

Mobile Home Rent Stabilization

This policy helps protect the affordability and stability of mobile home communities by providing rent stabilization protections. Mobile homes are disproportionately owned by low-income households and other vulnerable populations and residents are responsible for covering more expenses than typical renters, including their lot rent, mobile home loan payment, homeowner’s insurance, utilities and unit maintenance. They also have fewer relocation options if they are evicted due to the higher cost to relocate and lack of available spaces. Mobile home parks often make up a significant portion of unsubsidized affordable housing, and parks are increasingly being acquired by speculative investors.

Legal Context

What Does State Law Require?

While California’s Mobilehome Residency Law (MRL) provides protections specific to mobile home owners and residents, it does not regulate baseline rent or rent increases.

California’s Department of Housing & Community Development (HCD) administers a [Mobilehome Residency Law Protection Program](#) that allows any resident in a mobile home park to submit a complaint for violations of the MRL. Park owners are charged a registration fee of \$10 per mobile home for state program administration (a cost they may pass on to tenants). This is a limited-term program running from 2020-2027.

While Mobilehome Residency Law previously exempted “new construction” from local mobile home rent stabilization laws, SB 940 (2022) limits this exemption to 15 years. Additionally, SB 940 creates a distinction between mobile home parks and mobile home spaces. For individual mobile home spaces within an existing mobile home park, “new construction” is newly constructed spaces “initially rented” after January 1, 1990. For mobile home parks, “new construction” is all spaces in a newly constructed mobile home park for which the permit to operate is first issued on or after January 1, 2023.

At-A-Glance

RELEVANT STATE LAWS

[California Civil Code Sections 798 - 799.12](#)

[California Health and Safety Code, part 2.2, commencing with section 18800](#)

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE

- Program registration fees
- Rental registration fees

COST

Rent stabilization programs can be budget neutral by adding an annual fee on stabilized units.

ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN

 Medium

Staff capacity needed for program design, leading public and legislative processes and monitoring and enforcement. While passing the ordinance can require significant staff time, running the program is often a low lift.

WHICH P?

Protection

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

- Mobile Home Park Associations
- Nonprofit Service Providers
- Legal Aid Groups
- Tenant Advocacy Organizations

OPTION FOR TOC POLICY COMPLIANCE?

Yes!



The Costa-Hawkins Rental Housing Act does not restrict mobile home rent stabilization, so it is possible to implement local vacancy control. The Tenant Protections Act of 2019 does not protect mobile home parks.

How Can Jurisdictions Implement Programs That Go Beyond State Law?

Jurisdictions can adopt a mobile home rent stabilization ordinance and enforcement

program or incorporate protections specific to mobile home residents into an existing rent stabilization program. Additionally, local programs can provide education and require park owners to share information with residents, ensure an accessible, safe and effective reporting process for residents to report a violation of the rent stabilization ordinance and provide support services for both mobile home park owners and residents.

Program Design, Implementation and Evaluation Considerations

The callout box below labeled “TOC Policy Requirements” describes the policy features necessary for a jurisdiction to receive credit toward TOC Policy compliance. All other policy features discussed in this document represent details found in existing policies on the subject and a jurisdiction may want to consider them when adopting or implementing a policy, but nothing is required for TOC Policy compliance unless noted as a requirement in the “TOC Policy Requirements” callout box or the [TOC Policy Administrative Guidance](#).

Elements of the Program

- Define eligible circumstances for relocation
An ordinance that limits annual rent increases and provides a process for enforcement
- Outreach, education and support for both park owners and residents
- Program enforcement and monitoring

Program Design Considerations

Jurisdictions may want to consider the following:

INITIAL ANALYSIS: Data on existing rental housing and mobile home stock can help determine how to structure the program, and identify displacement trends and vulnerable populations.

ORDINANCE: Rent stabilization policies must be adopted through a local ordinance. Establishing program parameters for mobile home rent stabilization within the same ordinance may support effective implementation and enforcement.

PROTECTION FOR ALL RESIDENTS: Mobile home residents typically own their homes and

rent the lots where the homes are located. However, some residents also rent the mobile homes themselves. Jurisdictions can ensure policy language and support services provide protections for all residents.

BASE RENT: Base rent is typically set based on rent charged at a certain date for each mobile home, rent charged at the start of tenancy, or an amount set by the jurisdiction as the base amount for all mobile homes. Variations in base rent may be set to account for mobile home size, age and other factors.

RENT INCREASE LIMITS: Typically one increase is allowed per year, but jurisdictions may choose a timeframe appropriate to local context. Increase amounts are typically set by one or more of:

- 100% or less of CPI
- A cap of 5% or less
- Capped banked increases (previous increases that were allowed but not charged) of 10%
- Roll back rent for situations where current rent charged exceeds amounts allowed given the effective date of base rent

VACANCY CONTROL: Limiting the amount that rent can be increased for new tenants in a mobile home park to ensure rent stability even if tenancy changes. This can apply to a new tenancy of a space or new tenancy of a mobile home, typically set to an increase limited to 100% of CPI.

NOTIFICATIONS: Requiring park owners to notify residents regarding rent increases, local law, and support services.

MOBILE HOME OWNERSHIP COSTS: Base rent and allowable increases set by rent stabilization can account for costs beyond rental of lot space, such as unit maintenance, insurance and mortgage payments.

RESIDENT PETITION PROCESS: Providing a process for residents to report a violation or request a lowered rent increase based on code violations, service reductions, undue hardship and other considerations. This process can align with other local protection programs and can provide accessible resources in multiple languages, with a contact person for support services.

PARK OWNER PETITION PROCESS: Providing a process for park owners to request a rent increase adjustment to maintain a fair rate of return based on operating expenses, to account for capital improvements with limits set to prevent undue hardship for residents or for waiver of penalties for noncompliance.

REGISTRATION PROCESS AND DATABASE: Requiring that park owners register properties and report vacancies and rent increases. Typically registration updates are required yearly.

FEES: Setting registration fees to cover program costs, typically charged to park owners as part of a yearly registration update process. Jurisdictions can decide whether a portion of fees can be passed to residents.

Program Implementation, Administration and Enforcement

If there is an existing or planned jurisdiction-wide rent stabilization ordinance, the jurisdiction can combine efforts with existing staff and infrastructure. However, depending on the number of affected mobile home parks, jurisdictions may need to hire additional staff to administer the program and ensure effective ongoing outreach. Jurisdictions can consider investing in third party services to establish a database for program management.

Community partners can reduce the burden on staff capacity and department budgets while improving program reach and accessibility. Organizations specializing in advocacy for tenants can assist with outreach, especially to vulnerable populations.

Jurisdictions may want to define the types and levels of penalty for noncompliance, including unlawful rent increase, failure to register or failure to provide notices. This can include fines, additional rent increase limitations or additional rent rollback.

To ensure program effectiveness, it's important that jurisdictions establish an oversight mechanism, typically through a new or existing tenant commission or rent board.

Jurisdictions can ensure a robust outreach and education effort targeted to both park owners and residents, providing clear information outlining local law, program requirements, support services and noncompliance penalties. Jurisdictions can plan for regular, culturally appropriate outreach efforts to keep new park owners and residents informed. Information can be made accessible through city websites, template forms and both web and paper materials in multiple languages.

Program Evaluation

In evaluating Mobile Home Rent Stabilization programs, jurisdictions can analyze whether residents experience a decrease in the housing instability caused by rent increases and whether reporting and petition mechanisms are easily accessible and utilized by mobile home residents.



TOC Policy Requirements: To comply with TOC policy, jurisdictions must:

Establish a mobile home rent stabilization ordinance that includes:

- Maximum annual rent increases for both space/lot rent and mobile homes as ONE of the following:
 - A flat rate increase of up to 5% or less
 - A maximum allowable rent increase of 100% of CPI or less
 - Some combination of these two standards (e.g., a maximum annual rent increase limited to 60% of CPI or 5%, whichever is lower)
- Vacancy control within constitutional limits
- A local enforcement mechanism (such as a rent board or administrative hearing) that allows mobile home residents to dispute rent increases that exceed legally allowed maximums

Submit documentation for:

- The presence of at least one mobile home park within the jurisdiction
- The processes for enforcing maximum allowable rent increases and deciding disputes regarding rent increases

Complementary Policies

RENT STABILIZATION: Rent stabilization restricts annual rent increases jurisdiction-wide, often in combination with additional tenant protections.

MOBILE HOME PRESERVATION: Mobile home preservation policies help preserve existing stock of mobile homes, which represent a distinct type of naturally occurring affordable housing.

JUST CAUSE EVICTION PROGRAMS: Jurisdictions can extend Just Cause protections to mobile home residents to provide additional protections and prevent retaliation.

LEGAL ASSISTANCE FOR TENANTS: Legal Assistance programs can help ensure that tenants have legal support to address unlawful rent increases and other violations of legal protections.

Other Resources

EXAMPLES*

As of May 2024, approximately 90 cities and 10 counties in California had mobile home “space rent stabilization ordinances” in effect, including Novato, San Rafael, East Palo Alto, Concord, Los Gatos, Mountain View and San José.

[City of Mountain View - Rent Stabilization Program](#)

City of Los Gatos - [Partners with nonprofit Project Sentinel](#) to help administer the program.

OTHER RESOURCES

[California HCD Mobilehome Residency Law Protection Program](#)

[California Mobile Home Park Home Owners Allegiance on MRL](#)

[California Mobile Home Park Home Owners Allegiance on Rent Stabilization](#)

[Western Manufactured Housing Communities Association](#)

[Golden State Manufactured-home Owners League](#)

[Metropolitan Transportation Commission - Protection Policy 9: Mobile Home Rent Stabilization](#)

**Note that examples have not been vetted for full TOC Compliance.*

This document is intended to provide general information and does not constitute legal advice. Additional facts, facts specific to a particular situation, or future developments may affect the subjects discussed in this document. Seek the advice of your jurisdiction’s legal counsel before acting or relying upon this information. For specific questions regarding TOC compliance, please reach out to TOCpolicy@bayareametro.gov.