
Office of the Tenant Advocate

<http://ota.dc.gov>

Telephone: 202-719-6560

Description	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Approved	FY 2015 Proposed	% Change from FY 2014
Operating Budget	\$2,021,658	\$2,132,106	\$2,488,012	16.7
FTEs	14.7	15.0	16.0	6.7

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 to displaced tenants for certain emergency housing and tenant relocation expenses.

Summary of Services

OTA provides a range of services to the tenant community to further each aspect of its mission. The agency:

- advises tenants on resolving disputes with landlords, identifies legal issues and the rights and responsibilities of tenants and landlords, and provides legal and technical assistance for further action such as filing tenant petition;
- provides in-house representation for tenants in certain cases and refers other cases to pro bono or contracted legal service providers and attorneys;
- works with other governmental and non-governmental officials and entities, including the District Council, the Mayor's office, executive agencies, the courts, tenant stakeholders, advocates, and others, to promote better tenant protection laws and policies in the District;
- conducts educational seminars in a variety of contexts to inform tenants about their rights and other rental housing concerns; and
- provides financial assistance for certain emergency housing and relocation expenses to tenants displaced by fires, floods, property having been closed by the government, or other unanticipated emergencies.

The agency's FY 2015 proposed budget is presented in the following tables:

FY 2015 Proposed Gross Funds Operating Budget, by Revenue Type

Table CQ0-1 contains the proposed FY 2015 agency budget compared to the FY 2014 approved budget. It also provides FY 2012 and FY 2013 actual expenditures.

Table CQ0-1
(dollars in thousands)

Appropriated Fund	Actual FY 2012	Actual FY 2013	Approved FY 2014	Proposed FY 2015	Change from FY 2014	Percent Change*
General Fund						
Local Funds	1,949	2,022	2,132	2,488	356	16.7
Total for General Fund	1,949	2,022	2,132	2,488	356	16.7
Gross Funds	1,949	2,022	2,132	2,488	356	16.7

*Percent change is based on whole dollars.

Note: If applicable, for a breakdown of each Grant (Federal and Private), Special Purpose Revenue type and Intra-District agreement, please refer to **Schedule 80 Agency Summary by Revenue Source** in the **FY 2015 Operating Appendices** located on the Office of the Chief Financial Officer's website.

FY 2015 Proposed Full-Time Equivalent, by Revenue Type

Table CQ0-2 contains the proposed FY 2015 FTE level compared to the FY 2014 approved FTE level by revenue type. It also provides FY 2012 and FY 2013 actual data.

Table CQ0-2

Appropriated Fund	Actual FY 2012	Actual FY 2013	Approved FY 2014	Proposed FY 2015	Change from FY 2014	Percent Change
General Fund						
Local Funds	12.8	14.7	15.0	16.0	1.0	6.7
Total for General Fund	12.8	14.7	15.0	16.0	1.0	6.7
Total Proposed FTEs	12.8	14.7	15.0	16.0	1.0	6.7

FY 2015 Proposed Operating Budget, by Comptroller Source Group

Table CQ0-3 contains the proposed FY 2015 budget at the Comptroller Source Group (object class) level compared to the FY 2014 approved budget. It also provides FY 2012 and FY 2013 actual expenditures.

Table CQ0-3
(dollars in thousands)

Comptroller Source Group	Actual FY 2012	Actual FY 2013	Approved FY 2014	Proposed FY 2015	Change from FY 2014	Percent Change*
11 - Regular Pay - Continuing Full Time	879	1,008	1,101	1,246	144	13.1
12 - Regular Pay - Other	29	29	0	0	0	N/A
13 - Additional Gross Pay	3	1	0	0	0	N/A
14 - Fringe Benefits - Current Personnel	218	236	311	255	-55	-17.8
15 - Overtime Pay	4	3	0	0	0	N/A
Subtotal Personal Services (PS)	1,133	1,277	1,412	1,501	89	6.3
20 - Supplies and Materials	17	10	21	10	-11	-52.4
31 - Telephone, Telegraph, Telegram, Etc.	38	0	0	0	0	N/A
40 - Other Services and Charges	135	486	377	616	238	63.2
41 - Contractual Services - Other	625	249	314	334	20	6.4
70 - Equipment and Equipment Rental	0	0	8	27	20	260.0
Subtotal Nonpersonal Services (NPS)	816	745	720	987	267	37.1
Gross Funds	1,949	2,022	2,132	2,488	356	16.7

*Percent change is based on whole dollars.

Program Description

The Office of the Tenant Advocate operates through the following 6 programs:

Legal Representation – implements the agency’s statutory duty to represent tenants, at its discretion and as it determines to be in the public interest, in federal or District judicial or administrative proceedings.

This program contains the following 3 activities:

- **In-House Legal Representation** – provides in-house legal representation in certain “high-impact” cases if certain criteria are met, and refers other clients to pro bono or contracted legal service providers and attorneys or assists them in finding other representation;
- **Legal Hotline** – provides advice and analysis regarding legal rights in response to individual tenant inquiries regarding disputes with their landlords. Assists tenants in completing and filing tenant petitions and drafting other court documents. Provides in-house legal representation based on public interest impact and as resources allow; or provides funding for other legal service providers; or otherwise assists tenants in finding representation for court and administrative proceedings; and
- **Legal Service Provider** – provides a web-based “Ask the Director” forum and responds to Mayoral, Council, interagency, and community inquiries about tenant rights and rental housing law.

Policy Advocacy Program – provides support to community-based programs that inform tenants regarding their legislative and regulatory legal protections. It serves as the legal expert on all legislation relating to tenant rights, other affordable housing, tenant, and housing-related laws. The agency tracks legislative and regulatory issues and recommends appropriate changes.

OTA Educational Institute – provides a more formal series of educational and outreach forums with educational material regarding rental housing laws, rules, and policies, especially rights to petition and to form tenant associations.

Emergency Housing – implements the agency’s statutory duty to “provide emergency housing and relocation assistance to qualified tenants” in certain situations by:

- Providing financial assistance to temporarily house tenants displaced by fires, floods, or government closures;
- Providing assistance to tenants regarding the packing, moving, and storing of personal possessions;
- Providing first month’s rent, security and/or utility deposits, and application fees for replacement rental housing; and
- Coordinating with other District agencies and community-based organizations to ensure that displaced tenants receive appropriate services.

Case Management Administration and Community Outreach – implements the agency’s statutory duty to advise tenants and tenant organizations on filing complaints and petitions, including petitions in response to disputes with landlords.

This program contains the following 2 activities:

- **Case Management Administration** – provides legal and technical assistance to tenants regarding rental housing disputes with landlords, including identifying legal issues and the tenant’s and the landlord’s respective rights and responsibilities, and assisting with follow-up action items, such as completing and filing tenant petitions and monitoring rental housing case hearings; and petitions and monitors rental housing case hearings; and
- **Community Outreach** – provides outreach and educational programs regarding tenant rights and rental housing matters and sends “rapid response” letters to tenants affected by certain administrative actions to apprise them of their rights and of OTA’s availability to provide further assistance.

Administrative Services (Agency Management) – provides for administrative support and the required tools to achieve operational and programmatic results. This program is standard for all agencies using performance-based budgeting.

Program Structure Change

The Office of the Tenant Advocate has no program structure changes in the FY 2015 proposed budget.

FY 2015 Proposed Operating Budget and FTEs, by Program and Activity

Table CQ0-4 contains the proposed FY 2015 budget by program and activity compared to the FY 2014 approved budget. It also provides the FY 2013 actual data.

Table CQ0-4

(dollars in thousands)

Program/Activity	Dollars in Thousands				Full-Time Equivalents			
	Actual FY 2013	Approved FY 2014	Proposed FY 2015	Change from FY 2014	Actual FY 2013	Approved FY 2014	Proposed FY 2015	Change from FY 2014
(1000) Administrative Services								
(1040) Information Technology	16	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
(1090) Performance Management	420	415	430	16	3.9	4.0	4.0	0.0
Subtotal (1000) Administrative Services	435	415	430	16	3.9	4.0	4.0	0.0
(3000) Legal Representation								
(3015) In-House Legal Representation	423	607	601	-7	4.9	6.0	6.0	0.0
(3020) Legal Hotline	17	40	35	-5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
(3030) Legal Service Provider	201	264	264	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Subtotal (3000) Legal Representation	641	912	900	-12	4.9	6.0	6.0	0.0
(4000) Policy Advocacy Program								
(4010) Policy Advocacy Program	111	125	221	96	1.0	1.0	2.0	1.0
Subtotal (4000) Policy Advocacy Program	111	125	221	96	1.0	1.0	2.0	1.0
(5000) OTA Educational Institute								
(5010) OTA Educational Institute	105	116	115	-2	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.0
Subtotal (5000) OTA Educational Institute	105	116	115	-2	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.0
(6000) Emergency Housing								
(6010) Emergency Housing	400	296	546	250	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Subtotal (6000) Emergency Housing	400	296	546	250	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
(8000) Case Mgmt. Admin. and Community Outreach								
(8010) Case Management Administration	281	219	206	-13	3.9	3.0	3.0	0.0
(8020) Community Outreach	48	50	70	20	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Subtotal (8000) Case Mgmt. Admin. and Community Outreach	330	269	276	7	3.9	3.0	3.0	0.0
Total Proposed Operating Budget	2,022	2,132	2,488	356	14.7	15.0	16.0	1.0

(Change is calculated by whole numbers and numbers may not add up due to rounding)

Note: For more detailed information regarding the proposed funding for the activities within this agency's programs, please see **Schedule 30-PBB Program Summary by Activity** in the **FY 2015 Operating Appendices** located on the Office of the Chief Financial Officer's website.

FY 2015 Proposed Budget Changes

The Office of the Tenant Advocate's (OTA) proposed FY 2015 gross budget is \$2,488,012, which represents a 16.7 percent increase over its FY 2014 approved gross budget of \$2,132,106. The budget is comprised entirely of Local funds.

Current Services Funding Level

The Current Services Funding Level (CSFL) is a Local funds ONLY representation of the true cost of operating District agencies, before consideration of policy decisions. The CSFL reflects changes from the FY 2014 approved budget across multiple programs, and it estimates how much it would cost an agency to continue its current programs and operations into the following fiscal year. The FY 2015 CSFL adjustments to the FY 2014 Local funds budget are described in table 5 of this agency's budget chapter. Please see the CSFL Development section within Volume 1: Executive Summary for more information regarding the methodology used and components that comprise the CSFL.

OTA's FY 2015 CSFL budget is \$2,142,012, which represents a \$9,906, or 0.5 percent, increase over the FY 2014 approved Local funds budget of \$2,132,106.

CSFL Assumptions

The FY 2015 CSFL calculated for OTA included adjustment entries that are not described in detail on table 5. These adjustments were made for a decrease of \$7,378 in personal services, to account for Fringe Benefit costs based on trend and comparative analyses and the impact of cost-of-living adjustments implemented in FY 2013, and an increase of \$17,284 in nonpersonal services based on the Consumer Price Index factor of 2.4 percent.

Agency Budget Submission

Increase: OTA's budget includes a net increase of \$320 in personal services, primarily to support projected Fringe Benefit adjustments.

Decrease: OTA's nonpersonal services budget was reduced by \$320 to offset the increase in the personal services budget.

Mayor's Proposed Budget

Enhance: The Office of the Tenant Advocate's budget reflects an increase of \$250,000 in the Emergency Housing program to ensure that the agency meets all the statutory mandates of the Housing Act of 1985, the amendments to the Act of 2006, and also the relocation and other requirements of the Emergency Housing program.

District's Proposed Budget

Enhance: OTA's FY 2015 proposed Local budget includes a personal services increase of \$96,000 and 1.0 FTE to support an Attorney Advisor position.

FY 2014 Approved Budget to FY 2015 Proposed Budget, by Revenue Type

Table CQ0-5 itemizes the changes by revenue type between the FY 2014 approved budget and the FY 2015 proposed budget.

Table CQ0-5
(dollars in thousands)

DESCRIPTION	PROGRAM	BUDGET	FTE
LOCAL FUNDS: FY 2014 Approved Budget and FTE		2,132	15.0
Other CSFL Adjustments	Multiple Programs	10	0.0
LOCAL FUNDS: FY 2015 Current Services Funding Level Budget (CSFL)		2,142	15.0
Increase: To align Fringe Benefits budget with projected costs (less than \$500)	Multiple Programs	0	0.0
Decrease: To offset projected increases in personal services costs (less than \$500)	Multiple Programs	0	0.0
LOCAL FUNDS: FY 2015 Agency Budget Submission		2,142	15.0
Enhance: To increase Emergency Housing funding	Emergency Housing Program	250	0.0
LOCAL FUNDS: FY 2015 Mayor's Proposed Budget		2,392	15.0
Enhance: To support an Attorney Advisor position	Policy Advocacy Program	96	1.0
LOCAL FUNDS: FY 2015 District's Proposed Budget		2,488	16.0
Gross for CQ0 - Office of the Tenant Advocate		2,488	16.0

(Change is calculated by whole numbers and numbers may not add up due to rounding)

Agency Performance Plan

The agency's performance plan has the following objectives for FY 2015:

Objective 1: Create and enhance communication venues to better serve the tenant population.

Objective 2: Expand OTA's programmatic outreach into the student off-campus rental housing market.

Objective 3: Provide financial assistance to cover certain emergency housing and tenant relocation expenses under the OTA's "Emergency Housing Assistance Program" (EHAP).

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Measure	FY 2012 Actual	FY 2013 Target	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Projection	FY 2015 Projection	FY 2016 Projection
Percent of tenant intake cases resolved	100%	89%	100%	89%	89%	89%
Number of rental housing case abstracts to be included in database	131	180	180	210	240	255
Percent of identified tenant associations to be represented in tenant summit	86% (43/50)	50%	96% (48/50)	50%	50%	50%
Percent of households eligible for housing assistance for whom OTA made emergency housing available within 24 hours, if funding was available	100%	90%	100%	90%	90%	90%