

Hamilton County Tenant Resources and Protections in Response to COVID-19



Paying Rent

Q: I lost my job due to COVID-19, what should I do about my rent?

A: If you live in public housing, subsidized housing, or have a Housing Choice Voucher, report the decrease in your income to your landlord/property manager. Many leasing offices may be closed. If so, call and ask how you can provide proof of your loss of income so that your rent portion can be lowered. You may be able to mail the documents or leave them in a drop box. Always keep a copy of whatever you send in or drop off.

If you live in private / non-subsidized housing, you should try to pay your rent if you are able. If you can't pay the rent, you may be eligible for financial assistance.

Q: Can I get financial help to pay my rent?A: You may qualify for financial help to pay your rent. If you have a child or expectant mother in your household, you may be eligible for Prevention, Retention, and Contingency (PRC) Funds. Hamilton County JFS has an online PRC form that you can fill out at www.hcjfs.org. You may also call the Legal Aid Society at 513-241-

9400 for help in applying for PRC. You may also qualify for rental financial help from St. Vincent de Paul or Community Action Agency. Contact **Legal Aid Society at 513-241-9400, St. Vincent de Paul at 513-421-0602 or Community Action Agency at 513-569-1840.**

Q: Can I stop paying rent during this crisis?

A: If you can pay your rent, you should absolutely try to do so. Otherwise, your landlord could still file an eviction with the eviction court. You are still responsible for your rent portion even if there are no eviction hearings being held right now.

Q: Can I be evicted if I can't pay my rent?

A: The Hamilton County eviction court has re-opened as of June 8, 2020. Now that hearings have resumed, you can be evicted for failure to pay rent. However, if you are a renter living in a property that receives a federal subsidy, your landlord cannot file evictions for non-payment of rent at this time. This includes all renters living in public housing, in buildings receiving Section 8 rental assistance

vouchers or subsidies, in buildings receiving USDA rental housing assistance, or buildings that receive Low Income Housing Tax Credits. It also covers renters living in properties where the owner has a loan backed by the FHA, USDA, VA, or Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac. Owners of these properties cannot file eviction until after July 25, 2020. After that date, the owners of these properties may not evict a tenant except on 30 days' notice. The owner cannot give this 30-day notice until after the moratorium period ends.



Utilities & Lockouts

Q: What should I do if my landlord locks me out or tries to shut off my utilities to get me to leave?

A: Under Ohio law, the only way a landlord can legally force a tenant to leave is by taking the tenant to eviction court, getting a court order, and coming to your home with a court bailiff, deputy sheriff, or other court officer. This means the landlord must complete the eviction process. It is not enough for an eviction to just be filed with the court. A landlord must wait until the eviction hearing takes place. **If your landlord does try to illegally make you leave without an eviction hearing, call the Legal Aid Society at 513-241-9400.**

Q: Will my gas and electric be shut off if I can't pay my bill?

A. Some utility companies in Southwest Ohio have suspended electric and gas disconnections, including Duke Energy. Additionally, Duke Energy will not be assessing late fees for non-payment. The number to contact Duke Energy is 800-544-6900.

Q: Will my water be shut off if I can't pay my bill?

A: No, there are no water shutoffs in Southwest Ohio at this time. Greater Cincinnati Water Works (GCWW) will also be restoring service if your water was previously shut off. GCWW, is also waiving late fees at this time. The number to contact GCWW is 513-591-7700.

If you have questions or need legal assistance,
please call the Legal Aid line at **(513) 241-9400**