

Seattle Renters' Commission Work Plan 2024-2025

For the 2024-25 work plan, the SRC developed four priority areas based on our 2023 work planning and a retreat held in early 2024: advocacy for renter-friendly policies and legislation, city-wide outreach and education efforts, partner- and relationship-building efforts with aligned organizations and with the City, and internal operations. The below work plan outlines these priority areas, the purpose of each, and key activities we are undertaking to better represent and support renters across Seattle. This plan will be used to focus our efforts, identify work group priorities in between meetings, track progress, and set meeting agendas.

| Advocacy (Policy & Legislation) | | | | |
|---|------|----|------|----|
| Goal 1: Provide advice on priorities and strategies for strengthening renter protections Goal 2: Support successful creation of an Office of Rental Housing Standards | 2024 | | 2025 | |
| | Q3 | Q4 | Q1 | Q2 |
| Support/advocate for implementation of the tenant work group to investigate the creation of an Office of Rental Housing Standards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Select renters to participate in the tenant work group ● Coordinate with the work group on developing community listening sessions designed to solicit input/feedback on community needs re: an Office of Rental Housing Standards | x | x | | |
| Determine top advocacy focuses and plan for developing/proposing new legislation (see below for list from retreat) | | x | x | |
| Monitor, provide input, and comment on new & relevant legislation put forth by the City/City Council, including the comprehensive plan/One Seattle plan | x | x | x | x |
| Outreach & Education | | | | |
| Goal 1: Make the SRC a known and credible face in the public space Goal 2: Seek input from diverse renter voices across the city to better understand and advocate for arising/ongoing needs/challenges and to center those most impacted by housing injustice Goal 3: Increase city-wide awareness of renters' rights and available resources | 2024 | | 2025 | |
| | Q3 | Q4 | Q1 | Q2 |
| Widen the spectrum of voices giving input to tackle renter situations of the city <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stakeholder mapping to identify who we are(n't) currently connected with | x | x | | |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify a plan for connecting with more and varied renters about the barriers they encounter Develop a plan for reaching and advocating for/with non-English speakers | | | | |
| Public education/outreach that can increase awareness of renters' rights and dispel anti-renter myths | | | x | x |
| Partnerships & Relationships | | | | |
| Goal 1: Build relationships with aligned organizations in order to better collaborate, share resources, and serve Seattle communities Goal 2: Strengthen our relationships with the City to increase communication and advance goals | 2024 | | 2025 | |
| | Q3 | Q4 | Q1 | Q2 |
| Strengthen relationships with partners to identify opportunities for collaboration and/or joint advocacy on City initiatives, programs, activities, and policy, that advance SRC goals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and meet with organizations that serve renters/advance renters' rights Identify and meet with other commissions that serve special populations & intersect with SRC goals | x | x | x | |
| Develop relationships within City government to build mutual trust and provide information, advice, and counsel to the Mayor, Seattle City Council, and departments concerning issues and policies affecting renters | x | x | | |
| Support the social housing PDA board established by I-135 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with the board's executive committee (to better understand their current strengths, challenges, and needs) Establish a regular check-in mechanism for keeping up to date with their needs, including filling board roles as needed | x | x | x | x |
| Operations (Internal) | | | | |
| Goal 1: Develop a clear workflow with action items and timelines to improve the SRC's timeliness and effectiveness in moving work forward Goal 2: Establish processes for recruitment and onboarding to streamline HR processes | 2024 | | 2025 | |
| | Q3 | Q4 | Q1 | Q2 |
| Develop a workflow/procedure for addressing new policies/legislation and advocating for changing policies, particularly for arising/urgent issues | x | x | | |

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| Establish a process for ongoing recruitment and evaluation of applicants for open SRC roles, PDA board roles, tenant work group appointments, and any additional appointments that arise | x | x | | |
| Review and amend bylaws as needed | | | x | |
| 2025-26 work planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review 2024-25 successes/challenges ● Evaluate effectiveness of current policies/practices ● Adjust or re-write priorities and goals as needed ● Develop actionable 2025-26 work plan | | | x | x |

Potential advocacy focus areas (identified in 2023-24 work planning & 2024 retreat)

- Enforcement mechanisms & landlord accountability
 - Accountability mechanisms (e.g, financial accountability for landlords who violate laws)
 - Review progress of MFTE to see where adjustments can be made
 - Enforce laws to protect renters
 - Defend first in time
 - Clear timelines for compliance
 - Fees or fines for non-compliance
 - Penalties for retaliation against renters who assert their rights/file complaints
 - Tenant law enforcement in student housing (sometimes students aren't considered tenants by law)
 - Push for additional funding for renter resources like the Housing Justice Project, more inspectors in SDCI, and more investigators in SOCR. Research potential revenue sources; work with councilmembers on rollout.
- Rental processes & experiences
 - Make it illegal to discriminate based on levels of income
 - Expansion for a renter to break their lease given extenuating circumstances like a death in the family, change in employment, etc.
 - Get standards re mold
 - Advocate for pet owners
 - Limit/improve process for credit checks

- Evaluate/limit/eliminate how evictions are used in rental history
- Adjust the process for return of rental deposits to be easier/faster
- Focus on support of young adults finding their first rental
- Accessibility & affordability
 - Encourage more fair paths to shelter
 - Connect workers with housing next to their workplaces
 - Identify pockets of affordability around our region
 - Conceptualize paths to wealth building outside of home ownership
 - Lower the barrier to finding affordable housing
 - Raising 5% threshold for accessible housing
 - Establishing universal minimum standards for accessibility in rentals
 - Intersectionality of affordable housing with race, gender
 - Accountability structures in RSJI ordinance needed
- Housing supply/zoning laws
 - Increase supplies of all types of housing
 - Explore what supply renters need vs, other housing in city
 - Mandated reductions in pricing for vacancies (pay a vacancy tax or drop the rent by \$__ amount and repost to the market; if vacancy 1 continues, repeat this process monthly)
 - Rent control in other cities, and possible alternatives to rent control
 - Research what other cities/states/countries are doing to keep rent costs in line with tenant resources
 - Goal is to find methods to promote equitable income-based rent proposals that expand potential affordable housing by applying policy incentives to all housing units.
- Design, development, & zoning
 - Advocate for universal design
 - Adopt intelligent models from other cities
 - Advocate for dedicated zoning regulations and more public housing construction
 - Change zoning laws to be more renter friendly
 - Does current Seattle zoning support the kind of density that renters would benefit from?
 - What does zoning law advocacy look like?
- Desired outcomes (for any/all of the above)

- Care for & communication with special populations, including (but not limited to) BIPOC communities, elders, young people/students, LGBTQ+ people, and disabled people
- Bring housing costs into balance with wages and the rest of the economy
- Make/keep rent more affordable in Seattle
- Prevent further gentrification/displacement in the city
- Create government support for renters' rights
- Debunk myths about “mom & pop” landlords
- Balance the power dynamic between renters and landlords
- Connect the struggle of renters and unhoused people