



Tenant Challenges Related to COVID-19

Frequently Asked Questions

WHAT HAPPENS IF I CAN'T PAY RENT?

The COVID-19 pandemic is causing both health and economic impacts for many in our community. In these challenging times we know that many tenants might be unable to pay rent due to lost work. We urge tenants to reach out to their landlord before the rent is due to see if there are any opportunities to remain in the unit.

To prevent renters from losing their homes during this crisis, a moratorium is in place on evictions of Franklin County residents who are unable to pay rent due to the COVID-19 pandemic. At this time evictions may still be filed, but there will not be any eviction hearings set until May 11, 2020. City Council is currently working with the City Attorney's office and our Municipal Court Judges to further evaluate the process for evictions during this time. For more information and the most up-to-date news please visit this [Link](#).

Because the Franklin County Municipal Court is NOT hearing eviction cases, no one should be asked to leave their home. *If you feel you are being informally evicted, or your eviction is being served as a retaliatory action, please call Todd Dillard at (614) 645-5650.*

COLUMBUS CITY COUNCIL URGES TENANTS TO CONSIDER TAKING THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS:

- Follow the link above regarding the Franklin County Municipal court and their judicial orders. Policies and dates may change, so make sure you have the most up to date information before making any housing related decisions.
- Ask your landlord for a rental forbearance or deferral, a payment plan, or to waive late fees if you cannot pay rent after the rent due date because you have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Be prepared to provide your landlord documentation that you are unable to pay rent because of the financial effects of COVID-19.
- Follow the link to available resources to assist with food, health, and financial assistance.
- Communicate with your landlord proactively that you would like to work with them to ensure you and your family remain housed.

WHAT RESOURCES DO I AS THE TENANT HAVE IF I CAN'T PAY RENT?

In the event that you are unable to pay all or some of your monthly rent, some potential options are below:

1. **Community Mediation Services Tenant/Landlord Mediation** - CMS provide tenants at imminent RISK OF EVICTION and their landlords with mediation services so the tenant may establish a payment plan to get caught up on back rent or arrange to relocate into alternative stable housing and avoid an eviction.
2. **The Legal Aid Society of Columbus** - LASC provides advice and representation for tenants residing in private or subsidized housing. They provide this advice to tenants anytime between the initial hardship, to the eviction being filed, to legal representation at eviction court.
3. **Broad Street Presbyterian Church (COMPASS)** - COMPASS provides services to prevent homelessness and stall evictions, allowing families to remain in their homes. They also refer individuals and families to other agencies within the community. They provide rental assistance and utility bill assistance for individuals not in default.
4. **IMPACT Community Action Emergency Assistance Program** - IMPACT's EAP provides supportive services that deliver crisis intervention strategies to stabilize house holds and strengthen self-sufficiency. All Emergency Assistance Programs/Services serve Franklin County households that are at or below 125% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines and most households must have a qualifying emergency to receive assistance.
5. **COAAA Housing Assistance for Seniors** - The HAP program includes preventative efforts to reduce eviction, displacement, and homelessness for Columbus older adults. The focus is diversion, which is keeping older adults out of the shelter, as well as prevention, to keep from reaching a housing crisis.
6. **Franklin County Prevention, Retention and Contingency (PRC) Emergency Assistance** - PRC funding is currently available for folks who have at least one minor child or a pregnant woman living in your home and be at or below 165% of poverty.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR TENANTS:

- **Utility Companies** - AEP, Columbia Gas, and Columbus Department of Public Utilities have all agreed to a moratorium on utility shut-offs until the COVID-19 pandemic is over.
- If you are currently homeless or in need of immediate assistance, contact [Community Shelter Board for options](#).
- **Franklin County Municipal Court Self Help Resource Center** - If you are experiencing issues with your landlord during the pandemic, you can message the resource center staff at www.fcmcselfhelpcenter.org. They can offer advice and guide you to resources that can help