

Community Advocates: New federal eviction moratorium helpful for renters, but more assistance needed

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Milwaukee—Yesterday, the federal government announced a moratorium on evictions for low-income renters who meet certain requirements. Attached are frequently asked questions for tenants about the moratorium.

The moratorium will prevent eviction in many circumstances, but tenants must take certain steps in order to be protected. The moratorium will not prevent an eviction if the tenant has not met the requirements of the order. Similarly, the moratorium does not forgive rent or prevent late fees; tenants are still required to pay their rent as usual to prevent an eviction after the moratorium expires, even if they have lost income due to COVID-19. In fact, the new federal moratorium requires tenants to make every effort to pay their rent and seek assistance in order to be protected by the eviction ban.

“The new moratorium will help our clients avoid homelessness, but it’s important for renters to know that they must continue paying rent and that rent assistance is available,” Andi Elliott, CEO of Community Advocates, said. “Applying for that assistance is required to avoid being evicted for non-payment of rent, and help is only a click or a call away.”

Anyone in Milwaukee County facing an eviction or inability to pay their rent may learn more about what assistance is available and apply for assistance via Community Advocates and its Rental Housing Resource Center at: <https://communityadvocates.net/who-we-are/rental-housing-and-coronavirus-res>

[ources.html](#) or by contacting our Rent HelpLine at (414) 270-4646 or by e-mailing renthelp@communityadvocates.net. Additional legal assistance is available via Legal Action of Wisconsin or Legal Aid Society of Milwaukee, mediation assistance is available via Mediate Milwaukee. IMPACT is a source of referrals for those experiencing homelessness and connection to other resources.

Since June 1, 2020, Community Advocates has fielded tens of thousands of inquiries, and has received more than 4,000 applications for rent assistance. The State of Wisconsin, Milwaukee County, and the City of Milwaukee have all made rent assistance funds available using federal CARES Act funding and have partnered with community organizations, including Community Advocates, to reach tenants. Thanks in part to the assistance provided, fewer evictions were filed than were expected after Wisconsin's eviction moratorium ended at the end of May.

"This new eviction moratorium is a helpful step for tenants facing evictions, but it's an incomplete policy approach," said Mike Bare, who leads the Healthy Housing Initiative at the Community Advocates Public Policy Institute. "Most federal assistance programs, both congressional and via executive actions, are set to expire by the end of the year. This assistance has proven effective at helping to prevent evictions and housing insecurity after the state's eviction moratorium ended. Lawmakers could help to prevent people from struggling with housing insecurity by making more assistance available for a longer period of time."

Community Advocates, on its own, recently signed a letter to Wisconsin's Congressional delegation urging that Congress act urgently to provide "[f]unding for states, local governments, and school districts to cover lost revenue and continue essential services" and "[a]dditional funds for the homeless and those experiencing housing insecurity, including additional funds for Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG), Community Development Block Grants, and federal disaster aid administered by FEMA." The letter also recommends boosts to peoples' income and creating job opportunities.

Since 1976, the Milwaukee-based Community Advocates has provided a spectrum of programs and services to thousands of people experiencing housing insecurity every year. Its Public Policy Institute targets poverty through nonpartisan changes

to relevant public policies and laws; preventing its effects through public health efforts; and increasing opportunity and wellness for low-income people by fostering factors related to success, resilience, and well-being.