the chart.**

**Response:** See Attachment #1, “OTA Organizational Chart.”

**a. Please provide a narrative explanation of any changes to the organizational chart during FY 24 and FY 25, to date.**

**Response:** N/A

**12. Please provide a current Schedule A for the agency which identifies each position by program and activity, with the salary, fringe benefits, and length of time with the agency. Please note the date that the information was collected. The Schedule A should also indicate if**

*the position is continuing/term/temporary/contract or if it is vacant or frozen. Please indicate if any position must be filled to comply with federal or local law.*

**Response:** See Attachment #2, "Schedule A"; no position is filled to comply with federal or local law.

**13.** *Please list all employees detailed to or from your agency. For each employee identified, please provide the name of the agency the employee is detailed to or from, the reason for the detail, the date of the detail, and the employee's projected date of return.*

**Response:** N/A

**14.** *Please provide:*

- a. A list of all vehicles owned, leased, or otherwise used by the agency and to whom the vehicle is assigned as well as a description of all vehicle accidents involving the agency's vehicles in FY 24 and FY 25, to date;*
- b. A list of travel expenses, arranged by employee, for FY 24 and FY 25, to date, including justification for travel; and*
- c. A list of workers' compensation payments paid in FY 24 and FY 25, to date, including the number of employees who received workers' compensation payments, in what amounts, and for what reasons.*

**Response:** N/A

**15.** *Please list in descending order the top 25 overtime earners in your agency in FY 24 and FY 25, to date, if applicable. For each, state the employee's name, position number, position title, program, activity, salary, fringe, and the aggregate amount of overtime pay earned by each.*

**Response:** See Attachment #3, "Overtime."

**16.** *For FY 24 and FY 25, to date, please provide a list of employee bonuses, special pay granted, or separation pay issued, that identifies the employee receiving the bonus, special pay, or separation pay, the amount received, and the reason for the bonus, special pay, or separation pay.*

**Response:** N/A

**17.** *Please provide each collective bargaining agreement that is currently in effect for agency employees. Please include the bargaining unit and the duration of each agreement. Please note if the agency is currently in bargaining and the anticipated date of completion of each agreement in bargaining.*

**Response:** N/A

**18. Please describe the agency's procedures for investigating allegations of sexual harassment or misconduct committed by or against its employees. List and describe any allegations received by the agency in FY 24 and FY 25, to date, and whether and how those allegations were resolved.**

**Response:** The OTA's procedures for investigating allegations of sexual harassment or misconduct committed by or against its employees follow the steps outlined in Mayor's Order 2023-131. The SHO and Alt-SHO will work closely with the agency's general counsel and training material provided by DCHR and OHR. There have been no allegations received by the OTA in FY 24 and FY 25 to date.

**a. Has the agency identified a primary and alternate sexual harassment officer ("SHO")? If no, why not? If yes, please provide the names of the primary and alternate SHOs.**

**Response:** The OTA's primary and alternate sexual harassment officers are as follows:

Primary

Christopher E. Lucas

Alternate

Cynthia Houser

**b. Has the agency received any requests from staff in an otherwise prohibited dating, romantic, or sexual relationship for a waiver of provisions of the Sexual Harassment Order? What was the resolution of each request?**

**Response:** The OTA received no such requests in FY 24 and FY 25 to date.

**19. For FY 24 and FY 25, to date, please identify any special purpose revenue funds maintained by, used by, or available for use by the agency. For each fund identified, provide:**

**a. The revenue source name and code;**

**b. The source of funding;**

**c. A description of the program that generates the funds;**

**d. The amount of funds generated by each source or program;**

**e. Expenditures of funds, including the purpose of each expenditure; and**

**f. The current fund balance.**

**Response:** See Attachment #4, "Special Purpose Revenue."



**20. \*\*\* For FY 24 and FY 25, to date, please list any purchase card spending by the agency, the employee making each expenditure, and the general purpose for each expenditure.**

**Response:** The individual responsible for P-Card purchases at the agency is Tamela Tolton. All purchases are related to emergency housing or marketing materials and translation services for the Education and Outreach team.

See Attachment #5, “FY 24 P-Card Transactions” and Attachment #6, “FY 25 P-Card Transactions.”

**21. Please list all memoranda of understanding (“MOU”) entered into by your agency during FY 24 and FY 25, to date, as well as any MOU currently in force. For each, indicate the date on which the MOU was entered and the termination date. Please attach a copy of each.**

**Response:** See Attachment #6A, “MOUs for FY24 and FY25”

FY ‘24

OCFO	10/1/23 - 9/30/24
DCHR	10/1/23 - 9/30/24
The Community Partnership for the Prevention of Homelessness	10/1/23 - 9/30/24

FY ‘25

OCFO	10/1/24 - 9/30/25
DCHR	10/1/24 - 9/30/25
MODHH	10/1/24 - 9/30/25
The Community Partnership for the Prevention of Homelessness	10/1/24 - 9/30/25

**22. Please list all open capital projects and capital projects in the financial plan under the agency’s purview, including the amount budgeted, actual dollars spent so far, any remaining balances, and the status of the project. In addition, please provide a description of any projects which are experiencing delays, or which require additional funding.**

**Response:** N/A

23. *Please provide a table showing your agency’s Council-approved budget, revised budget (after reprogrammings, etc.), and actual spending, by program, activity, and funding source for FY 24 and FY 25, to date. Please detail any over- or under-spending and any federal funds that lapsed.*

**Response:** See Attachment #7, “FY 2024 Budget” and Attachment #8, “FY 2025 Budget.”

24. *\*\*\* Please list and describe any spending pressures the agency experienced in FY 24 and any anticipated spending pressures for the remainder of FY 25. Include a description of the pressure and the estimated amount. If the spending pressure was in FY 24, describe how it was resolved, and if the foreseen spending pressure is in FY 25, describe any proposed solutions.*

**Response:** In FY 24 OTA received \$250,438 in Contingency Reserve funds and \$146,000 via reprogramming to continue their Emergency Housing Program through the end of Fiscal Year 2024.

25. *Please provide a list of all budget enhancement requests (including capital improvement needs) for FY 25 or FY 26. For each, include a description of the need and the amount of funding requested.*

**Response:** See Attachment #8A, “FY 25 and FY 26 Enhancement Requests.”

26. *Please list, in chronological order, each reprogramming that impacted the agency in FY 24 and FY 25, to date, including those that moved funds into the agency, out of the agency, and within the agency. For each reprogramming, list the date, amount, rationale, and reprogramming number.*

**Response:** See Attachment #9, “Reprogramming.”

27. *\*\*\* Please list each grant or sub-grant received by the agency in FY 24 and FY 25, to date. List the date, amount, source, purpose of the grant or sub-grant received, and amount expended.*

**Response:** N/A

28. *How many FTEs are dependent on grant funding? What are the terms of this funding? If it is set to expire, what plans, if any, are in place to continue funding the FTEs?*

**Response:** N/A

29. \*\*\* Please list each contract (including leases) and procurement entered into or extended by your agency during FY 24 and FY 25, to date. For each contract, please provide the following information where applicable:

- a. The name of the contracting party;
- b. The nature of the contract, including the end product or service;
- c. The dollar amount of the contract, including amount budgeted and amount actually spent;
- d. The term of the contract;
- e. Whether the contract was competitively bid;
- f. The name of the agency's contract monitor and the results of any monitoring activity; and
- g. The funding source.

**Response:**

FY24 Acquisitions

<b>Contracting Party</b>	<b>Individual Principal</b>	<b>End Product</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Term</b>	<b>Bid</b>	<b>Monitor</b>	<b>Source</b>
Campbell & Company	Wendy Campbell	Marketing Material	\$9,950.00	9/18/24-9/30/24	Yes	Tamela Tolton	Local
ABC Technical Solutions	Mohsen Hosseini	Laptop Purchase	\$9,985.00	9/16/24-9/30/24	Yes	Tamela Tolton	Local
Laser Art, Inc	Andre Tyler	Office Products	\$8,000.00	8/27/24-9/30/24	Yes	Tamela Tolton	Local
Westlaw	John Nelson	Legal Reference Software	\$23,969.04	2/15/24-9/30/24	No	Tamela Tolton	Local
Campbell & Company	Wendy Cmsapbell	Virtual Tenant Summit	\$22,000.00	9/13/24-9/30/24	Yes	Tamela Tolton	Local
Clear Channel Outdoor	Mandy Hess	Transit Advertisement	\$39,000.00	9/5/24-9/30/24	No	Tamela Tolton	Local

FY25 Acquisitions

<b>Contracting Party</b>	<b>Individual Principal</b>	<b>End Product</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Term</b>	<b>Bid</b>	<b>Monitor</b>	<b>Source</b>
Star Office Products	Samina Ahmad	Office Supplies	\$4,750.12	12/19/24-9/30/25	Yes	Tamela Tolton	Local
Microsoft 365 License	Bill Rose	Software	\$5,646.00	12/16/24-9/30/25	No	Tamela Tolton	Local
Westlaw	John Nelson	Legal Reference Software	\$33,111.36	12/11/24-9/30/25	No	Tamela Tolton	Local

**30. \*\*\* If there have been cases where the agency has been dissatisfied with the procurement process, what have been the major issues?**

**a. What changes to contracting and procurement policies, practices, or systems would help the agency deliver more reliable, cost-effective, and timely services?**

**Response:** N/A

**31. What is the agency’s current adjusted expendable budget for CBE compliance purposes? How much has been spent with SBEs or CBEs? What percent of the agency’s current adjusted expendable budget has been spent with SBEs or CBEs?**

**Response:** The agency’s current adjusted expendable budget for CBE compliance purposes is \$412,025. To date, \$21,525.12 has been spent with SBE or CBEs, which is 5.2% of the SBE goal.

**32. Please provide the number of FOIA requests submitted to the Commission for FY 24 and FY 25 to date, specifying how many were granted, partially granted, denied, and are currently pending. Additionally, provide details on the average response time, estimated number of full-time employees (FTEs) needed to process these requests, estimated number of hours spent responding to them, and cost of compliance.**

**Response:** For FY 24, please see Attachment #10, “OTA FY 2024 FOIA Report Form.”

For FY 25, as of January 23, 2025: OTA has received five requests, including one request that was pending as of September 30, 2024. There are no pending requests. One request was granted in part and denied in part; one request sought records that OTA does not maintain; and three requests were denied. The average response time was 14 days; three FTEs worked on processing the requests; an estimated nine staff hours were spent responding; and \$524.96 is the estimated total dollar amount expended based on the FTEs’ salaries.

**33. Please list administrative complaints or grievances that the agency received in FY 24 and FY 25, to date, broken down by source. Please describe any changes to agency policies or procedures that have resulted from complaints or grievances that were resolved in FY 24 or FY 25, to date.**

**Response:** N/A

**34. Please list all pending lawsuits that name the agency as a party. Identify which cases on the list are lawsuits that potentially expose the District to financial liability or would result in a change in Commission practices and describe the current status of the litigation. Please provide the extent of each claim, regardless of its likelihood of success.**

**Response:**

On April 17, 2024 the DC Court of Appeals granted the District a Motion for Summary Affirmance, designed to bring to an end a case against the agency brought by a former employee who was terminated in February 2012.

On July 1, 2024, that former employee Filed a Motion for Reconsideration Construed as Petition for Rehearing or Rehearing En Banc. That motion was denied in part on July 25, 2024. The motion was denied in the other part on August 22, 2024.

On September 19, 2024, the former employee filed a Motion for Relief from Final Order (commonly called a Rule 60 Motion) in Superior Court. She was requesting that Superior Court reinstate the cases that the Court of Appeals had affirmed. That motion was denied on November 4, 2024.

On November 13, 2024, the former employee filed a Motion for Reconsideration with Superior Court, seeking reversal of the Superior Court's November 4, 2024 denial. That motion was denied on December 26, 2024.

Also on November 13, 2024, the former employee filed an appeal of the Superior Court's November 4, 2024 denial. The Court of Appeals will issue a briefing order as soon as the record below is certified.

**35. \*\*\* Please list all settlements entered into by the Commission and judgments against the Commission (or by or against the District on behalf of the Commission) in FY 24 or FY 25, to date, and provide the parties' names, the amount of the settlement or judgment, and if related to litigation, the case name and a brief description of the case. If unrelated to litigation, please describe the underlying issue or reason for the settlement (e.g. administrative complaint).**

**Response:** N/A

36. **\*\*\* Please list and describe any investigations, audits, or reports on the Commission or any employee of the Commission that are ongoing or were completed during FY 24 and FY 25, to date.**

**Response:** On October 8, 2024 OTA received a letter from the Office of the DC Auditor (ODCA) to notify OTA of an audit of the status of the rent control clearinghouse database and request certain documentation. OTA provided the requested documentation and met with ODCA on October 25, 2024. On January 27, 2025, ODCA informed OTA that ODCA's survey phase has been completed. A follow-up meeting has been scheduled for January 31.

37. **Please provide a list of all studies, research papers, reports, and analyses that the Commission prepared or funded during FY 24 and FY 25, to date. Please submit a hard copy to the Committee of any study, research paper, report, or analysis that is complete.**

**Response:** N/A

38. **Please list any task forces, committees, advisory boards, or membership organizations in which the agency participates.**

**Response:** The Legislative Director has a seat on the Property Maintenance Technical Advisory Group (PM TAG) under the Construction Codes Coordinating Board (CCCB), which undergoes a triennial review and revision of the District's Property Maintenance (PM) Code with the publication of the International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC). The most recent PM Code review concluded in the spring of 2023. Pending public comment and Council approval, the PM Code will retain District distinctions from the IPMC that we believe are of critical importance to District renters and other residents. Some of the tenant protections represent OTA recommendations approved by the TAG and CCCB in past review cycles. They include a minimum duration of AC if it is a provided service; allocation of pest extermination rights and responsibilities between landlords and tenants; and the annual testing requirement for smoke and CO detectors.

## AGENCY-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

39. \*\*\* *D.C. Official Code §42–3531.07(5)(B) requires “an annual report... on or before February 1... setting forth each tenant request for representation, a description of the circumstances surrounding each request, whether or not the Office provided representation, and the outcome of cases where representation was provided.”*

a. *Please provide a copy of the most recent annual report.*

**Response:** See Attachment #11, “OTA 2023 Annual Report.”

b. *What is the anticipated timeline for release of the next annual report?*

**Response:** Mid-February.

40. \*\*\* *Please provide a quantitative report on intakes received in FY 24 and FY 25, to date, including at minimum the following issue categories per month, broken down by Ward:*

a. *Illegal lease provisions;*

**Response:** OTA does not track “illegal lease provisions” as a separate category, however we had 2,453 intake cases involving “lease issues” more generally in FY 24. We estimate that approximately 25 percent of those general lease issues involved illegal lease provisions.

FY 25 to date: 939 intake requests were categorized under “lease issues.”

b. *Hidden or unfair utility costs;*

**Response:** OTA does not track unfair utility costs as a separate category. However, depending on the circumstances, it could fall under “lease issues” or “rent increase” issues.

c. *Unfulfilled maintenance or repair requests; and*

**Response:** OTA has not tracked this as a separate category, although there is likely to be a significant overlap between this category and housing code violations (see below).

d. *Housing code violations.*

**Response:** FY 24: 1,224  
FY 25 to date: 271

41. \*\*\* Please describe any especially prevalent housing code concerns, changes over time, or other patterns that OTA has observed in its intakes in recent years. Please support your observations with data where possible.

**Response:**

While we cannot cite specific data, the intake team reports increases in the following complaint categories:

- Tenant v. tenant disputes, such as smoking in buildings and sound ordinance violations by neighbors;
- Pest and mold issues;
- Management companies failing to address repair requests;
- Heating, particularly in units owned by small landlords;
- The use of unclear Ratio Utility Billing System (RUBS) formulas for utility billing calculations;
- Tenants seeking to break their leases due to safety concerns in or around their buildings.

42. *How many individuals contacted OTA for assistance using the following methods in FY 24 and FY 25, to date?*

a. *Calling the Tenant Phone Hotline;*

**Response:** FY 24: 5,425  
FY 25: 1,851

b. *Visiting OTA's office in person; and*

**Response:** FY 24: 77  
FY 25: 11

c. *Submitting Ask the Director Inquiries.*

**Response:** FY 24: 2,258  
FY 25: 159

43. \*\*\* Of the tenants served in FY24 and FY25, to date, how many were provided the following forms of assistance?

a. *Non-legal services;*

**Response:** FY 24: 295 families were assisted via EHAP.  
FY 25: 47 families have been assisted via EHAP to date.

b. *Legal information or advice;*



**Response:** FY 24: 7,760  
FY 25: 2,021

*c. Extended legal representation;*

**Response:** A significant number of our intakes receive extended legal representation. This has involved, for example, conducting extended negotiations on the tenant's behalf, assisting in drafting legal documents, navigating the court process, and assisting them in obtaining successful results that allow them to avoid the court process. There were three instances where OTA attorneys were unable to resolve the matter prior to reaching the courts (see (d) & (e) below).

*d. Legal representation in an administrative hearing; and*

**Response:** One.

*e. Legal representation in a court proceeding.*

**Response:** Two, one at a trial court and one before the court of appeals.

**44. \*\*\* What has been OTA's average caseload per attorney been in FY24 and FY25, to date?**

**Response:** Approximately 865 per attorney in FY 24 and 275 in FY 25 to date.

**45. Please provide a quantitative report on OTA's outreach and education activities in FY 24 and FY 25, to date, including at minimum:**

*a. Attendees at each of the monthly Renter's Rights 101 training and other public education and outreach programs;*

*b. Attendees at the Annual Tenant Summit; and*

*c. Listens and views on each tenants' rights podcast and webinar.*

**Response:** In FY 24, OTA's Education & Outreach team attended 497 events, with 10,085 attendees, across all 8 wards, both in-person and virtually. Most ward-specific events (24%) were held in Ward 8. 850 tenants attended our recurring Renter's Rights 101 trainings and 100 tenants attended our Annual Tenant Summit panel events. Our OTA Youtube channel amassed a total of 8,351 views on our tenant's rights tutorial videos and webinars. OTA can provide a full list of all events upon request.

**46. \*\*\* Please describe any significant changes to public education and outreach efforts that OTA intends to implement in FY25.**

**Response:** In FY 25 OTA intends to expand its recurring in-person events at scheduled locations like the DC Libraries, DHS Service Centers, CSOSA and Salvation Army resource fairs, and Food Distribution events. By establishing a regular presence and advertising the schedule of activities well in advance broadly to our stakeholders and tenant groups we will encourage tenants to come find us in their own neighborhoods to provide support. OTA is also exploring the feasibility of hosting the Annual Tenant Summit in person again, rather than virtually, at our new event space at 899 North Capitol.

**47. How does OTA use constituent surveys to collect data from tenants and from service providers such as housing counselors and case managers?**

**a. How does the Office measure improvement over time?**

**Response:** See response to (b) below.

**b. Please provide a summary of data collected from constituent surveys during FY24 and FY25, to date.**

**Response:** OTA utilized a survey to tenants involved in the Tenant Association Peer Mentorship Program to solicit feedback about topics that tenants felt were important to cover during our Tenant Summit in 2024. Due to the variety of responses, especially centering around utility charges and safety, we decided to feature a 2-day Tenant Summit, and each day was able to address a specific topic that had been recommended by numerous tenants. OTA also provides a survey to tenants for feedback after trainings both in-person and virtually, looking for feedback as to how to improve the trainings. Though response rates are a limiting factor, feedback consistently describes the trainings as valuable, attendees find them engaging, and the attendees often say they learn something new. In results from a recent survey (7 responses), 100% described the trainings as “very valuable” or “extremely valuable” and some of the answers to “how would you suggest we improve our trainings?” included “make them later in the evening,” “add more Q&A at the end,” and “have them more widely available to the public.”

**48. How many tenant associations are currently participating in the Tenant Association Peer Mentorship Program? How many total have participated in FY 24 and FY 25, to date?**

**Response:** Tenant Associations are informed about the Tenant Association Peer Mentorship Group when they contact us for trainings on how to begin, or when they send us information and request to be added. Once Tenant Associations have taken our trainings, we invite them to join the Tenant Association Peer Mentorship Program (TAPMP). OTA is in contact with approximately 100 active tenant associations as part of the TAPMP, and around 30 of those tenant association boards regularly engage within the TAPMP, attending meetings, forwarding informational flyers to tenants, contacting other Tenant Association Partners met through the TAPMP, inviting OTA to Tenant Association meetings, and working with OTA to recruit in their communities.

49. \*\*\* *How does OTA engage with housing providers?*

**Response:** The Education & Outreach team helps tenant associations who are negotiating for better conditions with housing providers by offering mediation at meetings between tenants and housing providers. In emergency housing scenarios, the agency directly speaks to owners to determine whether displaced tenants will be able to return to the property in a reasonable timeframe. In some intake cases, the OTA will draft demand letters to housing providers, or directly engage with them on the tenant's behalf. From a policy advocacy standpoint, the agency engages housing providers to help the agency craft balanced policy proposals. Additionally, the OTA has provided renter's rights trainings to some housing providers upon request, including realtors and also community based organizations that provide housing to tenants. In FY 25 the OTA will continue to encourage housing providers and property managers to attend our monthly renter's rights trainings to be better informed about tenants' rights in the District.

50. *Are OTA's amicus briefs collected in a publicly accessible online forum? If so, where? If not, please provide digital copies of OTA's amicus briefs filed in FY24 and FY25, to date.*

**Response:** The OTA's *amicus* briefs can be found at the following web page: <https://ota.dc.gov/page/ota-amicus-curiae-filings>.

51. *Please provide a report on emergency housing assistance for each month in FY 24 and FY 25, to date, including:*

- a. *Number of households supported;*
- b. *Length of hotel stay covered per household;*
- c. *Amounts expended per household;*
- d. *Total amount expended; and*
- e. *Funds recouped from housing providers.*

**Response:** See Attachment #12, "FY 24 and FY 25 EHAP Expenditures."

52. \*\*\* *Please detail OTA's process for coordinating with the Department of Buildings and any other relevant entities to support tenants when a building is deemed uninhabitable.*

**Response:** The process varies depending on the nature of the incident.

When a unit is determined to be uninhabitable by DOB or FEMS, the inspector or investigator will contact the OTA by phone to notify us of the incident and address any questions we may have. They will also send a follow-up email with all relevant details about the closure, including the tenant's contact information and household composition. The OTA then coordinates hotel placement and contacts the tenant to verify the

information provided by DOB or FEMS, while also offering details about the Emergency Housing program and hotel arrangements. Once contact is made, we share the tenant's information with DHS for further support.

When a fire occurs, the OTA initially receives information from HSEMA. The Red Cross is then requested to visit the fire scene, complete their intake of the displaced tenants, and offer financial assistance. The Red Cross also provides the tenant with the OTA's contact information. The tenant should use their Red Cross funds to cover hotel costs and contact the OTA once they are settled to receive further assistance. If the OTA does not hear from the tenant within 24 to 48 hours, we will proactively reach out to offer an additional 14 days of hotel accommodation. Once contact is made, we share the tenant's information with DHS for further support.

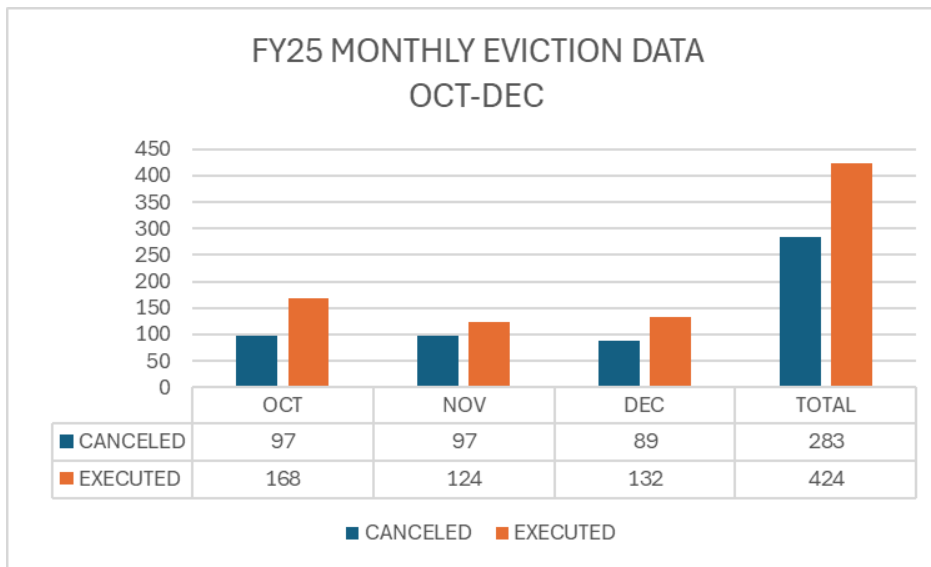
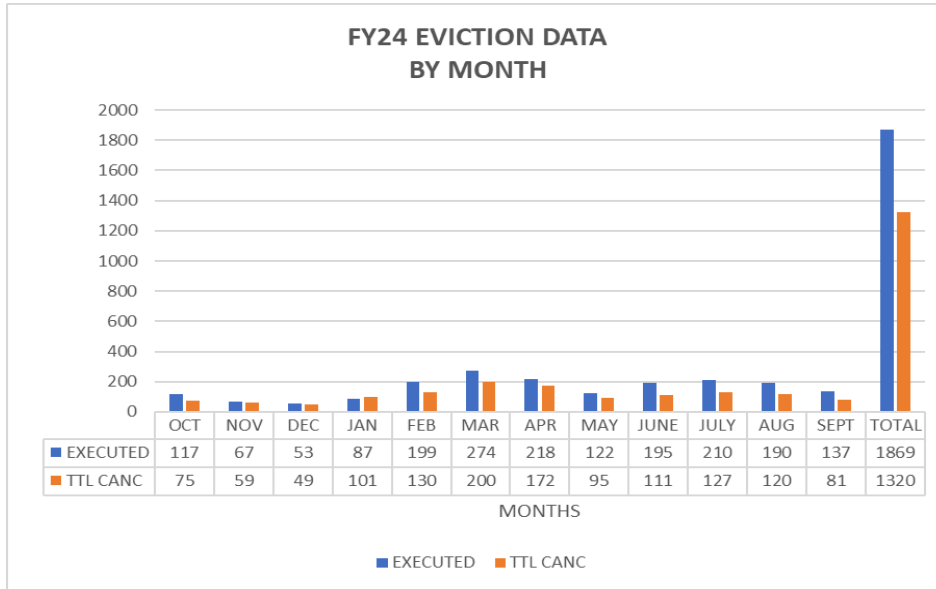
**53. *How much did OTA recover for tenants in settlements and damages per month in FY 24 and FY 25, to date?***

**Response:** We are still gathering the data for the first three months of FY 24 and will supply that data as soon as possible. However, we can provide the total for Calendar Year 2024: \$282,586.

**54. *\*\*\* Please describe OTA's role in helping to prevent evictions.***

**Response:** OTA assists in preventing evictions by sending rapid response letters to individuals on the scheduled eviction list. These letters inform tenants of their rights, provide guidance on receiving packing materials, and offer information about available financial assistance. In some cases we provide brief legal services or represent the tenant on a limited basis to forestall or prevent the eviction where a legal basis to do so exists.

55. Please compile a summary report on eviction actions in the District per month in FY 24 and FY 25, to date, including both canceled and executed evictions.



56. \*\*\* Please describe any major activities and accomplishments in FY24 and FY25, to date, that are not addressed above.

**Response:**

- In FY 25, the agency completed its move to a new office location at 899 North Capitol St. NE.
- The agency's new telephone intake system has made our intake operations more efficient, resulting in a noticeable increase in intake calls.

- The agency temporarily housed 200 displaced tenants following the gas explosion at 1433 Columbia Road.
- The OTA's Tenant Bill of Rights served as a model for a White House "Blueprint for a Renters Bill of Rights" (prepared by the White House Domestic Policy Council and National Economic Council in consultation through HUD with state and city agencies and non-governmental tenant rights organizations).

**57. *Please share any legislative priorities or recommendations for the Council for Council Period 26.***

**Response:** In early FY 2024, the OTA provided a memo to the Committee outlining its legislative priorities for the remainder of Council Period 25. A few of those recommendations have essentially been accomplished (in the rent control law, permanent repeal of the Certificates of Assurance provision; and repeal of the most offending provisions in the Voluntary Agreement section). While most of the other items remain as agency priorities, we want to emphasize here (1) utility billing practices reform discussed at question #6(a) above; and (2) a couple of items pertaining to the building conditions problem: (a) establishing that tenant rights and protections under section 501(f) of the Rental Housing Act ("temporary eviction for alterations and renovations") apply in emergency circumstances where tenants must vacate immediately, and thus there is no time for the lengthy 501(f) application process, much less the issuance of 120-day Notices to Vacate to the tenants; and (b) requiring landlords to maintain replacement reserve accounts for foreseeable maintenance and repairs.