

# Office of the Tenant Advocate

[www.ota.dc.gov](http://www.ota.dc.gov)

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**Table CQ0-1**

Description	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	% Change
	Actual	Actual	Approved	Proposed	from FY 2018
OPERATING BUDGET	\$2,738,196	\$3,075,032	\$4,008,227	\$4,254,365	6.1
FTEs	15.4	18.0	22.0	22.0	0.0

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 petitions;
- 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, and governmental property closures.

The agency's FY 2019 proposed budget is presented in the following tables:

## FY 2019 Proposed Gross Funds Operating Budget and FTEs, by Revenue Type

Table CQ0-2 contains the proposed FY 2019 budget by revenue type compared to the FY 2018 approved budget. It also provides FY 2016 and FY 2017 actual data.

**Table CQ0-2**

(dollars in thousands)

Appropriated Fund	Dollars in Thousands						Full-Time Equivalents					
	Actual FY 2016	Actual FY 2017	Approved FY 2018	Proposed FY 2019	Change from FY 2018	% Change*	Actual FY 2016	Actual FY 2017	Approved FY 2018	Proposed FY 2019	Change from FY 2018	% Change
<b>GENERAL FUND</b>												
Local Funds	2,738	3,075	3,538	3,745	208	5.9	15.4	18.0	19.0	18.6	-0.4	-1.8
Special Purpose Revenue Funds	0	0	471	509	38	8.2	0.0	0.0	3.0	3.4	0.4	11.7
<b>TOTAL FOR GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>2,738</b>	<b>3,075</b>	<b>4,008</b>	<b>4,254</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>15.4</b>	<b>18.0</b>	<b>22.0</b>	<b>22.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>
<b>GROSS FUNDS</b>	<b>2,738</b>	<b>3,075</b>	<b>4,008</b>	<b>4,254</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>15.4</b>	<b>18.0</b>	<b>22.0</b>	<b>22.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

\*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 2019 Operating Appendices** located on the Office of the Chief Financial Officer's website.

## FY 2019 Proposed Operating Budget, by Comptroller Source Group

Table CQ0-3 contains the proposed FY 2019 budget at the Comptroller Source Group (object class) level compared to the FY 2018 approved budget. It also provides FY 2016 and FY 2017 actual expenditures.

**Table CQ0-3**

(dollars in thousands)

Comptroller Source Group	Actual FY 2016	Actual FY 2017	Approved FY 2018	Proposed FY 2019	Change from FY 2018	Percentage Change*
11 - Regular Pay - Continuing Full Time	1,186	1,452	1,901	1,955	54	2.9
12 - Regular Pay - Other	56	0	0	44	44	N/A
13 - Additional Gross Pay	4	-1	0	0	0	N/A
14 - Fringe Benefits - Current Personnel	268	322	466	474	8	1.7
15 - Overtime Pay	9	9	0	10	10	N/A
<b>SUBTOTAL PERSONAL SERVICES (PS)</b>	<b>1,522</b>	<b>1,781</b>	<b>2,366</b>	<b>2,482</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>4.9</b>
20 - Supplies and Materials	10	8	10	19	8	79.0
40 - Other Services and Charges	837	750	686	803	116	16.9
41 - Contractual Services - Other	236	360	940	946	6	0.6
50 - Subsidies and Transfers	119	176	0	0	0	N/A
70 - Equipment and Equipment Rental	13	0	5	5	0	0.0
<b>SUBTOTAL NONPERSONAL SERVICES (NPS)</b>	<b>1,216</b>	<b>1,294</b>	<b>1,642</b>	<b>1,772</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>7.9</b>
<b>GROSS FUNDS</b>	<b>2,738</b>	<b>3,075</b>	<b>4,008</b>	<b>4,254</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>6.1</b>

\*Percent change is based on whole dollars.

## FY 2019 Proposed Operating Budget and FTEs, by Division/Program and Activity

Table CQ0-4 contains the proposed FY 2019 budget by division/program and activity compared to the FY 2018 approved budget. It also provides FY 2016 and FY 2017 actual data. For a more comprehensive explanation of divisions/programs and activities, please see the Division/Program Description section, which follows the table.

**Table CQ0-4**

(dollars in thousands)

Division/Program and Activity	Dollars in Thousands					Full-Time Equivalents				
	Actual FY 2016	Actual FY 2017	Approved FY 2018	Proposed FY 2019	Change from FY 2018	Actual FY 2016	Actual FY 2017	Approved FY 2018	Proposed FY 2019	Change from FY 2018
<b>(1000) ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES</b>										
(1040) Information Technology	0	0	263	755	492	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	0.0
(1087) Language Access	3	10	515	8	-506	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
(1090) Performance Management	629	515	609	661	52	3.4	3.0	5.0	5.5	0.5
<b>SUBTOTAL (1000)</b>										
<b>ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES</b>	<b>632</b>	<b>525</b>	<b>1,387</b>	<b>1,425</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>0.5</b>
<b>(3000) LEGAL REPRESENTATION</b>										
(3015) In-House Legal Representation	595	867	1,130	1,166	37	6.0	8.0	10.0	9.5	-0.5
(3020) Legal Hotline	100	103	100	104	4	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.0
(3030) Legal Service Provider	280	279	215	175	-40	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>SUBTOTAL (3000) LEGAL REPRESENTATION</b>	<b>975</b>	<b>1,249</b>	<b>1,445</b>	<b>1,446</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6.9</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>11.0</b>	<b>10.5</b>	<b>-0.5</b>
<b>(4000) POLICY ADVOCACY PROGRAM</b>										
(4010) Policy Advocacy Program	185	202	222	252	29	1.7	2.0	2.0	2.0	0.0
<b>SUBTOTAL (4000) POLICY ADVOCACY PROGRAM</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>
<b>(5000) OTA EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE</b>										
(5010) OTA Educational Institute	108	93	106	128	22	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.0
<b>SUBTOTAL (5000) OTA EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>
<b>(6000) EMERGENCY HOUSING</b>										
(6010) Emergency Housing	595	749	560	550	-10	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>SUBTOTAL (6000) EMERGENCY HOUSING</b>	<b>595</b>	<b>749</b>	<b>560</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>-10</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>
<b>(8000) CASE MNGT ADM AND COMM OUTREACH</b>										
(8010) Case Management Administration	170	177	173	180	7	2.6	3.0	2.0	2.0	0.0
(8020) Community Outreach	75	81	115	116	1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>SUBTOTAL (8000) CASE MNGT ADM AND COMM OUTREACH</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>
<b>(9000) RENT CONTROL HOUSING CLEARINGHOUSE</b>										
(9010) Rent Control Housing Clearinghouse	0	0	0	158	158	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>SUBTOTAL (9000) RENT CONTROL HOUSING CLEARINGHOUSE</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

**Table CQ0-4**

(dollars in thousands)

Division/Program and Activity	Dollars in Thousands					Full-Time Equivalents				
	Actual FY 2016	Actual FY 2017	Approved FY 2018	Proposed FY 2019	Change from FY 2018	Actual FY 2016	Actual FY 2017	Approved FY 2018	Proposed FY 2019	Change from FY 2018
(9960) YR END CLOSE	0	-1	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>SUBTOTAL (9960) YR END CLOSE</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>
<b>TOTAL PROPOSED</b>										
<b>OPERATING BUDGET</b>	<b>2,738</b>	<b>3,075</b>	<b>4,008</b>	<b>4,254</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>15.5</b>	<b>18.0</b>	<b>22.0</b>	<b>22.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

(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 2019 Operating Appendices** located on the Office of the Chief Financial Officer’s website. “No Activity Assigned” indicates budget or actuals that are recorded at the division/program level.

### Program Description

The Office of the Tenant Advocate operates through the following 7 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 agency clients with in-house legal representation in certain “high-impact” cases, and refers others to pro bono or contracted legal service providers and attorneys, or helps them find other representation;
- **Legal Hotline** – provides general advice regarding tenant rights in response to informal inquiries; provides a web-based “Ask the Director” forum and responds to Mayoral, Council, inter-agency, and community inquiries about tenant rights and rental housing law; engages the community in a regular “Live On-line Chat” through the agency website to discuss tenant rights and rental housing matters; and
- **Legal Service Provider** – provides funding to contracted non-profit legal service providers and attorneys, who qualify through the agency’s RFQ process, to enhance their capacity to provide tenants with appropriate legal assistance.

**Policy Advocacy** – implements the agency’s statutory duty to represent the interests of tenants and tenant organizations in legislative, executive, and judicial issues by advocating for changes in laws and rules. This division also tracks developments in rental housing legislation and regulations at both the local and federal levels, and keeps agency stakeholders apprised; develops legislative, rulemaking, and other policy recommendations, and coordinates policy discussions with governmental and community colleagues, including regular discussions with agency stakeholders; advises tenants, advocates, attorneys, governmental colleagues, and others regarding rental housing laws, and serves as the agency’s in-house statutory and regulatory expert; and provides support to community-based programs that inform tenants regarding their legislative and regulatory legal protections.

**OTA Educational Institute** – implements the agency’s statutory duty to provide education and outreach to tenants and the community about laws, rules, and other policy matters involving rental housing, including tenant rights under the petition process and formation of tenant organizations. This program also conducts informational presentations in various settings throughout the community; provides a formal series of educational and outreach forums; and develops educational material regarding rental housing laws, rules, and policies.

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

- Providing financial assistance to temporarily house tenants displaced by fires, floods, and government closures, and in other appropriate circumstances;
- Providing assistance to tenants regarding the packing, moving, and storing of personal possessions;
- Providing first month’s rent, and security deposits, utility deposits, and/or application fees, as applicable, 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
- **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.

**Rent Control Housing Clearinghouse** – implements the agency’s statutory duty to develop, in consultation with the DCRA, OTR, OCTO, and DHCD’s Rental Accommodations Division and Housing Provider Ombudsman, a demonstration project to establish the initial framework of a user-friendly, internet-accessible, and searchable database for the submission, management, and review of all documents and relevant data housing providers are required to submit to the RAD under the District’s rent control law.

**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 proposed program structure changes are provided in the Agency Realignment appendix to the proposed budget, which is located at [www.cfo.dc.gov](http://www.cfo.dc.gov) on the Annual Operating Budget and Capital Plan page.

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**FY 2018 Approved Budget to FY 2019 Proposed Budget, by Revenue Type**

Table CQ0-5 itemizes the changes by revenue type between the FY 2018 approved budget and the FY 2019 proposed budget. For a more comprehensive explanation of changes, please see the FY 2019 Proposed Budget Changes section, which follows the table.

**Table CQ0-5**

(dollars in thousands)

DESCRIPTION	DIVISION/PROGRAM	BUDGET	FTE
<b>LOCAL FUNDS: FY 2018 Approved Budget and FTE</b>		<b>3,538</b>	<b>19.0</b>
Removal of One-Time Costs	Administrative Services	-500	0.0

## Table CQ0-5

(dollars in thousands)

DESCRIPTION	DIVISION/PROGRAM	BUDGET	FTE
<b>LOCAL FUNDS: FY 2019 Recurring Budget</b>		<b>3,038</b>	<b>19.0</b>
COLA: FY 2019 COLA Adjustment	Multiple Programs	62	0.0
Agency Request-Increase: To align personal services, Fringe Benefits and Overtime Pay with projected costs	Multiple Programs	49	-0.4
Agency Request-Decrease: To partially offset projected adjustments in personal services costs	Multiple Programs	-34	0.0
Mayor's Policy-Enhance: To support legal research (one-time)	Legal Representation	14	0.0
<b>LOCAL FUNDS: FY 2019 Mayor's Proposed Budget</b>		<b>3,128</b>	<b>18.6</b>
Enhance: To support the Rent Control Housing Clearinghouse database demonstration program (\$255K one-time)	Administrative Services	617	0.0
<b>LOCAL FUNDS: FY 2019 District's Proposed Budget</b>		<b>3,745</b>	<b>18.6</b>
<b>SPECIAL PURPOSE REVENUE FUNDS: FY 2018 Approved Budget and FTE</b>		<b>471</b>	<b>3.0</b>
COLA: FY 2019 COLA Adjustment	Multiple Programs	10	0.0
Agency Request-Increase: To align budget with projected revenues	Multiple Programs	28	0.4
<b>SPECIAL PURPOSE REVENUE FUNDS: FY 2019 Mayor's Proposed Budget</b>		<b>509</b>	<b>3.4</b>
No Change		0	0.0
<b>SPECIAL PURPOSE REVENUE FUNDS: FY 2019 District's Proposed Budget</b>		<b>509</b>	<b>3.4</b>
<b>GROSS FOR CQ0 - OFFICE OF THE TENANT ADVOCATE</b>		<b>4,254</b>	<b>22.0</b>

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

### FY 2019 Proposed Budget Changes

The Office of the Tenant Advocate's (OTA) proposed FY 2019 gross budget is \$4,254,365, which represents a 6.1 percent increase over its FY 2018 approved gross budget of \$4,008,227. The budget is comprised of \$3,745,327 in Local funds and \$509,037 in Special Purpose Revenue funds.

#### Recurring Budget

The FY 2019 budget for OTA includes a net reduction of \$500,000 to account for the removal of one-time funding appropriated in FY 2018 to support the Rent Control Housing Clearinghouse program. This program is one of the District's most significant policy tools for maintaining affordable housing.

#### Mayor's Proposed Budget

**Cost-of-Living Adjustment:** OTA's budget proposal includes cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) of \$61,783 in Local funds and \$10,216 in Special Purpose Revenue funds.

**Agency Request – Increase:** In Local funds, OTA's proposed budget reflects a net increase in personal services in the amount of \$48,909 to support projected salary increases, Fringe Benefits, and Overtime costs across multiple programs. This adjustment includes a shift of 0.4 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) to Special Purpose Revenue funds.

In Special Purpose Revenue funds, the proposed budget includes a net increase of \$28,227 to align the budget with projected revenue from the Rental Unit Fee charged to housing providers. This additional funding will be used primarily to support the Rent Control Housing Clearinghouse program. This adjustment includes a shift of 0.4 FTE from Local funds.

**Agency Request – Decrease:** OTA's proposed budget includes a net reduction of \$34,395 in nonpersonal services across multiple programs to partially offset the proposed increases in personal services. This adjustment includes reductions of \$42,695 in contractual and professional service costs and is partially offset by an increase of \$8,300 in supply costs.

**Mayor's Policy – Enhance:** OTA’s proposed budget includes an increase of \$14,049 in one-time funding to support the cost of a proprietary database add-on of legal analysis, attorney arguments, additional case law, and litigation materials.

**District’s Proposed Budget**

**Enhance:** OTA’s Local funds budget proposal includes an increase of \$617,348, of which \$255,000 is one-time funding to support the expansion of the “Rent Control Housing Clearinghouse” database demonstration program, in accordance with the “Rental Housing Registration Update Amendment Act of 2018.” This proposed legislation would require housing providers to re-register their rental units within 120 days of the effective date of the Act, and would also require that the re-registration statements be made available for public inspection online on the Department of Housing and Community Development’s (DHCD) web portal.