




LOS ANGELES COUNTY
CONSUMER & BUSINESS AFFAIRS
Housing & Tenant Protections




LOS ANGELES COUNTY RENTAL HOUSING OVERSIGHT COMMISSION 2023 ANNUAL REPORT



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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Rafael Carbajal

The story of the Rental Housing Oversight Commission (RHOC) is, at its heart, a story about people—the families striving to make ends meet, the landlords investing in their properties, and the mobilehome park owners who make these communities home. This is why RHOC is more than an appellate body; it is a cornerstone of fairness and accountability, vital to the Department of Consumer and Business Affairs' (DCBA) mission to champion equity and economic justice across Los Angeles County.

Since its establishment, the RHOC has upheld the County's Rent Stabilization and Tenant Protection Ordinances as well as the Mobilehome Rent Stabilization and Mobilehome Owner Protections Ordinance. These frameworks were designed to do more than address housing policies—they were crafted to sustain the fabric of

our diverse communities. Through impartial and transparent adjudication of appeals, the RHOC fosters trust between stakeholders and ensures that tenants and mobilehome owners are protected from undue financial hardships, while landlords and mobilehome park owners retain the right to fair investment returns.

But this tells only a small part of the story. The RHOC's real impact comes through its balanced approach to resolving conflicts—where livelihoods and dreams often intersect. Guided by equity and compassion, each decision the Commission makes represents more than policy enforcement; it reflects a steadfast commitment to a vision of housing stability that serves all stakeholders. This approach not only fosters trust in the RHOC, it also underscores the County's efforts to create a stable and sustainable housing ecosystem that benefits all.

Our Commissioners are the cornerstone of this work. Their expertise, coupled with lived experience as tenants and property owners, informs every decision. Their diverse perspectives allow them to navigate the nuanced challenges of housing with empathy and fairness. In doing so, they remind us of an undeniable reality: that housing stability is critical in fostering economic justice and creating equitable opportunities for every resident of Los Angeles County.

Looking back on the RHOC's inaugural year, one theme stands out—collaboration. None of this would be possible without the collective efforts of our Commissioners and stakeholders. Together, we have taken meaningful steps toward building a stronger, more equitable future for everyone who calls Los Angeles County home.

Rafael Carbajal, Director

County of Los Angeles, Department of Consumer and Business Affairs



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Commissioner KeAndra Cylear Dodds

I am honored and excited to have served as the inaugural Chair of the Rental Housing Oversight Commission ("RHOC"). The RHOC was established in 2019 to oversee and ensure fair implementation of rental housing ordinances within the County. However, the RHOC faced significant challenges in its initial years, including disruptions caused by the pandemic and delays in meeting the minimum quorum requirement to conduct regular meetings.

Despite these early obstacles, the RHOC remained steadfast in its commitment to laying a strong foundation to move forward. We prioritized developing a thorough understanding of the applicable ordinances and creating fair and effective processes before holding our first hearing. This approach ensured that when the RHOC began its work, it was well-prepared to

navigate the complexities of the cases before us.

Throughout 2023 we made meaningful progress. By conducting hearings with a sense of urgency and understanding the impact that time delays have on all parties, we upheld our mission of fairness and efficiency. The lessons learned over the past year provided valuable insights and inform best practices which we will incorporate into recommendations to guide our future efforts.

I want to extend my deepest gratitude to my fellow commissioners for their hard work and collaborative efforts, as well as the Department of Consumer and Business Affairs and County Counsel for their unwavering support, patience, and guidance throughout this process. Their expertise and dedication have been instrumental in helping the RHOC fulfill its responsibilities and serve the community effectively.

As we look to the future, I am confident that the RHOC will continue to build upon this foundation, ensuring that our oversight of rental housing remains a cornerstone of equity and accountability in the County.

KeAndra Cylear Dodds, Chairperson

County of Los Angeles, Rental Housing Oversight Commission

2023 COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP



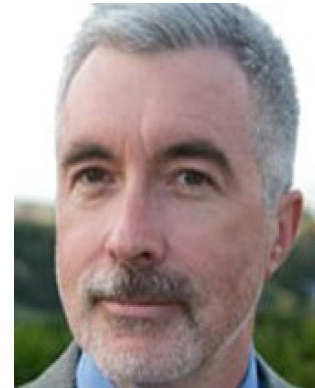
FIRST DISTRICT APPOINTEE
Pamela Agustin-Anguiano
02/28/2023 - 02/28/2026



SECOND DISTRICT APPOINTEE
Odest T. Riley Jr.
01/28/2020 - 02/28/2026



THIRD DISTRICT APPOINTEE
KeAndra D. Cylear Dodds
Chairperson
01/28/2020 - 02/07/2026



FOURTH DISTRICT APPOINTEE
Clint Patterson
02/07/2023 - 02/07/2026



FIFTH DISTRICT APPOINTEE
Ani Papirian
Vice Chair
01/24/2023 - 01/24/2026

MOBILEHOME OWNER APPOINTEE
Vacant

RENTAL MEMBER APPOINTEE
Vacant

MOBILEHOME TENANT APPOINTEE
Vacant

OWNER MEMBER APPOINTEE
Vacant

MISSION STATEMENT

The Rental Housing Oversight Commission is an appellate body whose mission and purpose is to safeguard tenants and mobilehome owners from rent increases that are inconsistent with County Code and to assure that landlords and mobile home park owners receive fair return on rents consistent with Los Angeles County's procedures and guidelines by hearing, making determinations, and resolving appeals of decisions made by Los Angeles County Department of Consumer and Business Affairs.

VISION

A fair and sustainable system of rental housing in Los Angeles County supported by transparent and reasonable application of the law. The Rental Housing Oversight Commission is dedicated to serving our community by providing fair, timely and efficient resolution of all cases.

VALUES

Integrity: We provide equal justice for all. We are honest, transparent, and have a neutral application of the law.

Inclusivity: We embrace the need for multiple perspectives where individual and community differences are seen as strengths.

Compassion: We treat those we serve, and each other, with respect, patience and unbiased judgement.

Stakeholder Orientation: We place our highest priority on meeting the needs of our stakeholders, landlords, tenants, mobilehome owners and mobilehome park owners.

Commitment: We have a commitment to providing equal justice and a resolution of all cases.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The Board of Supervisors formed the Rental Housing Oversight Commission (RHOC) in 2019 to adjudicate matters related to the Rent Stabilization Ordinance, the Mobilehome Rent Stabilization Ordinance and all related matters. The Rental Housing Oversight Commission serves at the pleasure of the Board of Supervisors to enforce rules and/or

guidelines consistent with the provisions of the ordinances adopted by the Board of Supervisors.

The Rental Housing Oversight Commission provides valuable representation in the administration of the Rent Stabilization Program within unincorporated Los Angeles County and fosters trust in the Program with both renter and owner stakeholder groups. The Commissioners' collective experience as tenants, mobilehome owners, landlords, mobilehome park owners, or by representing these groups, is a valuable resource in assisting DCBA in the implementation of the Rent Stabilization Program.

The Rental Housing Oversight Commission holds its bi-weekly meetings as needed at 1:30 p.m. at the East Los Angeles Community Service Center, 133 N. Sunol Drive, room #242, Los Angeles, CA and at 320 W. Temple St., Room 150, Los Angeles, CA 90012.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

The Rental Housing Oversight Commission's role is to review the determinations made by the Department of Consumer and Business Affairs (DCBA) relating to the ordinances adopted by the Board of Supervisors concerning the Rent Stabilization and Tenant Protection Ordinance (RSTPO) and Mobilehome Rent Stabilization and Mobilehome Owner Protections Ordinance (MRSMOPO). The Rental Housing Oversight Commission retains the power to enforce the procedures and guidelines prepared by the DCBA Director and approved by the Board to aid in the implementation of the Commission's work.

The Rental Housing Oversight Commission staff oversees and supports the implementation of the Commission's work. The staff provides administrative and clerical support and handle all logistics related to appeal hearings. Staff duties and responsibilities include preparing and drafting agendas, minutes, and notices, updating the Rental Housing Oversight Commission website, and maintain case management. In addition, the staff coordinates and schedules meetings, hearings, trainings, and maintains the Commission's calendar. The staff acts as a liaison between Board of Supervisors, Committee Book, County Counsel, appellants, and Commissioners.

The Rental Housing Oversight Commission's mandate is to:

- Hear, determine, and review appeals of decisions made by DCBA related to Rent Stabilization, Mobilehome Rent Stabilization, and tenant protections, including but not limited to appeals of determinations regarding:
 - Allowable rent increases; and
 - Allowable adjustments to the maximum allowable rent increase.
- Authority to conduct hearings and render decisions on mobilehome park closure relocation impact reports.
- Authority to take other actions as delegated by the Board.¹

COMMISSIONER MEMBERSHIP

The Rental Housing Oversight Commission consists of nine (9) members appointed by and serving at the discretion of the Board. Each Supervisor appoints one (1) member to the Commission who possesses a demonstrated interest in, and knowledge of, housing needs in Los Angeles County and a history of active involvement and leadership in the community.² Four (4) stakeholder members are appointed by the Board based on certain criteria.

Two Renter Members:³

- One (1) member shall be a renter whose primary residence is a dwelling subject to rent stabilization pursuant to Los Angeles County Code (County Code), Chapter 8.52 or an individual who is a representative of an organization that represents the interests of renters subject to Rent Stabilization.
- One (1) member shall be a renter whose primary residence is a mobilehome owned by the renter who is eligible or subject to mobilehome rent stabilization pursuant to County Code, Chapter 8.57 or an individual who is a representative of an organization that represents the interests of mobilehome owners renting a mobilehome space who are eligible or subject to Mobilehome Rent Stabilization and mobilehome owner protections, pursuant to County Code, Chapter 8.57.

¹ Los Angeles County Code (County Code) section 8.64.050.

² County Code section 8.64.020.B.1.

³ County Code section 8.64.020.B.2.

*Two Owner Members:*⁴

- One (1) member shall be an owner of a dwelling that is subject to rent stabilization, pursuant to County Code, Chapter 8.52, and whose primary residence is located in the County or an individual who is a representative of an organization that represents the interests of owners of dwellings subject to County Code, Chapter 8.52.
- One (1) member shall be an owner of a mobilehome park that is subject to Mobilehome Rent Stabilization, County Code, Chapter 8.57, and whose primary residence is located within the County, or an individual who is a representative of an organization that represents the interests of owners of mobilehome parks subject to Mobilehome Rent Stabilization, County Code, Chapter 8.57.

Commissioners serve three-year terms at the discretion of the Board.⁵ No member of the commission may serve more than two consecutive terms.⁶ The Board may, at its discretion, remove any Commissioner at any point during their term without cause.⁷

COMMISSIONER NOMINATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic emergency declaration, the Rental Housing Oversight Commission was unable to meet due to lack of a quorum from March 2020 through January 2023. Three of the original five Board-appointed Commissioners resigned for personal reasons.

In February 2023, the Board re-appointed Commissioners KeAndra D. Cylear Dodds (Third District), and Odest T. Riley Jr. (Second District) to serve a second term on the Commission. During that same month, the Board appointed Pamela Agustin-Anguiano (First District), Clint Patterson (Fourth District), and Ani Papirian (Fifth District) for their first terms with the Commission.

At its first meeting on March 24, 2023, the Rental Housing Oversight Commission elected Interim Chair KeAndra D. Cylear Dodds and Commissioner Ani Papirian to become the

⁴ County Code section 8.64.020.B.3.

⁵ County Code section 8.64.030.A.

⁶ County Code section 8.64.040.A.

⁷ *Id.*

permanent Chair and Vice Chair for 2023. The Rental Housing Oversight Commission also formed an Ad Hoc Committee to screen and interview those who applied for the owner member, tenant member, mobilehome park tenant member, and mobilehome park owner member Commission vacancies.

As a result of Ad Hoc Committee's efforts, and after approval by the Rental Housing Oversight Commission, on December 11, 2023, applicants Jarryd Gonzales, mobilehome park owner, and Ira Spiro, tenant advocate, were offered as potential nominees for appointment by the Board.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

The Rental Housing Oversight Commission is committed to meeting the growing demand from constituents for appeal hearings regarding enforcement decisions on the Los Angeles County ordinances RSTPO and MRSMOPO. The Rental Housing Oversight Commission is prepared to increase the frequency of hearings as necessary and will continue to develop and modify best practices to meet the needs of the public.

The Rental Housing Oversight Commission's priority is to review and determine appeal cases that were delayed due to the COVID pandemic. The lack of members required for a meeting – or quorum under the Brown Act – caused a delay in hearing and reviewing appeals. In 2023, the Rental Housing Oversight Commission heard 4 appeal cases, which resulted in a backlog reduction of 66.67%. The Rental Housing Oversight Commission is committed to resolving appeal cases not heard during the COVID-19 pandemic.

On March 24, 2023, the Rental Housing Oversight Commission committed to continuing to seek candidates appropriate for recommendation to the Board for the final four Commissioner vacancies. Commissioners continue to conduct outreach, leverage their networks, and encourage interested parties to apply. The Commission will also review incoming Commissioner applications on a rolling basis.

PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

The Rental Housing Oversight Commission meetings are held in public and comply with

the requirements of the Brown Act. In March 2023, the Rental Housing Oversight Commission adopted a regular meeting schedule and began conducting business. With the guidance of County Counsel and Commission staff, the Rental Housing Oversight Commission began discussions regarding application of governing ordinances, completed required trainings, and implemented procedures for impartial appeal hearings and administrative meetings. In July 2023, the Commission developed a second Ad Hoc Committee to collaborate with County Counsel and DCBA to make recommendations as needed for the completion of the Commission handbook and by-laws.

The Rental Housing Oversight Commission also remains current on the impact of new legislation at the City and State level as well as amendments to its governing ordinances. The Rental Housing Oversight Commission noted further work is necessary as they continue to hear more appeals and to better serve the constituents in unincorporated Los Angeles County.

2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In 2023, the Rental Housing Oversight Commission held ten administrative meetings and presided over four appeal hearings. From March to July 2023, the Rental Housing Oversight Commission established infrastructure, procedure, operational guidelines, and tackled difficult challenges in forming a framework to efficiently and equitably conduct its hearings (see Attachment 1 on page 15). The Rental Housing Oversight Commission established leadership by nominating and electing Chair KeAndra Cylear Dodds and Vice Chair Ani Papirian. It also acted immediately to increase its ranks by vetting applicants for the owner and renter seats. The Commissioners collaborated seamlessly with County Counsel and Commission staff to address its backlog and serve the Los Angeles County unincorporated community.

On September 18, 2023, the Rental Housing Oversight Commission conducted its first hearing. After considerable testimony and evidence provided by all parties, the Rental Housing Oversight Commission voted to affirm the determination of the DCBA and found unlawful rent increases in violation of the RSTPO. In this matter, the Rental Housing Oversight Commission found the tenant was entitled to an overpayment refund of \$16,142.15. In October 16, 2023, the Rental Housing Oversight Commission overturned

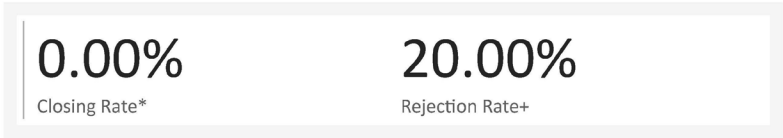
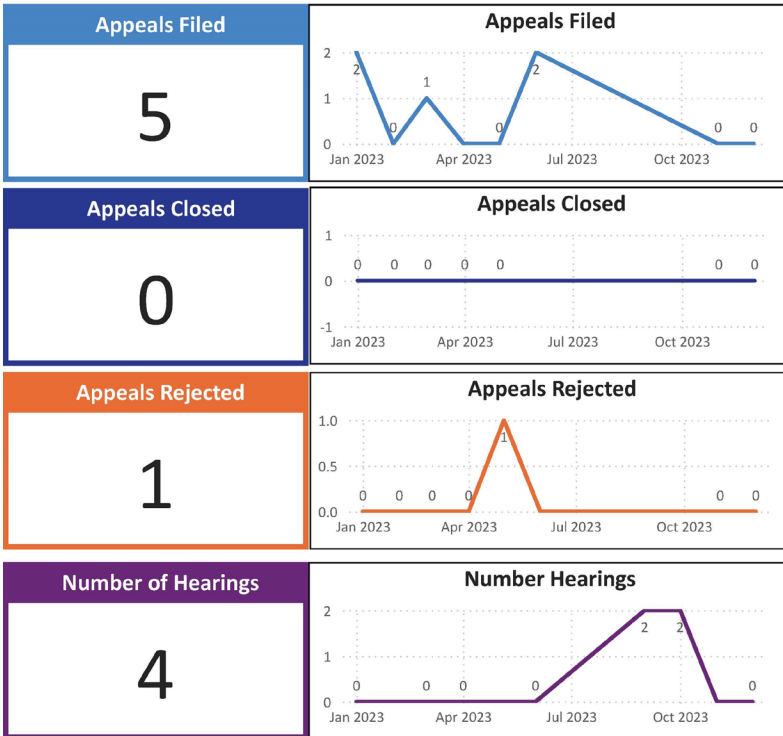
DCBA’s determination. Ultimately, both the landlord and tenant came to an agreement amenable to both. On October 30, 2023, the Rental Housing Oversight Commission reviewed a determination that modified the base amount of rent and deemed the tenant was due a refund of \$5,588.83 in rent overpayments.

As constituent demand grows for appeal hearings, the Rental Housing Oversight Commission expects to conduct more frequent hearings in addition to holding purely administrative meetings.

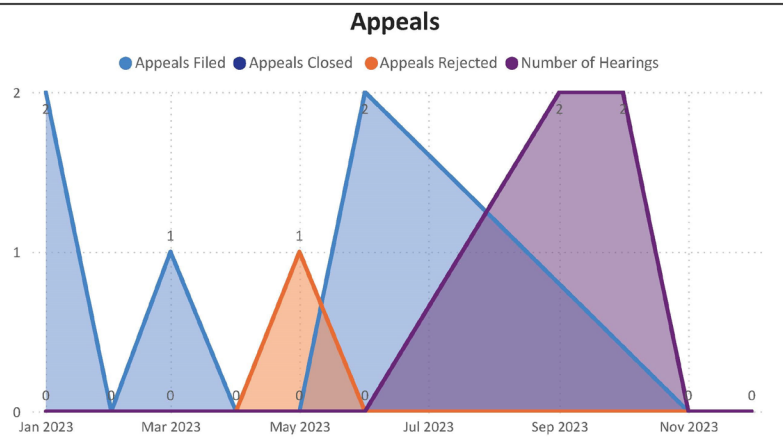
RENTAL HOUSING OVERSIGHT COMMISSION 2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS



2023 RENTAL HOUSING OVERSIGHT COMMISSION REPORT



*The closing rate is determined by dividing the total number of appeals closed by the total number of appeals filed.
 +The rejection rate is determined by dividing the total number of appeals rejected by the total number of appeals filed.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on their experience throughout 2023, the commissioners offer the following recommendations for staff and County Counsel to improve implementation of the RHOC program:

1. Provide an easier communication mechanism for any ongoing cases with the upload of documents to an online platform and sharing of information for litigants.
2. Recommendation to amend the RSTPO and MRSMOPO to add language clarifying whether the penalty per the County’s Rent Stabilization Ordinances run with the land or individual owner of the property when a property is sold or a transfer of ownership occurs during the time of violation, when a decision is issued by the Department or Commission on Enforcement related matters.
3. Determine the extent of liability and person’s liable based on conduct and provide a notice mechanism so that individuals or entities affected can be made aware of all facts and information of existing cases and investigations.

4. Conduct more training sessions for the Commission regarding the updated ordinance and relevant laws.

CONCLUSION

The Rental Housing Oversight Commission proudly continues to serve County residents by providing fair, efficient and equitable review of determinations by the DCBA. The Rental Housing Oversight Commission will continue to hear appeals, and complete projects enhance its efforts to fulfill its mission, vision and values.

Sincerely,



KeAndra Cylear Dodds, Chairperson

County of Los Angeles, Rental Housing Oversight Commission

cc: Board of Supervisors

Attachment 1 – Code of Conduct

Rental Housing Oversight Commission

Code of Conduct

In preparation for your hearing before the Rental Housing Oversight Commission. Please read the Commission code of conduct for guidelines and procedures to ensure the efficient administration of the meeting.

As members of the public, it is your right to participate in today's Commission meeting, and the Commission encourages such participation. However, the right of the public to address the Commission must be balanced with the need to ensure that public comment does not interfere with the orderly course of the Commission's business. All are reminded to abide by the following rules:

- Speakers must cease speaking immediately when their time has ended.
- Public comment on agenda items must relate to the subject matter of that item.
- General public comment is limited to subject with the jurisdiction of the Commission.
- Public comment does not include the right to engage in a dialogue with Commission members or staff. Parties, witnesses, and the general public should refrain from approaching or speaking with Commission members outside of time allotted for testimony or public comment.
- Please remain respectful of the forum and refrain from uttering, writing or displaying profane, personal, threatening, derogatory, demeaning or other abusive statements toward the Commission, any member thereof, staff or any other person.
- Members of the audience should be respectful of the views expressed by speakers, staff, and Commission members, and may not clap, cheer, whistly, or otherwise disrupt the orderly conduct of the meeting.
- Any person engaging in conduct that disrupts the meeting is subject to being removed from the Commission meeting at the discretion of the Chair.
- Finally, if you witness conduct or behavior by other members of the public that disrupts your ability to remain engaged or participate in this meeting, please notify staff.

The Commission will hear the testimony of parties, witnesses, and members of the public in the following order:

- The Department will speak regarding its determination for ten (10) minutes.
- The Appellant will testify in support of the appeal for ten (10) minutes.
- Witnesses for the Appellant, if any, will testify. Depending on the number of witnesses, the Chair will allot two (2) to four (4) minutes for each English-speaking witness.

- The Respondent will testify regarding the response to the appeal for ten (10) minutes.
- Witnesses for the Respondent, if any, will testify. Depending on the number of witnesses, the Chair will allot two (2) to four (4) minutes for each English-speaking witness.
- Following testimony, The Commission will have the opportunity to ask clarifying questions of all parties.
- Before proceeding with a vote on the appeal, the Chair will ask if any members of the public would like to comment. Any members of the public wishing to provide public comment on the appeal will be given 1-3 minutes to speak before the Commission.

Responses to questions from the Commission will not be included in these time limitations. Parties, witnesses and members of the public speaking in a language other than English – receiving simultaneous translation – will receive twice as much time as is listed above.

For all parties, witnesses and members of the public requiring a translator, please communicate through the County designated translator. The Commission will address all parties in English, and the translator will then relay the information in the parties' preferred language. All testimony will be translated – to the best of the translator's knowledge and ability – between the Commission and the parties.

Thank you for your cooperation.