



First-in-Time Applicant Screening

On August 8, the Seattle City Council unanimously passed legislation directed at rental housing within the City of Seattle. The legislation (1) expanded source of income protections, (2) prohibited preferred employer programs, (3) mandated acceptance of community pledges prior to the expiration of a 3-day notice to pay or vacate, and (4) created a first of its kind, First-In-Time policy.

Described in more detail below, the law requires a housing provider to screen the first applicant that provides a completed application to the housing provider and offer tenancy to that applicant, if the applicant qualifies per the pre-determined screening criteria.

- All advertising of an available apartment home on any website must include direct access to the screening criteria. The Office of Civil Rights has determined by rule, that the website may include full text or a hyperlink to the required information. The hyperlink must be obvious on the website and must take the applicant directly to the screening criteria.
- The Housing provider's screening criteria must include the following:
 - What may result in denial;
 - The *minimum qualifications* needed by the applicant to be offered tenancy;
 - Any additional or different criteria used if an individualized assessment is used;
 - All information, documentation and other submissions necessary to complete applicant screening (including those documents associated with an individualized assessment); and
 - How to request additional time to complete the application on account of a request for a reasonable accommodation or because of a request for meaningful access.
- The housing provider must indicate the date and time the housing provider received the completed application from the applicant.
- Applications must be screened in the order they are received. If, after screening the applicant, the housing provider needs more information (i.e. conditional approval), the housing provider may request additional information by telephone, in writing, or in person and must provide at least 72 hours for the applicant to provide the information.
- The housing provider must provide qualified applicants with 48 hours to accept any offer.
- An applicant may request additional time to complete an application or request meaningful access. Meaningful access is defined as the need to obtain language translation assistance. The housing provider is not required to provide language translation services.
 - The housing provider may request reasonable documentation to support a request for meaningful access with the completed application. Requests for reasonable accommodations are governed by the Federal Fair Housing Act.