

*Board of County Commissioners*

# Office of Tenant Services 6-month Update

October 10, 2023



# Presentation Outline

- Background
- Office of Tenant Services
- Outreach & Education
- Legislative Updates
- Summary





# Presentation Outline

- **Background**
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## Background

- **The BCC adopted the Tenant’s Bill of Rights on January 23, 2023**
- **TBR offered additional protections beyond those found in Ch. 83, Florida Statutes, and the Fair Housing Act**
- **The Ordinance created the Office of Tenant Services**
  - **The Office was created to enforce the Tenant’s Bill of Rights Ordinance and the Rental Notices Ordinance by issuing civil citations for violations**
  - **The Office would become a one-stop shop for residents to call and receive assistance with rental issues**
  - **The Office would bridge the gap between landlords and tenants throughout Orange County**



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# Office of Tenant Services

- **The Office of Tenant Services:**
  - Opened March 1, 2023
  - Office has four staff
    - **Administrator: Amy Michaels**
    - **Program Manager: Ruth Jacques**
    - **Program Coordinator: Aline Robinson**
    - **Administrative Assistant: Martha Pineda**





# Office of Tenant Services

## ▪ Service Delivery

– March 1, 2023 – August 31, 2023

- Phone calls: 1,976
- Emails: 934
- Walk-ins: 35

	Phone Calls	Emails	Walk-ins
<b>March</b>	435	216	7
<b>April</b>	279	150	6
<b>May</b>	313	127	1
<b>June</b>	212	135	5
<b>July</b>	361	151	7
<b>August</b>	376	155	9



# Office of Tenant Services

## ▪ Top five reasons for assistance

### 1. Code Compliance

– Mold/Pest control/AC issues

### 2. Financial Issues

– Behind on rent payments

### 3. Evictions

– Non-payment of rent

### 4. 60-day notices

– Rental increase of more than 5%

### 5. Security Deposits



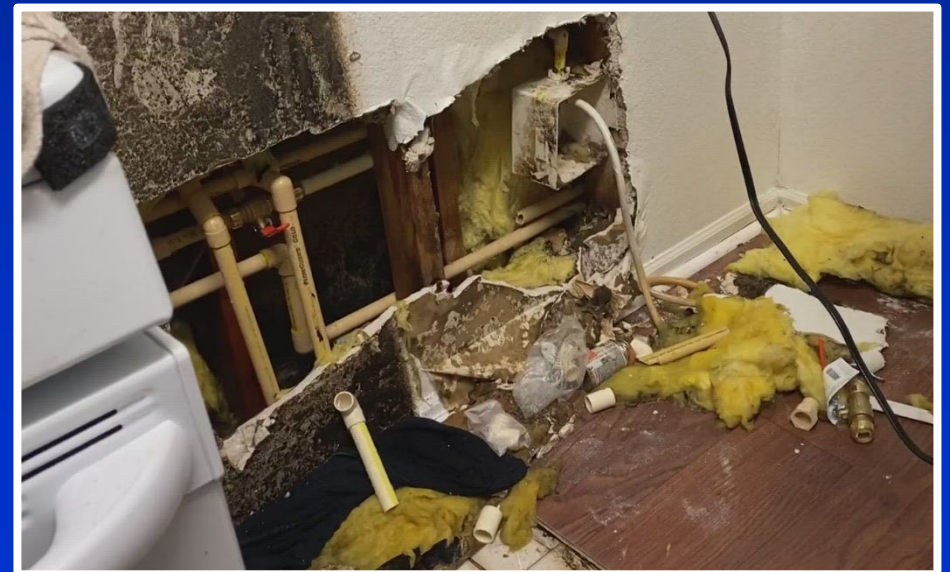




## ▪ Code Compliance – Building Issues

–178 calls referred

- 78% (138) cases have been closed
  - Customer never followed through with complaint
  - No violation found by Code Compliance Inspector
  - Landlord came into compliance
- 5% (9) cases are open investigations
- 17% (31) cases were referred to a municipality





## ▪ Financial Issues

### – Rental Assistance

- 150 cases referred to various agencies for rental assistance
  - Orange County Emergency Rental Assistance
  - 211; Christian Service Center

### – Security Deposit

- 19 cases were investigated for return of deposit
  - No violations have been found

### – Utility Payment Assistance

- 13 cases referred for utility payment assistance



# Office of Tenant Services

## ▪ Legal Issues

### – Legal Aid Society of the Orange County Bar Association

- Contract was amended to provide dedicated attorney.  
Continues through FY23-24
- March 1, 2023 through August 31, 2023
  - 3,302 total clients served
    - » 482 clients provided with tenant defense litigation
- Legal Aid has attended several events with the Office

### – Housing & Community Development

- To date, the Office has not referred any cases of discrimination





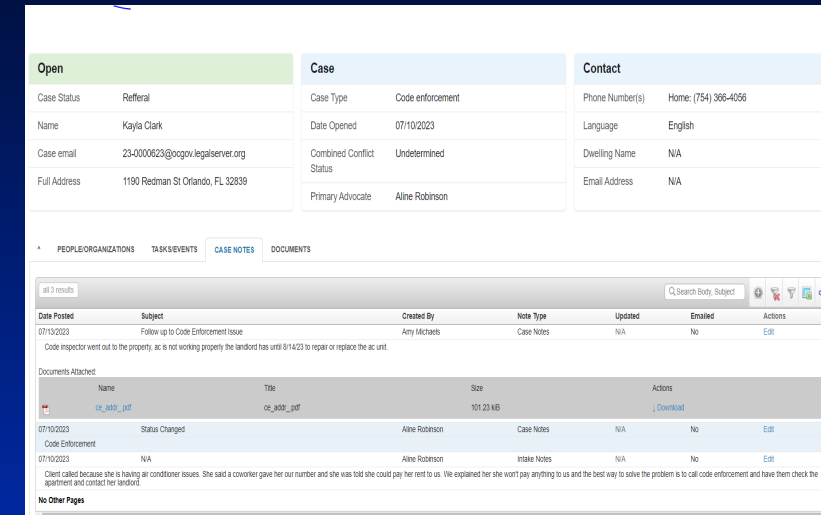
## ■ Case Management

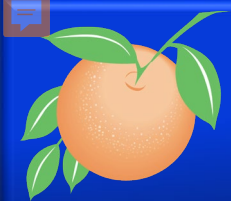
### • Rental Assistance

- Follow-up to the client is completed every 10 days
- Phone calls or emails are documented in the case file

### • Code Compliance

- Follow-up through the Code Compliance database every 10 days
- Cases are monitored until Code Compliance has closed their case
- 60-days notice for rental increases and non-renewal of leases
- Office investigated 5 cases from March 1, 2023 to June 30, 2023; landlord came into compliance; all communication is logged into the case management system





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# Outreach & Education

## ▪ Partner Meetings

- The meetings describe the Office’s services and how the Office can partner with other agencies
- 24 meetings with 857 people in attendance
  - Internal agencies:
    - 3-1-1; Community & Family Services; Housing & Community Development; Neighborhood Services; Mayor’s Interfaith Leaders Meeting
  - External agencies:
    - HFUW; Reality Investors; NARPA; Christian Service Center; Homeless Services Network





# Outreach & Education

## ▪ Seminars

- The Office coordinates with local agencies and businesses to provide landlord-tenant information onsite
  - County staff provide seminars in English, Spanish, and Creole
  - The Office provides information at the Orange County Courthouse each month
  - 63 hours of outreach have been provided to 2,441 Orange County residents from March 1<sup>st</sup> through August 31<sup>st</sup>
- Seminars are scheduled through 2023
  - WebEx and In-person seminars





# Outreach & Education

## ▪ Seminar in a Bottle

–The Office tables at local businesses to educate residents onsite

- Water bottle question and answer

## ▪ Community Events

–The Office attends community events with various organizations

- Head Start; HFUW; Resource Fairs; Brazilian Consulate; Bithlo Advisory Board; Hurricane Expo







# Outreach & Education

## ▪ Communications

– The Office worked with the Communications Division to:

- Create brochures in English, Spanish, and Creole
- Distribute brochures at Community Centers; Clerk of Courts; NCF's; Commissioners; Mayor's Office; multiple County and community agencies

– Brochures are also placed at each information desk in the Administration Building

Para obtener más información y recibir videos y materiales educativos, escanee el código QR.

**CONTÁCTENOS**

407-836-RENT (7368)  
 TenantServices@ocfl.net  
 LUNES-VIERNES | 8 A.M. to 5 P.M.  
 www.ocfl.net/TenantServices

**OFICINA DE SERVICIOS PARA INQUILINOS**  
 Cerrando la brecha entre inquilinos y propietarios

**ORANGE COUNTY GOVERNMENT FLORIDA**

**QUIENES SOMOS**  
 La Oficina de Servicios para Inquilinos actúa como una ventanilla única y centro de intercambio de información para abordar los problemas de los derechos de propietarios e inquilinos para los ciudadanos ubicados dentro del área no incorporada del Condado de Orange. La oficina se enfoca en el alcance y la educación tanto para los inquilinos como para los propietarios al proporcionar información relacionada con el alquiler dentro del Condado de Orange.

**ÁREAS DE ENFOQUE:**

- Alcance y Educación
- Información y referidos
- Administración de casos

**LO QUE HACEMOS**  
 La Oficina de Servicios para Inquilinos se asegura de que los residentes conozcan sus derechos bajo la ley de Florida. La oficina también puede investigar quejas y hacer cumplir la Ordenanza de la Declaración de Derechos del Inquilino y la Ordenanza de Avisos de Alquiler. Ofrecemos referidos para:

- Cumplimiento del Código del Condado de Orange
- Otros departamentos del Condado de Orange
- Sociedad de Asistencia Legal del Colegio de Abogados del Condado de Orange
- Organizaciones sin fines de lucro
- Otras partes interesadas de la comunidad

**LO QUE NO HACEMOS**

- Proporcionar asistencia monetaria directa.
- Proporcionar asistencia de emergencia para el alquiler.
- Representar a los consumidores en acciones legales.
- Brindar asesoría legal.
- Obligar u ordenar a un propietario o inquilino que brinde una resolución específica.

**NUESTROS SERVICIOS**  
 Alcance y Educación

- Informar a los residentes sobre la Ordenanza de Notificación de 60 días y la Notificación de los Derechos de los Inquilinos.
- Organizar sesiones informativas y talleres gratuitos en todo el Condado de Orange.
- Producir recursos de concientización para inquilinos y propietarios bajo la Ley de Florida.

Información y referidos

- Colaborar con socios públicos, privados y filantrópicos.
- Administrar una lista completa de recursos para inquilinos en el Condado de Orange.
- Comunicar información oportuna y precisa sobre nuevas leyes y servicios.

Administración de casos

- Investigar e identificar las necesidades del cliente para determinar el curso de acción más efectivo.
- Planificar e implementar referencias a las agencias asociadas apropiadas.
- Evaluar y monitorear casos para producir resultados positivos de servicio al cliente.



# Outreach & Education

- Social Media campaign
  - English, Spanish, and Creole called “Did You Know” was created for the County’s social media accounts
  - Posted on social media each month

ORANGE COUNTY RESIDENTS,  
**Eske OU TE KONNEN?**

Biwo Sevis Lokatè a fòminalè pou edike lokatè ak youn nan sesyon seminè atè oswa yon pwopriyete dwa'w.

**BIWO SEVIS POU LOKATE**

- 407-836-RENT (7368)
- TENANTSERVICES@OCFL.NET
- OCFL.NET/TENANTSERVICES
- LUN - VEN | 8 AM TO 5 PM

ORANGE COUNTY RESIDENTS,  
**Did YOU KNOW?**

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**OFFICE OF TENANT SERVICES**

- 407-836-RENT (7368)
- TENANTSERVICES@OCFL.NET
- OCFL.NET/TENANTSERVICES
- MON - FRI | 8 AM TO 5 PM

ORANGE COUNTY GOVERNMENT FLORIDA  
RESIDENTES DEL CONDADO DE ORANGE,  
**¿Sabia? QUE?**

No puede cortar los servicios públicos (agua y luz) de los inquilinos solo porque no pagaron el alquiler.

**OFICINA DE SERVICIOS PARA INQUILINOS**

- 407-836-RENT (7368)
- TENANTSERVICES@OCFL.NET
- OCFL.NET/TENANTSERVICES
- LUNES - VIERNES | 8 A.M. TO 5 P.M.





# Outreach & Education

- Monthly newsletter
  - English and Spanish
  - The first newsletter was emailed in May 2023
  - Currently there are 710 residents on the mailing list

**OFFICE OF TENANT SERVICES** May  
 Bridging the gap between tenants and landlords

ORANGE COUNTY RESIDENTS,  
**Did YOU KNOW?**

Even if your "landlord" has the key to show you the house that doesn't mean he is actually the owner or property manager. Don't get scammed!

**Did You Fall Too?**  
 By Karay Ortega-Brown

I think we can all agree that scammers have become much more sophisticated. Not only have they moved from phone calls to texts, but also from emails to physical mail. Nowadays, scams even happen in person, face-to-face. Would you believe a "landlord" could also be a scammer? One of the key complaints we often receive in the office is scammers pretending to be landlords who showcase a beautiful home that's not theirs to rent out. Unknowingly, potential tenants trust this "landlord," and after showing them the property and putting in their first month's rent, move-in day comes, and it turns out that the home was never on the market. Tenants lose thousands of dollars simply because they only look at the surface. The Office of Tenant Services is here to educate and redirect you to the proper ways of renting a home. Our best advice? Verify the owner of the property with the property appraiser. If you are renting an apartment, never sign a lease onsite at the property you are about to rent. For some more tips, continue reading below.

**TOP TIPS**

**DO:** Make sure there is a leasing office and sign your lease there!

**DON'T:** Sign your lease on the property.

**DO:** Pay using money order and/or checking accounts.

**DON'T:** Send your money via Cashapp, Zelle, or any other money transfer app.

**Resources**  
 Attorney General Office of Citizen Services  
[www.myfloridalegal.com](http://www.myfloridalegal.com)  
 1-800-908-7226

**What's in for you this month?**

**TENANTS**

**May 25** - Eatonville Library – 5 p.m.  
 200 E Kennedy Blvd Eatonville, FL 32751

**May 23** - Goldenrod Recreation Center – 12 p.m.  
 4853 N Goldenrod Road, Winter Park, FL 32792

**May 30** - Holden Heights Community Center – 12 p.m.  
 1201 20th St., Orlando, FL 32806

**LANDLORDS**

Webinar - [Registration here](#)

Orange County Government - Office of Tenant Services | Post Office Box 2687, Orlando, FL 32802 <https://orangecountyfl.net/Neighbors/Housing/TenantServices.aspx>

[View the blog](#) | [View the calendar](#) | [View the profile](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Data Notice](#)

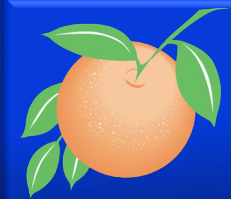
Sent by [tenant@ocfl.net](mailto:tenant@ocfl.net) in collaboration with

**Constant Contact**  
 "Your marketing for the holidays"



# Outreach & Education

- **Grass roots marketing campaign**
  - Lynx, Social Media, Radio, Newspaper, Google Search Engine
  - Identified underserved areas within Orange County to disseminate information about the Office's services
  - Large floor decal (10x10) located at the Lynx Central Station with information about the Office
  - Lynx bus stop signage: each district has a bus shelter that provides information on how to contact the Office
  - Bus cards located within the Lynx busses to provide bus riders with the Office's information



# Outreach and Education

## How to navigate and survive a foreclosure



### Business BOOST Program Helps Those Still Recovering from Pandemic

Many local business owners are still struggling as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In order to assist them, Orange County has introduced the Small Business BOOST program.

### Winn-Dixie unveils new Apopka City Center supermarket

The new Apopka store in the Apopka City Center at 611 East Main Street is designed to provide customers with a unique, localized shopping experience.



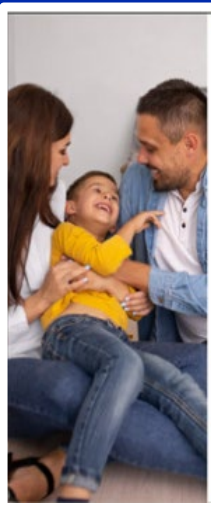
**STOP WAITING.**  
We can help bridge the gap between you and your landlord.  
CALL TENANT SERVICES  
**407-836-RENT**

Training opportunities for single mothers through CareerSource Central Florida  
CareerSource Central Florida has a great complimentary training opportunity starting on August 21st to support single mothers and connect them with family-friendly employment.



**STAY HOUSED, STAY HAPPY**  
Our resources help to support tenants and landlords.

**407-836-RENT**  
For more info, visit [ocfl.net/tenantservices](http://ocfl.net/tenantservices)



## STAY HOUSED, STAY HAPPY

Our resources help to support tenants and landlords.

CALL TENANT SERVICES  
**407-836-RENT**



## DON'T WAIT UNTIL IT'S TOO LATE.

CALL TENANT SERVICES  
**407-836-RENT**

Our resources may be able to help you stay in your home.



## STOP WAITING.

We can help bridge the gap between you and your landlord.

CALL TENANT SERVICES  
**407-836-RENT**





## STAY HOUSED, STAY HAPPY

We provide resources to support tenants and landlords.

CALL TENANT SERVICES  
**407-836-RENT**



NEWS ARTS + CULTURE FOOD + DRINK MUSIC MOVIES CANNABIS CALENDAR BEST OF OR

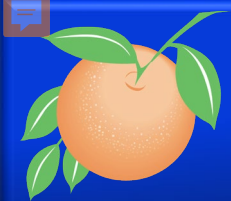
## BEST GOVERNMENT OFFICE HELPING ORANGE COUNTY RENTERS: ORANGE COUNTY OFFICE OF TENANT SERVICES

BEST OF ORLANDO | 2023 | CITY LIFE | STAFF PICK

The Orange County government's Office of Tenant Services officially launched in March to help assist local landlords and tenants, as well as to enforce local tenant protections (e.g. a "tenant bill of rights") that have since been wiped out by a new, industry-backed state law. Womp womp. Even still, the office itself is still open, generally to offer referrals for legal or rental assistance, or to provide mediation for landlord and tenant issues. If you've got a question about landlord or tenant rights in Orange County, they're our best (and only?) dedicated resource on this topic to hit up.

201 S. Rosalind Ave., [ocfl.net](https://ocfl.net)





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# Legislative Updates

- **Rental Notices Ordinance (Ordinance No. 2022-27)**
  - 60-days notice required for non-renewal of monthly and quarterly tenancies
  - 60-days notice required for rental increase of more than 5%
- **Tenant's Bill of Rights Ordinance (Ordinance No. 2023-06)**
  - Notice of Tenant Rights
  - List of Tenant Fees
  - Created the Office of Tenant Services



# Legislative Updates

- **Florida House Bill 1417 preempts the County from regulating residential tenancies and the landlord-tenant relationship**
- **H.B. 1417 amends Chapter 83, Florida Statutes, to require:**
  - **30 days notice to terminate a monthly tenancy**
  - **Rental agreements with a specific duration to provide a minimum of 30 days and a maximum of 60 days notice of non-renewal**



# Legislative Updates

- **H.B. 1417 preempts the County's ability to enforce the Rental Notices Ordinance and the Tenant's Bill of Rights Ordinance**
  - **The following are no longer enforceable:**
    - **60-days notice for non-renewal of monthly and quarterly tenancies**
    - **60-days notice for rental increases of more than 5%**
    - **Notice of Tenant Rights**
    - **List of Tenant Fees**
  - **Does not preempt the County's creation of the Office**



# Legislative Updates

- **H.B. 1417's impact on the Office's operations:**
  - **Notice of Tenant Rights and List of Tenant Fees**
    - Documents to become a best practice for landlords
  - **The Office has issued no citations for either ordinance to date**
  - **The Office's materials have been updated to reflect state preemption**
  - **The County Attorney's Office is evaluating any necessary changes to the Code**
  - **There is no State agency identified in Ch. 83 for enforcement:**
    - Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services accepts some complaints
    - Section 83.54, Florida Statutes, states enforcement is by civil action
    - The Office will continue to refer qualified tenants to Legal Aid Society



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- **The Office of Tenant Services has engaged 10,092 Orange County residents regarding tenant/landlord issues**
- **Outreach & Education to tenants/landlords remains a priority through partnerships and collaborations throughout the County**
- **Preemption of the Tenant's Bill of Rights/Rental Notices Ordinance does not impact the Office's ability to assist the community; it only removes the Office's ability to enforce the ordinances with civil citations**
- **Pivot to create a best practices toolbox for landlords and tenants with items such as the List of Tenant Fees and Notice of Tenant Rights**