

## Tenants With Substandard Housing Have An Ally

Megan Burks' recent article in Speak City Heights doesn't tell the whole story. Yes, the City is in violation of HUD requirements to fund fair housing counselors. But these counselors help fight against housing discrimination based on race, marital status, and the like. Nevertheless, tenants have a strong ally in their fight for decent housing in Affordable Housing Advocates' Tenants Rights Project (TRP).

The TRP is based in City Heights and serves tenants in need throughout the City of San Diego. Although the TRP helps individual tenants, their main focus is working with groups of tenants to fight for better code enforcement. The problems identified in Burks' article- the City's failure to abate infestations and mold, are true. But the reasons the Neighborhood Code Compliance Department (NCCD) gave for this failure are not. The City has a duty to enforce all minimum health and safety standards, including the abatement of infestations and every plumbing leak that causes mold. The problem is they don't.

Frustrated by the lack of action on the part of NCCD, the TRP did a recent Public Records Act request and reviewed all NCCD housing case files, from the last fiscal year, for City Heights. The results confirmed that NCCD rarely enforces any housing codes, and substandard living conditions remain prevalent. See the breakdown of these finding below.

Because they receive no federal funding, AHA is the only legal services organization engaged in advocacy work to fight for better code enforcement. Their doors are open from 9 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday, and staff speak English, Spanish and Vietnamese. Free legal services are available to low income tenants, regardless of documentation. For more information and to apply for services call 619-233-8441, or go to their storefront office in the City Heights Center at 4305 University Avenue, Suite 110.

## Tenants' Rights Project - NCCD Public Records Act Request

Affordable Housing Advocates' Tenants' Rights Project did a PRA request to the City of San Diego's Neighborhood Code Compliance Department (NCCD) and reviewed their housing case files in zip codes 92105 and 92115 for fiscal year 7/1/2010-6/30/2011. The Following is a breakdown of the cases.

Type of Building Inspected:	Total: 85
36 Multi-Family	
42 Single Family	
4 Commercial	
3 Other/unknown	

Complainant:	Total: 85
45 Tenant	
19 Neighbor	
12 Unknown/ Not reflected in file	
8 Other City Agencies	
1 LL	

Complaint Classification:	Total: 85
32 Structural Deficiencies (leaks, heat, habitability, garage conversion)	
24 Occupied Unpermitted Structures (garage conversions, lived-in trailers/motor homes)	
14 Plumbing Deficiencies	
9 Mechanical Deficiencies	
3 Electrical Deficiencies	
2 Fire Prevention	
1 Pool Barrier	

Citations by Type:	Total: 26
19 Administrative Warnings	
1 Administrative Citation of \$500 (illegally converted garage)	
1 Civil Penalty Notice and Order (AHA client)	
5 Voluntary Compliance Letter	

Percentage of Cases with:	
Tenant Complaints:	53%
Written Citations:	30%
Abatement of Substandard Conditions:	5 % (four cases)

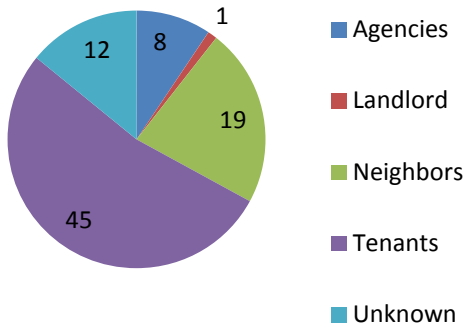
Citation Fees Collected:	\$528.83
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### General Observations:

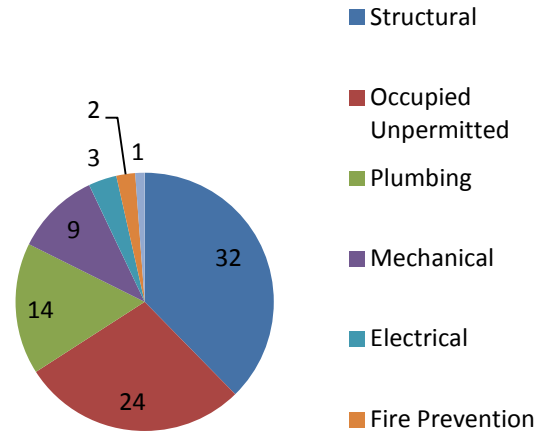
- Only four (4) files substantiate actual results/abated conditions after investigation.
- No inspection checklist is used.
- Inspectors' notes are not detailed.
- Many cases are opened and closed with no contact made and no inspection conducted.
- When follow-up is done, it is not timely. For example, 8 files show that complainants are gone/unit is empty at follow-up.

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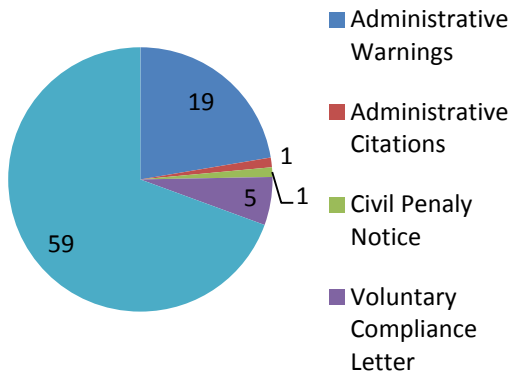
## Complainant



## Complaint Classification



## Citations



## Evidence of Abated Conditions

