



Legislation Text

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Int. No. 384

By Council Members Brooks-Powers, Lee, Ossé, Louis, Nurse, Abreu, Restler and Sanchez

A Local Law to amend the New York city charter, in relation to the creation of an office of the homeowner advocate within the department of housing preservation and development

Be it enacted by the Council as follows:

Section 1. Chapter 61 of the New York city charter is amended by adding a new section 1807 to read as follows:

§ 1807. Office of the homeowner advocate. a. For the purposes of this section the following term shall have the following meaning:

Homeowner. The term “homeowner” means a person who utilizes a building as a primary residence by being: (1) the lawful owner of shares in a cooperative corporation that entitles such owner to occupancy of a dwelling unit in such building; (2) the owner of a residential condominium unit in such building; or (3) the owner of such building containing a residence within the city, provided such building may be either a one- or two- family dwelling or a multiple dwelling as defined by section 4 of the New York state multiple dwelling law.

b. There shall be in the department an office of the homeowner advocate whose duties shall include, but not be limited, to the following:

1. establish a website and email address to receive comments and complaints from homeowners;
2. refer homeowners to the appropriate state or federal agency and, where needed, facilitate communication between the homeowner and such agency;
3. serve as a liaison to homeowners and city agencies including, but not limited to, the department, the

department of buildings, the department of environmental protection and the department of finance and to provide the names of individuals or offices within such agencies that directly relate to the interests of homeowners;

4. act as a liaison to homeowners and community based organizations, legal services organizations and other organizations that provide support to homeowners;

5. make available, or provide referrals to, counseling for homeowners on areas such as scam prevention, mortgage counseling, municipal payment assistance, repair financing, financial planning and estate planning;

6. provide trainings for homeowners on topics such as homeownership basics, property management, utility payments, insurance, mortgage relief and foreclosure prevention;

7. assist homeowners with navigating and accessing private and public financial and technical resources; and

8. create public awareness campaigns about the rights and responsibilities of homeowners.

c. By January 1, 2023, and by January first of each year thereafter, the office of the homeowner advocate shall submit to the speaker of the council, the mayor and post on its website a report. The report shall include, but need not be limited to, the following, disaggregated by community district where applicable:

1. the number of inquiries received by the office of the homeowner advocate, including complaint type and frequency;

2. a summary of actions taken for each inquiry type;

3. average amount of time taken to address each inquiry type;

4. the names and websites of existing not for profit organizations providing low cost or free services to homeowners within the city, including the names of individual points of contact within such organizations; and

5. recommendations for free and low cost services not already available that might be beneficial to homeowners within the city.

§ 2. This local law takes effect 90 days after becoming law.

Session 12

IP

LS #8427

5/4/22 1:14pm

Session 11

GZ

LS #2340, 18093

Int. #2436-2021