

City	Registration Deadline	"Vacancy" Definition	Registry Participation Fee	Fine Structure (Failure to Register)	Vacancy Contributing Factors	Insights and Feedback
San Francisco, CA	Within 30 days	<p><i>Definition:</i> - if unoccupied (for over 30 days) and unsecured or unsafe</p> <p><i>Exemptions:</i> - Active building permit or owner is actively seeking - If space vacant due to public infrastructure construction or maintenance activities lasting over 30 days</p>	<p><i>Annual Registration Fee:</i> \$1,230.95</p> <p>If the owner rents the storefront to a tenant before the next registration deadline, the owner will be removed from the registry, and will receive a refund of up to half the registration fee prorated on the remaining days until the annual renewal date. A hardship program is available, offering prorated rates if eligible.</p>	<p><i>Fee for Failure to Register:</i> An amount four (4) times the registration fee</p>	<p><i>Examples:</i> Routine turnover; Non-leasable buildings (Code issues or physical irregularities); Absentee landlords; Rent speculation; Neighborhood conditions (crime, poor foot traffic) making site unattractive; Selective leasing (landlords hold out for a particular type of tenant rather than quickly filling vacancies)</p>	<p>Registry is complaint-based and primarily enforced when a vacancy is visually apparent and noticed. Code Department employee described the process as time-consuming, making the complaint-based approach most prevalent. Accordingly, result is lenient approach and unaggressive enforcement.</p> <p>An alternative program, a vacancy tax, has been highly effective in reducing vacant properties. Additionally, they provide incentives for long-standing legacy businesses.</p>
Washington, DC	Within 30 days	<p>Vacant unoccupied property for 30 days or more; Any property that is unoccupied, properly registered, and meets the vacant property conditions will be cited and issued a vacant property sticker; Unregistered property may also be considered vacant if the property is unoccupied, NOT registered or subject to an exemption.</p>	<p><i>Annual Registration Fee:</i> (Initial and Renewal) \$250 per storefront</p> <p>Fee is neither pro-rated nor refundable</p>	<p>Fine of \$2,499, and/or criminal penalties up to ninety (90) days imprisonment.</p> <p>According to the website, the \$2,499 civil fine and the higher Class 3-Vacant property tax rate of \$5 per \$100 of assessed value have been the most effective deterrents against prolonged vacancies.</p>	<p>Largely attributed to property speculation</p>	<p>Compliance and enforcement enhanced through interagency coordination.</p> <p>According to City employee, due to the significant fine structure for unregistered properties, property owners are incentivized to register for the program</p> <p>The program measures success through workload tracking, with the added benefit that other agencies, such as public safety departments, can utilize the vacancy list to address nuisances like crime.</p>
Long Beach, CA	Within 30 days	<p>Any property, lot, or parcel that is either undeveloped or has an existing onsite building or structure that is either abandoned, vacant or unleased by the property owner for more than thirty (30) consecutive days.</p>	<p>Prorated fee based on when owner registers during the fiscal year. In addition, a quarterly monitoring fee assessed by the city. Fee exemptions exist when allowing property use for an eligible community-serving use for a minimum specified duration of time.</p>	<p>Fee affixed to tax bill and is lienable if unpaid</p>	<p>n/a</p>	<p>n/a</p>
Lowell, MA	Within 90 days	<p>Any property not legally occupied in the preceding 90 days and without an active building permit.</p>	<p><i>Cumulative Fee Structure:</i></p> <p><i>Initial registration fee:</i> \$1,000</p> <p><i>Each subsequent year:</i> Increases by \$1,000 each year</p>	<p><i>Failure to Register:</i> Up to \$500 fine, with each week of noncompliance treated as a separate violation. <i>Failure to Respond:</i> Failure of the property owner to respond timely is punishable by up to \$300 <i>Failure to Maintain Property:</i> Up to \$300 fine, with each week of noncompliance considered a separate violation. Any city-incurred costs to secure the property may be recovered through a lien.</p>	<p>Challenges with securing large anchor tenants; lack of business acumen; tax reasons</p>	<p>The contracted service provider, Upnext, is responsible for identifying and facilitating short-term leases that may transition into long-term agreements.</p> <p>Staff members monitoring vacancies quarterly and conducting annual neighborhood district checks. They collaborate with health inspectors and building inspectors to track vacancies using tax records and utility documents. The Office of Economic Development is responsible for outreach, fee collection, and vacancy notifications.</p>
New Bedford, MA	Within 45 days	<p>Any commercial building in which no person or entity conducts a lawfully licensed business; or any residential building in which no person lawfully resides; or any building in which more than one-half of the total exterior windows and doors are broken, boarded, or open without a functioning lock shall be deemed "vacant", regardless of occupancy</p>	<p>Property owners are required to register annually through the <i>Opengov</i> platform.</p>	<p>\$300.00 per offense</p> <p>Each day that the owner is in violation shall constitute a separate offense.</p>	<p>Inherited properties; Elderly owners unable to maintain property; Mixed use spaces wherein the currently-occupied residential units generate sufficient income for owners to lack concern about vacancies in other units</p>	<p>Metrics for actual vacancy turnover are not recorded, but vacancies are monitored through utility usage records and property tax data. The program involves representatives from each city department who meet monthly to discuss vacancies.</p> <p>City Neighborhood Taskforce representative noted that program's success largely due to the monetary value it generates for the city. Approximately 400 registration invoices are sent out annually, though many are not paid as landlords secure tenants within 45 days. Additionally, the program has significantly improved communication between the city and property owners.</p>

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Arlington, MA	Within 90 days	Any property not legally occupied, abandoned, or not occupied for a period of at least 90 consecutive days; or is intermittently occupied, but exhibits, in the opinion of the Building Inspector, dilapidated walls, or doors which fail to prevent the entry of trespassors, for a period of more than 7 days. Waiver for financial hardship available for review upon application	<i>Annual Registration Fee (Initial and Renewal):</i> \$400 per storefront annually	<i>Failure to Register:</i> \$100 per day	Inherited properties and new owner fails to maintain; High Capital Requirements; Small Spaces & Compliance Challenges (limited square footage may create ADA compliance and other regulatory hurdles, increasing costs); Waiting for a Specific Tenant (some landlords hold out for a particular business type, prolonging vacancies)	A representative from the Economic Development Department reported that in the first year after the program's implementation, vacancies decreased by 8%. However, the decline has since plateaued. Vacancies are monitored through CoStar, complaints, and visual inspections. Additionally, the Massachusetts Vacant Storefront Program has been updated, increasing available funds from \$10,000 to \$50,000 and eliminating the matching fund requirement, which previously mandated that the city match the granted funds. The City has no BIDs but has a Chamber of Commerce.
New Haven, CT	Immediately	<i>Vacant building</i> means any building in which no occupant lawfully resides or no tenant is in lawful possession, or any building otherwise not being used for any lawful occupancy or deemed unsafe or uninhabitable by the building official.	<i>Vacant Secured (Initial Registration Fee)</i> \$1,000.00 <i>Vacant Secured (Renewal Fee)</i> \$2,500.00	\$250.00 per unit per day.		Economic Development Department representative reported that in the first year after implementation, vacancies decreased by 8%, though the decline has since plateaued. Vacancies are monitored through CoStar, complaints, and visual inspections. Additionally, the Massachusetts Vacant Storefront Program has been expanded, increasing available funds from \$10,000 to \$50,000 and eliminating the matching fund requirement, which previously required cities to match grant funds. While the City has no BIDs, it does have a Chamber of Commerce to facilitate outreach.
Newark, NJ	Within 30 days	Any vacant property (Residential or Commercial) or vacant lot	<i>Buildings under 5,000 sf:</i> \$5,000 <i>Buildings 5,000 - 25,000 sf:</i> \$15,000 per unit <i>Buildings over 25,000 sf:</i> \$25,000	\$500 -\$1,000 for each offense. Fines are recoverable as a property lien		Per source: the New Jersey Business Action Center (BAC) lacks the necessary resources and expertise to develop and maintain a database effectively, which could divert attention from other priorities. Instead, the BAC would be better served by conducting a study to assess the impact of vacant commercial properties on small businesses. This study should examine existing public and private initiatives that help small businesses secure real estate and identify the most effective programs.