

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA REAL ESTATE COMMISSION



Fiscal Year 2025-2026
Performance Oversight Hearing

Testimony of
Edward Downs
Chairperson
District of Columbia Real Estate Commission

Before the
Committee on Housing
Council of the District of Columbia
The Honorable Robert C. White, Jr., Chair

John A. Wilson Building
Room 500
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004

Thursday, January 29, 2026, 9:30 a. m.

Good morning, Chairperson White and members and staff of the Committee on Housing. I am Edward Downs, Chairperson of the District of Columbia Real Estate Commission (Commission). Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of Mayor Muriel Bowser at today's hearing to discuss the activities and accomplishments of the Commission in Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) to the present.

I would like to begin by thanking Mayor Muriel Bowser for appointing to the Commission. Working with my fellow Commission members to uphold the integrity of the profession and protect consumers has been very rewarding – personally and professionally. I am currently serving in my second year as chairperson of the Commission, a position I do not take for granted. I continue to be excited for the opportunity to serve on the Commission and in this capacity.

Our mission is to protect the public health, safety, and welfare of District residents by assuring that licensed persons engaged in the practice of real estate transactions, as well as applicants seeking to engage in the practice of real estate, have the specialized skills and necessary training required to perform the real estate services governed by the Commission. I am pleased to be able to work with an engaged group of fellow Commission members, as well as the dedicated Department of Licensing and Consumer Protection staff and legal counsel.

The Commission consists of nine members, including three real estate brokers, two property managers, two salespersons, one attorney, and one consumer



member. Each real estate broker, salesperson, and property manager member must be licensed in the District. The attorney member must be engaged in the practice of real estate law. All members of the Commission are required to be residents of the District of Columbia. The Mayor, with the consent of the Council, appoints each member of the Commission who serves a maximum of three full consecutive three-year terms. The Commission meets every second Tuesday of each month at 10:00 a.m., except for August. The current Commission members are:

- Edward Downs – Chair, broker member
- Elizabeth Blakeslee – Vice Chair, broker member
- Monique Owens – property manager member
- Ericka Black – salesperson member
- Patrice Richardson – consumer member.

We currently have four vacancies, including a real estate broker, a real estate salesperson, a property manager, and an attorney. DLCP and the Commission are working closing with the Mayor’s Office of Talent & Appointments to fill these vacancies. We anticipate resolutions being sent to the Council soon.

Introduction

The Commission is responsible for determining initial eligibility and renewal licensure requirements, establishing and monitoring compliance with continuing



education requirements, continually monitoring standards for the professions involved in real estate transactions and recommending changes as needed, along with receiving and resolving complaints against licensed real estate professionals. Further, the Commission remains vigilant in our oversight of the Real Estate Guaranty and Education Fund.

Since last year's Performance Oversight Hearing, the Commission has reviewed its pre-licensing property management examination databank of questions, reassessing the validity of questions, and developing and writing new questions for pre-test questions.

Outreach

In addition, the Commission continued its ongoing efforts to inform younger generations about the real estate profession. During FY 25, the Commission engaged in several outreach activities with elementary, middle, and high school students. Specifically, the Commission participated in outreach programs reaching 60+ students at Savoy Elementary School, and participated in a career presentation for six youth in the Marion Barry Summer Youth Employment Program. The students were enthusiastic about learning about the many fields of real estate. Additionally, the Commission participated in an outreach activity at American University Kogod School of Business. We hope to expand our reach to the other



colleges and universities in the District as well. The students were enthusiastic to learn about the many fields of real estate.

License Issuance

In comparing new Real Estate Commission applications across fiscal years, in Fiscal Year 2025, we received 1,023 new license applications. This is a 3.4% increase from FY 2024 in which 989 new license applications were received. Presently for FY 2026 to date, we are tracking approximately 225 applications. If this pace continues, we project approximately 675 applications by year-end, which would represent a significant drop compared to previous years. The Commission is closely monitoring the number of applications and working with DLCP and the industry to explore what initiatives – administrative, programmatic, and legislative - the District can take to address this. The real estate profession has been on the District’s strongest professions. There are number of factors that impact licensure, and the Commission is committed to doing its part to support and maintain the vibrancy of the profession.

Renewal Applications

FY 2025 was a renewal year for the real estate licensees. Licenses are renewed every two years. During the renewal period, 13,430 licensees renewed their license across the following license types:



Salesperson	9424
Brokers	2314
Property Managers	661
Real Estate Organization	1031

This represents a 4.08% increase from the last renewal period in FY 2023 where 12,904 licensees renewed their license.

Legislative and Regulatory Trends

During FY 2025, the Commission continued to monitor legislative and regulatory trends across the country to determine what changes could be incorporated in the District. We will continue these efforts in FY 2026 while also reviewing the District’s current laws and regulations governing real estate professionals. There is a wealth of opportunities to support current and future real estate licensed professionals, and we look forward to working with DLCP, Mayor Bowser, he Council, and the real estate industry in achieving this goal.

The Commission, however, did address one significant regulatory need during FY 25. It arose during last year’s Performance Oversight Period as well. With the support of the Greater Capital Area Association of Realtors and several District agencies, including the Department of Energy and Environment, the Commission updated the Seller Disclosure Form as set forth in 17 DCMR § 2708. The



amendments include updating terms to align with the Omnibus Domestic Partnership Equality Amendment Act of 2008 as well as to recognize the unique situation that property owners within condominiums have as it relates to their knowledge of aspects of the common elements of real property. Additionally, the Seller Disclosure Form was amended to inquire about known instances of flooding or water intrusion on the property and remove duplicative questions. Given the number of flooding incidents in the District over the years, inquiring about instances of flooding on the property is pivotal.

Educational Programs

The Commission continues to expand its educational offerings through public-private partnerships with local agencies and private organizations. During FY25, the Commission and DLCP offered both virtual and in-person courses covering key topics, including DC Legislative Updates, DC Fair Housing, DC Ethics, DC Property Management, and DC Broker Supervision in the District. These courses were held on the following dates: DC Legislative Updates, DC Fair Housing, and DC Ethics on July 24, 2025; and DC Property Management and DC Broker Supervision in the District on July 25, 2025. The Commission, in conjunction with DLCP, the Board of Real Estate Appraisers, and the DC Historic Preservation League, also sponsored a series of in-person seminars on Historic Preservation in the summer of last year. To remain current with fair housing laws and regulations,



the Commission sponsored two in-person Fair Housing Instructor Development Workshops at the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library. These course offerings sought to ensure all education providers are knowledgeable about the teaching methodologies for delivering the material to all licensees.

Compliance with the Occupations and Professions Licensure Act of 1998

In FY25, the Commission received a total of 70 complaints. Each complaint was reviewed and determined to fall into one of the following categories: no violation, a civil matter, or outside the Commission’s jurisdiction. As a result, no disciplinary action was taken on any of these cases. By comparison, in FY24, the Commission received 64 complaints, of which 2 resulted in disciplinary action taken against a licensee.

In FY26 to date, the Commission has received 8 complaints. The Commission values transparency and publishes newsletters regularly as well as consumer alerts that the public and licensees can view online on the Commission’s website under “Publications and Resources”. The newsletters include disciplinary actions taken against licensees by the Commission, as well as articles for educational purposes and regulatory requirements.

Conclusion

The Commission will continue to dutifully carry out its responsibility of protecting the public interest and welfare by upholding the letter and spirit of the



District's licensure law concerning real estate brokers and salespersons, as well as property managers. The Commission appreciates the opportunity to share its accomplishments and plans for the future; and it looks forward to continuing to work with Mayor Bowser, DLCP, and the Committee.

Thank you for your leadership and support. This concludes my testimony. I welcome any questions the Committee may have.

