September 18, 2026

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

TO: Planning, Housing, and Economic Development Committee (PHED)

THRU: Rana Hightower, Committee Director
Planning, Housing, and Economic Development Committee (PHED)

FROM: Caleb Callender
Legislative Budget and Policy Analyst

RE: Policy Analysis and Fiscal Impact Statement
CB-114-2026 Tenant Rights Education and Accessibility Act

CB-114-2026 (*Proposed by:* Council Member Hunter)

Assigned to the Planning, Housing, and Economic Development Committee (PHED)

AN ACT CONCERNING TENANT RIGHTS EDUCATION AND ACCESSIBILITY ACT, for the purpose of requiring the Department of Housing and Community Development, Department of Permitting, Inspections and Enforcement, the Office of Community Relations, and the Office of Homeland Security to prepare and distribute a centralized, plain-language, multilingual tenant rights to resource guide to improve access to information to the public about landlord-tenant relations; and generally regarding a landlord-tenant rights resource guide.

Fiscal Summary

Direct Impact

Expenditures: Expected administrative costs to the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), Department of Permitting, Inspections and Enforcement (DPIE), Office of Community Relations (OCR), and Office of Homeland Security (OHS) will likely have a slightly adverse fiscal impact.

Revenues: No anticipated impact on revenues.

Indirect Impact

Likely Favorable.

Legislative Summary:

CB-114-2026[1], proposed by Council Member Hunter, would require County agencies to collaborate to ensure that residents are aware of existing Housing and Property Standards through a resource guide. Previously, agencies were required to post this information on their websites, but no language-access requirements were specified. The bill would require a resource guide to be distributed and made available in multiple languages. The information provided in the guide would help residents better understand and navigate landlord-tenant relations, including housing code protections, complaint procedures, inspection processes, potential relocation rights, and available legal or emergency support services.

The bill would also amend the County Code to designate the Office of Homeland Security as a required agency for displaying Housing and Property Standards on its website. Additionally, the Office would be authorized to enforce the applicable provisions pursuant to Section 13-102[2], including imposing penalties of up to $5,000 for violations. This enforcement responsibility was previously assigned to the Department of Permitting, Inspections, and Enforcement.

Current Law/Background:

County Law:

The County Code currently states that the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), The Department of Permitting, Inspections and Enforcement (DPIE), and the Office of Community Relations (OCR) are required to provide information on requirements through Subdivision 1 of Division 3 within the Housing and Property Standards. As currently constructed, those are to be shared through the websites of the aforementioned agencies. Additionally, DPIE was mandated to create a web portal for the general public, dedicated to determining whether particular rental properties are subject to the limits of the rent increase allowance in Section 13-144.

Neighboring Jurisdictions:

In 2017, Montgomery County's Department of Housing and Community Affairs expanded their tenant's rights website by making the handbook available in Chinese, French, Korean, and

[1] CB-114-2026
[2] Prince George's County Code

Vietnamese[3]. The Handbook was previously available in English and Spanish. The County also provides the handbook as a hard copy in each of these languages, which landlords must offer to all tenants.

Resource Personnel:

- Kathy Canning, Legislative Officer
- Briana J. Young, Chief of Staff

Discussion/Policy Analysis:

This bill will provide tenants with information that empowers them to better understand and defend their rights, particularly when they may be unaware that a violation has occurred. Previous versions of the County Code did not specify how offices were required to present this information. As long as the information was available on their websites, the requirement was considered satisfied. However, merely making information available online did not guarantee that residents could understand the language, terminology, or nuances of the provisions contained throughout Subdivision 1 of Division 3 of the Housing and Property Standards[4]. Requiring offices to create a resource guide written in plain language would help eliminate confusing terminology and make these protections more accessible to tenants.

In addition to requiring the guide to be written in plain language, the bill would make the information available in multiple languages. In 2024, 24.9% of Prince George's County residents were reported to have been born outside of the United States, the second-highest percentage among Maryland's counties after Montgomery County[5]. Many of these residents may consider English their second language, and some may live in households where English is not the primary language spoken. This can create a significant information gap, particularly when tenants are unable to fully understand the regulations governing their housing. Without clear and accessible information, landlords may have an advantage simply because tenants are unfamiliar with their rights and the requirements imposed by law.

After reviewing the Montgomery County Code, the Council may wish to consider adding specific provisions identifying the languages in which the guides must be provided or requiring agencies to provide the guide in any language reasonably requested by a tenant. Establishing a broader language-access requirement would reduce the possibility of agencies limiting the guide to a predetermined set of languages, which could continue to leave gaps given the County's linguistic diversity. The Council should also consider addressing the technology gap. While the

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[3] Department of Housing and Community Affairs Offers Translations of New Tenant Rights Tools
[4] County Code
[5] Data USA

bill requires the creation of a resource guide, it does not explicitly require printed copies to be made available to landlords for distribution to prospective or future tenants. Requiring both digital and printed versions would ensure that tenants can access this information regardless of their access to technology.

Plain-language materials, meaningful language access, and both digital and printed formats would help ensure that the protections established in the County Code reach the residents they are intended to serve. Strengthening these provisions would make the bill more comprehensive and help reduce barriers that may otherwise prevent tenants from fully understanding and exercising their rights.

Fiscal Impact:

- *Direct Impact*

Enactment of CB-114-2026 would likely have an immediate, modest adverse fiscal impact on the County. Implementation of the proposed program is expected to result in additional administrative costs for the requisite agencies. These costs may include expenses associated with translation services to develop and provide a multilingual tenant rights resource guide. While the proposed legislation does not clarify if the resource materials need to be printed, the costs of printing and distributing them could impose an additional financial burden on the County.

- *Indirect Impact*

Enactment of CB-114-2026 may have a favorable indirect impact by providing residents with more accessibility to housing standards. This will ensure residents are more knowledgeable about regulations between landlords and tenants, granting them more empowerment in a system where the landlord typically holds the upper hand.

- *Appropriated in the Current Fiscal Year Budget*

No.

Policy Implementation Resource/Project Timeline:

At the time of this report, the Agency could not be contacted due to turnaround time. According to the analyst these are the steps needed for implementation.

Milestone 1:

- Create a succinct, plain language guide, providing residents with an overview of all information required from the bill.

Milestone 2:

- Hiring a translating service that confirms the accuracy of translations made to the guide.

Milestone 3:

- Distribute the guide to landlords across the County.

Effective Date of Proposed Legislation:

The proposed Bill shall be effective forty-five (45) calendar days after it becomes law.

If you require additional information or have questions about this fiscal impact statement, please reach out to me via phone or email.