

# Workshop for Landlords: Managing the challenges of COVID-19

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Sponsored by the Greenfield Community and Economic  
Development, Police and Health Departments

October 27, 2020 (with support from CDBG funds)



# Workshop Agenda

**Welcome and Introduction** - MJ Adams, Greenfield Community and Economic Development

**Eviction Diversion Initiative Overview** - MJ Adams

**Rental Assistance for tenants and landlords** - Gina Govoni and Amanda Watson, FCRHRA, Housing Consumer Education Center

**Community Mediation** - Betsy Williams, Collaborative Resolutions Group, Inc.

**Court Process**- Greenfield Court Service Center, Mary G. Klaes, Esq., Manager

**Community Legal Services**

**Greenfield Compliance Assistance Program** - MJ Adams/Jen Hoffman

**Q and A Session**

# What do landlords need to know about eviction moratoriums?

Massachusetts' Eviction Moratorium ended on October 17, 2020

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has a federal moratorium on evictions in place until December 31, 2020 for COVID-impacted tenants

MA's Baker-Polito administration has announced an Eviction Diversion Initiative to support landlords and tenants with the ongoing financial challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic

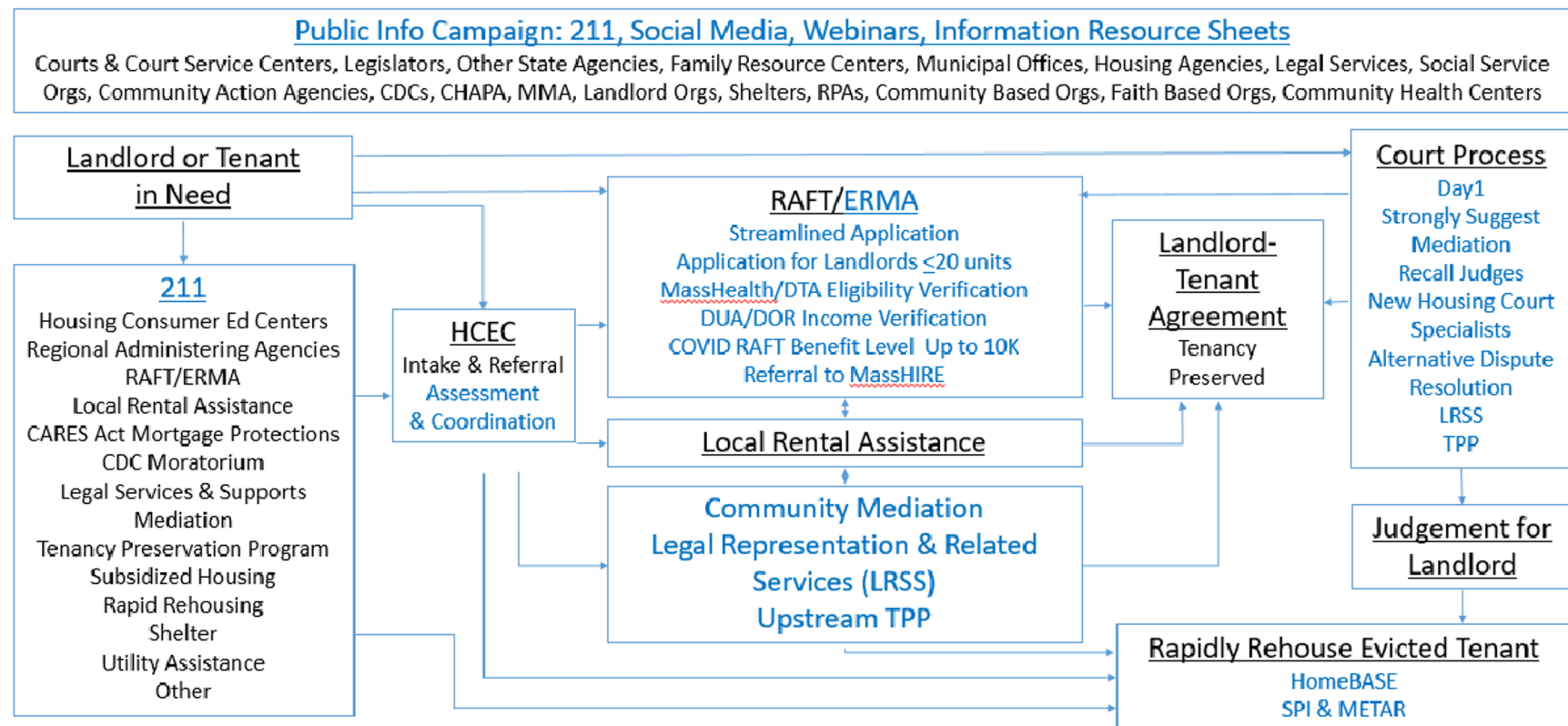
# Eviction Diversion Initiative - Overview

## Goals

1. To protect the public health
2. To prevent evictions caused by the impact of COVID 19 economic hardships
3. To invite landlords to join as partners with housing/courts and public health officials in keeping the public safe and to address financial challenges faced by landlords due to deferred/delayed/forgiven rent payments

# Eviction Diversion Road Map

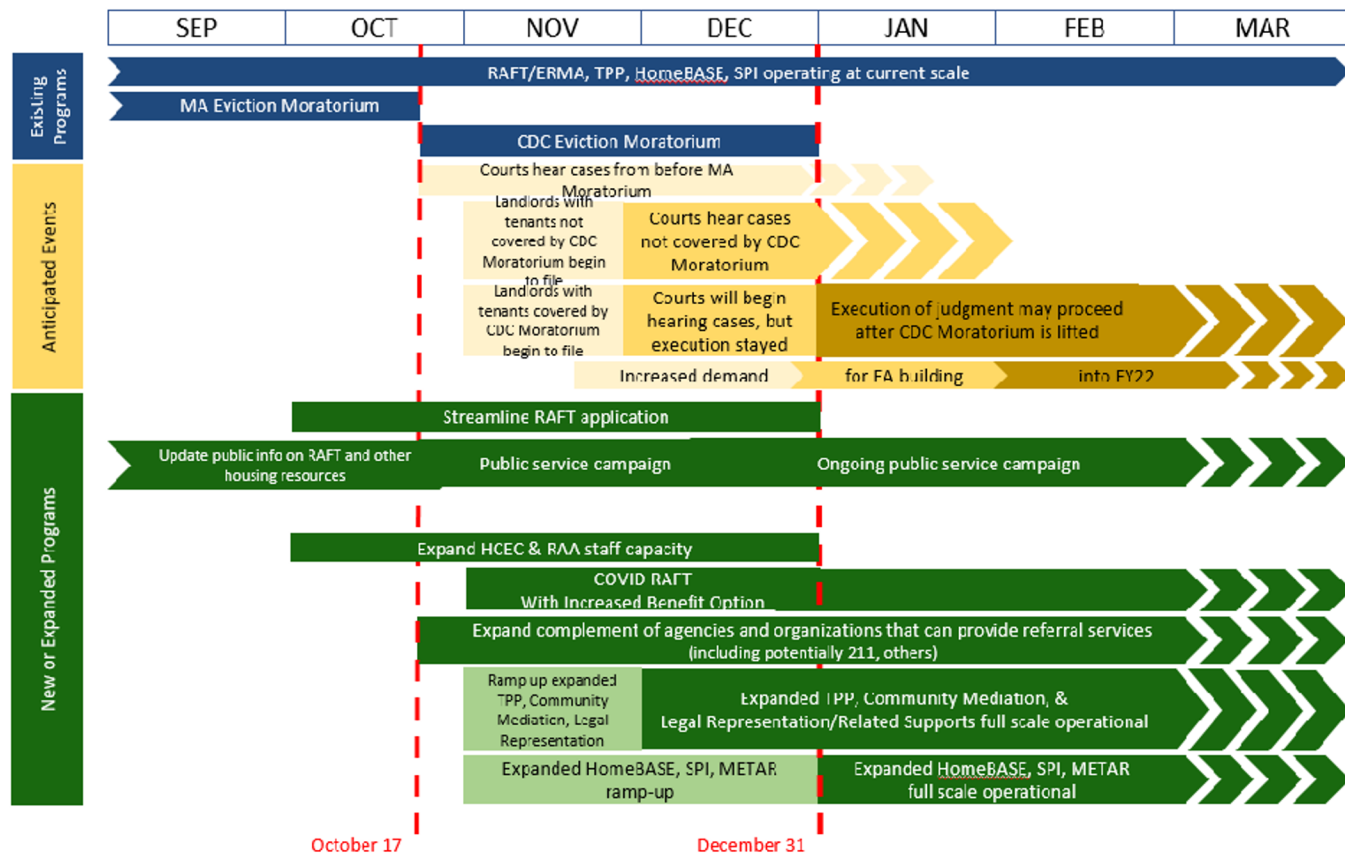
## Multiple Interventions from Pre-Filing to Post-Eviction



Blue denotes new or expanded initiative

10/10/2020

# Anticipated Timeline with Intervention









FROM DHCD OCTOBER 12TH PRESENTATION

# Eviction Diversion

## Seven Stages of Interventions: Upstream & Court Process



Light blue text = court intervention  
Black text = administration intervention

		1 Pre Filing	2 Filing	3 Post Filing / Pre Court	4 1st Day in Court	5 Post Day 1 in Court, Pre-Trial	6 Trial	7 Post Eviction
Existing Interventions	Information / Service Coord. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Multiple entities referring tenants to Housing Consumer Ed Center (HCECs) or Regional Administering Agencies (RAAs)</li><li>Upstream Tenancy Preservation Program (TPP)</li></ul>						
	Financial support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Residential Assistance For Families in Transition (RAFT) and Emergency Rental and Mortgage Assistance (ERMA)</li><li>Local Rental Assistance</li></ul>						<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Rapid Rehousing (SPI, HomeBASE)</li></ul>
	Pre-Court & Court Processes 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Legal services and court service centers support prep for court</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Housing Court Specialists<sup>1</sup></li><li>Referral to TPP<sup>1</sup></li><li>Lawyer for the Day (LFD)<sup>1</sup></li></ul> <p><i>1. Housing court only</i></p>			
Planned New or Expanded Interventions	Information / Service Coord. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Information campaign with 211 as a new front door</li><li>Expand HCEC capacity to coordinate across new programs and track outcomes</li><li>Expand Upstream TPP</li></ul>						
	Financial support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Enhanced benefit level for COVID RAFT</li><li>Landlords with &lt;20 units option to apply directly to RAFT/ERMA</li></ul>						<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Expand Rapid Rehousing programs (SPI, HomeBASE, new METAR)</li></ul>
	Pre-Court & Court Processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Community mediation</li><li>Legal Representation &amp; Related Services</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Referrals to resources in court documents</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) in District Court &amp; Expand Housing Court Specialists</li><li>Recall Judges</li></ul>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Require landlords to certify if tenant has given certification as per CDC order</li></ul>							

FROM DHCD OCTOBER 12TH PRESENTATION

# Are you unable to pay your rent or mortgage due to COVID-19?

## Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) Emergency Rental & Mortgage Assistance (ERMA)

For individuals and families at risk of being displaced or forced to leave due to their homes due to COVID-19 employment loss, there are programs that can help.

RAFT and ERMA are programs that can provide eligible households up to \$4,000 to help keep their housing, obtain new housing, or otherwise avoid becoming homeless, regardless of source of income or lack of income.

### Who is Eligible?

- Families
- Individuals
- Unaccompanied youth
- See income eligibility
- Federal immigration status has no impact on eligibility for most of this funding.

### How can Funds Be Used?

Eligible households can receive up to \$4,000 in a 12 month period. Funds can be used for:

- Rental or mortgage arrearages
- Short-term rental stipends
- First & last month's rent
- Security deposits

### How is ERMA Different from RAFT?

RAFT is targeted to households up to 50%AMI while ERMA focuses on households between 50-80% AMI.

### Difference in Income Limits:

Household size	Annual income limit for RAFT (50%)	Annual income limit for ERMA (80%AMI)
1	\$29,900	\$47,850
2	\$34,200	\$54,650
3	\$38,450	\$61,500
4	\$42,700	\$68,300
5	\$46,150	\$73,800
6	\$49,550	\$79,250

### Application Process:

There is a single application process for RAFT and ERMA. Households seeking assistance will first be asked about their household income. If their income is below 80% AMI, they will begin the RAFT/ERMA application. If their gross income exceeds 80% AMI, they will be referred to other resources.

**Franklin County Regional Housing & Redevelopment Authority**  
241 Millers Falls Rd Turners Falls MA, 01376

**[www.fcrhra.org](http://www.fcrhra.org) or 413-863-9781 ext. 150**







Collaborative Resolutions Group, Inc.  
P. O. Box 931  
Greenfield, MA 01302

## MEDIATION FACT SHEET

Collaborative Resolutions Groups is the approved provider of the Housing Mediation Program for Franklin and Hampshire Counties, providing landlord/tenant mediation services free of charge at this time.

### Does mediation make sense for you?

Mediation is a voluntary, confidential process for resolving disputes with the help of a neutral third party. The mediator(s) will help the parties in dispute come up with solutions which meet the needs of everyone involved. The mediator(s) will not take sides or prescribe solutions. The mediators will not take any actions on behalf of either party against the other party in any current or future litigation or other dispute resolution process.

There are three fundamental principles of mediation that are important to understand before beginning mediation:

1. **Mediation is voluntary.** Mediation only happens when all parties agree to use it.

2. **Mediation is confidential.** Collaborative Resolutions Group (CRG) will not share any information from the mediation or the intake process without the written consent of all parties. The only exceptions to this confidentiality are: (a) if we hear about child abuse, (b) if we hear about someone who is going to harm him/herself or someone else, or (c) if we hear about someone who plans to commit a crime. We also require all parties to sign an agreement that neither CRG, nor its mediators or records will be brought into any legal, judicial or other proceeding outside of the mediation.

3. **Mediators are neutral.** Your mediator(s) will not be acting as advocate(s) for any party in the dispute. They are facilitators of your negotiating process, setting ground rules, keeping the conversation on track, asking clarifying questions, helping interpret when communication breaks down, and helping draw up any written agreements. This means all parties must be able to negotiate on their own behalf. Mediators are trained to help manage the difficult dynamics of a conflict situation, but each person needs to be able to express his/her own needs and wants. Any resolutions which come out of mediation are created by the mediation participants themselves.

The mediation process begins with each party either filling out an intake questionnaire on-line or having an intake with a CRG Case Coordinator. This aids the case coordinator in gathering enough information to understand the situation, determine whether or not the case is

appropriate for mediation, and to assign mediators. Once the intake has been received from all parties, the case coordinator contacts each person to answer any final questions and to schedule the case. Most often there will be a team of two mediators assigned to each case. Occasionally there is just one mediator assigned.

The mediation is usually set up in two-hour sessions. Currently, due to Covid-19, all mediations are conducted either via the Zoom, on-line platform, or via phone. Some large-group disputes are scheduled for longer sessions. If the dispute is not resolved by the end of the first session, the parties decide whether or not to schedule another session. If they choose to continue in mediation, they arrange the time for the next session with the mediator. The mediation process continues until the parties resolve the issues or believe mediation is no longer useful to them.

If parties reach agreement in mediation, mediators will create a written agreement for all parties to sign. Everyone will receive a copy of the fully signed agreement. If the agreement is going to be filed at a court, everyone will have to agree to how, where and when that will happen.

If you have further questions about mediation or other services offered by CRG, please feel free to go to our website: [www.collaborativeresolutionsgroup.org](http://www.collaborativeresolutionsgroup.org), or email us at [info@crg-collab.org](mailto:info@crg-collab.org).



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Greenfield, MA 01302

### Guidelines for CRG Online Mediation Services

Please follow these guidelines when participating in CRG phone or online mediation sessions:

- a. Use only a **SECURE** password protected internet connection, without public access;
- b. Locate a **QUIET** space where you can talk freely without interruptions, and without the presence of people who are not part of the mediation (please tell your mediator of all people present in the space you use);
- c. Respect the **PRIVACY** and confidentiality of the process by ensuring that there are no other people (including children) present or within listening range, and that you do not post links to the session on social media or in other public places;
- d. Be on **TIME**. If a participant does not log into mediation within 10 minutes of the agreed upon start time, the session will be canceled and a cancellation fee may be charged;
- e. Be **PATIENT**. Technological glitches (including lag time and delays) can happen. Please remember that we're all learning how to use new technology. If the connection fails, try the session link again; **CONTACT** the Case Coordinator or the Mediator if you need support;
- f. Speak **RESPECTFULLY** and be mindful of facial expressions and body language;
- g. Be **ATTENTIVE** to the session, silence your phone, and avoid unrelated texts, calls, emails, messages, notifications, and technology that distract participation;
- h. **DO NOT RECORD** the session in any way; and
- i. **DO NOT SHARE** sensitive personal information during the session (account numbers, Social Security, dates of birth, etc.) – make other arrangements if needed to share that info.

### CONTACT INFO FOR CRG:

[Info@crg-collab.org](mailto:Info@crg-collab.org) (413-774-7469)

### ONLINE MEDIATION PLATFORMS – ZOOM

CRG currently uses Zoom for online mediations (<https://zoom.us>). If all parties agree, it may be possible to conduct mediation sessions by phone, FaceTime or other platforms – contact CRG for details.

#### Learning how to use Zoom:

While Zoom is relatively easy to use and your Case Coordinator or Mediator will work with you to ensure that you are familiar with the technology, we encourage you to prepare for your online mediation session by learning how Zoom works. The following links may be helpful:

- o Upload the latest version of Zoom before a meeting [click here](#); related to software updates: [On viewing what version of Zoom you're running](#), [On how to update to the most recent version of Zoom](#)
- o [How to join a Zoom Meeting](#)
- o [How to configure your audio and video for a Zoom meeting](#)
- o [Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Some people are just learning how to use Zoom and other platforms, and may initially not feel very comfortable with this way of talking together. Please speak to your Case Coordinator or Mediator if you have any questions or concerns about mediating in this way, or if you need help finding ways to address technical issues.

#### Security concerns and recommendations:

While CRG Case Coordinators and Mediators are committed to confidentiality, we do not have control over information collected and used by online platforms like Zoom. Whenever you use an online platform, identifying data such as IP, MAC Address and other network information may be shared with the platform (see details on next page). Each platform handles personal and consumer data differently; it's important to have an understanding of how your information is being collected and used.

- For full information about how Zoom uses your data when you access Zoom or Zoom websites please refer to [their most recent privacy policy](#). Additionally, the privacy policy details **your right** to have access to data collected by Zoom and encourages users with questions about the policy to reach out to their security team at [privacy@zoom.us](mailto:privacy@zoom.us)

Acknowledging the information given here about the use of online platforms is a part of signing the Agreement to Mediate; you are responsible for reading through these materials and doing your part to ensure the privacy of the session and the security of your computer and internet connection.



COLLABORATIVE  
RESOLUTIONS GROUP

info@crq-collab.org | 413-774-7469  
www.collaborativeresolutionsgroup.org  
P.O. Box 931, Greenfield MA 01302

## COLLABORATIVE RESOLUTIONS GROUP (CRG) CONTACT INFO

Collaborative Resolutions Group (CRG) is an independent tax-exempt non-profit organization, and is a successor to The Mediation & Training Collaborative. CRG's mission is to increase individuals' and organizations' capacity to communicate effectively, manage differences, resolve conflict, and work collaboratively. We offer customized mediation, training, facilitation, restorative practices processes, and conflict coaching services in online, phone, and (when possible) in-person settings.

CRG is led by a diverse Board and staff, and depends on a roster of consultant and volunteer mediators, trainers and other providers to serve local communities in ways that work for them. We believe in basing our work on community needs, training and serving community members, and adapting what we do to fit various community cultural contexts. We are committed internally, and in our external work with community members, to developing equity, empowerment and collaboration in sustainable ways.

### General CRG contact info:

**Referrals, info requests:** [info@crq-collab.org](mailto:info@crq-collab.org), 413-774-7469  
**Mailing address:** P.O. Box 931, Greenfield MA 01302  
**Website:** [www.collaborativeresolutionsgroup.org](http://www.collaborativeresolutionsgroup.org)

### CRG Staff contacts\*:

Name	Email address	Phone	Title, area of focus
Gloria A. Santa Anna (she/her)	<a href="mailto:gasantaanna@crq-collab.org">gasantaanna@crq-collab.org</a>	413-636-1183	Co-Executive Director Organizational development, community partnerships, fundraising, evaluation
Debbie Lynangale (she/her)	<a href="mailto:dlynangale@crq-collab.org">dlynangale@crq-collab.org</a>	413-636-1587	Co-Executive Director Operations, training, facilitation, current funders
Betsy Williams (she/her)	<a href="mailto:ewilliams@crq-collab.org">ewilliams@crq-collab.org</a>	413-636-1402	Mediation Director Court liaison, mediator supervision/support, case management
Christopher Sabo (he/him)	<a href="mailto:csabo@crq-collab.org">csabo@crq-collab.org</a>	413-834-2571	School Services Director Restorative practices, school support, case management
Sam Fox (them/them)	<a href="mailto:sfox@crq-collab.org">sfox@crq-collab.org</a>	413-834-5587	Administrative Coordinator Data entry, reporting, inquiries/ case correspondence

*Please note that CRG staff are working remotely at this time; we do not have a physical office.*

### CRG Board of Directors:

Cate Woolner (she/her), Chair & Interim Treasurer, [catewool@comcast.net](mailto:catewool@comcast.net)  
Dana Mengwasser (they/them), Secretary, [danamengwasser@gmail.com](mailto:danamengwasser@gmail.com)  
Jean Frazier (she/her), Member at Large, [je12puzzle@verizon.net](mailto:je12puzzle@verizon.net)

# Court Process: Greenfield Court Service Center

by Mary G. Klaes, Esq., Manager

What is the Court Service Center “CSC”?

- ❖ A department of the MA Trial Court (access to justice, navigation, resources, information)
- ❖ Operating statewide as a Virtual CSC with state-wide Triage Center as well as local contacts
- ❖ “CSCs” assist self-represented/pro-se litigants with legal information, **NOT** legal advice
- ❖ We can assist both sides of a case, if they do not have lawyers (landlords and tenants)- often we’ll provide information we’d provide to both sides- we are not anyone’s attorney, so it’s not a privileged communication
- ❖ We can assist with forms and filing, as long as it doesn’t involve strategy, legal advice, opinions, etc...  
“Should I....?”, “What’s the best option....?” “What’s your opinion?” = Hire a lawyer/seek independent legal advice
- ❖ We provide referrals to the TCLL, CLA, FCBA, and other community resources

**CSC Contacts:** Mary G. Klaes, Esq., Manager and Maureen McMahon, Staff Attorney

General voicemail: 413-775-7483 Email: [greenfieldcsc@jud.state.ma.us](mailto:greenfieldcsc@jud.state.ma.us)

Local Zoom M-F (except state holidays) 9:00 am- 12 pm

<https://www.zoomgov.com/j/16068272771>

# Court Operations Post Moratorium

Housing Court & District Court each have jurisdiction

**Western Division Housing Court- see Court handout**

**Springfield- virtual, mandatory mediation, five-days of Summary Process, backlogged cases first**

**Housing Court Standing Order 6-20: Temporary modifications to court operations based on the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and the expiration of chapter 65 of the acts of 2020 (eviction moratorium) <https://www.mass.gov/housing-court-rules/housing-court-standing-order-6-20-temporary-modifications-to-court-operations>**

**District Court Revised Standing Order 10-20: Court operations for the adjudication of summary process cases under the exigent circumstances created by COVID-19**  
<https://www.mass.gov/districtmunicipal-court-rules/district-court-revised-standing-order-10-20-court-operations-for-the>

<https://www.mass.gov/resource/court-system-response-to-covid-19>

# Community Legal Aid

**Bar associations collaborate to provide pro bono assistance to low income landlords who meet certain criteria (owner-occupants with 3 or fewer units). You can get more information about this program by contacting the Franklin County Bar Association at 413-773-9839.**

Community Legal Aid's Housing and Homelessness Unit provides legal services to help tenants facing eviction and termination of Section 8 vouchers, homeowners who are threatened with foreclosure, homeless families who need to access the state's Emergency Assistance shelter program, and people trying to get into affordable housing.

In response to the lifting of the eviction moratorium, we are hiring additional housing attorneys as well as case managers who will help tenants navigate the rental arrearage assistance programs. Tenants can apply for services online at [www.communitylegal.org](http://www.communitylegal.org) or by calling 855-252-5342

# Greenfield Compliance Assistance-MJ/Jen

When Board of Health receives call from tenant:

1. Inspection scheduled: during inspection Health Agent will distribute info about Eviction Diversion Initiative & inquire if tenant is up to date with rent
2. For properties in downtown neighborhoods: Rehab Specialist will provide technical assistance to landlord to move along repairs as quickly as possible
3. Rehab Specialist will support communication/coordination among involved inspectors (may include fire, building, plumbing, gas, or electrical inspectors)

# Q & A

Next workshop:  
December 1st  
Energy Program