

What are Fair Rent Commissions?

- For more than 50 years, Connecticut cities & towns have been permitted to set up Fair Rent Commissions (FRCs)
- An FRC is a municipal board with the power to limit or modify rent increases and other rental charges so as to prevent them from being so "excessive" that they're "harsh and unconscionable".
- Most tenants have no practical way to challenge an unfair rent increase unless they live in a town with a fair rent commission.
- An FRC functions as the conscience of the community regarding rental charges and increases. Commissioners are ordinary residents of the town, not experts.



What else does a Fair Rent Commission do?

- An FRC buttresses housing code enforcement
 - FRC can delay or deny rent increases or reduce rental charges if the landlord fails to maintain the property in compliance with the housing code.
- An FRC can help resolve many landlord-tenant disagreements, often without a hearing



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What are Fair Rent Commissions for?

- FRCs provide rent stabilization to tenants who already live in an apartment based on tenant complaints about
 - unfair rent increases
 - bad conditions or a reduction in services (e.g. rent is unfair given rats, mold, & broken elevator)
 - · landlord retaliation
- Under state law, any tenant can complain unless they live in a seasonal rental
- Tenant complains → informal conciliation → possible investigation → hearing → DECISION



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What can Fair Rent Commissions do?

- FRC decisions are flexible, and can include:
 - no rent increase
 - delayed or staggered rent increase
 - rent reduction
 - lowering or escrowing the rent until repairs are made
 - · allowing the rent increase to go forward
 - ordering the landlord to cease retaliatory conduct



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What can Fair Rent Commissions consider?

- The state law lists 13 factors for the FRC to look at if applicable, but not all have to given equal weight (and the FRC can consider other relevant factors). The main factors are:
 - Size and history of rent increases
 - Landlord's operating costs
 - Tenant's income and availability of alternative housing
 - Condition of the apartment and complex, including whether it's substandard
 - · What's included in the rent
 - Comparable rents in the neighborhood and town



FRC Complaints in Practice

- Tenant files a complaint. Landlord and tenant both get notice and information about the process, last agreed upon rent to be paid in the interim, & examples of prohibited retaliation
- If appropriate, staff arrange for housing code/health code inspection
- Staff may attempt to conciliate the complaint
- FRC may consolidate similar or overlapping complaints in the same complex or against the same landlord for a hearing
- Model suggests hearing scheduled within 30 days, with 10 days notice



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Fair Rent Commission Hearings

- Municipalities have flexibility, but often
 - Commissioners get copies before the hearing of evidence submitted by the parties or collected by the town (like housing inspection reports)
 - A chair runs the hearing and swears in the parties and witnesses
 - Interpretation is provided to anyone with limited English proficiency
 - Town staff or the town attorney are on hand to provide guidance
 - The commissioners asks questions of the parties and witnesses, and then give the parties a chance for examination or cross examination
 - The commissioners deliberate, come to a decision, and deliver an oral decision at the hearing
 - Staff write up the decision after the hearing, get approval from the chair or the commission, and send it to the parties



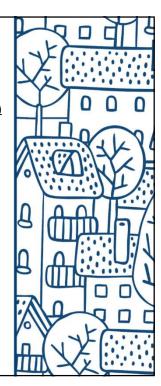
Towns with Fair Rent Commissions

MANDATORY (45)

Branford* Groton New London* Stratford* Bridgeport Hamden New Milford* Torrington* Bristol* Hartford Trumbull* Newington Cheshire* Manchester Newtown* Vernon* Danbury Mansfield* Norwalk Wallingford* East Hartford* Meriden* Norwich* Waterbury* East Haven* Middletown* Ridgefield* West Hartford Enfield Milford* Shelton* West Haven Fairfield* South Windsor* Westport* Naugatuck* New Britain Southington* Wethersfield Farmington Glastonbury New Haven Stamford Windsor

NON-MANDATORY (7)

Bloomfield
Clinton
Colchester
Killingworth
Rocky Hill
Simsbury
Westbrook



* = Town newly-required to have a fair rent commission by P.A. 22-30

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Greenwich*

Fair Rent Commissions by Region

Greater Hartford (17) Greater New Haven (8) Greater Waterbury (3) Central CT (3) Bloomfield Branford* Naugatuck* Meriden* Bristol* Cheshire* Southington* Middletown*

Bristol* Cheshire*
East Hartford* Clinton
Enfield East Haven*
Farmington Hamden
Glastonbury Milford*
Hartford New Haven
Manchester West Haven
New Britain
Newington
Rocky Hill Greater Bridge

Simsbury

South Windsor*

West Hartford

Wethersfield

Windsor

Cheshire* Southington*
Clinton Waterbury*

East Haven* Lower Fairfield County (8)

Hamden Danbury S

Milford* Greenwich*

Danbury Greenwich* New Milford* Newtown* Norwalk Ridgefield* Stamford

Killingworth
New London*
Norwich*
Westbrook

Northeastern CT (3)

Wallingford*

Southeastern CT (5)

Groton

Greater Bridgeport (5) Bridgeport

Fairfield*
Shelton*
Stratford*
Trumbull*

Northwestern CT (1)

Torrington*

Westport*

Colchester Mansfield*

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