



April 15, 2020

# APRIL HOUSING LAW UPDATES

## Volunteer Lawyers Network Housing Newsletter

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### COVID-19 Impact: VLN Housing Program

- All in-person clinics are suspended until further notice. This includes the Hennepin, Ramsey, and Anoka County Housing Courts Clinics.
- We are providing Housing Law Phone Advice daily from 2-4pm. If you are interested in signing up for a shift, please email [Kait](mailto:kait@vlnmn.org) at [kait.ripley@vlnmn.org](mailto:kait.ripley@vlnmn.org).
- We have phone advice resources for attorneys available on our website, linked here: [www.vlnmn.org/volunteer/housing/housing-law-phone-advice-resources](http://www.vlnmn.org/volunteer/housing/housing-law-phone-advice-resources)

Thank you to all our volunteers who make our work possible!

### AG's Office Now Accepting Online Complaints about Landlords

Under Governor Walz's Executive Order 10-24, willful violation of the current eviction moratorium is a misdemeanor (see practice tip for more details). The AG's office is actively enforcing this Order. Tenants whose landlords are trying to evict them in violation of this Order can submit a Tenant Eviction Complaint Form, available on the AG's website:

<https://www.ag.state.mn.us/Office/Forms/TenantEvictionComplaint.asp>.

### Practice Tip: The Minnesota and CARES Act Eviction Moratoriums

Both the State of Minnesota and federal government have enacted broad eviction moratoriums. This month's practice tip provides basic information about both moratoriums: describing the protections they provide for Minnesota renters and how long those protections will last. The article also briefly discusses resources available to renters and landlords seeking financial assistance to help them weather the coronavirus crisis. Check out the Practice Tip here:

[https://www.vlnmn.org/volunteer/housing/practice\\_tips](https://www.vlnmn.org/volunteer/housing/practice_tips)

### Contact Your Legislator for Increased Rental Assistance

The Minnesota Legislature is currently considering increased funding for rental support. As far as we are aware, there is no actual bill name or number yet, but you can read more about the work behind the bill here: [www.minnpost.com/state-government/2020/04/coalition-of-minnesota-landlords-tenant-advocates-push-for-rental-assistance/](http://www.minnpost.com/state-government/2020/04/coalition-of-minnesota-landlords-tenant-advocates-push-for-rental-assistance/). Consideration of this increased funding will likely take place very soon, so don't delay. Call or email your state legislators and let them know that increased assistance to renters and landlords is important to you!

## **POSTPONED!**

### **Annual Housing Law Seminar, previously scheduled for March 27**

We are considering rescheduling the seminar sometime later this summer or fall. Watch for updates! We will provide refunds if we are unable to reschedule.

### **Staffing Update: Housing Court Project Coordinator**



We are happy to introduce the newest member of our Housing Law Program— Brigid! If you've been to our main office, you may recognize Brigid from the front desk. In her new capacity as Housing Court Project Coordinator, Brigid will serve as the clinic assistant at the Hennepin and Ramsey county housing court clinics, where she will manage the day to day operations of the clinics and work directly to support clients and volunteer attorneys in clinic settings. We are so excited to have her on our team!

### **MSBF Awards \$4k to the Habitability Fund!**

VLN administers a Habitability Fund for housing cases in both Ramsey and Hennepin counties. These funds can be used by tenants who are unable to pay rent into court to proceed with a rent escrow case OR who want to raise a repair defense in an eviction action but do not have the money to do so. The Habitability Fund is a revolving fund. Any money returned or awarded as part of the litigation first goes toward replenishing the Fund. The Minnesota State Bar Foundation (MSBF) just granted \$4k to help this Fund continue its work. Thank you MSBF!

***If you have a client who would like to use these Funds, the application can be found here:***

[https://www.vlnmn.org/volunteer/housing/rent\\_escrow\\_resources](https://www.vlnmn.org/volunteer/housing/rent_escrow_resources)

### **Resources During COVID-19**

#### **Hennepin County COVID Info Guide**

[www.mncourts.gov/mncourtsgov/media/fourth\\_district/documents/4thDist-COVID-19-Info-Guide.pdf](http://www.mncourts.gov/mncourtsgov/media/fourth_district/documents/4thDist-COVID-19-Info-Guide.pdf)

#### **MSBA COVID Resources**

[www.mnbar.org/resources/covid-19-resources](http://www.mnbar.org/resources/covid-19-resources)

#### **LawHelp COVID Landlord-Tenant Fact Sheets**

[www.lawhelpmn.org/self-help-library/fact-sheet/covid-19-renters-rights-and-court-changes-during-pandemic](http://www.lawhelpmn.org/self-help-library/fact-sheet/covid-19-renters-rights-and-court-changes-during-pandemic)

#### **Hennepin County Law Library Resources**

The Hennepin County Law Library remains a resource to attorneys throughout the pandemic. While the library's physical space is closed, staff members have remote access to many important practice materials, including:

- Dunnell Minnesota Digest
- Minnesota Civil Practice (by McFarland & Keppel)
- West's Minnesota Practice series (including JIGs, Civil Rules Annotated)
- Minnesota Family Law Practice Manual
- Federal Practice and Procedure ("Wright & Miller")

Library staff can retrieve documents or sections from these resources and can retrieve cases, codes, and Shepard's and KeyCite reports.

Requests can be sent to [Law.Library@hennepin.us](mailto:Law.Library@hennepin.us)

## **We Will Need You!**

While planning for the future is difficult during the pandemic, we are expecting there will be an increased number of evictions time when the courts finally reopen for all evictions. Please watch for email updates from us. We will be planning for this increased volume and will send out information and requests for volunteers when we have enough concrete information to do so!