

**I am having trouble
paying my rent.
Where can I get help?**

Rent Relief RI provides rent and utility payments to help eligible renters maintain housing stability. The program can cover rent and utility arrears dating back to April 1, 2020, as well as up to three months of upcoming rent, and security deposits. Applicants are eligible for help with rent and utility payments for up to a total of 18 months. You do not need to have an eviction notice to be eligible. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis through September 2022.

Eligibility and FAQs

If you are a tenant, you will be asked to provide information about your household income, whether you experienced a financial hardship during or because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and about your housing situation. You may be asked to provide documentation if you have it. If you do not have documents you can sign a statement (called a self-attestation form) to confirm your income, hardship, and rent history.

Questions or need help to apply?

RIHousing has a Call Center to assist applicants with questions:

Phone Number:
1-855-608-8756

Hours of Operation:
Mon – Friday, 8:30AM – 5:30PM,
Saturdays 8AM to 1PM EST.

Visit www.rihousing.com/rentreliefri for more information including partner agencies available to assist you with your application.

**Is there a moratorium on
evictions in Rhode Island?**

No, there is currently no order banning evictions of any kind.

The lack of moratorium does not mean you can be immediately evicted from your home if you are behind on rent. You cannot legally be evicted from your home until your case goes to court and a court order for you to move out (also called an “order of execution”) has been issued. Only a judge can evict you. Your landlord cannot require you to move unless the court orders it. If you are behind on rent and worried about being evicted, apply for help from Rent Relief RI.

How do evictions work?

There are a few steps to legal evictions. Papers have to be filed with the court, a hearing must be scheduled, and after the hearing, a judgment entered by a judge. After a judgment is entered, a court order for the tenant to move out (an “order of execution”) can be issued. The court order to move someone out of their home can only be enforced by an authorized constable or sheriff. On June 1, 2020, the courts started doing eviction hearings and enforcements of move-out orders. Legal evictions have been allowed to take place.

Sometimes landlords try to evict people without going to court. These evictions are called “self-help evictions” and they are illegal.

**Can my landlord come and
move me out?**

Landlords cannot move you out without going to court and getting a court order. If someone comes to move you out, make sure that they have a court order signed by a judge. Only a constable or sheriff authorized by the State of Rhode Island can move you out with a court order. Ask to see their credentials and call the police for assistance if they cannot show you proof of ID as a sheriff or constable, or if they do not have a court order. Your landlord cannot just come to your home and move you out even if they claim they have a court order. Only a constable or sheriff can move you out with a court order.

If you believe your landlord is trying to evict you illegally, you can contact Rhode Island Legal Services or the Rhode Island Center for Justice (information below) for help. You can also file a complaint with the Rhode Island Attorney General. To ensure your complaint is able to be properly responded to, it is recommended you file a police report.

I received an eviction notice. What should I do?

You cannot be legally evicted until after the case has been processed through the court system and received a hearing. You should check the notice to see whether it is a demand for rent or a court summons for eviction. A demand for payment of rent is different from a court summons for eviction. If you received a demand letter for payment of rent, you may be able to work out a payment agreement with your landlord or property manager, or let them know you are going to apply for help from Rent Relief RI, if you have not done so already.

If you received a notice to appear in court, you should make every effort to attend the hearing and seek legal assistance. You should keep any evidence of your efforts to pay rent. You should document any changes to your income at this time and track any conversations you have with your landlord about making partial payments or about losing your income. These are very important to show the court. It is very important that you get and keep receipts for rent that you pay. Proof of payment can be a money order receipt, a canceled check or a receipt from the landlord.

Where can I go for help with an eviction?

If your landlord is telling you to move out during this emergency, or you have other concerns about your rental apartment, contact a legal services provider.

- If you live in a private rental home, contact the [Rhode Island Center for Justice](#): (401) 491-1101. The RI Center for Justice is able to serve tenants who are undocumented or do not have legal status.
- If you have Section 8 housing or live in public housing, or private housing, you can call [Rhode Island Legal Services](#) at (401) 274-2652. RI Legal Services cannot provide services to residents who are undocumented.

Both RI Legal Services and the RI Center for Justice can answer general housing questions and concerns.

If you are experiencing homelessness or at immediate risk of becoming homeless, you can contact the [Rhode Island Coordinated Entry System](#) at (401) 277-4316.

Where can I go for more help?

Depending on what you need help with, there are lots of resources. Call United Way of Rhode Island at 2-1-1 to speak to someone who will refer you to help based on your needs.