



**CITY OF TACOMA, WASHINGTON
OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL
COUNCIL CONSIDERATION REQUEST**

TO: Mayor & City Council

FROM: Council Member Sarah Rumbaugh and Senior Council Policy Analyst Lynda Foster

COPIES TO: Hyun Kim, Interim City Manager; Allyson Griffith, Deputy City Manager; Chris Bacha, City Attorney

SUBJECT: **Ordinance - Amending CHAPTER 1.100 LANDLORD FAIRNESS CODE INITIATIVE of the Tacoma Municipal Code - November 18, 2025**

DATE: November 12, 2025

I ask for your support for an Ordinance amending CHAPTER 1.100 LANDLORD FAIRNESS CODE INITIATIVE of the Tacoma Municipal Code.

LEGISLATIVE INTENT:

The community, Vitality and Safety Committee recommended amendments to the Landlord Fairness Code Initiative at their Nov 6, 2025, special meeting. The recommended changes are outlined in Handout A.

Background

The 2023 Landlord Fairness Code Initiative, also known as Measure 1, is a ballot measure that passed in the City of Tacoma November 2023 general election. The 2023 Landlord Fairness Code Initiative introduces some new requirements and rules for landlords and tenants in the City of Tacoma. These new requirements went into effect December 8, 2023. The Community, Vitality, and Safety Committee received the following presentations on this topic:

- June 12, 2025: Rental Housing Code and Tacoma and Landlord Fairness Code Initiative Overview,
- Aug 28, 2025: Rental Housing Code and Landlord Fairness Code Initiative Overview,
- Oct. 9, 2025: Study Group to Assess Effect of Tacoma's New Renter Protection Ordinance Study Results.
- Oct 23, 2025: Landlord Fairness Code Initiative Policy Proposal Discussion, and
- Nov 6, 2025: Landlord Fairness Code Initiative Policy Proposal request for action.

According to the LFCI:

1. The people of the City of Tacoma hereby adopt this citizen initiative for the purpose of protecting families and tenants and reducing homelessness.
 - a. require landlords to comply with tenant protection laws before raising rent or evicting a tenant;
 - b. prohibit unfair or excessive fees;
 - c. require landlords to provide notice of rent increases and pay relocation assistance when significant rent increases require tenants to relocate;

- d. prohibit certain student/school-year evictions, cold-weather evictions, and evictions based upon a tenant's status as servicemember, first responder, senior, family member, health care provider, or educator; and
 - e. provide penalties and other enforcement mechanisms
2. This measure is designed to protect families, promote community, stabilize the rental market, and reduce homelessness. It is Tacoma's intent to continue its long-term commitment to maintain vibrant and diverse neighborhoods within the City. The regulations contained in this initiative balance the needs of the landlord, tenant, and Tacoma while creating a partnership to ensure safe, healthy, and thriving rental housing in Tacoma. Providing housing for Tacoma residents directly impacts quality of life at the most basic level and therefore requires regulations to ensure that it is equitably undertaken.

DESIRED ORDINANCE FIRST READING DATE: December 2, 2025

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT/ (CUSTOMER RESEARCH):

Since the Landlord Fairness Code Initiative (LFCI) went into effect on December 8, 2023, community members have shared positive and negative feedback about its impacts in Tacoma. CM Rumbaugh met with key stakeholders to gather data and perspective on the LFCI, including:

- Micheal Mirra, Co-convenor of the study group which presented to CVS on October 8, 2025,
- The Tacoma Housing Authority,
- Tacoma Pro Bono,
- A court commissioner,
- The Affordable Housing Consortium,
- YWCA,
- Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber of Commerce,
- South Sound Housing Affordability Partners,
- Representatives of Tacoma for all, and
- Individual landlords and tenants.

2025 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Equity and Accessibility:

Eviction has equity impacts. According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition¹, children represented more than 40% of all individuals who face eviction throughout the course of a year. Most at risk of eviction are Black renters, who made up less than a fifth of renters across the country but accounted for more than half of evictions. The data revealed that one in five Black renters were filed against and that one in 10 were evicted. In contrast, just one in 24 white renters were filed against, and one in 40 were evicted. Rates of both filings and evictions for Hispanic and Asian renters were comparable to those of white renters.

Access to low-income housing also is an equity issue. In Tacoma, we also see people of color utilizing low-income housing options at a higher rate. Compared to the racial demographics in City of Tacoma², the Tacoma serves a higher proportion of Black or African American (9.4% and 28.3%, respectively) and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander households (1.0% and 2.2%).

¹ <https://nlihc.org/resource/children-face-highest-risk-eviction#:~:text=While%20the%20eviction%20filing%20rate,more%20than%20half%20of%20evictions.>

² <https://www.tacomahousing.org/about/who-we-serve/#:~:text=THA%20serves%20low%2Dincome%20households,less%20than%20%2432%2C250%20per%20year.>

Economy/Workforce: *Equity Index Score:* Moderate Opportunity

Increase the percentage of people relocating to the city and affordability of housing compared to neighboring jurisdictions.

Livability: *Equity Index Score:* Moderate Opportunity

Increase the number of Complete Compact Communities/ 20-Minute Neighborhoods throughout the city.

Improve health outcomes and reduce disparities, in alignment with the community health needs assessment and CHIP, for all Tacoma residents

Decrease the percentage of individuals who are spending more than 45% of income on housing and transportation costs.

Explain how your legislation will affect the selected indicator(s)?

Research and outreach to stakeholders across the rental system in Tacoma identified key areas where the LFCI was having unintended consequences. When asked if the measure succeeded at its goal to balance the needs of the landlord, tenant, and Tacoma while creating a partnership to ensure safe, healthy, and thriving rental housing in Tacoma key themes emerged: the LFCI is destabilizing the budget of low-income housing providers; there has been an increase to the amount of damage to units; landlords are screening tenants more thoroughly, reducing access to the most at-need tenants and leaving units unoccupied longer between tenants; and landlords with fewer units are disproportionately burdened by the fiscal impacts of rent being unpaid for long stretches of time. CVS recommended a narrow range of changes to the LFCI targeting these issues in order to protect the low-income housing units currently in the City and to allow for development of more of this critical housing, and to balance the impacts of the LFCI on landlords with few units. This proposal retains eviction moratoriums for the majority of rental units in Tacoma.

ALTERNATIVES:

Alternative	Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts
1. Take no action	Allow time for further review and deliberation, and a comprehensive incorporation of the LFCI into the RHC.	The LFCI has many unintended consequences that urgently need to be addressed.
2. Treat nonprofit and corporate low-income providers differently	Build belief and trusts with advocates.	All low-income housing providers are critical to solving the homelessness crisis.
3. Provide more exemptions to the school-year eviction moratorium	Tailoring the school-year eviction moratorium may better balance in the rental housing market.	Policy discussions would benefit from more study to understand the full impact of changes.
4. Include more “just cause” eviction options in exemptions to the eviction moratoriums	State law and the RHC outline just causes for eviction, landlords request more flexibility evict.	Policy discussions would benefit from more study to understand the full impact of changes.
5. Adjust details in the LFCI – such as requiring relocation assistance when rents are raised more than 5% or allowing for higher move in fees	Offer balance to landlords absorbing more financial risk during eviction moratoriums.	Increase costs and risk to tenants.
6. Repeal the entire LFCI	State law and the RHC offer tenant protections balanced against the needs of the rental-housing system.	Does not include eviction moratorium, as strict of restrictions on rent increases, and other tenant-focused policy.

EVALUATIONS AND FOLLOW UP:

The Community, Vitality and Safety Committee will include further conversation on landlord/tenant policy in its 2026 workplan, including the following topics:

- Bundle LFCI into RHC so there's one code where constituents can find all landlord-tenant items. Revisit Nov. 6 conversation on:
 - Review exemptions to eviction moratoriums for when tenants damage the unit
 - School year eviction moratorium
- Tenant rights outreach and education
- Landlord education & licensing requirements
- Predatory landlords
- Health & safety conditions in units
- Accessible income restricted housing options (requiring 3x the rent in income can be a barrier)
- Program to support landlord/tenant conflicts – i.e. mediation, something like community court
- Tools for renters to end a lease early should they lose income
- Rental assistance (in our legislative agenda)
- Landlord insurance for damaged units and unpaid rent

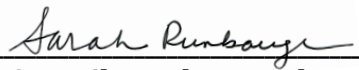
SPONSOR RECOMMENDATION:

Sponsors recommend moving forward with amending the LFCI CHAPTER 1.100 LANDLORD FAIRNESS CODE INITIATIVE of the Tacoma Municipal Code to further the goals of the LFCI: to protect families, promote community, stabilize the rental market, and reduce homelessness; to continue its long-term commitment to maintain vibrant and diverse neighborhoods within the City; and to balance the needs of the landlord, tenant, and Tacoma while creating a partnership to ensure safe, healthy, and thriving rental housing in Tacoma.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Changes to the Landlord Fairness Code Initiative can be incorporated into ongoing budgeted work. Although there is no immediate fiscal impact to adopting this ordinance as proposed, alternatives including enhanced enforcement or other City services may require resourcing.

If you have a question related to the Council Contingency Fund Request, please contact Lynda Foster at 253.591.5166 or lfoster@Tacoma.gov.

SUBMITTED FOR COUNCIL CONSIDERATION BY: 
Council Member Rumbaugh

SUPPORTING COUNCIL MEMBERS

Unanimously recommended for full Council consideration at the Nov. 6 Community, Vitality and Safety Committee by Chair Rumbaugh and Council Members Diaz, Sadalge and Walker.

Mayor's initials 
(Mayor's initials for awareness only to ensure alignment and coordination of emergent policies.)