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# Office of the Tenant Advocate

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**Table CQ0-1**

Description	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	% Change
	Actual	Actual	Approved	Approved	from FY 2019
OPERATING BUDGET	\$3,075,032	\$3,140,225	\$4,254,365	\$4,183,698	-1.7
FTEs	18.0	17.4	22.0	24.0	9.1

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 2020 approved budget is presented in the following tables:

## FY 2020 Approved Gross Funds Operating Budget and FTEs, by Revenue Type

Table CQ0-2 contains the approved FY 2020 budget by revenue type compared to the FY 2019 approved budget. It also provides FY 2017 and FY 2018 actual data.

**Table CQ0-2**

(dollars in thousands)

Appropriated Fund	Dollars in Thousands						Full-Time Equivalents					
	Actual FY 2017	Actual FY 2018	Approved FY 2019	Approved FY 2020	Change from FY 2019	% Change*	Actual FY 2017	Actual FY 2018	Approved FY 2019	Approved FY 2020	Change from FY 2019	% Change
<b>GENERAL FUND</b>												
Local Funds	3,075	3,121	3,745	3,524	-222	-5.9	18.0	16.5	18.6	20.6	2.0	10.7
Special Purpose												
Revenue Funds	0	19	509	660	151	29.7	0.0	0.9	3.4	3.4	0.0	0.0
<b>TOTAL FOR GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>3,075</b>	<b>3,140</b>	<b>4,254</b>	<b>4,184</b>	<b>-71</b>	<b>-1.7</b>	<b>18.0</b>	<b>17.4</b>	<b>22.0</b>	<b>24.0</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>9.1</b>
<b>GROSS FUNDS</b>	<b>3,075</b>	<b>3,140</b>	<b>4,254</b>	<b>4,184</b>	<b>-71</b>	<b>-1.7</b>	<b>18.0</b>	<b>17.4</b>	<b>22.0</b>	<b>24.0</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>9.1</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 2020 Operating Appendices** located on the Office of the Chief Financial Officer's website.

## FY 2020 Approved Operating Budget, by Comptroller Source Group

Table CQ0-3 contains the approved FY 2020 budget at the Comptroller Source Group (object class) level compared to the FY 2019 approved budget. It also provides FY 2017 and FY 2018 actual expenditures.

**Table CQ0-3**

(dollars in thousands)

Comptroller Source Group	Actual FY 2017	Actual FY 2018	Approved FY 2019	Approved FY 2020	Change from FY 2019	Percentage Change*
11 - Regular Pay - Continuing Full Time	1,452	1,423	1,955	2,162	207	10.6
12 - Regular Pay - Other	0	42	44	52	8	19.0
13 - Additional Gross Pay	-1	39	0	0	0	N/A
14 - Fringe Benefits - Current Personnel	322	352	474	538	64	13.6
15 - Overtime Pay	9	7	10	12	2	23.4
<b>SUBTOTAL PERSONAL SERVICES (PS)</b>	<b>1,781</b>	<b>1,863</b>	<b>2,482</b>	<b>2,764</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>11.4</b>
20 - Supplies and Materials	8	9	19	19	0	0.0
40 - Other Services and Charges	750	954	803	873	70	8.7
41 - Contractual Services - Other	360	315	946	503	-442	-46.8
50 - Subsidies and Transfers	176	0	0	0	0	N/A
70 - Equipment and Equipment Rental	0	0	5	25	20	400.0
<b>SUBTOTAL NONPERSONAL SERVICES (NPS)</b>	<b>1,294</b>	<b>1,278</b>	<b>1,772</b>	<b>1,420</b>	<b>-352</b>	<b>-19.9</b>
<b>GROSS FUNDS</b>	<b>3,075</b>	<b>3,140</b>	<b>4,254</b>	<b>4,184</b>	<b>-71</b>	<b>-1.7</b>

\*Percent change is based on whole dollars.

## FY 2020 Approved Operating Budget and FTEs, by Division/Program and Activity

Table CQ0-4 contains the approved FY 2020 budget by division/program and activity compared to the FY 2019 approved budget. It also provides FY 2017 and FY 2018 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 2017	Actual FY 2018	Approved FY 2019	Approved FY 2020	Change from FY 2019	Actual FY 2017	Actual FY 2018	Approved FY 2019	Approved FY 2020	Change from FY 2019
<b>(1000) ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES</b>										
(1040) Information Technology	0	0	755	141	-614	0.0	0.9	1.0	1.0	0.0
(1087) Language Access	10	10	8	8	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
(1090) Performance Management	515	512	661	643	-19	3.0	3.8	5.5	5.0	-0.5
<b>SUBTOTAL (1000)</b>										
<b>ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES</b>	<b>525</b>	<b>522</b>	<b>1,425</b>	<b>792</b>	<b>-632</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>-0.5</b>
<b>(3000) LEGAL REPRESENTATION</b>										
(3015) In-House Legal Representation	867	927	1,166	1,349	183	8.0	7.6	9.5	10.0	0.5
(3020) Legal Hotline	103	108	104	200	96	1.0	0.9	1.0	2.0	1.0
(3030) Legal Service Provider	279	215	175	0	-175	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>SUBTOTAL (3000) LEGAL REPRESENTATION</b>	<b>1,249</b>	<b>1,250</b>	<b>1,446</b>	<b>1,549</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>8.4</b>	<b>10.5</b>	<b>12.0</b>	<b>1.5</b>
<b>(4000) POLICY ADVOCACY PROGRAM</b>										
(4010) Policy Advocacy Program	202	220	252	291	39	2.0	1.7	2.0	2.0	0.0
<b>SUBTOTAL (4000) POLICY ADVOCACY PROGRAM</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>
<b>(5000) OTA EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE</b>										
(5010) OTA Educational Institute	93	62	128	297	169	1.0	0.9	1.0	2.0	1.0
<b>SUBTOTAL (5000) OTA EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>1.0</b>
<b>(6000) EMERGENCY HOUSING</b>										
(6010) Emergency Housing	749	790	550	550	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>SUBTOTAL (6000) EMERGENCY HOUSING</b>	<b>749</b>	<b>790</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>550</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>(8000) CASE MNGT ADM AND COMM OUTREACH</b>										
(8010) Case Management Administration	177	181	180	186	5	3.0	1.7	2.0	2.0	0.0
(8020) Community Outreach	81	115	116	199	83	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>SUBTOTAL (8000) CASE MNGT ADM AND COMM OUTREACH</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>1.7</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	158	321	162	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>158</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>162</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 2017	Actual FY 2018	Approved FY 2019	Approved FY 2020	Change from FY 2019	Actual FY 2017	Actual FY 2018	Approved FY 2019	Approved FY 2020	Change from FY 2019
(9960) YR END CLOSE	-1	0	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
SUBTOTAL (9960) YR END CLOSE	-1	0	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
TOTAL APPROVED OPERATING BUDGET	3,075	3,140	4,254	4,184	-71	18.0	17.4	22.0	24.0	2.0

(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 2020 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 2 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; and
- **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.

**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 Office of the Tenant Advocate has no program structure changes in the FY 2020 approved budget.

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**FY 2019 Approved Budget to FY 2020 Approved Budget, by Revenue Type**

Table CQ0-5 itemizes the changes by revenue type between the FY 2019 approved budget and the FY 2020 approved budget. For a more comprehensive explanation of changes, please see the FY 2020 Approved Budget Changes section, which follows the table.

**Table CQ0-5**

(dollars in thousands)

DESCRIPTION	DIVISION/PROGRAM	BUDGET	FTE
<b>LOCAL FUNDS: FY 2019 Approved Budget and FTE</b>		<b>3,745</b>	<b>18.6</b>
Removal of One-Time Costs	Multiple Programs	-269	0.0
<b>LOCAL FUNDS: FY 2020 Recurring Budget</b>		<b>3,476</b>	<b>18.6</b>

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**Table CQ0-5**

(dollars in thousands)

DESCRIPTION	DIVISION/PROGRAM	BUDGET	FTE
Increase: To support additional FTE(s) and other projected adjustments in personal services cost	Multiple Programs	251	2.0
Decrease: To partially offset projected adjustments in personal services costs	Multiple Programs	-204	0.0
<b>LOCAL FUNDS: FY 2020 Mayor's Proposed Budget</b>		<b>3,524</b>	<b>20.6</b>
No Change		0	0.0
<b>LOCAL FUNDS: FY 2020 District's Approved Budget</b>		<b>3,524</b>	<b>20.6</b>
<b>SPECIAL PURPOSE REVENUE FUNDS: FY 2019 Approved Budget and FTE</b>		<b>509</b>	<b>3.4</b>
Increase: To align budget with projected revenues	Multiple Programs	151	0.0
<b>SPECIAL PURPOSE REVENUE FUNDS: FY 2020 Mayor's Proposed Budget</b>		<b>660</b>	<b>3.4</b>
No Change		0	0.0
<b>SPECIAL PURPOSE REVENUE FUNDS: FY 2020 District's Approved Budget</b>		<b>660</b>	<b>3.4</b>
<b>GROSS FOR CQ0 - OFFICE OF THE TENANT ADVOCATE</b>		<b>4,184</b>	<b>24.0</b>

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

**FY 2020 Approved Budget Changes**

The Office of the Tenant Advocate's (OTA) approved FY 2020 gross budget is \$4,183,698, which represents a 1.7 percent decrease from its FY 2019 approved gross budget of \$4,254,365. The budget is comprised of \$3,523,633 in Local funds and \$660,065 in Special Purpose Revenue funds.

**Recurring Budget**

The FY 2020 budget for OTA includes a net reduction of \$269,049 to account for the removal of one-time funding appropriated in FY 2019. This amount is comprised of \$255,000 to support the Rent Control Housing Clearinghouse database and \$14,049 to support the procurement of legal reference software for use by agency attorneys and legislative staff for in-house legal representation and reference materials.

**Mayor's Proposed Budget**

**Increase:** In Local funds, OTA's proposed budget reflects a net increase in personal services in the amount of \$251,421, across multiple programs, to properly fund 2.0 Full-Time Equivalent (FTEs) and to support projected increases in salary step, Fringe Benefits, and overtime costs.

In Special Purpose Revenue funds, the proposed budget includes a net increase of \$151,027 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.

**Decrease:** OTA's proposed Local budget includes a net reduction of \$204,066 in nonpersonal services across multiple programs to partially offset the proposed increases in personal services.

**District's Approved Budget**

**No Change:** The Office of the Tenant Advocate's budget reflects no change from the Mayor's proposed budget to the District's approved budget.