



October 7, 2019

# OCTOBER HOUSING LAW UPDATES

## Volunteer Lawyers Network Housing Newsletter

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### A New Volunteer Resource! Health and Safety Code Enforcement Manual

Have you been looking for an easy way to access municipal health and safety code information when advising tenants on repair issues? This new resource provides a comprehensive list of information about local health and safety codes for Minneapolis, St. Paul **AND** the surrounding suburbs, including:

- Links to relevant city codes,
- Links to city and county websites with relevant information,
- Names and telephone numbers for officials in charge of residential rental property licensing (where applicable), inspections, and enforcement, and
- Information on how to access to repair orders.

Check out the manual on our website [here](#) and let us know what you think!

## We did it!

Last year, VLN set a goal to increase our volunteer hours by 20% in 2019. Not only will we reach our goal, we will do it 2.5 months early. To celebrate, please join us for cake and a:

### Roundtable Discussion (moderated by Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey) on the importance of Legal Representation in Housing (CLE)

**WHAT:** The panel will include a discussion on the disparate impact of evictions, the impact of full representation – through programs like the More Representation Minneapolis initiative – on results in housing court, and tips from one of VLN’s eviction representation project (ERP) volunteers. Panel members will include:

**Luke Grundman**, Housing Managing Attorney, Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid;  
**Muria Kruger**, Housing Program Manager and Resource Attorney, VLN;  
**Kevin Kitchen**, Stinson LLP and pro bono volunteer with the Eviction Representation Program

The panel will also include a **Minneapolis City Councilmember** and **Representative from the Minnesota Attorney General’s Office**. Please watch for the announcement of these additional participants!

**WHEN:** Thursday, October 17, 1:30-2:30pm

**WHERE:** Minneapolis, MN

**REGISTRATION and MORE INFORMATION:**

Registration appreciated at [www.vlnmn.org/events](http://www.vlnmn.org/events)

This event is free and open to the public

1 standard CLE credit will be requested

### Practice Tip: Proper Plaintiff

Eviction actions must be brought in the name of the proper plaintiff. This practice tip provides the legal foundations for who can be a proper plaintiff, and further provides practical suggestions for determining who the proper plaintiff is and what to do if the case is not brought by the correct plaintiff. This tip is valuable to any volunteer who advises on eviction defenses or eviction expungement. Check it out on our website, [here!](#)

*“Housing is a human right. There can be no fairness or justice in a society in which some live in homelessness, or in the shadow of that risk, while others cannot even imagine it.”*

**Jordan Flaherty**

# HOUSING UPDATES

## New Rental Ordinance in Minneapolis

Minneapolis City Council passed a new ordinance on Friday, September 13<sup>th</sup> that will put additional limitations on tenant screening and provide potential tenants more protections. This new ordinance goes into effect for most landlords on June 1, 2020; smaller landlords with 15 units or fewer have until December 1, 2020 to begin compliance. Some of the new rules under the ordinance include:

- ◆ Landlords can't deny an applicant based on a misdemeanor if the conviction is older than 3 years;
- ◆ Landlords can't deny an applicant based on a felony older than 7 years;
- ◆ Eviction judgments cannot be considered if they are 3+ years old;
- ◆ Landlords can't deny an applicant because of insufficient credit history;
- ◆ Security deposits must be capped at a month's rent.

This information is important to how we advise clients looking for housing in Minneapolis, particularly for our Housing Court Project volunteers.

There are some exceptions when it comes to denying applicants with criminal backgrounds, as well as some additional protections for potential tenants not listed above. Read more about those and the new ordinance at the [Star Tribune](#).

## Meet the Navigator at Hennepin County Housing Court

Hennepin County Housing Court has a new addition to First Appearance Eviction calendars: a Navigator. Jordan is an employee of the court. Her role is to direct clients to outside resources when they don't qualify for services offered by the county. Housing Court Project volunteers can direct clients who are looking for housing, or who don't qualify for Emergency Assistance to Jordan. She can help direct them towards resources that may be able to help.



## **VLN Housing Law in the Community**

*Above: Check-in with Mayor Frey on the More Representation Minneapolis project in August. See "Volunteer Opportunities" to learn more about how to get involved!*

*Below: An attorney and a client draft an expungement motion at the Eviction Expungement clinic this past August. Please reach out to Muria at [muria@vlnmn.org](mailto:muria@vlnmn.org) to learn more about our Eviction Expungement Clinics.*



## Volunteer Opportunities: Ramsey County Clinic Volunteers

### **More Representation Minneapolis: Eviction Representation Project**

The Eviction Representation Project (ERP) is a joint undertaking by VLN and Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid at the Hennepin County Housing Court.

The purpose of the ERP is to provide full representation to tenants during their initial appearance eviction hearings and subsequent trial (if scheduled) in Hennepin County.

On demand training and on-site mentoring and shadowing opportunities available.

*Please contact VLN Housing Resource Attorney Muria at [muria.kruger@vlnmn.org](mailto:muria.kruger@vlnmn.org) for more information.*

### **We need attorneys at the Ramsey County Housing Court!**

Attorneys provide brief legal services, advice and referrals during the initial appearance/eviction hearing calendar at the Ramsey County courthouse. Training is provided through an on-demand video (1.75 CLE credits) and shadowing. Time commitment is one 4-hour shift per month. Shifts are available Tuesday and Thursday mornings (8:00-12:00).

*Please contact VLN Housing Attorney Ann at [ann.mcfarland@vlnmn.org](mailto:ann.mcfarland@vlnmn.org) for more information.*