

# A Rent Control Report for the District of Columbia

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## OVERVIEW

This report summarizes the work of NeighborhoodInfo DC in compiling a list of residential properties potentially subject to rent control regulation in the District of Columbia. The *D.C. Rent Stabilization Program* (“rent control”), as it is officially known, is one of the city’s longest established and most significant policies for maintaining affordable housing in the city. Owners of housing units covered by rent control are restricted in the frequency and amount by which they can adjust monthly rents. The law also requires landlords to give tenants adequate notification of rent increases and provides for an appeals process for tenants who believe that rents have been raised improperly.

Not all rental units in the city are subject to rent control, however. The Act includes several exclusions and exemptions from rent control, including those for subsidized housing and for small landlords owning fewer than five units. Despite its importance, at present there is no definitive list or database of properties subject to rent control. This report describes the steps taken to prepare a database of all properties potentially covered by the *D.C. Rent Stabilization Program*, along with basic characteristics of those properties (such as size and location) and their owners.

The report starts with a basic overview of rent control in the District of Columbia. It then discusses the data sources that we used in compiling the database of rent-controlled properties, the methods used to identify properties subject to rent control, and the limitations of the data and methods. Based on this work, our initial estimate is that there are currently 4,818 properties with 79,145 housing units potentially subject to rent control regulation in the city. In the final section, we describe the characteristics and locations of rent-controlled units in the city.

While we have attempted to be as complete and accurate as possible in compiling this database, we use the qualifier, “potentially subject to D.C. rent control regulation,” because, as is discussed below, it is not possible to construct a definitive list of rent control properties from current electronic records alone. Nevertheless, this database is an important and significant step forward in a better understanding and tracking of rent control in the District of Columbia.

### Rent Control in the District of Columbia<sup>1</sup>

Rent control was established under D.C. law as part of the Rental Housing Act of 1985 (DC Law 6-10) as amended (the Act), which is codified as DC Official Code §42-3501.01 et seq.<sup>2</sup> Additional regulations implementing rent control are enacted under D.C. Municipal Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 4200 et seq.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Information in this section was taken from D.C. Department of Housing and Community Development, “What You Should Know about Rent Control in the District of Columbia,” <http://www.dhcd.dc.gov/dhcd/lib/dhcd/services/rental/rentcontlfs7.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> The complete Act can be read at <http://government.westlaw.com/linkedslice/default.asp?rs=gvt1.0&vr=2.0&sp=dcc-1000>.



The Rental Accommodations Division (RAD), which is part of the D.C. Department of Housing and Community Development's (DHCD) Housing Regulation Administration (HRA), is responsible for administering the Act.<sup>4</sup> The head of RAD is the rent administrator.

The Act sets forth the conditions under which rental housing units are subject to, excluded from, or exempt from rent control regulation. Every housing accommodation or rental unit must be registered with RAD by filing a RAD Registration/Claim of Exemption Form. Once registered, the housing accommodation or rental unit is assigned a registration number if it is subject to rent control. If it is exempt, it is assigned an exemption number. If a housing accommodation was initially exempt from the Act but later becomes subject to the Act, the housing provider must amend the form at that time. Changes in ownership require housing providers to complete the Basic Business License and registration process within thirty (30) days. In addition, changes in management must be reported on an Amended Registration Form and filed with RAD within 30 days of the event.

Under the Act, housing under rent control regulation is subject to restrictions on rent increases. The default limit on rent increases (also referred to as "automatic" increases) for occupied units is based on changes in the Consumer Price Index (CPI-W), as published by the Rental Housing Commission.<sup>5</sup> For most tenants, the largest amount that their current rent can be adjusted is the CPI-W percentage plus 2 percent, but not more than 10 percent. For elderly or disabled tenants (who have filed the requisite form with RAD), the maximum increase is the CPI-W percentage only, but not more than 5 percent. Larger automatic rent increases (vacancy increases) are permitted when a housing unit becomes vacant and is leased to a new tenant.

In addition to the automatic increases described above, a housing provider may request larger allowable increases under other provisions of the Act. Justifications for larger rent increases include hardship, capital improvements, services and facilities, substantial rehabilitation, or a voluntary agreement with 70 percent of the tenants. The housing provider must petition or otherwise seek the consent of the rent administrator. Tenants may choose to participate in the process, often at hearings before an administrative hearing judge.

For housing subject to rent control, adjustments in rent amounts are only permitted once every 12 months and tenants must receive a minimum of 30 days notification of proposed increases. A tenant who challenges a rent adjustment may file a tenant petition with RAD. Tenants may also appeal RAD decisions on housing provider petitions to a separate, three-member Rental Housing Commission.

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<sup>3</sup> The complete set of regulations can be read at <http://os.dc.gov/os/cwp/view,a,1206,q,522357,osNav,%7C31374%7C.asp>.

<sup>4</sup> HRA was transferred from the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs to DHCD, effective October 1, 2007.

<sup>5</sup> For more information on the CPI, see <http://www.bls.gov/cpi>.



## **Rent Control Property Database**

As noted, the purpose of this study was to create a database of all residential properties potentially subject to rent control regulation in the District of Columbia. The database was compiled using electronic administrative databases on real property, housing unit addresses, and assisted housing. These separate databases were combined to assemble the information needed to identify properties that should be included and excluded from rent control.

The final database consists of a list of 9,352 rental properties, primarily multifamily, in the District of Columbia. Each property has separate fields to identify whether particular rent control exclusions or exemptions apply to that property, as well as a field to identify properties potentially subject to rent control—4,818 properties with 79,145 units in total. In addition, other characteristics are provided in the database, such as property location (by address, Ward, Census tract, and other geographical identifiers), size (number of units), and owner information.

We emphasize that this database does not comprise a definitive list of rent-controlled properties in the District of Columbia. While we were able to use data sources to identify several criteria needed to determine whether a property should be subject to rent control regulation, not all of the Act’s specifications, such as the date of building permit issuance or whether the property has been continuously vacant since January 1, 1985, are reported in current electronic records. Furthermore, property owners must file with RAD to claim an exemption from rent control, and we had no data to determine whether such claims were filed. If no exemption was claimed, a property would be subject to rent control regulation even if it were eligible for an exemption.

Therefore, the next steps in completing this database would be a manual review of the properties included and excluded to see if other exemptions apply or if the appropriate exemptions were claimed. This review would most likely need to rely on paper records filed with DHCD and other city agencies. Such a manual review was not part of the scope of this study.

## **DATA SOURCES**

There is no single data source that contains all of the information needed to enumerate all of the rent-controlled properties in the District of Columbia. Therefore, we had to rely on multiple data sources to compile the database of properties potentially subject to rent control.

### **Real Property and CAMA Files**

The real property file is maintained by the D.C. Office of Tax and Revenue (OTR) and contains data on all real property parcels in the District of Columbia. According to the file documentation, “This dataset is used by the DC Real Property Tax Administration (RPTA) to facilitate analysis and mapping of real property features within the District of Columbia.... In conjunction with scanned tax maps, the attributed



property points provide a means to locate, map, and analyze real property lots within the District.”<sup>6</sup> The real property data contains information on the property use, type of structure, land area, and the most recent owner. Regular updates of the real property file are made available on the DC Geographic Information System (DC GIS) Data Clearinghouse and added to the NeighborhoodInfo DC warehouse. The data used for this analysis are based on the OTR data extract from September 2010.

A companion set of property files are available from the Computer Assisted Mass Appraisal (CAMA) database. The dataset contains attribution on housing characteristics for residential properties, and was created as part of DC GIS for the D.C. Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) and participating D.C. government agencies. The CAMA files include information on the property characteristics, including the year the property was built. Regular updates of the real property file are made available on the DC Geographic Information System (DC GIS) Data Clearinghouse and added to the NeighborhoodInfo DC warehouse.

The real property and CAMA databases were linked by the unique property identification number—square, suffix, and lot (SSL).

NeighborhoodInfo DC has developed an owner classification system that examines the names listed in the real property data and categorizes them according to owner type.<sup>7</sup> This owner classification was used to implement exclusions and exemptions for particular categories of owners and is included in the final database.

### **Master Address Repository**

The Master Address Repository (MAR) database was compiled by the D.C. Office of the Chief Technology Officer. The MAR is a database of building addresses, intersections and other location identifiers in the District. Each address in the database has been assigned a unique address identification number (AID), map coordinates, and other useful information. The MAR database includes an enumeration of individual apartment addresses and a correspondence between street addresses and real property parcel identifiers.

#### *Determination of Unit Counts*

To determine the number of housing units subject to rent control in the District of Columbia, it is necessary to have unit counts for all residential properties in the city. For multifamily residential apartment buildings, we must use the unit address enumeration in the MAR database. By counting the number of apartment addresses in the same property, we can arrive at a unit count.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://dcatlas.dcgis.dc.gov/metadata/OwnerPt.html>.

<sup>7</sup> A more complete description of the owner classification methodology can be found in the “Who Owns the Neighborhood?” special section of the Winter 2007 issue of the *District of Columbia Housing Monitor* (<http://www.neighborhoodinfodc.org/housing/>).



Unfortunately, the MAR apartment address database currently does not cover all multifamily buildings in the city. To estimate unit counts for those buildings that were not covered in MAR, we created a regression model that predicted the number of units in a multifamily property based on the characteristics of that property (such as the property size). Using this method, we were able to assign unit counts for all properties in the real property database.

### **DC Preservation Catalog**

The DC Preservation Catalog is a database of rental properties in the District of Columbia with units affordable to low-income households (at or below 80 percent of the area median income) through one or more federal or local housing subsidy programs. The catalog is used by a network of government agencies and community-based organizations to track properties at risk of being lost as affordable housing and to develop strategies for preserving these units.

The Preservation Catalog was used to identify properties that are benefiting from housing subsidies.

## **SELECTION OF RENT-CONTROLLED PROPERTIES**

The above data sources were combined together to create a list of properties that are potentially subject to rent control, as described below.

### **Initial List of Multifamily Rental Properties**

Using the OTR real property database, we identified all multifamily rental properties included in the most recent parcel list (September 2010). We estimated that there are approximately 119,288 units in 9,352 primarily multifamily rental apartment buildings in the District of Columbia (table 1). We obtained this number by taking all current parcels with property use codes indicating that they were multifamily apartment buildings and matching those parcels to the OCTO MAR unit database, including estimated unit counts for properties not in the MAR unit file, as described above. This process resulted in a total of 125,636 units, but we ultimately eliminated 6,348 properties/units that were not deemed to be subject to rent control and that MAR identified as only having a single unit in them, since these would not appear to be rent-controlled multifamily properties. Table 2 shows property and unit counts by Ward.

It should be emphasized that we were not attempting to enumerate all renter-occupied housing units in the city. Our final count of rental properties and units does not include any multifamily cooperative properties or, in general, single family homes. Both of these types of properties may also be renter occupied, but we decided to restrict our analysis to the multifamily rental stock, since these constitute the vast majority of rent-controlled properties in the city. Some single-family homes were included in the final database, however, if they were deemed to be potentially subject to rent control based on other criteria. Because of these restrictions, our starting estimate of 119,288 units will be considerably smaller than other estimates of total “rental units” for the District of Columbia, such as those issued by the Census Bureau.

**Table 1. Summary of Rent Control Exclusions and Exemptions**

	Properties	Units
Total rental properties	9,352	119,288
<i>Exclusions</i>		
Nontaxable	409	14,187
Foreign-owned	1	4
<i>Exemptions</i>		
Built 1978 or later	237	10,131
Built 1976–77 <sup>a</sup>	280	11,003
Owns fewer than 5 units <sup>b</sup>	3,940	11,903
Publicly assisted	166	15,343
Government-owned	183	5,760
Total with one or more exemptions	4,370	37,299
Potentially subject to rent control <sup>c</sup>	4,818	79,145

*Source:* Authors' calculations from rent-controlled properties database.

*Notes:*

- a. Properties built 1976–77 are included in the database as possibly subject to rent control.
- b. Exemption only applies to properties owned by individuals (natural persons).
- c. Additional properties with only one housing unit and deemed not subject to rent control were removed from the database at the final stage. Such properties appear to have been improperly classified as multifamily rental in the OTR real property data.

**Table 2. Summary of Rent Control Exclusions and Exemptions by Ward**

	Properties			Units		
	Total Rental	Exempt/ Excluded	Rent Controlled	Total Rental	Exempt/ Excluded	Rent Controlled
City total	9,352	4,534	4,818	119,288	40,143	79,145
Ward 1	1,105	594	511	18,614	5,580	13,034
Ward 2	999	523	476	17,387	5,090	12,297
Ward 3	358	96	262	14,430	1,612	12,818
Ward 4	680	287	393	8,860	1,838	7,022
Ward 5	1,822	997	825	12,539	5,512	7,027
Ward 6	1,403	811	592	12,494	7,667	4,827
Ward 7	1,376	551	825	15,143	4,999	10,144
Ward 8	1,609	675	934	19,821	7,845	11,976

*Source:* Authors' calculations from rent-controlled properties database.

## Rent-Control Exclusions

The Rental Housing Act of 1985 (DC Law 6-10) as amended (the Act) recognizes several *exclusions* from consideration of rent control requirements. Properties meeting these criteria are excluded from rent control; under certain provisions the owners of these properties must seek a determination from the rent administrator. Properties not excluded from rent control may still not be subject to regulation if they meet, and the property owner successfully claims, one or more *exemptions*, detailed in the next section.

### *Properties owned by foreign governments*

The Act excludes from rent control regulation, “Any rental unit operated by a foreign government as a residence for diplomatic personnel.”<sup>8</sup>

We implemented this exclusion by identifying all rental properties with owners who were foreign governments using the NeighborhoodInfo DC property owner classification system. Only one such property was identified from our original list. This implementation does not specifically identify properties operated as a “residence for diplomatic personnel”; however, it would seem highly likely that this property fits this description.

<sup>8</sup> DC ST § 42-3502.05(e)(1).



*Care homes and dormitories*

The Act excludes from rent control regulation, “Any rental unit in an establishment which has as its primary purpose providing diagnostic care and treatment of diseases, including, but not limited to, hospitals, convalescent homes, nursing homes, and personal care homes; any dormitory.”<sup>9</sup>

Care homes, hospitals, and dormitories are automatically excluded from the initial rental properties list since they would have different property use codes than the rental properties that we selected.

*Housing operated by nonprofit charitable organizations*

The Act excludes from rent control regulation

Following a determination by the Rent Administrator, any rental unit or housing accommodation intended for use as long-term temporary housing by families with 1 or more members that satisfies each of the following requirements:

(A) The rental unit or housing accommodation is occupied by families that, at the time of their initial occupancy, have had incomes at or below 50% of the District median income for families of the size in question for the immediately preceding 12 months;

(B) The housing provider of the rental unit or housing accommodation is a nonprofit charitable organization that operates the unit or housing accommodation on a strictly not-for-profit basis under which no part of the net earnings of the housing provider inure to the benefit of or are distributable to its directors, officers, or any private individual other than as reasonable compensation for services rendered; and

(C) The housing provider offers a comprehensive social services program to resident families.<sup>10</sup>

To implement this exclusion, we identified all properties from the initial list of rental properties that had a tax exempt flag in the OTR real property database, indicating the property was exempt from real property taxes. These properties are identified as “nontaxable” in table 1.

We have no means of determining, from current data sources, whether all of these properties are being used for the purposes laid out in the exclusion requirements above. This will require subsequent manual verification.

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<sup>9</sup> DC ST § 42-3502.05(e)(2) and (3).

<sup>10</sup> DC ST § 42-3502.05(e)(4).



## Rent-Control Exemptions

Exemptions remove additional properties from those not excluded by the Act from rent control. As with exclusions, not all exemptions can be addressed by current data sources. Furthermore, as discussed above, exemptions must be claimed by the owner. Therefore, even if a property is eligible for an exemption the property may still be subject to rent control if that exemption has not been claimed.

### *Publicly owned or assisted properties*

The Act exempts from rent control regulation, “Any rental unit in any federally or District-owned housing accommodation or in any housing accommodation with respect to which the mortgage or rent is federally or District-subsidized except units subsidized under subchapter III.”<sup>11</sup> The “subsidized units under subchapter III” refers to the Tenant Assistance Program, which is similar to the federal Housing Choice Voucher program and provides payments to low-income households to assist them in renting housing units.

To identify properties subject to this exemption, we used information in the DC Preservation Catalog regarding properties that receive federal or local housing subsidies. The catalog does not include portable housing subsidies, such as Housing Choice Vouchers or the Tenant Assistance Program, which are eligible for an exemption. It also does not include certain housing subsidies, such as Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation program properties, which are not included in HUD subsidized housing databases.

### *Properties built 1978 or later*

The Act exempts from rent control regulation

Any rental unit in any newly constructed housing accommodation for which the [original] building permit was issued after December 31, 1975, or any newly created rental unit, added to an existing structure or housing accommodation and covered by a certificate of occupancy for housing use issued after January 1, 1980, provided, however, that this exemption shall not apply to any housing accommodation the construction of which required the demolition of an housing accommodation subject to this chapter, unless the number of newly constructed rental units exceeds the number of demolished rental units.<sup>12</sup>

We did not have any data on building permits so we could not implement this exemption exactly as stated. Instead, we used the year the property was built, from the CAMA database, to approximate this exemption. We identified properties built in 1978 or later as exempt from rent control on the assumption that those properties should have had building permits issued after December 31, 1975.

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<sup>11</sup> DC ST § 42-3502.05(a)(1).

<sup>12</sup> DC ST § 42-3502.05(a)(2).



In addition, in the database we flagged properties that were built between 1976 and 1977 since those properties may have also had building permits issued after December 31, 1975. These properties should be subject to manual review to see if paper records can indicate the correct building permit issuance date.

We had no data on issuance of certificate of occupancy so we could not account for this requirement.

*Owner owns fewer than five rental units*

The Act exempts from rent control regulation

(3) Any rental unit in any housing accommodation of 4 or fewer rental units, including any aggregate of 4 rental units whether within the same structure or not, provided:

(A) The housing accommodation is owned by not more than 4 natural persons;

(B) None of the housing providers has an interest, either directly or indirectly, in any other rental unit in the District of Columbia;

(C) The housing provider of the housing accommodation files with the Rent Administrator a claim of exemption statement which consists of an oath or affirmation by the housing provider of the valid claim to the exemption. The claim of exemption statement shall also contain the signatures of each person having an interest, direct or indirect, in the housing accommodation. Any change in the ownership of the exempted housing accommodation or change in the housing provider's interest in any other housing accommodation which would invalidate the exemption claim must be reported in writing to the Rent Administrator within 30 days of the change;

(D) The limitation of the exemption to a housing accommodation owned by natural persons shall not apply to a housing accommodation owned or controlled by a decedent's estate or testamentary trust if the housing accommodation was, at the time of the decedent's death, already exempt under the terms of paragraphs (3)(A) and (3)(B) of this subsection; and

(E) For purposes of determining the eligibility of a condominium rental unit for the exemption provided by this paragraph, by § 42-3404.13(a)(3), or by § 42-4016(a)(3), a housing accommodation shall be the aggregate of the condominium rental units and any other rental units owned by the natural person(s) claiming the exemption.<sup>13</sup>

If a property owner owns a single rental property with more than four units, then that property would not receive an exemption. For those properties with fewer than four units, however, we looked in the real property database to determine if the same owner owned other properties in the city that would put the total unit count for that owner over the four unit exemption limit. We used the mailing address of the

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<sup>13</sup> DC ST § 42-3502.05(a)(3).



property owner, for property tax purposes, as the identification of the individual owners since matching on owner names could be unreliable because of spelling variations.

This exemption only applies to owners who are “natural persons.” We used the NeighborhoodInfo DC owner classification to exclude any companies, partnerships, or other nonpersons from those properties receiving this exemption.

*Additional exemptions not accounted for in database*

The Act includes the following additional exemptions from rent control regulation, not enumerated above

(4) Any housing accommodation which has been continuously vacant and not subject to a rental agreement since January 1, 1985, and any housing accommodation previously exempt under § 206(a)(4) of the Rental Housing Act of 1980, provided that upon re-rental the housing accommodation is in substantial compliance with the housing regulations when offered for rent;

(5) Any rental unit in any structure owned by a cooperative housing association, if:

(A) The proprietary lease or occupancy agreement for the rental unit is owned by not more than 4 natural persons, who are shareholders or members of the cooperative housing association;

(B) None of the shareholders or members has an interest, directly or indirectly, in more than 4 rental units in the District of Columbia. A shareholder or member of a cooperative housing association owning a proprietary lease or occupancy agreement for a rental unit in an association shall not be deemed to have an indirect interest in any other rental unit in any structure owned by a cooperative housing association solely by virtue of ownership of a stock or membership certificate, proprietary lease, or other evidence of membership in the association; and

(C) The shareholders or members owning the proprietary lease or occupancy agreement for the rental unit file with the Rent Administrator a claim of exemption statement which consists of an oath or affirmation by the shareholders or members of a valid claim to the exemption. The claim of exemption statement shall also contain the signature of each person having an interest, direct or indirect, in the proprietary lease or occupancy agreement for the rental unit. Any change in the ownership of the proprietary lease or occupancy agreement or change in the shareholder’s or member’s interest in any other rental unit which would invalidate the exemption claim must be reported in writing to the Rent Administrator within 30 days of the change;

(7) Housing accommodations for which a building improvement plan has been executed under the apartment improvement program and housing accommodations which receive rehabilitation



assistance under other multi-family assistance programs administered by the Department of Housing and Community Development, if:

(A) The building improvement plan, accompanied by a certification signed by the tenants of 70% of the occupied units, is filed with the Division at the time of execution;

(B) Upon expiration of the building improvement plan, the exemption provided under this paragraph shall terminate and the housing accommodation will again be subject to §§ 42-3502.05(f) through 42-3502.19; and

(C) Upon expiration of the building improvement plan, and notwithstanding the provisions of § 42-3502.09, the schedule of rents charged, services, and facilities established by the building improvement plans shall be considered the rents charged and service and facility levels established for the purposes of subchapter II of this chapter.<sup>14</sup>

We did not have data available to account for any of the above exemptions. Therefore, all such properties would be listed in our database as potentially subject to rent control. It would be necessary to review other records to determine if any of the above exemptions should be applied to properties in the database.

### **Rent-Controlled Properties**

In the final database, we identify properties that did not receive one or more exclusion or exemption as being potentially subject to rent control. We identified 4,818 such properties, comprising 79,145 housing units. The characteristics of these properties and their owners are described in the next section.

## **DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTIES IN DATABASE**

This section of the report describes the 4,818 properties in the database that are potentially subject to rent control regulation. We look at a number of characteristics of these properties, including location, property characteristics, and owner characteristics. In addition to the tables below, a set of tables are provided in appendix A that have the same indicators for properties in each of the city's eight Wards.

### **Location**

Table 3 shows the locations of properties potentially subject to rent control by city ward. Each of the city's eight wards has some rent-controlled units and, with a few exceptions, the buildings and units are distributed fairly evenly. Wards 5, 7, and 8 have the largest number of properties potentially subject to rent regulation. Wards 3 and 4 have the smallest number of rent-controlled buildings, with Ward 3 having only 262 such properties. The map in appendix B also shows the location of rent-controlled buildings in the city by numbers of units.

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<sup>14</sup> DC ST § 42-3502.05(a).



The wards with the highest numbers of buildings, however, do not have the largest numbers of rent-controlled units. Wards 1, 2, and 3 have over 12,200 apartments each that may be subject to rent control, followed by Ward 8 with 11,976. This is because rent-controlled buildings in Wards 1, 2, and 3 tend to be larger, on average, than those in other parts of the city. In Ward 3, for example, 21 percent of the rent-controlled buildings have 51 or more units, compared to only 2 percent of such buildings in Ward 5. (See appendix A ward tables.)

**Table 3. Location by Ward**

Properties Potentially Subject to Rent Control, Washington, D.C.

	Number of properties	Percent of properties	Number of units	Percent of units
Total Rent Controlled	4,818	100.0	79,145	100.0
Ward				
Ward 1	511	10.6	13,034	16.5
Ward 2	476	9.9	12,297	15.5
Ward 3	262	5.4	12,818	16.2
Ward 4	393	8.2	7,022	8.9
Ward 5	825	17.1	7,027	8.9
Ward 6	592	12.3	4,827	6.1
Ward 7	825	17.1	10,144	12.8
Ward 8	934	19.4	11,976	15.1

*Source:* Authors' calculations from rent-controlled properties database.

## Property Characteristics

This section discusses characteristics of properties identified in the database that are potentially subject to rent control. Table 4 looks at the year these properties were built, as reported in the OTR real property database. About a quarter of the properties (1,149 properties or 23.9 percent) were built before 1920. Almost half of the properties (2,352 or 48.8 percent) were built in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s. Another quarter of the properties were built in the 1950s or later. The distribution of units looks slightly different, however, with roughly equal shares of units built between 1920 and 1949 as were built between 1950 and 1975. This reflects the construction of larger scale rental developments in the city after World War II.

Table 5 shows the numbers of properties by size, that is, the number of units or apartments in each property. The largest number of rent-controlled properties (1,592 or 33.0 percent) have 3 to 5 units, while the second largest number (1,330 or 27.6 percent) have 11 to 50 units each. A relatively small number of rent-controlled properties, only 290 or 6.1 percent, have over 50 units.



The distribution is different, of course, when looking at the number of units. Since larger buildings have more units, they make up a greater share of rent-controlled apartments. The 123 properties with 100 or more units make up fewer than 3 percent of the rent-controlled properties in the city, but comprise about a third (34.5 percent) of all rent-controlled units. This is roughly equal to the share of the 1,330 buildings with 11 to 50 units.

**Table 4. Year Built**

Properties Potentially Subject to Rent Control, Washington, D.C.

	Number of properties	Percent of properties	Number of units	Percent of units
Total rent controlled	4,818	100.0	79,145	100.0
Actual year built				
Missing	12	0.2	148	0.2
Before 1900	389	8.1	6,754	8.5
1900–1919	760	15.8	5,508	7.0
1920–1949	2,352	48.8	33,499	42.3
1950–1975	1,305	27.1	33,236	42.0

*Source:* Authors' calculations from rent-controlled properties database.

**Table 5. Property Size**

Properties Potentially Subject to Rent Control, Washington, D.C.

	Number of properties	Percent of properties	Number of units	Percent of units
Total rent controlled	4,818	100.0	79,145	100.0
Number of units in property				
1	597	12.4	597	0.8
2	425	8.8	850	1.1
3–5	1,592	33.0	6,398	8.1
6–10	584	12.1	4,278	5.4
11–50	1,330	27.6	27,910	35.3
51–100	167	3.5	11,781	14.9
100 or more	123	2.6	27,331	34.5

*Source:* Authors' calculations from rent-controlled properties database.**Owner Characteristics**

This section examines the characteristics of the owners of rent-controlled properties in the District of Columbia. The first table classifies owners according to type using the NeighborhoodInfo DC owner categorization methodology. As shown in table 6, almost all rent-controlled properties are owned by taxable corporations, partnerships, and associations, which own 2,244 properties comprising 57,206 units, and by individuals, who own 2,373 properties comprising 20,492 units. As can be seen from these figures, individuals tend to own smaller properties with fewer units (an average of 9 units per property), compared with corporations, partnerships, and associations (average of 25 units per property).

Table 6 also shows that 114 rent-controlled properties, with 928 units, are currently owned by banks, lending, and mortgage and servicing companies. Almost all of these are owned by national banks, including Bank of America, Citibank, Deutsche Bank, HSBC, Bank of New York, U.S. Bank, and Wells Fargo. Bank ownership of these properties is likely a result of foreclosure activity, which has increased overall in the city as a result of the national recession and the housing market downturn.

**Table 6. Owner Type**

Properties Potentially Subject to Rent Control, Washington, D.C.

	Number of properties	Percent properties	Number of units	Percent of units
Total rent controlled	4,818	100.0	79,145	100.0
Owner category				
Individuals (natural persons)	2,373	49.3	20,492	25.9
Community development corporations/organizations	7	0.1	56	0.1
Private universities, colleges, schools	13	0.3	209	0.3
Churches, synagogues, religious	37	0.8	166	0.2
Taxable corporations, partnerships, associations	2,244	46.6	57,206	72.3
Government-sponsored enterprise	30	0.6	88	0.1
Banks, lending, and mortgage and servicing companies	114	2.4	928	1.2

*Source:* Authors' calculations from rent-controlled properties database.

Most of the owners of rent-controlled properties have provided OTR with a local address for property tax billing (table 7). It is possible, however, that the address could be a local office for national or non-D.C. entity. Nonetheless, almost two-thirds (62.0 percent) of properties and 58.9 percent of units potentially subject to rent control are owned by a person, company, or organization with a Washington, D.C., address.

**Table 7. Owner Address Provided to OTR**

Properties Potentially Subject to Rent Control, Washington, D.C.

	Number of properties	Percent of properties	Number of units	Percent of units
Total rent controlled	4,818	100.0	79,145	100.0
D.C.-based owner				
No	1,830	38.0	32,558	41.1
Yes	2,988	62.0	46,587	58.9

*Source:* Authors' calculations from rent-controlled properties database.*Notes:* Based on owner's mailing address provided to OTR.

Finally, we look at the distribution of owners by the number of rent-controlled apartments that they own. The data indicate that large-scale owners have the majority of rent-controlled units. The largest shares of properties (31.5 percent) and units (69.3 percent) subject to rent control belong to owners who own 101 or more of such units throughout the city. Another quarter (26.8 percent) of properties and 15.1 percent of units belong to owners with 11 to 50 rent-controlled units.

**Table 8. Rent-Controlled Units Owned by Same Owner**

Properties Potentially Subject to Rent Control, Washington, D.C.

	Number of properties	Percent of properties	Number of units	Percent of units
Total rent controlled	4,818	100.0	79,145	100.0
Units owned by owner				
1	159	3.3	159	0.2
2	54	1.1	95	0.1
3–5	486	10.1	1,654	2.1
6–10	953	19.8	4,055	5.1
11–50	1,290	26.8	11,944	15.1
51–100	359	7.5	6,428	8.1
101 or more	1,517	31.5	54,810	69.3

*Source:* Authors' calculations from rent-controlled properties database.





## **APPENDIX A: WARD TABLES**





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Ward 1	Number of properties	Percent of properties	Number of units	Percent of units
Total rent controlled	511	100.0	13,034	100.0
Actual year built				
Before 1900	63	12.3	1,991	15.3
1900–1919	253	49.5	2,760	21.2
1920–1949	135	26.4	5,801	44.5
1950 or later	60	11.7	2,482	19.0
Number of units owned by same owner				
1	20	3.9	20	0.2
2	7	1.4	14	0.1
3–5	66	12.9	222	1.7
6–10	94	18.4	413	3.2
11–50	139	27.2	1,632	12.5
51–100	37	7.2	1,449	11.1
101–700	83	16.2	3,626	27.8
Above 700	65	12.7	5,658	43.4
Owner type				
Individuals (natural persons)	217	42.5	1,962	15.1
Private universities, colleges, schools	5	1.0	115	0.9
Churches, synagogues, religious	4	0.8	13	0.1
Taxable corporations, partnerships, associations	272	53.2	10,677	81.9
Government-sponsored enterprise	2	0.4	3	0.0
Banks, lending, mortgage, and servicing companies	11	2.2	264	2.0
DC owner				
No	152	29.7	4,813	36.9
Yes	359	70.3	8,221	63.1
Number of units in property				
1	92	18.0	92	0.7
2	40	7.8	80	0.6
3–5	103	20.2	416	3.2
6–10	63	12.3	466	3.6
11–50	142	27.8	3,387	26.0
51–100	48	9.4	3,641	27.9
Above 100	23	4.5	4,952	38.0

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Ward 2	Number of properties	Percent of properties	Number of units	Percent of units
Total rent controlled	476	100.0	12,297	100.0
Actual year built				
Missing	1	0.2	10	0.1
Before 1900	113	23.7	1,254	10.2
1900–1919	198	41.6	1,772	14.4
1920–1949	96	20.2	3,519	28.6
1950 or later	68	14.3	5,742	46.7
Number of units owned by same owner				
1	41	8.6	41	0.3
2	12	2.5	21	0.2
3–5	69	14.5	225	1.8
6–10	92	19.3	387	3.1
11–50	99	20.8	860	7.0
51–100	27	5.7	789	6.4
101–700	88	18.5	3,174	25.8
Above 700	48	10.1	6,800	55.3
Owner type				
Individuals (natural persons)	226	47.5	3,139	25.5
Private universities, colleges, schools	7	1.5	93	0.8
Churches, synagogues, religious	6	1.3	13	0.1
Taxable corporations, partnerships, associations	236	49.6	9,051	73.6
Banks, lending, mortgage, and servicing companies	1	0.2	1	0.0
DC owner				
No	142	29.8	2,760	22.4
Yes	334	70.2	9,537	77.6
Number of units in property				
1	93	19.5	93	0.8
2	55	11.6	110	0.9
3–5	143	30.0	552	4.5
6–10	53	11.1	388	3.2
11–50	70	14.7	1,707	13.9
51–100	24	5.0	1,752	14.2
Above 100	38	8.0	7,695	62.6

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Ward 3	Number of properties	Percent of properties	Number of units	Percent of units
Total rent controlled	262	100.0	12,818	100.0
Actual year built				
Missing	5	1.9	34	0.3
Before 1900	4	1.5	683	5.3
1900–1919	6	2.3	43	0.3
1920–1949	203	77.5	5,963	46.5
1950 or later	44	16.8	6,095	47.6
Number of units owned by same owner				
1	6	2.3	6	0.0
3–5	16	6.1	62	0.5
6–10	25	9.5	109	0.9
11–50	76	29.0	942	7.3
51–100	18	6.9	505	3.9
101–700	66	25.2	4,342	33.9
Above 700	55	21.0	6,852	53.5
Owner type				
Individuals (natural persons)	114	43.5	3,085	24.1
Taxable corporations, partnerships, associations	146	55.7	9,637	75.2
Banks, lending, mortgage, and servicing companies	2	0.8	96	0.7
DC owner				
No	123	46.9	7,009	54.7
Yes	139	53.1	5,809	45.3
Number of units in property				
1	9	3.4	9	0.1
2	7	2.7	14	0.1
3–5	95	36.3	392	3.1
6–10	12	4.6	81	0.6
11–50	84	32.1	2,050	16.0
51–100	21	8.0	1,557	12.1
Above 100	34	13.0	8,715	68.0

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Ward 4	Number of properties	Percent of properties	Number of units	Percent of units
Total rent controlled	393	100.0	7,022	100.0
Actual year built				
Missing	2	0.5	29	0.4
Before 1900	14	3.6	286	4.1
1900–1919	18	4.6	58	0.8
1920–1949	281	71.5	4,471	63.7
1950 or later	78	19.8	2,178	31.0
Number of units owned by same owner				
1	5	1.3	5	0.1
2	1	0.3	2	0.0
3–5	26	6.6	104	1.5
6–10	63	16.0	283	4.0
11–50	128	32.6	1,755	25.0
51–100	41	10.4	965	13.7
101–700	93	23.7	2,484	35.4
Above 700	36	9.2	1,424	20.3
Owner type				
Individuals (natural persons)	199	50.6	1,997	28.4
Churches, synagogues, religious	3	0.8	11	0.2
Taxable corporations, partnerships, associations	182	46.3	4,964	70.7
Government-sponsored enterprise	2	0.5	3	0.0
Banks, lending, mortgage, and servicing companies	7	1.8	47	0.7
DC owner				
No	157	39.9	2,922	41.6
Yes	236	60.1	4,100	58.4
Number of units in property				
1	25	6.4	25	0.4
2	10	2.5	20	0.3
3–5	119	30.3	486	6.9
6–10	34	8.7	240	3.4
11–50	178	45.3	3,894	55.5
51–100	23	5.9	1,560	22.2
Above 100	4	1.0	797	11.4



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Ward 5	Number of properties	Percent of properties	Number of units	Percent of units
Total rent controlled	825	100.0	7,027	100.0
Actual year built				
Missing	1	0.1	48	0.7
Before 1900	28	3.4	903	12.9
1900–1919	99	12.0	233	3.3
1920–1949	549	66.5	3,901	55.5
1950 or later	148	17.9	1,942	27.6
Number of units owned by same owner				
1	23	2.8	23	0.3
2	7	0.8	12	0.2
3–5	91	11.0	273	3.9
6–10	195	23.6	752	10.7
11–50	217	26.3	1,192	17.0
51–100	47	5.7	464	6.6
101–700	144	17.5	1,496	21.3
Above 700	101	12.2	2,815	40.1
Owner type				
Individuals (natural persons)	501	60.7	2,501	35.6
Private universities, colleges, schools	1	0.1	1	0.0
Churches, synagogues, religious	7	0.8	8	0.1
Taxable corporations, partnerships, associations	282	34.2	4,421	62.9
Government-sponsored enterprise	8	1.0	24	0.3
Banks, lending, mortgage, and servicing companies	26	3.2	72	1.0
DC owner				
No	297	36.0	1,855	26.4
Yes	528	64.0	5,172	73.6
Number of units in property				
1	107	13.0	107	1.5
2	97	11.8	194	2.8
3–5	377	45.7	1,480	21.1
6–10	99	12.0	732	10.4
11–50	126	15.3	2,996	42.6
51–100	17	2.1	1,072	15.3
Above 100	2	0.2	446	6.3

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Ward 6	Number of properties	Percent of properties	Number of units	Percent of units
Total rent controlled	592	100.0	4,827	100.0
Actual year built				
Missing	1	0.2	2	0.0
Before 1900	102	17.2	469	9.7
1900–1919	178	30.1	548	11.4
1920–1949	226	38.2	1,603	33.2
1950 or later	85	14.4	2,205	45.7
Number of units owned by same owner				
1	37	6.3	37	0.8
2	9	1.5	15	0.3
3–5	78	13.2	219	4.5
6–10	148	25.0	518	10.7
11–50	186	31.4	1,117	23.1
51–100	37	6.3	226	4.7
101–700	82	13.9	2,221	46.0
Above 700	15	2.5	474	9.8
Owner type				
Individuals (natural persons)	362	61.1	2,150	44.5
Community development corporations/organizations	1	0.2	13	0.3
Churches, synagogues, religious	7	1.2	20	0.4
Taxable corporations, partnerships, associations	203	34.3	2,593	53.7
Government-sponsored enterprise	1	0.2	4	0.1
Banks, lending, mortgage, and servicing companies	18	3.0	47	1.0
DC owner				
No	215	36.3	2,371	49.1
Yes	377	63.7	2,456	50.9
Number of units in property				
1	161	27.2	161	3.3
2	95	16.0	190	3.9
3–5	186	31.4	750	15.5
6–10	65	11.0	457	9.5
11–50	73	12.3	1,337	27.7
51–100	6	1.0	384	8.0
Above 100	6	1.0	1,548	32.1

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Ward 7	Number of properties	Percent of properties	Number of units	Percent of units
Total rent controlled	825	100.0	10,144	100.0
Actual year built				
Missing	2	0.2	25	0.2
Before 1900	53	6.4	1,036	10.2
1900–1919	1	0.1	1	0.0
1920–1949	389	47.2	3,296	32.5
1950 or later	380	46.1	5,786	57.0
Number of units owned by same owner				
1	13	1.6	13	0.1
2	12	1.5	20	0.2
3–5	65	7.9	251	2.5
6–10	159	19.3	792	7.8
11–50	222	26.9	1,968	19.4
51–100	75	9.1	916	9.0
101–700	177	21.5	3,380	33.3
Above 700	102	12.4	2,804	27.6
Owner type				
Individuals (natural persons)	388	47.0	2,929	28.9
Community development corporations/organizations	6	0.7	43	0.4
Churches, synagogues, religious	6	0.7	61	0.6
Taxable corporations, partnerships, associations	392	47.5	6,966	68.7
Government-sponsored enterprise	9	1.1	27	0.3
Banks, lending, mortgage, and servicing companies	24	2.9	118	1.2
DC owner				
No	375	45.5	5,578	55.0
Yes	450	54.5	4,566	45.0
Number of units in property				
1	45	5.5	45	0.4
2	72	8.7	144	1.4
3–5	274	33.2	1,121	11.1
6–10	141	17.1	1,043	10.3
11–50	275	33.3	5,243	51.7
51–100	10	1.2	681	6.7
Above 100	8	1.0	1,867	18.4

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Ward 8	Number of properties	Percent of properties	Number of units	Percent of units
Total rent controlled	934	100.0	11,976	100.0
Actual year built				
Before 1900	12	1.3	132	1.1
1900–1919	7	0.7	93	0.8
1920–1949	473	50.6	4,945	41.3
1950 or later	442	47.3	6,806	56.8
Number of units owned by same owner				
1	14	1.5	14	0.1
2	6	0.6	11	0.1
3–5	75	8.0	298	2.5
6–10	177	19.0	801	6.7
11–50	223	23.9	2,478	20.7
51–100	77	8.2	1,114	9.3
101–700	114	12.2	2,543	21.2
Above 700	248	26.6	4,717	39.4
Owner type				
Individuals (natural persons)	366	39.2	2,729	22.8
Churches, synagogues, religious	4	0.4	40	0.3
Taxable corporations, partnerships, associations	531	56.9	8,897	74.3
Government-sponsored enterprise	8	0.9	27	0.2
Banks, lending, mortgage, and servicing companies	25	2.7	283	2.4
DC owner				
No	369	39.5	5,250	43.8
Yes	565	60.5	6,726	56.2
Number of units in property				
1	65	7.0	65	0.5
2	49	5.2	98	0.8
3–5	295	31.6	1,201	10.0
6–10	117	12.5	871	7.3
11–50	382	40.9	7,296	60.9
51–100	18	1.9	1,134	9.5
Above 100	8	0.9	1,311	10.9

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## **APPENDIX B: MAP OF RENT-CONTROLLED PROPERTIES**





### Residential Properties Potentially Subject to Rent Control Regulation by Unit Size Washington, D.C.



