

Advertising Section of  
The Plain Dealer

## Lifestyles

## RENTALS [CLASSIFIEDS]

# The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland can help eligible tenants with eviction disputes

By Jill Sell

Tenants who fail to pay their rent on time or stay in a rental unit after the termination or expiration of the rental agreement, may find themselves faced with an eviction notice from their landlord. Few people would deny that there are some tenants who should be legally evicted, often for more than one reason.

But there are also cases where landlords improperly started eviction procedures or failed to have a legal reason to demand tenants move. A renter can't be evicted just because property management "doesn't like" someone.

In some cases, the Legal Aid Society of Cleveland can help.

Two years ago, the Society joined the Cleveland Tenants Organization and Cleveland Mediation Center "to help provide representation to low-income people in private landlord-tenant disputes," according to Melanie A. Shakarian, director of development for the Society.

Today, Legal Aid staff and volunteer lawyers handle 1,500 housing law cases annually. Each year, there are about 12,000 eviction instances filed in Cleveland Housing Court that seek the eviction of tenants. An additional 5,500 filed in the four largest suburban municipal courts, said Shakarian.

Because of limited staff, Legal Aid's Housing Unit focuses on government-subsidized rental housing cases. Shakarian said that is the priority because "tenants who are evicted from subsidized housing risk losing both their housing and their subsidy." Those in a private landlord-tenant dispute have no subsidy to lose.

Because in-house Legal Aid attorneys handle governmental-subsidized rental housing, Legal Aid's volunteer attorneys handle private landlord-tenant disputes pro bono. Lawyers from Jones Day, Thompson Hine, Han Loeser and Calfee, and Halter & Griswold participate in providing high-quality, free legal services to low-income tenants.



The  
**Legal Aid Society**  
of Cleveland  
*Since 1905*

To qualify for Legal Aid help, a tenant must have an income that is 125 percent of the federal poverty guidelines or below. Legal Aid then determines if it is a legal problem it can handle and whether it has resources available.

Those in need of help can visit a Legal Aid Society office, call (216) 687-1900, or attend a free advice clinic held evenings and weekends. Visit [www.lasclev.org](http://www.lasclev.org) for more information.

Upcoming clinics will be held at the following locations:

**Saturday, October 24**

Fatima Family Center, 6600 Lexington Avenue, 9:45 a.m. to noon.

**Saturday November 14**

St. Martin de Porres Family Center, 1264 East 123 Street, 9:45 a.m. to noon.

Jill Sell is a freelance writer specializing in real estate, home and garden. Jill can be reached at [jillsell@en.com](mailto:jillsell@en.com).

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