

FREE EVICTION HELP:
OVERVIEW FOR MUNICIPAL JUDGES AND CLERKS


May 26, 2021



The logo features a blue outline of a house with a chimney. Below the house, the words "FREE EVICTION" are written in orange, and "HELP" is written in large, bold, blue letters with a blue underline.

1

WELCOME:
JUDGE NICASTRO, GARFIELD HEIGHTS



The logo features a blue outline of a house with a chimney. Below the house, the words "FREE EVICTION" are written in orange, and "HELP" is written in large, bold, blue letters with a blue underline.

2

Meeting Civil Legal Needs:

Legal Aid's Mission

To secure justice and resolve fundamental problems for those who are low income and vulnerable by providing high quality legal services and working for systemic solutions

3

Meeting Civil Legal Needs:

Who Legal Aid Serves

- Individuals and families at or below 200% of federal poverty limit
 - Individual = \$24,280
 - Family of Four = \$50,200
- Most recent census data: 31% of Clevelanders live in poverty, including 43% of African-American and 40% of Hispanic residents. Almost half of Clevelanders under 18 have experienced poverty.
- In an average year -
 - 97% of clients made less than \$25,000 a year
 - 71% of clients were women
 - 24% of clients were older adults (age 60+)

4

Meeting Civil Legal Needs:

Legal Aid's Four Goals -

Improve Safety & Health

Promote Education and Economic Stability

Ensure Government and Justice Systems
are Accountable & Accessible

Create Safe and Stable Housing


5

IMPORTANCE OF LEGAL HELP IN EVICTIONS:

Evictions lead to school instability, poor health, unemployment, community destabilization, homelessness and create barriers to future housing.

What does legal representation look like?

- Defending against the eviction
- Facilitating access to the Court via technology
- Filing counterclaims against the landlord
- Seeking repair of poor housing conditions at the rental premises
- Facilitating rent assistance applications
- Providing Legal Aid social work services for warm referrals
- Internal Legal Aid referrals for additional legal help




6

Importance of Legal Help in Evictions:

Who is being evicted:

- 77% of tenants are African American
- 76% of tenants are Women
- 60% of tenants have children in the household
- 2 children per household average
- \$1,200 median monthly income
- 30% of tenants had a previous eviction filing

Pre COVID 19	Post COVID 19
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 20,000 evictions per year in Cuyahoga County• 9,000 in Cleveland• Average 2 months of rental assistance or \$1,250	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Up to 86,000 evictions in Cuyahoga County without on-going intervention• Average 2.5 months rental assistance or \$1,500 (\$2,000 outside Cleveland)



7

New Resources in Cuyahoga County



8



9

Local Court Engagement: How to bring Free Eviction Help to your Community

1. Outreach
 - List of eviction filings for outreach/Follow Up Letter
 - Insert in summons

ATTENTION TENANTS!

You may be eligible for free legal help at your eviction hearing. Call or apply online to find out if you are eligible.

Call Us
Llámmanos
Appeler-nous
ግንባሩ

FREE EVICTION HELP

(216) 861-5835
Monday to Friday, 9 am to 4 pm
2-1-1
Available 24/7

Apply Online
FreeEvictionHelp.org
Available 24/7

Do not ignore your eviction case. Tenants' rights in the eviction process can be protected by a lawyer. Lawyers who represent tenants in evictions often get good results, such as:

- Stopping the eviction
- Getting tenants more time to move
- Protecting tenants' property
- Reducing or avoiding debt owed by tenant
- Addressing unit repairs
- Applying for rental assistance

Call now, you may be eligible for free legal help at your eviction hearing.

10

Local Court Engagement:
How to bring Free Eviction Help to your Community

2. Promote Housing Stability
& Help Landlords Get Rental Assistance for Tenants

- Screening of Tenants
- Schedule eviction hearing at least 30 days from filing

11

Local Court Engagement:
How to bring Free Eviction Help to your Community

3. Procedural Efficiencies

- Bifurcate 1st and 2nd Cause filings
or increase filing fee for cases with a 2nd Cause
- 1-week continuance
- Email or electronic access to pleadings
- If eligible for representation, automatic fee waiver
- Designate certain docket days for evictions


12

Local Court Engagement:
How to bring Free Eviction Help to your Community

4. Data Collection for Sustainability

13

Questions?



14