



What's Changed with TOPA

Late last year, the Council of the District of Columbia passed Mayor Muriel Bowser's landmark RENTAL Act. During the bill's consideration, DCAR led the charge to ensure that the needs of small housing providers were considered and addressed. We advocated relentlessly for months through public hearings, messaging campaigns, and in offices and meeting rooms to build and sustain a coalition for positive change for our industry.

With the Mayor's leadership and the Council's support, the final bill reflected a huge victory for our members and for housing affordability and availability across the District. The law took effect on December 31st and included numerous critical changes to the law, including significant changes in the Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA) which are intended to:

- **Narrow TOPA**
 - Owners of buildings with fewer than four housing units are exempt from TOPA if they are not a business corporation.
 - New housing is exempt from TOPA for 15 years after receiving a permanent certificate of occupancy.
 - Certain transfers of ownership interest that allow the exit of limited partners or investor members with a minority interest are exempt from TOPA.
 - Transfers of property owned by the DC Housing Authority or by certain health, religious, and educational institutions are exempt from TOPA.
 - TOPA rights are not vested in tenants who begin occupying the property after the issuance of an offer of sale.
 - Housing providers whose property transfers are otherwise exempt from TOPA must provide a notice of transfer to tenants 45 days before the transfer.
- **Incentivize TOPA Sales to Qualified Purchasers**
 - The Mayor must certify certain pre-approved developers as qualified purchasers of TOPA rights.
 - TOPA sales to qualified purchasers are exempt from deed tax.
- **Support Tenants Remaining Under TOPA**
 - Tenant organizations may not assign their purchase rights to a third party for 45 days after receiving an offer of sale unless they have received training on their rights and filed documentation with DHCD.
 - Individuals and organizations contacting tenant organizations or tenants related to a TOPA transaction must make certain disclosures.
 - Tenant support providers who counsel tenants or first-time homeowners must be certified by the Mayor and provided with TOPA offers of sale.
 - TOPA notices must now include a list of certified tenant support providers.
 - Secondary assignments of tenant TOPA rights are restricted.
 - Interference with tenant TOPA rights is prohibited.
 - Tenants who file civil actions for coercion, retaliation, or fraud under TOPA may recover double interest and attorney's fees.
- **Increase Transparency and Consistency of TOPA**
 - TOPA agreements or purchase contracts must be filed with DHCD.
 - DHCD must create optional standard templates for purchase contracts.
 - A TOPA transparency portal to track TOPA offers of sale, timelines, and outcomes must be created.

What is Next

Taken together, these reforms will accelerate housing investment in the District and unlock more housing inventory for our residents. That said, implementation is ongoing, and DHCD must update the necessary forms and procedures. DCAR stands ready to partner in this work. In the meantime, when navigating transactions, it is critical to ensure compliance with the new requirements, work closely with your title company as processes are updated, and maintain good records.

What an Insightful Conversation at the DCAR YPN 2026 Economic Outlook & Sphere of Influence Event!



"It was clear that NAR is not only watching economic trends but also paying close attention to social media conversations. As a real estate community, we need to be thoughtful about what we share and ask ourselves: is it actually helpful?"

While information may be factual, is it helping solve a problem? For example, instead of simply stating the average age of a first-time homebuyer, offer your perspective and a solution.

Words matter. Real estate agents help drive a major part of our economy, and your voice is incredibly valuable to both your clients and the community. As a speaker on social media trends and lead generation, I'm honored to be part of this local conversation."
- Samantha Tunador, Loan Officer at Atlantic Coast Mortgage

"Joining DC REALTORS® was a joy - the members were engaged, asked thoughtful questions, and brought great energy around the DC spring real estate market."
- Jessica Lautz, Deputy Chief Economist and Vice President of Research at the National Association of REALTORS®

DCAR Stands for Fair Housing Solutions!



As highlighted in "Washington DC housing crisis impacting tenants and landlords" by WJLA, the city's housing system is under serious strain.

This is why DCAR fights for common-sense reforms, like those in the RENTAL Act - and why we keep pushing every day to ensure small housing providers are treated fairly.

[Read the story here >](#)

Cornhole Social with DCAR & GCAAR YPN

Join DCAR and GCAAR YPN for a rooftop cornhole social!

Toss some bags, enjoy drinks and skyline views, and connect with fellow real estate pros in a little friendly competition. All are welcome!



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