

LEGISLATIVE DIGEST

[Administrative Code - Establish an Office of Tenant Assistance]

Ordinance amending the Administrative Code to establish an Office of Tenant Assistance to provide full scope legal representation to San Francisco tenants in certain eviction proceedings; and to require notice regarding the Office of Tenant Assistance to tenants being evicted from rental units covered by the Rent Ordinance.

Existing Law

The City does not currently have a program to help tenants in eviction proceedings secure free legal representation.

Amendments to Current Law

The proposed ordinance would establish within the Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development an Office of Tenant Assistance ("OTA"). OTA's purpose would be to help San Francisco tenants who are in eviction proceedings secure free full scope legal representation. OTA assistance would not be available to a tenant in an eviction proceeding (1) brought by a landlord or master tenant who resides in the same unit as the tenant; (2) based in whole or part on the tenant having engaged in an act of domestic violence, elder abuse, child abuse, or harassment; or (3) for which a state or federal program already provides full scope legal representation to the tenant.

The proposed ordinance would also require the Rent Board to include background information about OTA on the form that a landlord is required to provide to a tenant who is being evicted from a "rental unit" covered by the Residential Rent Stabilization and Arbitration Ordinance.

Background Information

In 2012, the City established a pilot program that helped indigent San Francisco tenants in eviction proceedings secure free legal representation, but the program expired. The goal would be to fund the OTA from the FY2017-2018 budget.