Thank you for joining
Raise your hand or post questions in chat

Renting in Seattle

Presented by
Code Compliance Division - Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections

Construction & Inspections

What We Do

Our **vision**: To set the standard for awesome local government service.

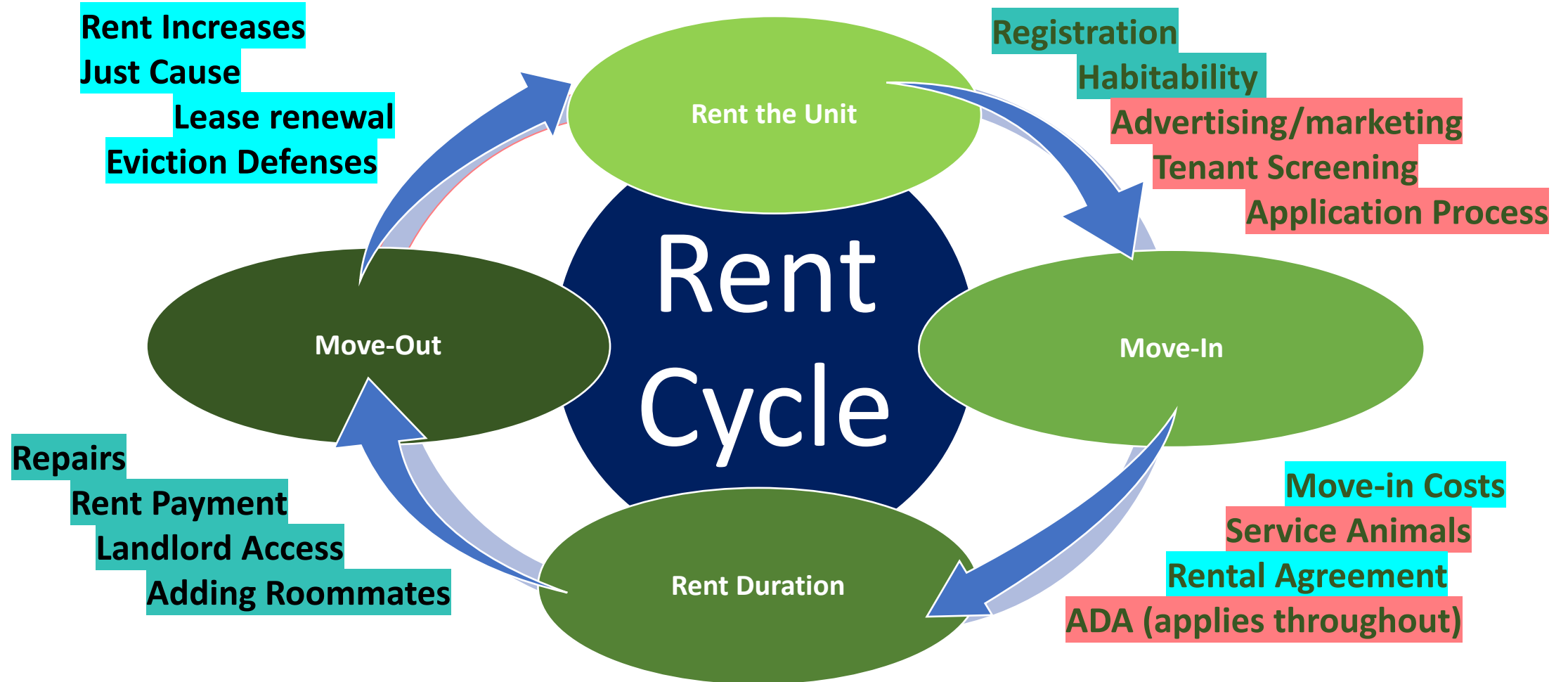Our **purpose**: Helping people build a safe, livable, and inclusive Seattle.

Our **values**: Equity, respect, quality, integrity, and service.

SDCI Home Fair – Renting in Seattle - Overiew

- Seattle's rental regulations and fair housing laws

- Where they apply in the rent cycle

- Types of regulations

- City intake process

- Meet team code compliance

- The work we do

Open for Q&A

Regulations – Where Do They Apply?

Rent Increases
Just Cause
Lease renewal
Eviction Defenses

Registration
Habitability
Advertising/marketing
Tenant Screening
Application Process

Rent the Unit

Rent Cycle

Move-Out

Move-In

Rent Duration

Repairs
Rent Payment
Landlord Access
Adding Roommates

Move-in Costs
Service Animals
Rental Agreement
ADA (applies throughout)

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Types of Renter Protections

Rental regulations and fair housing laws in Seattle are some of the most robust tenant protections in the nation

Three Primary Regulatory Schemes

Building/Unit

Habitability, minimum standards, safety, zoning (permitted use), right to occupy

Consumer protections

Contractual, rental agreement, administrative, documents, rules, responsibilities

Civil Rights

Equitable access, protected classes, dismantling institutional racism

Seattle Rental Housing Protections

Compliance Areas

SDCI - *Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections*

- Habitability standards
- Eviction protections
- Land use code (zoning)
- Rental agreement regulations

SOCR - *Seattle Office for Civil Rights*

- Based on protected classes
- Fair Housing (including first-in-time) and Fair Chance Housing
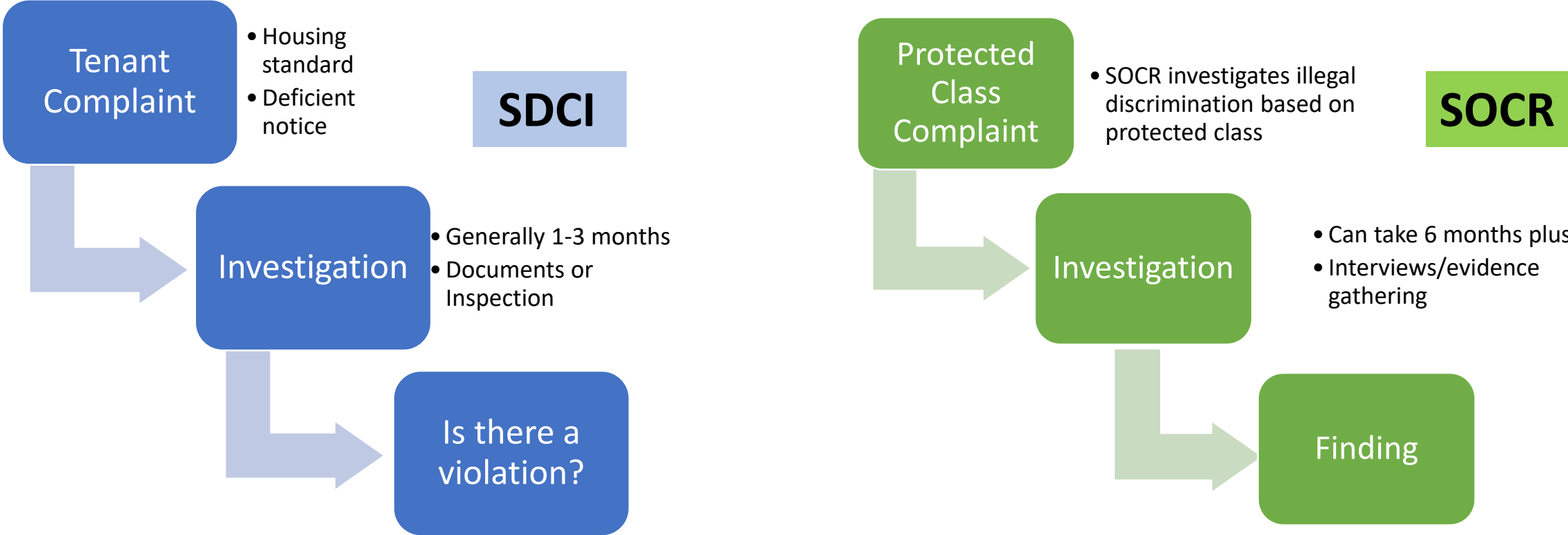- Reasonable Accommodation/Modification

Protected Classes

- **Race**
- **Color**
- **National Origin**
- **Citizenship / Immigration Status**
- **Religion**
- **Sex**
- **Disability**
- **Familial Status**
- **Marital Status**
- **Sexual Orientation**

- **Cast**
- **Gender Identity**
- **Veteran/Military Status**
- **Age**
- **Ancestry**
- **Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8)**
- **Subsidies**
- **Alternative Source of Income**
- **Political Ideology**
- **Creed**
- **Pregnancy Outcomes**

1 Age discrimination for City of Seattle, it is any age.
2 This protected class only applies to Employment cases.
3 This protected class does not apply to Employment cases.
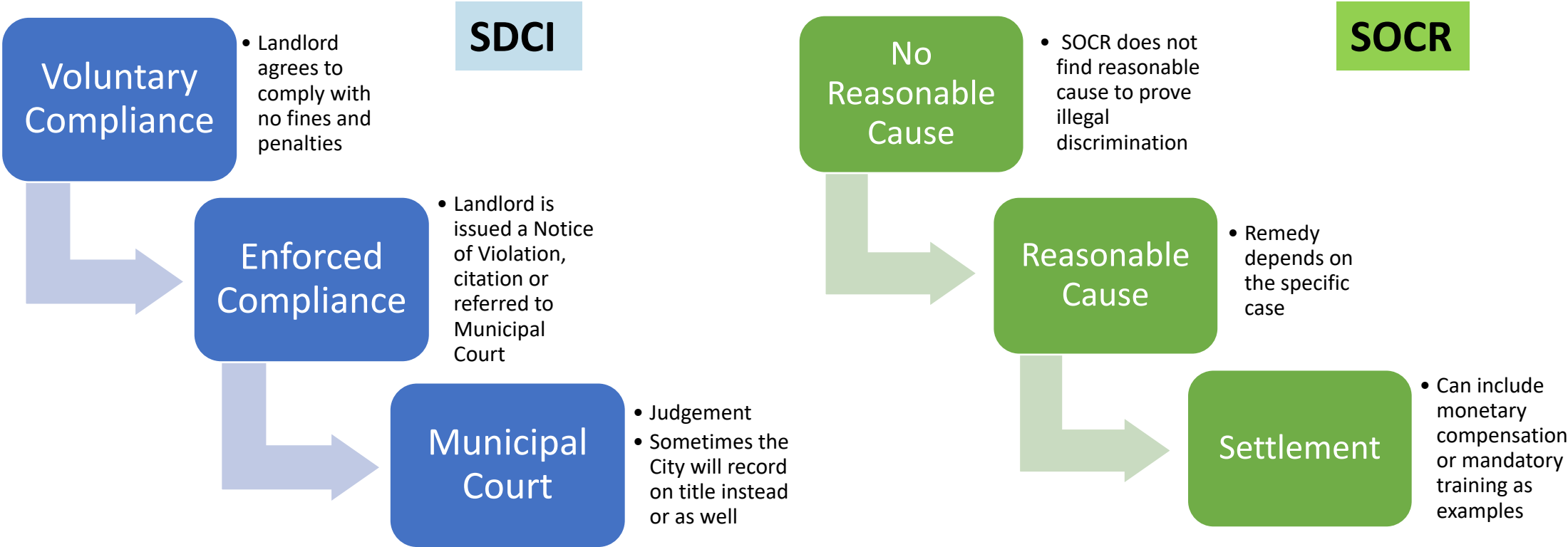4 Includes traits associated with race

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City rental housing laws - intake process

SDCI & SOCR – primarily complaint-based enforcement

(exceptions include the RRIO program based on scheduled inspection and Fair Housing violations from SOCR testing program)

Tenant Complaint
- Housing standard
- Deficient notice

SDCI

Investigation
- Generally 1-3 months
- Documents or Inspection

Is there a violation?

Protected Class Complaint
- SOCR investigates illegal discrimination based on protected class

SOCR

Investigation
- Can take 6 months plus
- Interviews/evidence gathering

Finding

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City rental housing laws – enforcement process

SDCI

Voluntary Compliance
- Landlord agrees to comply with no fines and penalties

Enforced Compliance
- Landlord is issued a Notice of Violation, citation or referred to Municipal Court

Municipal Court
- Judgement
- Sometimes the City will record on title instead or as well

SOCR

No Reasonable Cause
- SOCR does not find reasonable cause to prove illegal discrimination

Reasonable Cause
- Remedy depends on the specific case

Settlement
- Can include monetary compensation or mandatory training as examples

Municode References ETC

Rental Regulations

Title 22 Subtitle II - Housing Code

- Habitable Buildings 22.206

- Just Cause Eviction 22.205

- Tenant Relocation Assistance 22.210

- Economic Displacement Relocation Assistance 22.212

- Rental Registration Inspection 22.214

TITLE 23 – Land Use Code

TITLE 7 – Consumer Protection

Rental Agreement Regulation 7.24

Fair Housing Laws

Seattle Municipal Code (SMC):

https://library.municode.com/wa/seattle/codes/municipal_code

Unfair Housing Practices (SMC 14.08)

Fair Chance Housing (SMC 14.09)

SOCR civil rights enforcement:

https://www.seattle.gov/civilrights/civil-rights-enforcement

Washington Residential Landlord Tenant Act +

https://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=59.18

https://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=59.12

Meet Team Code Compliance

What we do

We implement community standards in all neighborhoods. We ensure that all rental housing is registered, code-compliant and that landlords follow tenant protection regulations for renters who make up more than half of Seattle's residents.

Budget and Legislation background

Legislation

- Led by elected officials

- Departments assist, respond, provide data

- Departments implement

Budget

- Initiated by Mayor's Office

- Modified and approved by the City Council

- Departments make requests, provide information, and work within constraints

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SDCI Code Compliance Team

Property Owner and Tenant Analysts aka POTA

Who they serve -
renters, landlords, developers, city staff, housing advocates, elected officials

Global pandemics make housing security a high priority

MONTHLY POTA CUSTOMER INTAKE - THROUGH JUNE 2022

Legend: —— Monthly POTA Intake Intake

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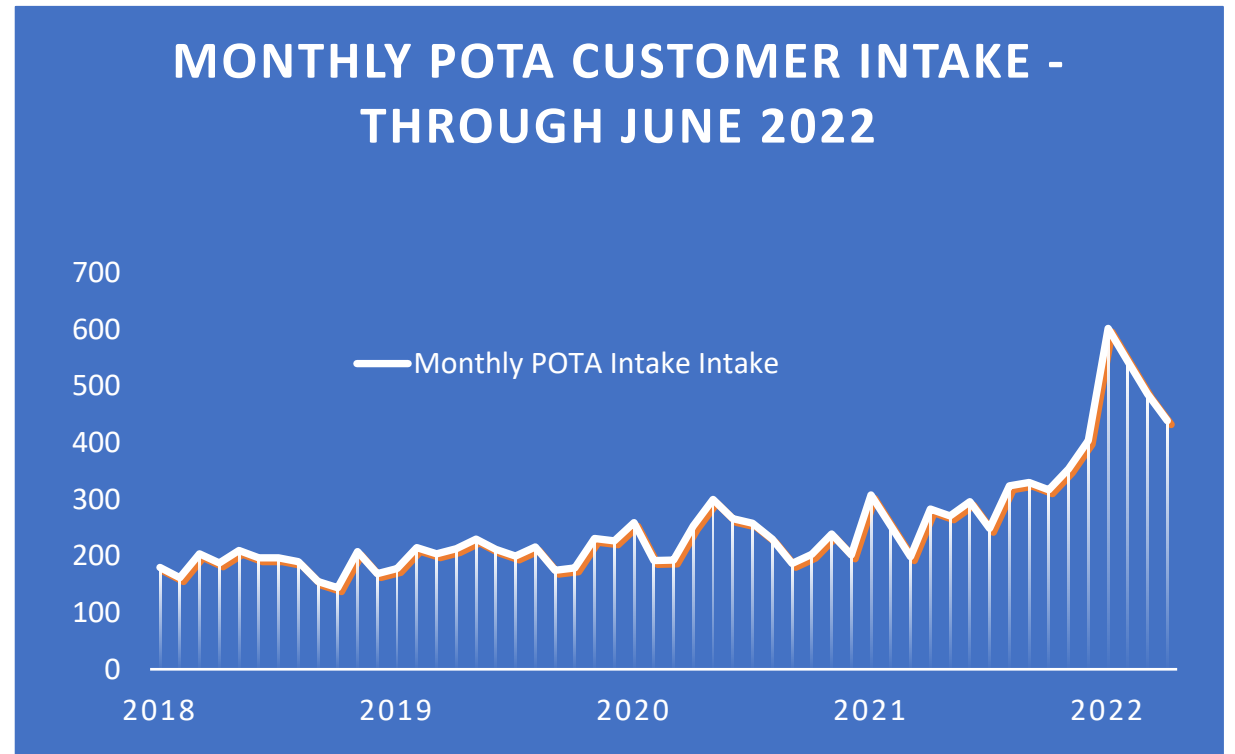
SDCI Code Compliance Team - POTA

What they do -

- Investigate tenant-reported code violations
- Identify compliance requirement
- Provide technical assistance
- Apply enforcement action
- Assist and liaise with Inspection staff on landlord/tenant issues
- Represent SDCI before the Hearing Examiner in appeals
- Administer 2 relocation programs
  - Displacement by development (TRAO – Tenant Relocation Assistance Ordinance)
  - Economic displacement by housing cost increase (EDRA – Economic Displacement Relocation Assistance)

SDCI Code Compliance Team

Inspection Staff

- **Housing and Building Maintenance Inspectors**
- **Vacant Building Inspector**
- **Shoreline Inspector**
- **RRIO Inspector**

Support Staff

- **Administrative**
- **Management**

Outreach & Education

Grant Management

Policy Analyst

Housing and Zoning Techs

Construction analysts

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SDCI Code Compliance Team - Inspectors

- **_Inspection Staff_**

- Inspect for habitability standards

- Conduct RRIO inspections

- Protect our substantial shoreline

- Keep vacant buildings secured and safe

- Respond to emergency housing conditions

- Ensure zoning laws that protect against junk storage, overgrown vegetation, illegal use of a property

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SDCI Code Compliance Team - Outreach

Outreach & Education

- Customer-focused non-regulatory *Renting in Seattle* program

- Launched www.seattle.gov/rentinginseattle

- Published the Renter's Handbook

- Accessible targeted content on rental regulations and fair housing laws

- Manage listserv for 18k+ housing providers

- Quarterly landlord workshops

- Other outreach/educational events

- Cross departmental collaboration

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SDCI Code Compliance Team – Grants & Policy

Grant Management

- SDCI manages $2.5 million in grants for multiple community providers serving tenants
- Conducts annual RFP process
- Provides training and technical assistance for CSP grantees

Policy Analyst

- Works to harmonize city regulations and state laws
- Analyses code inconsistencies for continual improvement
- Represents department in policy discussions with council and mayor's office staff

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SDCI Code Compliance Team - Techs & CA's

Housing and Zoning Techs

- *Frontline – answer the helpline*

- *Route callers*

- *Take complaints*

- *Prepare intake for referral to correct division*

- *Make referrals to other City departments or resources*

Construction analysts

- *Manage incoming queries or complaints about construction without a permit*

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Final Thoughts

SDCI – Code Compliance's goal is to help customers achieve voluntary compliance. Fines and penalties are rarely used tools to enforce against violations when there is no attempt to comply. We achieve a very high standard of voluntary compliance.

- A simple rule of thumb in the landlord/tenant relationship is each party should always consider how the other might feel in any given situation and respond accordingly!

- When in doubt, reach out! Call the Renting in Seattle Helpline for guidance. We are here to help.

- Be informed. Both landlords and tenants can find information on every stage of the renting experience at www.seattle.gov/rentinginseattle.

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Questions?

Renting in Seattle

Call the Renting in Seattle Helpline(206) 684-5700

www.seattle.gov/rentinginseattle

Thank you for joining
Raise your hand or post questions in chat

Our live presentation has ended
The recording will be available on SDCI's website

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