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Research Protocol for CityHealth: Healthy Rental Housing

Prepared by Center for Public Health Law Research

Published December 2023

CITYHEALTH: HEALTHY RENTAL HOUSING
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Research Protocol

I. **Dates of Protocol:** December 16, 2022; December 1, 2023

II. **Scope:** Compile statutes and ordinances on Healthy Rental laws across 75 cities, their respective counties, 33 states and the District of Columbia. CityHealth examines policies that have been determined to help people lead healthier and happier lives. Health Rental Laws help ensure rental housing meet health and safety requirements by requiring rental housing to be registered and inspected. This is a cross-sectional dataset capturing currently effective law valid through June 1, 2023.

III. **Primary Data Collection**

    a. **Original project dates:** June 2022 – December 2022

    b. **Data collection methods**: The team building this dataset consisted of five team members: four legal researchers ("Researchers") and one supervisor ("Supervisor").

    c. **Databases used**: Searches conducted using WestlawNext, city and county code databases; the laws were then collected from state-specific legislature websites. County and city laws were collected from official government websites, municode.com and amlegal.com.

    d. **Search terms**: "healthy rental housing", "rental registration", "rental inspection"

        i. Key word searches were supplemented by examination of the table of contents of each relevant section of the law identified.

        ii. Once all the relevant laws were identified in each jurisdiction, a master sheet was created for each jurisdiction that summarized the relevant laws within the scope at each jurisdictional level. This summary included the statutory history for each law and the effective date for that version of the law.

    e. **Information about initial returns and additional inclusion or exclusion criteria**: Only mandatory Healthy Rental Housing laws and policies were included; voluntary policies were excluded. Researchers also excluded laws that were exclusive to short-term rentals and boarding houses.

IV. **Coding**

    a. **Development of coding scheme**: The Researchers and Supervisor drafted coding questions and circulated them for review until all parties felt they had been sufficiently refined. Once the coding questions were finalized, they were entered into the MonQcle software. Some states have passed legislation preempting cities and counties from creating Healthy Rental Housing laws. For each city, the state law was researched

for preemption specifically. When researching counties, if a city spans multiple counties only the county seat was researched.

     i. Some jurisdictions have different inspection periods based on size of the building or a previous inspection score. When that occurred, we gave cities credit for the most frequent inspection schedule. For example, in Dallas the frequency of inspections varies based on type of property (e.g., 3 years for multitenant, 5 years for single units). In that situation we coded three years.

          1. However, some jurisdictions allowed property owners to self-certify, often on a yearly basis. Self-certifications did not count towards the frequency of inspection.

    b. Coding methods: The Researchers and the Supervisor were responsible for coding 15 cities each, including the respective state and county laws. Each jurisdiction was researched and coded independently.

    c. Quality control: The Supervisor oversaw the overall quality of the data by downloading the data from the MonQcle into Microsoft Excel and reviewed it for missing answer choices, and errors in the coding. Any issues identified in the original coding review was sent to the Researchers for their review.

    The Supervisor also compared the data to the 2022 Preview Assessment. The 2022 Preview Assessment was conducted in 2021 and was a preliminary assessment of the 2.0 policies.

    Additionally, the Supervisor conducted the city review phase. During the city reviews, the Supervisor contacted officials at either the city or county level and officials were given the opportunity to review the individual policy score and provide additional laws or policies. Issues or discrepancies in the research or coding were discussed by the team and resolved accordingly.

V.   **2023 Assessment**

    a. Updates: Substantive updates were found in Louisville, Newark, Pittsburgh, and Tampa. Following a coding review and/or discussions with CityHealth and subject matter experts, it was determined that Louisville would change from no medal to bronze. Newark from bronze to gold. Pittsburgh from bronze to silver. Tampa repealed its law which resulted in a decrease from bronze to no medal.

    b. Quality Control: Detroit, Louisville, New Orleans, St Paul, and Tampa records were redundantly coded. Any divergences were discussed with the researchers and supervisor, and subsequently resolved.

    c. City Review Phase: Following the completion of the research and coding, all 75 cities were contacted via one or more representatives to review the findings. All feedback was discussed between Temple, CityHealth and the subject matter expert. If necessary, any coding changes were made.