

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Stay in your home during the coronavirus crisis

If you need help covering your rent and utility payments, there is funding available. To learn more or apply for rental assistance, go to www.renthelp.nm.org or call 1-(833) 485-1334.



To qualify for rental assistance, you must:

- Owe rent for a residence located in New Mexico;
- Have a financial hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic - being unemployed or receiving unemployment benefits can show this;
- Meet income requirements;
- Be at risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability. If you don't have a document to show this, you can just provide a signed statement;
- Show that you owe money for rent and/or utilities since March 30, 2020.

If your landlord tries to evict you for failure to pay rent:

If you are being evicted for failure to pay rent, taking these steps may keep you in your home longer:

- You might have to go to court or your hearing might happen by phone. The court will send you instructions.
- Go to court and show you can't pay rent by providing one or more of the following:

Your own statement explaining why you are unable to pay rent.
Examples: "I was laid off from my job. I couldn't afford my rent this month" or "I can't work because I have a medical condition that makes me high-risk for getting the coronavirus."

Documents that prove you are unable to pay rent. For example, paychecks that show how your work hours have been cut and how your pay has been reduced.

- If you submit documents, call the court before your hearing to find out how to get them to the judge.
- If you are unable to get documents to the judge before your hearing or need more time to look for a lawyer, you can call and ask the court to reschedule your hearing to a later date.

A witness can testify that you cannot pay your rent. For example, your boss or co-worker could testify that you're no longer working or that your hours have been cut.

- Call the courthouse before your hearing for guidance on witness testimony.

What happens after your hearing?

If the judge rules to evict you because you did not pay your rent, the court will enter a judgment against you that describes how much you owe your landlord.

If you appeared in court and showed that you could not pay rent, the court should also issue a stay. This means that you will not be required to move out of your home immediately. You can stay in your home for as long as the court keeps its special rules on evictions during the coronavirus crisis.

If you are staying in your home, you should make regular rent payments if you are able.

For questions or help with an eviction case filed against you, call New Mexico Legal Aid at 1-833-545-4357 (Monday - Thursday, 10am-3pm) or New Mexico Center on Law and Poverty at 505-255-2840.