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Arkansas non-profit hoping to aid tenants facing evictions due to moratorium ban lifted

by Desmond Nugent | Tuesday, October 12th 2021



According to officials with the Center of Arkansas Legal Services, compared to last year, their landlord and tenant issues have almost tripled with more than 845 cases. (Photo: KATV)(/p)



LITTLE ROCK (KATV) — Nearly two months ago, the U.S. Supreme Court **struck down** the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention **eviction moratorium**, which now allows landlords around the country to remove tenants from their homes. One local non-profit told KATV they are hoping to aid Arkansans who are in need of free legal services.



Julie Norman is the director for advocacy and legal work with the Center for Arkansas Legal Services. She said compared to last year, their landlord and tenant issues have almost tripled with more than 845 cases. According to Norman, it's important to do what they can to keep Arkansans in their home and for them to get back on their feet.

"Now that the moratorium has ended, we've been trying to assist those clients in working out a way to repay their landlord," Norman said. "Either through the eviction programs or through the more traditional means of having to file for bankruptcy."

Norman said they work with low-income Arkansans and service 44 counties in the state. She said their overall housing cases have doubled with more than 1,000 housing cases this year.



Officials with the Department of Human Services told KATV they allocated 173 million dollars for their **rent relief program** back in May. They said so far this year they have disbursed \$18.2 million in payments. Officials said as of last week, nearly 21,000 thousand applications were submitted and nearly 6,000 of those applications were paid.

Norman said providing free legal services has helped Arkansans.

"That's such a big relief for people," she said. "It is very stressful, but especially during the time of the pandemic with people losing jobs, and needing assistance. your bills start to pile up and when they come to us they're usually at their lowest."

Tremayne Cain is one of the many Arkansans facing evictions. According to Cain, he's been taking the necessary steps to get the rental assistance needed. He said it's been a struggle to keep up on bills with only his disability check.

"I've been pretty nervous these last couple of months because I really don't have any dependable place right now," Cain said.

Cain said he did have a part-time job but he was laid off because of the pandemic, and now he's now facing eviction at his Barrington Hills apartment.

"I had a secondary job, but since the pandemic, I got laid off, so that's when I signed up for the rental assistance program," Cain said. "Every since then I have just been waiting and waiting."

According to Cain, he did apply for the **emergency rental assistance funds** in Pulaski County but hasn't received any information on if his application was approved. He said his court date is next month, and he's hoping to have a place to live.

"If I get evicted, I'm not gonna be able to get a place because that's on my record, and they're going to hold me up on the process of getting another apartment," Cain said.

Norman said for any Arkansas that is in need of legal advice, they will be providing that service at the Pulaski County Courthouse on Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Officials with the Pulaski County Clerk's Office told as of last week, 75 landlords have unlawfully petitioned to have a tenant be removed from their home.

According to DHS, they will continue **accepting rent relief applications** until the end of this year.

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