

User Types

Policy Advocate *

Puts pressure on Policy Maker directly and through other advocates, and through the press. Their goal is for policymakers to adopt and implement policies that provide opportunity for low income residents.

Tenant Advocate *

Tenant advocates help the tenants of specific buildings whose owners have decided to sell their property to navigate the legal process and protect their rights, especially through DC laws like the Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA).

Policy Maker *

Wants to understand the impacts of funding allocation strategies city-wide or within their ward. Likely user is the staff person compiling reports like the Preservation Strike Force report or the manager in charge of determining how funding applications are processed. Can impact funding distribution directly (e.g. Policy-level people at DHCD, Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development) or indirectly (council member staffer or councilperson, mayor's office).

Evaluator

Reviews applications, allocates funding to specific buildings and tracks their compliance with necessary requirements. Example: distributing Housing Production Trust Fund money at DHCD, Housing Finance Agency staff overseeing individual loans.

Developer

Owners of buildings may be for-profit or non-profit developers. Many developers are allies of the tenant advocate and policy advocates, especially mission-driven developers who own affordable housing properties with the goal of helping residents, while other developers may not be. Developers may use the tool in writing applications for city funding, for example, and the tool may be accessed by both positive and negative

Press

Interested in catching the public's attention. Often gets their information from the other users (especially the two advocate roles), but for more detailed stories will want access to primary data.

* Most important users to consider when designing the tool

User Type: Policy Advocate

Example Job titles:

- Vice President of Housing Policy at the Coalition for Nonprofit Housing and Economic Development
 - Housing Policy Analyst at the DC Fiscal Policy Institute
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What problems are they trying to solve?

Policy Advocates want to ensure that residents with low and moderate incomes have housing and economic opportunities in neighborhoods throughout the District of Columbia. This means making sure that stated policies and regulations are designed to provide these opportunities, but also making sure the reality of their implementation meets these goals as well.

They think that a tool to help them analyse the decisionmaking process would shed some light on an otherwise opaque funding allocation process. It would also allow them to search for indicators that policy reality contradicts stated objectives of the policy maker.

Who do they interact with?

Policy advocates communicate regularly with tenant advocates, policy makers, and developers.

What does their workflow look like?

Many of them have existing systems for tracking data, and are aware of and use existing public data sources, usually in the context of writing reports for publication. But, the amount of time it takes to compile this information limits how often they can use it and how quickly they can make it available; while some policy advocates are able to analyze available data themselves, others aren't experienced in data analysis and have to rely on others for providing information to support their arguments.

What are their incentives? What motivates them?

Policy Advocates are incentivized and motivated by keeping the city demographically diverse; making sure low income residents still have opportunity in gentrifying neighborhoods; pushing government to improve the quality of its services; and eliminating real or perceived corruption that could exist between elected officials and developers.

User Type: Tenant Advocate

Example Job Titles:

- Tenant Organizer at the Latino Economic Development Center
 - Staff Attorney at Bread for the City
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What problems are they trying to solve?

Tenant advocates help specific residents whose buildings are at risk of being sold and who might be displaced as a result. They are trying to find information that can be used to advocate for the preservation of a building. This information could help them have data to back up narratives, and could be used in courts or fair housing funding applications.

Who do they interact with?

Tenant advocates work on behalf of tenants of at-risk buildings. They're often on the front-lines of hearing what areas or buildings are at-risk for being sold. They understand the history and demographics of neighborhoods and specific buildings.

What does their workflow look like?

Tenant advocates typically get involved when they find out a building owner is planning to sell their building, either through a TOPA notice or when they are approached by a tenant. They don't have enough time to help all the buildings they talk to, but each organization may have different criteria for choosing. This is often where they can have the most impact - where a specific legal consideration is relevant, where residents may have a much harder time finding new housing, or with larger buildings which may take more time but their time per resident may be smaller.

What are their incentives? What motivates them?

Tenant advocates are incentivized by helping residents of specific buildings successfully keep their affordable housing. Like the policy advocates, they are also motivated by keeping the city demographically diverse. However, while they care about city-wide policy, they mostly work within the context of the existing system working to keep specific tenants in their homes.

Reactionary nature of their work is a pain point, as is the difficulty of getting tenants to organize and, fighting for the future affordability of the units.

User Type: Policymaker

Example Job Titles:

- Staffer to a DC City Council Member
- Office of the Deputy Mayor of Planning and Economic Development

This role covers all levels of policy development - legislative and regulatory

What problems are they trying to solve?

The policy maker wants to know where the city should target its efforts and funds to have the biggest impact. They determine what kinds of funding allocation and initiatives can best make progress for the city, so they want to know which locations in the city deserve higher incentives or scoring points for developers to build / preserve there, and why. Their biggest question is balancing competing needs - what policy changes could help preserve affordable housing without depressing revitalization in the city?

Who do they interact with?

Policymakers at the legislative level may need to deal with lots of issues, so they rely on policy advocates, developers, and other interested business representatives and citizen groups to guide them on the issues. They know each of these groups provides information that supports their own point of view, but they also need these subject matter experts.

Other policymakers are focused specifically on affordable housing preservation. The Mayor's stated goal is preserving 100% of existing affordable housing, and they're responsible for the decisions about how to do that.

What does their workflow look like?

They may write reports or briefs, or attend meetings with other levels of policymakers, to advise on decisions about official DC policy, initiatives to start or continue, or legislative bills that may be coming. They must be careful to consider many competing views and considerations before making official statements.

What are their incentives? What motivates them?

The Deputy Mayor of Planning and Economic Development lists its first goal as [increasing affordable housing](#), and the DC government allocates more than \$200M/year on affordable housing, including the \$100M Housing Production Trust Fund. However, preserving affordable housing can often be directly in conflict with other goals like economic revitalization and rebuilding retail corridors; this budget is also insufficient to serve the goal of 100% preservation.

Many policymakers are accountable to mayoral directives and goals, and all are accountable ultimately to the public. They need to show that funds are being used effectively. The DC government overall is interested in transparency and open government, but many specific issues are slow to become open due to resistance to change as well as the fact that even good decisions will be criticized by someone.