

TENANTS' RIGHTS DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS

(This information is up to date as of 3/19/20)

DO YOU HAVE AN EVICTION CASE IN HOUSING COURT?

- **All current eviction cases are postponed** until April 21, 2020 or later.
- Most new dates have not yet been scheduled. The court will notify you of your new date by phone or letter. You can also check your case on www.masscourts.org or call the courthouse: 508-831-2050 (Worcester) or 413-748-7838 (Western Mass. counties).
- If you already had a court date after March 1, 2020 and **missed it** you can file a motion ("to remove the default"). Find out how here: <https://www.masslegalhelp.org/housing/lt1-booklet-6-removing-default.pdf>
- Your landlord may contact you to negotiate an agreement in a pending case. **Seek advice before signing anything or wait** to go to court on your court date to reach an agreement.

DO YOU HAVE A HOUSING EMERGENCY?

- The Housing Courts are **only open for emergency matters** until at least April 6, 2020. You **can** ask the Housing Court for a hearing in these situations:
 - You received a 48 Hour Notice (you are immediately facing move-out by the sheriff);
 - Your landlord is threatening to change the locks or kick you out;
 - There is no heat or there is no hot water, or where you live has been condemned;
 - Your landlord claims you or a member of your household is a threat to others' safety or health.

ARE YOU HAVING TROUBLE PAYING YOUR RENT DUE TO A LOSS IN INCOME?

- You may be eligible for unemployment benefits (<https://www.mass.gov/how-to/apply-for-unemployment-benefits>).
- If you live in public or subsidized housing, contact your housing provider to ask that your rental portion be recalculated.
- If you cannot afford to pay your utility bill during this crisis, utility companies **cannot shut off your service**.

DO YOU NEED LEGAL ADVICE ABOUT A HOUSING ISSUE? Community Legal Aid's offices are currently closed to the public **but we are working!** If you have an existing case, you can contact your advocate. If you need to apply for assistance, call our intake line at 855-CLA-LEGAL (855-252-5342).

More information about this time of crisis:

www.communitylegalaid.org

www.masslegalhelp.org