



Legislation Text

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Int. No. 555-A

A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to the senior citizen rent increase exemption program and the disability rent increase exemption program

By Council Members Ferreras, Cohen, Arroyo, Dickens, King, Koo, Koslowitz, Williams, Vacca, Rodriguez, Mendez, Chin, Van Bramer, Miller, Rosenthal, Dromm, Kallos, Mealy and Vallone

Section 1. The administrative code of the city of New York is amended by adding a new section 11-137 to read as follows:

§ 11-137 Rent increase exemption programs: ombudspersons, notices and report. a. Ombudspersons. (1)

The commissioner of finance shall designate an employee of the department of finance to serve as the ombudsperson for the senior citizen rent increase exemption program set forth in title twenty-six of this code and designate a different employee of the department of finance to serve as the ombudsperson for the disability rent increase exemption program set forth in title twenty-six of this code. The duties of each such ombudsperson shall include, but need not be limited to:

(i) establishing a system for such ombudspersons to receive complaints with respect to each such rent increase exemption program;

(ii) investigating and responding to complaints received pursuant to subparagraph (i) of this paragraph;
and

(iii) making recommendations to the commissioner of finance regarding the administration of each such rent increase exemption program, which may include recommendations for training appropriate department of finance staff members.

(2) The commissioner of finance shall establish a dedicated email address for the senior citizen rent

increase exemption program and a dedicated email address for the disability rent increase exemption program, or links to directly contact each such program through the department of finance's website, to receive written inquiries regarding such rent increase exemption programs. A statement that inquiries may be made to the 311 citizen service center or submitted electronically through the website of the department of finance shall be posted on a page of such website that is dedicated to these rent increase exemption programs. Such statement, along with the name and title of the ombudsperson for the relevant rent increase exemption program, and the email address for, or a link to directly contact, such ombudsperson through the department of finance's website shall also be included on any notice issued by the department of finance pertaining to a rent increase exemption program where such notice is related to:

- (i) the denial, or the appeal of a denial of, such application;
- (ii) the termination of benefits due to the death of a tenant sent to the household or the landlord;
- (iii) the revocation of benefits sent to the tenant or the landlord;
- (iv) the denial of a tenant's application for benefit takeover; and
- (v) any other document deemed appropriate by the department of finance.

(3) No later than October first of each year, the department of finance shall submit a report to the council for the prior fiscal year, indicating:

- (i) the number and nature of inquiries received by the department of finance and the 311 citizen service center regarding the rent increase exemption programs;
- (ii) the number, nature, and resolution of comments and complaints received by the ombudspersons designated pursuant to paragraph one of subdivision a of this section regarding the rent increase exemption programs; and
- (iii) any recommendations made by any such ombudsperson to the commissioner of finance regarding the administration of such rent increase exemption programs.

b. Notice of Eligibility Requirements. The relevant eligibility criteria for the senior citizen rent increase

exemption program or the disability rent increase exemption program shall be included on the following documents issued by the department of finance pertaining to such rent increase exemption program:

(1) the application or renewal application for the program;

(2) any notice related to the termination of benefits due to the death of a tenant sent to the household or the landlord;

(3) a tenant renewal reminder notice; and

(4) any other document deemed appropriate by the department of finance.

c. Report on Eligibility. No later than December thirty-first, two thousand eighteen, and every third December thirty-first thereafter, the department of finance shall prepare a report on the population of tenants estimated to be eligible for participation in such rent increase exemption programs. Such report shall be submitted to the council and posted on the website of the department of finance. Such report shall include:

(1) the total number of tenants estimated to be eligible for the rent increase exemption programs, disaggregated by program, enrollment status, borough, and neighborhood;

(2) for tenants enrolled in the senior citizen rent increase exemption program and in the disability rent increase exemption program, the average and median:

(i) number of years receiving the rent increase exemption;

(ii) household size;

(iii) age;

(iv) annual household income;

(v) amount paid in rent by the tenant; and

(vi) amount of the tax abatement credit received by the landlord on behalf of a tenant;

(3) a description of the department of finance's efforts to increase enrollment in each rent increase exemption program; and

(4) a comparison of the data contained in each such report with the data contained in the most recent

prior report issued pursuant to this subdivision.

§ 2. This local law shall take effect 90 days after it shall have become a law.

RC
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LS 1662, 2226, 3272, and 3668