

Housing Law Bulletin

The Housing Law Center Remains Ready to Help!



Rhode Island Legal Services' ("RILS") Housing Law Center remains ready to help Rhode Island families through this ongoing and unprecedented public health crisis. While our physical offices are closed to clients in order to comply with the Governor's directives, our phone lines remain

open, we have attorneys ready to help, and we are continuing to monitor housing and foreclosure news as it unfolds. Recent updates are summarized below.

1 Readers are encouraged to review the underlying documents referenced here and reminded that this bulletin is for informational purposes only. It does not create an attorney-client relationship.

RECENT EVICTION & FORECLOSURE NEWS

Evictions Halted Until At Least April 17, 2020: As noted in the last bulletin, all Rhode Island State

courts remain closed for Non-Essential Matters *until after April 17, 2020*. This includes non-emergency evictions. We also understand that executions (i.e. forced move outs) for landlord-tenant matters have stopped since our last update. If you have questions

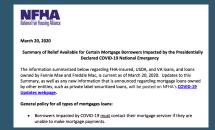
₩ HOMES RI	ON EVICTIONS FOR RENTER
What is a moratorium?	A monitorium in a delay in an activity or an obligation. Monitoriums are usually insu- an authority such as a state agency or elected official.
is there a moratorium on orieticus in Rhede Island?	On March 17, 3039, Bhode bland souts stopped hearing all non-excential mallows, including existions, until after April 17, 2000. This functions as a transforter on-evid because the courts will not move them forward, even if they are filed, during this per
	You second highly be noticed from your bone until an arction has been presented from job or or one of the property of the proof of the property of the proof of the
I heard that exictions are still happening, is that trus?	There are a her steps to legal existions. Papers have to be filed with the court, a hear most be scheduled, and after the basing, a judgment enteredily a judge. After a judgment is selected, a court order for the basest to move out one be bossed. The or order to move out any be selected by an authorized compision or short?
	Figifut now, landlords can still file papers with the court, but hearings will not be subschiled until after April 37, 2029. This means enterlains cannot move forward until April 37.
	State authorities are instructing brethords and constables to not enhance court-order show outs of this time. However, if the court approved a move out order before the Phode bland Supreme Court dosed on Namh 17, it can be enhanced.
Can my landlord just	Landonds carnot nove you sut without going to court and getting a sourt order.
move me dut?	If sources some in more part out, make a run that they have a count order signed byings, they a constained on shariff and that by the Steam of Steam Standard and out of the shariff common out with a count or site. As in a see that trademistic and call the police for ministence they cannot detune up and of it has a shall five controlled. In Steam Standard controlled to the Steam Standard controlled to the Steam Standard controlled to the Standard controlled to the Standard controlled controlled controlled and standard controlled controlled controlled to standard controlled cont
I have received an existion solice. What should I do?	You served be legally existed selfil after the case has been processed through the in spates and resolved a having. Hearings are not being scheduled until after add 12 DSS affects being as an energence, if you have solved a solve, do not the hearing if the date is before April 27, you can call the court to welly whether the case has be rescheduled.
	In the meanine, this still means that your landord will want to evic you after the or your, may alread these evidence of your offers to say your. It was should foresens draighten by our loopers of this time all that any overnational your later will by the sense of the property of the p
	homestring (CA abbanear) (CA) abbanear

about the court closures or your rights, or you are having problems paying

your utilities, you can consult **this resource**, which is also available in **Spanish**, or call RILS for more information.

<u>Initiation of Certain Foreclosures</u> <u>Suspended through May 17, 2020:</u>

We reported in the <u>last bulletin</u> that the initiation of foreclosures is suspended for 60 days (or through May 17, 2020) for certain



mortgages. This includes the initiation of foreclosure sales. *But not everyone is protected (at least not yet)*. A good summary of available relief, with additional details, can be found here.

FHFA offers incentive for Multifamily Properties to Suspend Covid-19 Evictions:

Last week the Federal Housing Finance Agency announced that Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac will offer multifamily property owners mortgage forbearance with the condition that they *suspend all evictions for renters unable to pay due to Covid-19*. More information about this development can be found at FHFA.gov.

Reminders from us at RILS Housing Law Center:

- Stay calm, positive, and patient as help is on the way
- Continue to adhere to the terms of your lease or mortgage if you can
- Maintain communication with your landlord or bank if you need help

Last Friday afternoon, a new \$2 trillion relief package was signed into law. This will result in new and different protections that will be summarized in upcoming bulletins. Stay tuned!

YOU CAN ONLY BE EVICTED BY COURT ORDER



With the courts closed to most evictions, it is important to remember that self-help evictions (or evictions done without a court order) are illegal. Sometimes landlords want to skip using the courts to get a tenant out. They might turn off

heat or electricity, or change the locks. If your landlord threatens to do any of those things, call RILS immediately.

Rhode Island's Landlord-Tenant Act (see R.I.G.L. 34-18-44) specifically prohibits self-help evictions; if your landlord tries to force you out he may be required to pay damages and your attorney's fees. See R.I.G.L. 34-18-34 (describing damages available). And any landlord engaging in a self-help eviction may also face arrest and/or criminal prosecution. See R.I.G.L. 11-44-26 (willful trespass). RILS is currently working with law enforcement to help ensure that police halt illegal evictions. Right now, even one illegal eviction can put a community at risk.

RESOURCES TO HELP YOU

We all know someone who has been impacted by this crisis. If you need help, our Providence office can be reached at 401.274.2652 and our Newport office can be reached at 401.846.2264. If you'd like to help, donate here. Other helpful resources are available too. You are not alone.



Click the buttons below for more other useful information:

Center for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC)

RI Office of the Governor, Gina Raimondo

US Department of Veteran Affairs **Medicare & Medicaid Resources**

Social Security Resource

United Way Rhode Island

RI Coalition for the Homeless

RI Fair Housing

Don't forget to follow us on Facebook and Twitter!





Our Website

Donate

Rhode Island Legal Services, Inc. is funded in part by the Legal Services Corporation ("LSC"). As a condition of the funding received from LSC, Rhode Island Legal Services, Inc. is restricted in certain activities in all its legal work, including work supported by other funding sources. Rhode Island Legal Services, Inc. may not expend any funds for any activity prohibited by the Legal Services Corporation Act, 42 U.S.C §2996 et. seq. or by Public Law 104-

134. Public Law 104—234 §504(d) required that notice of these restrictions be given to all funders or programs funded by the Legal Services Corporation. For a copy of these laws or any further information, please contact: Robert M. Barge, Executive Director, Rhode Island Legal Services, Inc., 56 Pine Street, Suite 400, Providence, Rhode Island 02903; Tel. 401.274.2652.