



Legislation Text

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A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to notifications regarding applications in New York City's housing portal and designation of a representative to receive notifications

Be it enacted by the Council as follows:

Section 1. Paragraph 2 of subdivision a of section 26-1802 of the administrative code of the city of New York, as amended by local law number 81 for the year 2020, is amended to read as follows:

2. Allows a user of such website to:

(a) View limited unit information and offered unit information for listed units;

(b) View full unit information for a listed unit if such user verifies, in a manner established by department rule, that such user is a lawful leaseholder or owner of such unit, provided that this functionality (i) shall only be required on and after January 1, 2021, but may be implemented earlier than such date, and (ii) may be implemented through a system other than the housing portal;

(c) View a selection of listed units based on search criteria entered by such user;

(d) Apply for occupancy of each listed unit for which the owner thereof is accepting applications for occupancy through such website and for which such user appears to be eligible;

(e) Track the progress of applications submitted by such user through such website, including such user's position on waiting lists for listed units;

(f) Automatically populate applications for occupancy of listed units with information provided by such user;

(g) Receive notifications by electronic mail and text message when a new listed unit for which the user may be eligible based on the information in their profile is posted that matches criteria specified by such user or when posted information changes for a listed unit specified by such user;

(h) Obtain limited unit information for listed units in a non-proprietary format that permits automated processing; [and]

(i) Indicate in such website whether such user is interested in being considered for an affordable unit that subsequently becomes vacant, provided that consideration of users for such units may be carried out in a manner determined by the department, users shall only be considered for such units that satisfy their indicated preferences and such website may require users at regular intervals to review and update their relevant profile information[.];

(j) Receive notifications by electronic mail and text message, which shall be marked as urgent or as requiring action, of all updates related to such user's application, including (i) requests for additional documentation or information, (ii) selection of an applicant for review of eligibility for a unit, and (iii) rejection of an application;

(k) Designate a representative to receive notifications by electronic mail and text message of any updates related to the user's application that the user could elect to receive themselves pursuant to this paragraph and that the user requests that such designated representative receive, provided such designated representative first consents to receiving such notifications;

(l) Select a designated citywide language, as defined in subdivision a of section 23-1101, in which the notifications required by this paragraph shall be delivered; and

(m) Receive a warning, when the user begins an application and information currently in the user's profile renders them ineligible for the unit in question, informing the user that the user is ineligible, providing the reason for which they are ineligible, and informing the user that the user may apply for the unit and that subsequent updates to the information in such user's profile may render such application eligible for such unit.

§ 2. a. Study and report. The department of housing preservation and development shall conduct a study to assess the effectiveness of notifications sent to representatives that have been designated by users of such department's housing portal website, pursuant to subparagraph (k) of paragraph 2 of subdivision a of section 26-1802 of the administrative code of the city of New York, as added by section one of this local law. Such study shall assess the effectiveness of notifications to such designated representatives as a means of serving users who have limited access to the internet, limited fluency with technology, disabilities, or other needs that may render the services of such a representative helpful to such users. In conducting such study, such department shall solicit feedback from local service providers and other individuals who have been designated as representatives pursuant to such subparagraph, and shall consult with any other city agency that sends similar notifications to similar third-party representatives. At minimum, such study shall include:

1. A consideration of whether the implementation of additional services for such representatives, including, but not limited to, allowing such representatives to create accounts on the housing portal maintained pursuant to such section 26-1802, would improve the user-friendliness of such housing portal or provide other benefits to such representatives or the users such representatives represent;

2. An estimate of the cost of implementing the services considered pursuant to paragraph 1 of this subdivision; and

3. An estimate of when such department would be able to implement services considered pursuant to paragraph 1 of this subdivision.

b. No later than 1 year after the effective date of this local law, the commissioner of the department of housing preservation and development shall submit a report on the results of the study conducted pursuant to this section to the mayor and the speaker of the council and shall post such report on the department's website.

§ 3. This local law takes effect 18 months after it becomes law.

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