



ADDRESSING CLIENTS' NEEDS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC April 8, 2020

- **Have a question?** Review our COVID-19 FAQ [here](#).
- Need to have your subsidized rent recalculated due to income loss? The Rent Recalculation Request tool can be accessed [here](#) in Spanish and English.
- Save the Date: September 10, 2020 is our annual Richard and Mildred Loving Civil Rights Awards Reception

What happened on April 7, 2020:

- No help for tenants who cannot pay rent: Tenants and advocates continue to ask for financial assistance or a rent forbearance similar to what has been given to homeowners. According to [data](#) released by the National Multifamily Housing Council, only 69% of tenants living in private, non-subsidized housing around the country paid rent by April 5, 2020. This compares to 81% of private tenants who paid rent during the first week of March 2020 and 82% who paid rent in April 2019. Real estate analysts are worried that unpaid rent could set off a chain of events that cause commercial mortgage defaults leading to falling returns on bonds backed by those mortgages.
- Big city mayors ask legislators to expand and extend the eviction moratorium: Because Connecticut's cities are likely to be disproportionately affected by the economic impact of the foreclosure crisis, the mayors of Bridgeport, Hartford, New Haven, Middletown, Norwalk, and Stamford to expand and extend the eviction moratorium. The requested protections include giving renters 90 days after the public health emergency ends to pay the missed rent, as long as half of any amount owed is paid back within the first 30 days of when the emergency ends. The mayors also want the state to give tenants who make partial payment of back rent within 30 days after the emergency ends another 60 days to catch up on their rent and keep their housing. For more on this, click [here](#).
- Hotel for homeless in West Haven: The State reached an agreement with the town of West Haven to move people out of shelter and into hotels in an effort to stop the spread of COVID-19. Despite clear language in a letter from Chief of Police Joseph Perno to the Best Western Corporation sent on April 4, 2020, the Town now says it never intended to charge the hotel nearly \$5,000 a day to hire two police officers. This type of police presence is not required at any of the other shelters in the State nor is it required at any of the other hotels in West Haven. People are expected to move into the hotel during the next several days. For more information, click [here](#) and [here](#).
- Outreach: On the whole, Connecticut's Southeast Asian-American population have not achieved the socioeconomic success of other Asian-Americans. As a result, they have been particularly hard hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, all Asian-Americans have experienced a rise in anti-Asian racism that has followed the COVID-19 pandemic. This has led to hate crimes, attacks, harassment, vandalism and threats to not just Chinese Americans, but Asian-Americans of many backgrounds. For more information on the challenges faced by

Connecticut's Southeast Asian-American residents click [here](#). The Center's fair housing information has been translated into Mandarin and Vietnamese and can be accessed [here](#).

- **Outreach:** Staff has produced a comprehensive FAQ for tenants and advocates on what how the COVID-19 crisis is affecting tenants and how to respond. The FAQs can be accessed [here](#).
- **Outreach:** Staff created a Rent Recalculation Request letter generator to help tenants living in subsidized housing ask that their rent be reduced as the result of a loss in come. The Rent Recalculation Request tool can be accessed [here](#) in Spanish and English.
- **Outreach:** The Center's website doubled the number of views it receives in one day to more than 1,241 unique views on COVID-19 resources.
- **Outreach:** Staff distributed this [daily housing update](#) to over 600 advocates and had more than 600 unique hits on the update on our website. If you want this daily update delivered to your inbox, click [here](#).

What has NOT happened:

- Help for tenants who cannot pay their rent, they are still receiving notices to quit and summary process complaints. As a result, tenants are likely to spread the coronavirus as they are forced from their homes and take refuge with family or friends or try to access homeless shelters. Effective assistance for tenants includes:
 - Money to pay rent or utility bills for people whose employment is affected by the COVID-19 crisis;
 - Money for utility shut-off restoration once the moratorium ends and people are again faced with loss of utilities;
 - Stopping all of phases of the eviction process for all tenants including issuing notices to quit, filing of summary process actions, court hearings, eviction judgments, and court ordered move outs;
 - Prohibition of late fees;
 - Making automatic adjustments to subsidized rents;
 - Setting reasonable time limits on landlord access to rental units;
 - Creation of a rent bank to help tenants who have lost their jobs pay rent;
 - Announcing self-help evictions are not allowed now that the courts are closed.
 - Ensure judgments dismissing summary process cases are being entered.
 - Keeping the eviction moratorium in effect long enough to allow tenants whose income was reduced to apply for and obtain any relief benefits;
 - Additional lawyers to represent tenants in evictions and homeowners in foreclosure filed after the current moratoriums on filing new cases is lifted;
 - Housing counselors who can advise tenants and homeowners of the resources available to them to keep their homes after the current moratoriums are lifted as well as to avoid scams that may result in them losing money and their housing;
 - Additional mediators for Connecticut's Foreclosure Mediation Program to assist the homeowners who will be faced with foreclosure actions once the moratorium on filing new foreclosure cases is lifted;
- Despite guidance from HUD on March 31, 2020, there has been no effort by housing authorities to notify their tenants of new procedures and requests for rent calculations during the current pandemic. A review of housing authority websites to determine what they were telling their tenants about COVID-19 procedures and whether there was any information in

Spanish. The majority still have no information about changes to housing authority procedures in light of the current crisis. [Click here](#) for a summary of what we have found.

- People continue to live in substandard conditions and cannot get assistance in moving out even though the conditions are harming them and their families.

What we are learning from our clients

- The majority of calls received by the Center and other housing advocates ask whether there is any assistance for tenants who cannot pay their rent.
- Landlords continue to issue notices to quit.
- Landlords continue to file summary process complaints. More than 700 new summary process cases have been filed since the governor declared a public health and civil preparedness emergency.
- The Center's Rent Recalculation Request tool has been used to request a rent recalculation more than 30 times since it was created on April 1, 2020. The Rent Recalculation Request tool can be accessed [here](#) in Spanish and English.
- Tenants continue to call because they are being asked to show their apartments to prospective tenants without regard to COVID-19 precautions. The Center is advising tenants that under Connecticut landlord/tenant laws they have the right to refuse entrance to anyone if it would cause a safety hazard.
- Because not all mortgage servicers are participating in the federal or state forbearance programs, homeowners continue to receive notices of default.
- Mortgage servicers continue to file foreclosure complaints.
- Homeowners do not know what to do when they receive a foreclosure summons and complaint since many courts and court information centers are closed.
- People without legal status continue to face deportation and are unable to access services to stay in their homes.
- People who were laid off from their jobs as the result of the pandemic are moving in with parents and friends sometimes causing overcrowding or lease violations. Foreclosures of homeowners will now affect many more people.

External COVID-19 resources can be found on our website [here](#).

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR FAIR HOUSING RIGHTS IN ENGLISH, SPANISH, MANDARIN, VIETNAMESE, FARSI, RUSSIAN, ITALIAN, KREYOL, AND ARABIC, CLICK [HERE](#)

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