

# Effective Tenant Protections: The Technology You Need and Tips for How to Get It

Making a community more livable and affordable is often a never-ending and challenging task. But it's even more difficult when you don't have the right tools for the job.

From preserving affordable housing to enforcing ordinances to managing inspections, there's a lot to do and even more to keep track of with tenant protection programs. Housing and Community Development (HCD) departments across the country are often forced to make do with manual processes, difficult-to-use software, and missing or siloed information.

These challenges are real, but not insurmountable. With the right technology in place, they can be eliminated so that HCD teams are empowered to maximize the impact for their community's tenants.

**The right housing technology can support tenant protection programs by making it easier to:**

- Make sure tenants and landlords are aware of ordinances, protections, and responsibilities
- Effectively enforce ordinances
- Reduce displacement and gentrification to preserve the community
- Reduce homelessness
- Ensure rents remain affordable
- Track and maintain a log of all rentals and rent amounts
- Inspect properties and enforce codes

In this guide, we'll share insights that will help you:


- 1. Determine the type of software you should look for**
- 2. Gain budget approval for your solution**
- 3. Minimize the need for IT resources**

# What technology do you need to power your tenant protection programs?

Whether you're managing complex programs for a large city or you're about to pass the first tenant protection ordinance in a small one, there are three things you'll need to manage: properties, people, and processes.

The technology that supports your program should be a 360-degree platform that supports all three.

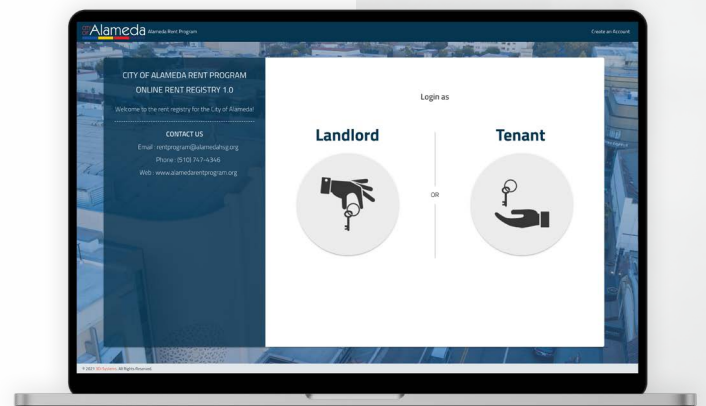
## It all starts with a rental registry.

 Your technology solution will be much more powerful if it's built upon the foundation of a rental registry. This is perhaps the most important step you can take in establishing an accurate rental property inventory based on parcels and units.

By giving landlords and property managers a secure place to submit rental information, a registry allows you to:

- Accurately manage your community's rental property portfolio
- Improve compliance with tenant protection ordinances
- Better manage evictions
- Stabilize rent
- Perform property inspections more efficiently

In short, a rental registry empowers you with the essential property information you need to make informed decisions.





## A rental registry is just the start.

While a rental registry is necessary for getting a complete picture of your community's housing situation, it's only one piece of the puzzle. In order to properly support your tenant protection programs, you'll also need tools for managing the people and processes involved.



To keep track of all the people your programs interact with, your tenant protections software should include a customer relationship management (CRM) solution. CRM's are fairly common — they help you manage relationships with citizens and stakeholders by making it easy to communicate with them and by storing contact information, notes, communication history, and more.

While there are many CRM solutions available, they aren't all created equally. Many are stand-alone solutions designed to support sales and marketing activities rather than common public sector functions.

The best CRM solution for tenant protections will be designed for engagement rather than sales. It should be tightly integrated with the property and process management tools you'll need, such as your rental registry. This will help you avoid information silos and inefficiencies while ensuring you have all the capabilities you need.



Speaking of process management, this is an area where you'll find significant differences between software solutions. The most important factor when considering a process management solution is how well it conforms to your unique processes.

You don't want an overly rigid solution that forces you to adapt your rental inspections, evictions management, or other processes to the software's limitations. But you also don't want a solution that has to be built from scratch to accommodate your needs — adding significant costs and delays in the process. The ideal solution will support rapid implementation of custom workflows and automations to make your processes run more smoothly, not force you to change them.



## What should you look for in software that supports rental registry? It should:

Empower property owners and landlords to provide the required information easily and securely

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Be specifically built for communication between state/local government and property owners

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Automate relevant workflows and processes

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Allow for easy modifications as your programs change over time

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Provide intuitive dashboards and on-demand reporting

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Support online Bill Pay

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Seamlessly integrate with other software solutions you may be using



Once you find a solution that supports this full range of functions, there are several things to consider before deciding whether it's the best solution for you and your needs. We recommend asking the following questions of your software vendor:

1. How long have you been in business?
2. Does your company continue to demonstrate profitable, stable growth?
3. Is your solution specifically designed for government?
4. Can your solution support all HCD programs, even those with different business processes?
5. Does your platform provide a 360-degree view of all programs?
6. Does it automate previously manual processes?
7. Is it a cloud based or on-premise solution?
8. Does it price by the seat or usage (per-seat pricing can lead to large future price increases)?
9. What is the implementation time (reliable vendors can often get you up and running in less than 120 days)?
10. What kind of customer support is offered (before, during, and after implementation)?
11. How does you keep our information secure?



# The Key to Getting Budget Approval: Cost Recovery

The support of the right software is imperative to efficiently managing successful tenant protection programs, but getting the expense authorized can be difficult. Luckily, a well-designed program can recover the costs of the technology, and much more.

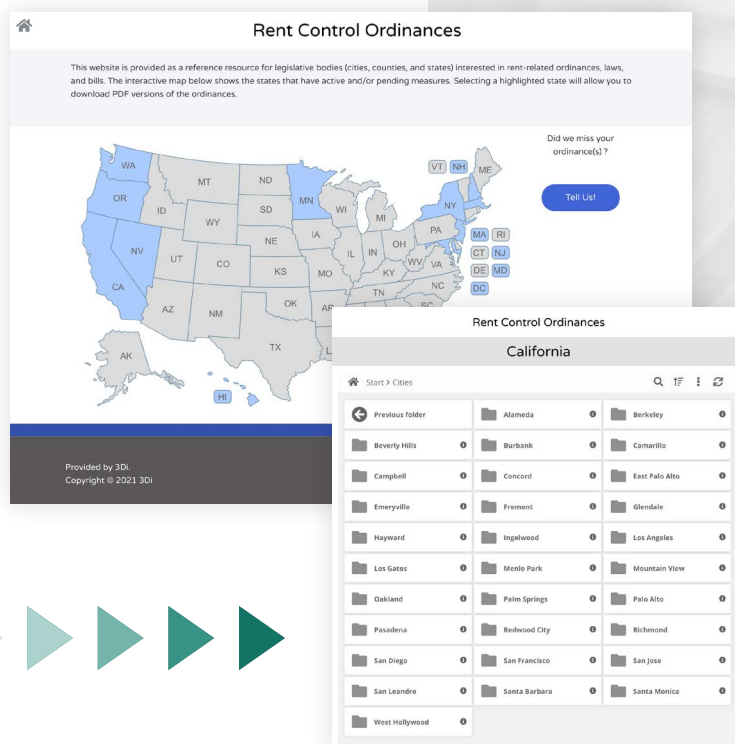
The key is charging a small fee for landlords when they register their rental properties and making it extremely easy for them to process those payments through your rental registry portal. Cities can also charge fines for failing to register rental properties, providing inaccurate contact information, or failing to renew registration in a timely manner.

Keep in mind that the goal is to get everyone to register their properties and corresponding units. It's a mutually beneficial endeavor, but some pushback is to be expected. Be careful to ensure your fees are reasonable and work to increase buy-in by stressing all the benefits associated with a rental registry for your community and all parties involved.

The revenue earned will allow your city to work towards achieving a budget neutral program that doesn't rely on other funding sources.

The practice is common amongst cities with rent registries, but there are a variety of ways to approach it. For example, some may charge a flat fee per unit and others may use a graduated fee structure. Regardless of the method your city chooses, it's essential to include fee collection in the language of the relevant ordinance.

To see how various cities have structured ordinances related to tenant protections, view our collection of ordinances at [RentControlOrdinances.com](https://RentControlOrdinances.com).



# How to Minimize Your Need for Internal IT Resources

At this point you might be thinking, “this all sounds great, but how can I pull it off without using all the time and resources of my IT team?”

Rest easy. There are software companies out there that will do most or all of the IT heavy lifting — before, during, and after implementation.

While some work will be required by your housing department team in order to make sure all process flows, integrations, and databases are synced up, here are a few things to look for to ease your IT burden:



## 1. High-profile tech partnerships.

Look for a vendor that has a partnership with a major cloud services provider. With the backing of a major brand like Amazon, Microsoft, or Oracle, you can be more confident in the solution’s reliability and security.



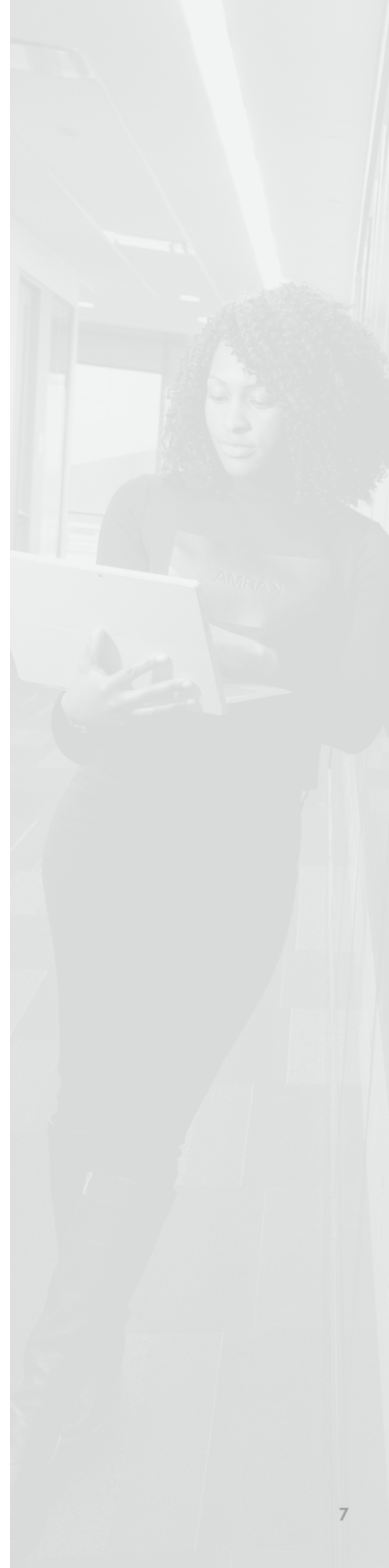
## 2. Exceptional security.

While a partnership like the one mentioned above is a good indicator that their solution is secure, it doesn’t guarantee it. Ask about the vendor’s cybersecurity protections and what security certifications they have, such as SOC 2 Type 2.



## 3. All-in-one solution.

Find a solution designed to solve a wide variety of housing challenges without the need for a disparate set of tools. With functionality for customer relationship management (CRM), service request lifecycle management, reporting, case management, knowledge base, mobile apps, and more — the solution should give you a robust digital experience without taxing your IT team.







#### **4. Already built for housing.**

There should be a lot of options for customizing the software to your unique needs and processes, and it will still need to be integrated with any existing systems. But when the technology is specifically built for the needs of those managing housing programs, the core functionality of the software will be ready to go from day one – without the usual IT headaches.



#### **5. Exceptional and ongoing support.**

Make sure the housing technology you use is backed by solid customer support. Rather than placing the burden on your IT team to manage and fix potential issues, the software company should offer generous support hours as part of the contract, and even the ability to purchase additional hours if necessary.

# One Solution That Has It All

**One solution that satisfies all the recommendations in this guide is 3Di Engage for Housing.**

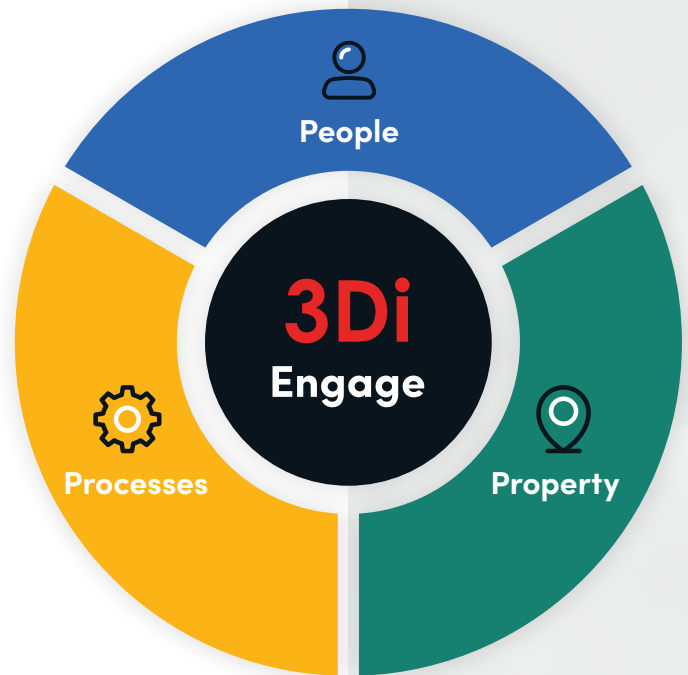
With more than two decades of experience working with local governments and helping to empower housing programs for communities like Los Angeles, 3Di has learned a lot about how to make it easier to manage successful tenant protection programs. Those insights have shaped Engage for Housing into an ideal solution for helping you help your community.

3Di Engage is a software as a service (SaaS) platform designed specifically for local governments and related organizations. Its powerful set of tools helps communities manage their tenant protection programs with ease and efficiency. But Engage has another benefit too.

Unlike single-point solutions that handle just one aspect of your programs, 3Di Engage for Housing provides a solid foundation for nearly everything a Housing and Community Development (HCD) department needs to do. Lead hazard remediation, public service grant management, façade improvement programs — however you're improving your community, 3Di Engage for Housing can help you do it more easily and with greater effectiveness.

And since it's already built for the way you work, it can be implemented much faster and more affordably than custom software or solutions built on top of a mass-market CRM.

In short, 3Di Engage for Housing helps you help more people in less time with fewer resources. At the end of the day, isn't that what it's all about?





## Learn More About 3Di

At 3Di, we create powerful software solutions that empower governments and organizations to create stronger communities. Places where people feel safer, more engaged, and full of hope for their futures.

Even though local government employees across the country work tirelessly to advance these goals, many don't have the right tools for the job. We're here to change that.

From Los Angeles to Norfolk, Virginia, our solutions have been destroying silos, streamlining processes, and simplifying engagement for over 20 years — all with rapid implementation and robust support.

**Take the next step in preserving an affordable and livable community. Request a free demo to see what 3Di Engage for Housing can do for you and the beneficiaries of your programs.**