



Tenant Hotline
Phone: 612-728-5767
Online: homelinemn.org/email

Minnesota Landlord/Tenant Law During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Overview of new COVID- 19 Emergency Rental Assistance program

Guest speaker:
Minnesota Housing Deputy Commissioner Rachel Robinson

March 24, 2021— 1:30-3:00pm

HOME Line Managing Attorney & Tenant Hotline Director Michael Vraa

HOME Line Executive Director Eric Hauge

What is HOME Line?

- HOME Line is a statewide nonprofit organization providing free legal, educational, and advocacy services to Minnesota renters. We have advised over 260,000 renters since 1992.
- Our primary program is a free and confidential legal hotline any Minnesota renter can contact us to receive legal advice specific to their situation, in 4 languages.
- HOME Line has a staff of 23, including attorneys, tenant advocates, and tenant organizers. We also rely on volunteers and interns.



What is HOME Line?

HOME Line Tenant Hotline:

612-728-5767

Toll-free: 866-866-3546

- Para Español, llame al 612-255-8870
- Af- Soomaali wac 612-255-8860
- Hais lus Hmoob, Hu 612-255-7104
- Online: *homelinemn.org/email*



HOME Line COVID-19 Resources & Webinars

THREE WEEKS FROM TODAY:

Wednesday, April 14

1:30 – 3:00pm

Update on Eviction Moratoriums and Rental Assistance

Wednesday, April 28

1:30 – 3:00pm

Data from a full year of the eviction moratorium examined

More COVID-19 resources, recordings of previous webinars, on our website:

homelinemn.org — “COVID-19” tab at top right



Another relevant CLE webinar

Almost Everything You Wanted to Know About Minnesota Residential Security Deposits

Speaker: Paul Birnberg, Former Senior Attorney with
HOME Line

Monday, March 29, 2021—12:00 PM to 1:00 PM

1.0 Standard CLE Credit

[https://www.mnbar.org/members/cle-events/hcba-
event?EventID=4468](https://www.mnbar.org/members/cle-events/hcba-event?EventID=4468)



When will MN evictions be filed again?

- Minnesota Moratorium (EO-20-79)
 - Governor's Executive Orders—April 14, 2021 is current Peacetime Emergency Declaration End
 - Been renewed by Governor twelve times already
 - No more special sessions required until at least May
 - Could be some legislative agreement ending Peacetime Emergency or ending state eviction ban
 - Successful court challenge could end moratorium as well



When will MN evictions be filed again? Competing legislative bills

- Senate File 1470 and House File 12
- Both would add 'material breach' to exceptions for reasons for eviction
- Differing timelines on when various things occur
- Bills are at different legislative stages



Federal Moratorium on Evictions

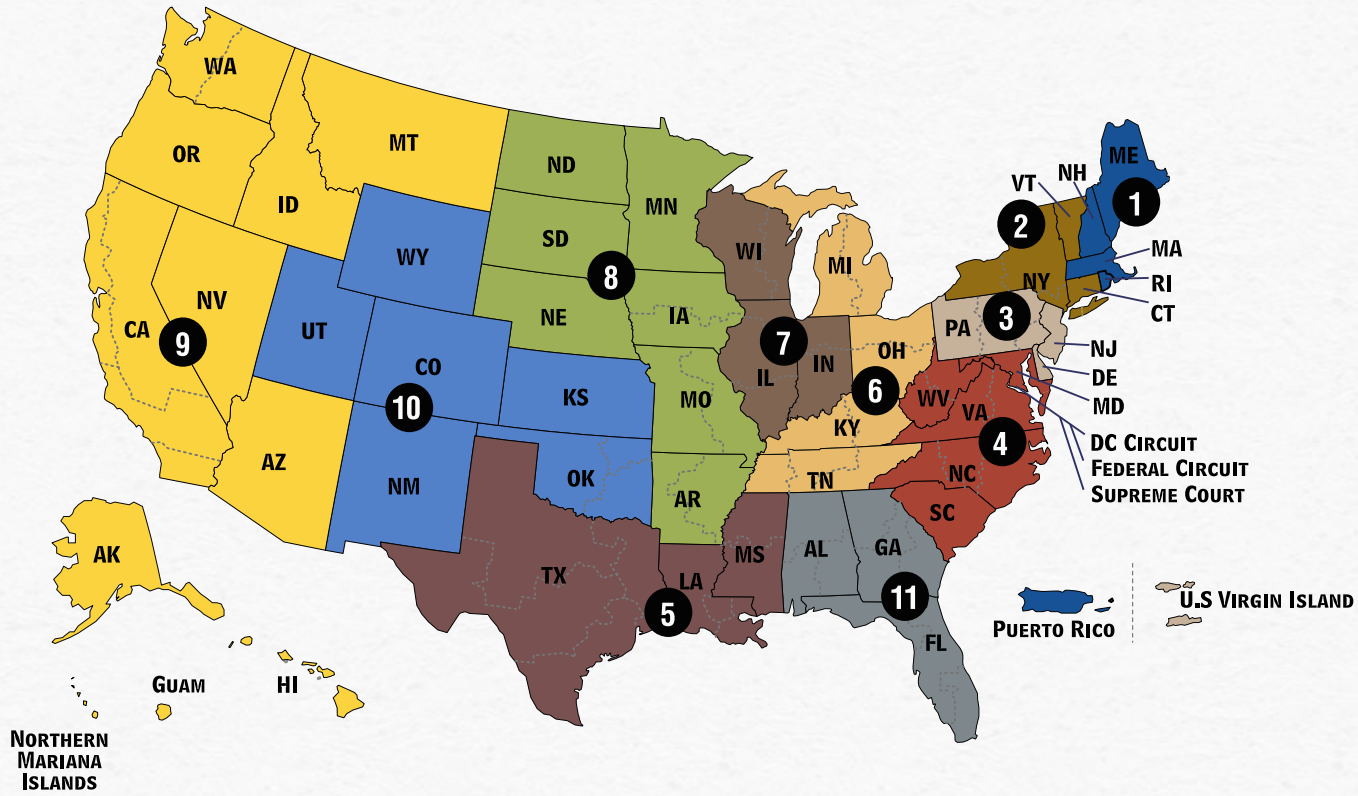
CDC order status

- Currently expires March 31
- Three federal district court decisions have now ruled against the CDC moratorium
- *Terkel v. CDC*, (TX)
 - Fairly broad, constitutional critique of order
- *Tiger Lily v. HUD, CDC* (TN), *Skyworks v. CDC* (OH),
 - Both strictly analyze the limit of the statute authorizing CDC 'quarantine' power



Geographic Boundaries

of United States Courts of Appeals and United States District Courts





COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance



March 24, 2021

Minnesota Housing | mnhousing.gov

COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance Program Overview

- The COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance Program will provide assistance to benefit **renter households** that have experienced hardship or are at risk of housing instability due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The program is **not yet open** for applications but will be in the coming weeks.
- It will be funded through federal appropriations subject to program requirements set by the U.S. Department of Treasury.
 - Revised Guidance was published the last week of February
- Minnesota's total allocation is \$375 million from December and additional ERA was included in the American Rescue Plan Act signed in March, 2021.

COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance Program Overview

- Minnesota Housing directly received about \$290 million and will serve the entire state.
- About \$85 million was provided directly to seven cities and counties in the metro area to administer.
 - Collaboration efforts with local units of government
- Tribal Nations received additional direct allocations.
- Funding is available until September 30, 2022 (extended in American Rescue Plan Act).



Eligible Applicants for COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance Program

Renter Households:

- Be a Minnesota resident and a renter (homeowners not eligible)
- Have a household income at or below 80% of Area Median Income
- Have experienced financial hardship through the coronavirus outbreak
- Demonstrate a risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability

Landlords can initiate applications but renters must provide income information and sign the application.



Eligible Expenses

- Households may be eligible for up to 15 months of assistance total
- Past-due rent (back to March of 2020), tenant-paid utilities, and some other costs
- Future payments
 - First must resolve arrears
 - Three months at a time
- Rent for manufactured home lots and rented manufactured homes included

Rental Payments

- Minnesota will first open applications for tenants already behind on rent, but will process for the maximum eligible assistance.
- Payments for both rental arrears and prospective rental assistance will generally be made directly to landlords.
- If a landlord cannot be reached or refuses to participate, the assistance can be paid to the tenant household.



How to Apply for Emergency Rental Assistance

- When the program opens, tenants will be able to apply online and landlords will be able to register for payment and connect to tenant accounts.
- Tenants can access a dedicated team at the rent assistance phone line 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday to Saturday. Web applications will be accessible 24/7.
- There will also be a hard copy/paper application.
- Given federal requirements, tenants and landlords will need to upload some documentation. Assistance meeting requirements is available through the call center and upon referral, from field partners.

Navigation and Outreach Efforts

- Engaging a Network of Field Partners
 - Field partners are nonprofit and government entities funded to provide navigation and outreach services, trainings and assistance working through the application.
 - A focus on organizations that are able to reach and serve populations over-represented amongst those experiencing housing instability.
 - Provide access and assistance in multiple languages and formats.
- Connections to field partners will be available through the call center or through direct connections.



Thank you

Questions?

Rachel Robinson
Deputy Commissioner
Minnesota Housing



Q & A

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Thank You