

HOME Line's Tenant Organizing Webinar series continues...

Know Your Rights for Tenant Organizers

May 6th, 2021 6:00 - 7:00 PM

Erin West - Tenant Organizer, HOME Line
Lovetee Pohlan - Organizer, Georgetown Apartments

Get to know HOME Line

HOME Line provides free and low-cost legal, organizing, education, and advocacy services so that tenants throughout Minnesota can solve their own rental housing problems. We work to improve public and private policies relating to rental housing by involving affected tenants in the process.

- For English, call [612-728-5767](tel:612-728-5767) or [email your question](#).
Toll-free from Greater Minnesota: [866-866-3546](tel:866-866-3546)
- Para Español, llame al [612-255-8870](tel:612-255-8870).
- Af- Soomaali wac [612-255-8860](tel:612-255-8860).
- Hais lus Hmoob, Hu [612-255-7104](tel:612-255-7104).

What is tenant organizing?

Tenants organize because they agree there is a **commonly-shared issue** and they believe that their **collective actions** can address that issue.

Tenant associations are building, neighborhood, or city-based organizations made up of tenants who organize with each other to use collective political, economic, and social pressures to overcome recurring problems. Tenant associations are also important sources of community and connection within an otherwise disconnected and rapidly changing rental market.

Why organize?

Sometimes, knowing the law isn't enough to address an issue, and acting alone may not change landlord actions.

**Know Your
Rights!**

Resources

Find out what legal obligations you and your landlord have.

- Research: <https://www.ag.state.mn.us/consumer/handbooks/lt/default.asp>
- Legal services: <https://www.lawhelpmn.org/self-help-library/housing>
- Call HOME Line: (612) 728-5767
- Call Legal Aid

Not everything that's legal is just!

Retaliation

The right to organize is not explicitly protected under MN state law. However, you are protected from retaliation in the form of eviction, rent increase, or loss of services.

- Your LL has to prove an eviction is not retaliatory within a 90-day period after you've asserted your rights. (504B.285 Subd. 2)

Rights to organize *are* protected for some subsidized housing, see next month's webinar!

Repairs

- Rent Escrow (504B.385)
 - MN law states that your LL has 14 days to complete a repair after you've made a request in writing. If they do not, you have the right to pay your rent into escrow at your county court.
- Emergency Tenant Remedies Action (504B.381)
 - Emergency repair = loss of (hot) water, heat, electricity, sanitary or other essential facilities
 - MN law requires your LL to make the fix within 24 hrs after making a request in writing or you can file an ETRA case in court
- Tenant Remedies Action (504B.395)
 - A formal tenant association with the support of the residents or a local neighborhood group are both able to file a Tenant Remedies Action 14 days after providing a repair request to the landlord.

Utilities

Shut-offs

- If you LL is delinquent on utility bills, you can pay the balance and deduct from your rent
- Give your LL 48 hrs written notice and keep the receipts

Heat

- Loss of heat is case for ETRA
- Heat standards vary by city
- If you pay for your own heat, remember the Cold Weather Rule & apply for energy assistance

Q & A

How to stay involved

- Stay in touch with HOME Line
 - Follow local organizing efforts
 - Sign up for CURA's Neighborhoods NOW training
 - Run for neighborhood boards and other local commissions
 - Testify at public meetings, engage public officials
 - Sign up for eviction defense, mutual aid, other organizing
-

Next Webinar:

“Organizing in Subsidized Housing”

Thursday, June 10th, 6:00 PM