City of Newark

Community Development Department
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Supporting Newark Renters: New Tenant Protection Programs

The City of Newark is advancing new tenant protection policies to strengthen housing stability, prevent displacement, and support renters facing hardship. The City's 2023–2031 Housing Element identified significant housing challenges such as widespread affordability concerns among survey respondents and a high volume of housing-related 2-1-1 service requests, indicating a need to improve housing stability in Newark.

Over the past year, the City has gathered input from tenants and landlords to shape these efforts and now invites all members of the public to provide their feedback on draft tenant protections policies from May 19th to June 2nd before they go to City Council for approval.

Use the following link to access the draft language and provide your input: Newark Tenant Protections Ordinance Feedback Form

Tenant protection policies can take different forms in different contexts and are primarily shaped based on current and anticipated housing challenges. The State of California recently passed a package of laws that provide some level of protections to tenants in certain circumstances statewide. At the local level, a city may choose to adopt policies or ordinances that strengthen or extend the state's laws, or a city may choose to adopt additional local policies that address different needs unique to that community.

Tenant Protections Proposal

Newark staff have identified four key tenant protections for City Council to consider. Many of the provisions already have been adopted in some form by the state of California or nearby jurisdictions. Ultimately, the goal of these policies is to create some relief for tenants by providing protections against abuse and creating alternatives to evictions that are both property owner and tenant friendly.

Proposed Tenant Protection Programs

- **Rent Review and Mediation Program:** Prevent displacement through a mandatory mediation process for tenants when the rent is increased by more than 5%.
  - Allow tenants facing rent increases greater than 5 percent within a 12-month period to request a rent review and mediation process between the tenant and property owner.
  - If the tenant requests rent review and mediation, the property owner's participation is mandatory. Decisions are non-binding. Failure of the landlord to participate voids the rent increase.
  - Applies to any housing unit offered for rent or lease (excludes any unit subject to a recorded regulatory agreement, hotels, boarding houses, transient accommodations, dormitories, mobile space renters, JADUs).

- **Just Cause Eviction and Relocation Assistance:** Ensure local just cause protections continue if/when AB 1482 expires at the end of 2029. Require landlords to provide financial assistance to tenants displaced by a no-fault just cause eviction
  - Applies to tenants who have lived in the unit for 12 months or more.
  - Provide assistance equivalent to two months' rent.

- **Anti-Harassment Protections:** Protect tenants from landlord harassment by adopting additional anti-harassment provisions.

- **Emergency Rental Assistance:** Establish a City program to support tenants at risk of eviction with short-term financial aid.

Community Outreach

To inform these new protections, the City partnered with a local consultant to lead a community-driven engagement process. Starting in the summer of 2024, the City heard from a wide range of Newark residents, including tenants, advocates, and property owners. Outreach included the following activities.

- **Stakeholder Interviews**: We spoke with tenant advocacy groups, nonprofit service providers, and landlord representatives to understand diverse perspectives on tenant protections.
- **Focus Groups**:
  - In-person session with tenants and advocates
  - Two virtual sessions with landlords and property owners
  - Virtual session with tenant-oriented organizations
- **Public Survey**: From mid-September through the end of October, we collected survey responses on residents' housing experiences, barriers, and ideas for change.
- **Newark Days Resource Fair**: City staff and CPC representatives shared information and encouraged community participation at the annual event in September.
- **City Newsletter**: The September edition of *Newark News* included information on proposed tenant protections and links to the survey and upcoming events.
- **Virtual Community Workshop**: In October, we presented draft policy ideas to the community and invited feedback.

Stay Involved

No matter your housing situation, Newark is working to reduce the burden of housing costs and building a stronger future for all residents.

Visit Newark Housing or contact housing@newarkca.gov for updates and more information.

Provide your input here, or email housing@newarkca.gov.