

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 34 OF THE CITY CODE TO CREATE A LANDLORD EDUCATION AND RESOURCE AWARENESS PROGRAM

#0174

Sponsor:

Council
Member
Darby

WHEREAS, the City of Wilmington continues to face ongoing challenges with unlicensed rental units, absentee and unresponsive landlords, and repeated code violations that endanger tenants; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of this legislation is to promote the safe and healthy housing for City residents who rent, and to engage and assist landlords in complying with the City Code; and

WHEREAS, establishing a landlord education and accountability program will strengthen relationships between the City and landlords by combining supportive education, clear expectations, and mandatory corrective intervention for noncompliant landlords while ensuring a suitable, livable rental housing stock for City tenants; and

WHEREAS, City Council deems it necessary and appropriate to amend Chapter 34 of the City Code to effectuate the aforementioned changes.

**NOW, THEREFORE, THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WILMINGTON
HEREBY ORDAINS:**

SECTION 1. Chapter 34 of the City Code is hereby amended by creating a new Section 34-68 by adding the underlined language to read as follows:

Sec. 34-68. Landlord Education and Resource Awareness Program.

(a) The department of licenses and inspections shall create and maintain a landlord education and resource awareness program.

(b) Program components. The program shall consist of written guides and brochures summarizing city, state, and federal resources available to landlords including, but not limited to:

- i. Housing repair funds;
- ii. Utility bill assistance programs;
- iii. Repair/rehabilitation programs; and
- iv. Code compliance assistance

(c) Dedicated webpage. The department is hereby ordered to create an online resource hub that lists all landlord-related programs, applications, incentives, and compliance information.

(d) Workshops and Training. The department shall develop and present quarterly educational workshops or training to inform landlords about available resources, law changes, and best practices for property management.

a. Mandatory Training. Training for landlords shall be mandatory if any of the following are met:

- i. Three (3) or more substantiated violations involving health, safety, or habitability; or
- ii. One (1) major violation involving unsafe or unsanitary conditions;

b. The department will forward names of non-compliant landlords to the law department for possible legal action and the department of finance for rental business license review.

(e) Annual fair. The department also shall host an annual event to connect landlords with city staff, nonprofit organizations, and state partners offering grants, loans, and housing assistance programs.

(f) Reporting. The department shall provide an annual report to City

Council detailing:

- i. The number of landlords reached through the program;
- ii. The types of materials produced and distributed;
- iii. Attendance at workshops and improvements; and
- iv. Recommendations for improvement

SECTION 2. Chapter 34 of the City Code is hereby amended by renumbering certain reserved sections thereof by deleting the stricken language and adding in the underlined language to read as follows:

Secs. 34-689–34-85. Reserved.

SECTION 3. This Ordinance shall become effective immediately after its passage by City Council and approval by the Mayor.

First Reading.....February 5, 2026
Second Reading....February 5, 2026
Third Reading.....

Passed by City Council,

President of City Council

ATTEST: _____
City Clerk

Approved as to form this ____ day
of February 2026

Assistant City Solicitor

Approved this ____ day of _____, 2026

Mayor

SYNOPSIS: This Ordinance requires the department of licenses and inspections to create a Landlord Education and Resource Awareness Program.

FISCAL IMPACT: The Office of Management & Budget (OMB) has reviewed and analyzed the proposed ordinance requiring the Department of Licenses and Inspections (L&I) to establish, maintain, and report on a Landlord Education and Resource Awareness Program.

The ordinance would create new, ongoing operational responsibilities for L&I that extend beyond activities currently mandated by the City Charter and City Code. OMB worked closely with L&I, Finance, and IT to assess the structural and operational changes necessary to meet the ordinance's requirements and determined that they exceed the Department's existing staffing and resource capacity. Implementation would require dedicated personnel, operating funds, and contractual support to carry out content development, public outreach, website and resource hub management, workshops, an annual landlord fair, and annual reporting.

The estimated total annual fiscal impact is approximately \$181,000. This includes \$75,225 for one new Administrative Clerk I position; \$10,000 for staff overtime; \$30,000 for technology and web development (including first-year buildout and ongoing support, subject to IT review); \$27,000 for printing, outreach, and translation services; \$32,000 for quarterly workshops and an annual landlord fair; and \$7,000 for reporting and data tools.

Because the ordinance establishes ongoing programmatic obligations rather than one-time activities, a substantial portion of these costs would be recurring. Absent additional funding and staffing, implementation would require the diversion of existing L&I enforcement personnel, which would negatively affect inspection, licensing, and code enforcement operations.

While the Landlord Education and Resource Awareness Program may generate long-term cost avoidance through improved compliance and reduced repeat violations, any such savings are not immediately quantifiable.