

Brown, Butler, Clermont, Clinton, Highland, and Warren County Tenant Resources and Protections in Response to COVID-19

Eviction Courts Current Status

Brown County | No hearings until after May 18. However, any writs issued before the court closure will be executed.

Clermont County | No hearings through April 17. However, any writs issued prior to March 17, 2020 will be executed.

Warren County | **Hearings ONGOING, except for Lebanon, OH.** In Lebanon, no hearings until after May 1.

Clinton County | No hearings until first week of May and no set-outs until April 25.

Highland County | **Hearings ONGOING**

Butler County | No hearings until approximately April 16. Hamilton, OH is not accepting eviction filings. Middletown is not accepting any evictions unless the case involves drugs or domestic violence.



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 offices are closed. If so, call and leave a message asking how you can leave 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.

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 if/when the eviction court accepts filings. 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: Most counties have postponed hearings at least until mid-April. Also, if you are a renter living in a property that receives a federal subsidy, your landlord cannot file evictions 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.

Q: Can I get help to pay my rent?

A: Depending on your personal and household circumstances, you may qualify for different kinds of financial help. Your household may be eligible for Prevention, Retention, and Contingency Funds from your county's job and family services agency. Some financial help specific to the Covid-19 crisis may also be available. If you have questions about these kinds of assistance, contact your local Jobs and Family Services office.



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 court reopens and 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. Many, but not all, utility companies in Southwest Ohio have suspended electric and gas disconnections. This includes Duke Energy and Butler REC. Additionally, Duke Energy and Butler REC will not be assessing late fees for non-payment. However, some municipal gas and electric companies, such as the City of Hamilton have not made a final decision about whether they will continue to stop disconnections during this time. You should contact your gas and electric company with any questions.

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

A: No, there are no water shut offs at this time in Southwest Ohio. Greater Cincinnati Water Works (GCWW) will also be restoring service if your water was previously shut off. GCWW, Warren County Water & Sewer, and Western Water Company are also waiving late fees at this time. However, Brown County Rural Water Association, Butler County Water & Sewer, Highland County Water, Wilmington Ohio Water (Clinton & Warren County) are still charging late fees.

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