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HOUSING
Special Edition



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PHOTO BY DANNY PETERSON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Community Alliance of Tenants Executive Director Katrina Holland (second from right) and members of her staff reach out to explain new tenant and landlord laws in Portland and statewide while advocating for low-income tenants and other people renting homes and apartments. The other CAT team members pictured (from left) are Thuy Phan, Dung Ho, Violeta Alvarez and Ostin Merkle-Lawler.

Renter Rights in Focus

Alliance reaches out to explain new rules, regulations

BY DANNY PETERSON
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Tenant and landlord laws have undergone some dramatic changes both in Portland and statewide. To help navigate the recent changes, the Portland Observer sat down with Katrina Holland, executive director of Community Alliance of Tenants, a membership-driven organization focusing on tenant rights, housing education and advocacy.

Most of the new laws and regulations lean toward more protections for renters, both in the city and statewide, a “positive direction,” according to Holland. One of the biggest changes in state law came with the passage of Senate Bill 608. The housing legislation put limits on rent increases and the use of no cause eviction notices.

“A tenant whose occupancy has been at least a year or longer will be protected from no cause terminations in the

sense that a landlord will no longer be able to just say all right you’re done...that won’t exist anymore. Now they actually have to provide a reason,” Holland said.

Valid reasons for eviction can now include a tenant violating a lease agreement, but for which a landlord is compelled to provide notice to the tenant each time that occurs, Holland added.

There are also new landlord-based causes for termination of a lease, which include the landlord intending to demolish or remove the unit from the market, plans for the landlord to move into it, or if a family member of the landlord is moving in. There could also be cause for termination of the lease if the property is determined to be uninhabitable, or a person who purchased the property from the landlord decides to move in.

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