



# A Guide to Evictions

## Where can tenants and landlords go for free legal help with evictions?

Call **855-956-5763** or visit [cookcountylegalaid.org](http://cookcountylegalaid.org).

You can get help even if you do not yet have an eviction case at court.

### Landlords:

#### How do I file an eviction case?

Before starting a case, visit [cookcountylegalaid.org](http://cookcountylegalaid.org) for a [checklist](#) and free legal resources for landlords.

To start an eviction case, the landlord (plaintiff) must file the following documents with our office:

- Civil Action Cover Sheet
- Eviction Complaint
- Eviction Summons
- Flyer for Early Resolution Program (ERP)
- Plaintiff's Certification of Compliance
- Tenant Declaration Form (if applicable)
- Eviction Demand or Notice
- Affidavit of Service of a Demand or Notice
- Written Lease Agreement (if applicable)

The landlord can also file an "Affidavit Supporting Documents Not Attached to Eviction Complaint" if any of the documents listed above are missing.

### Information for Landlords & Tenants:

Most forms needed for an eviction are available on our website [cookcountyclerkofcourt.org](http://cookcountyclerkofcourt.org), in our offices, and on the Illinois Supreme Court's website [illinoiscourts.gov](http://illinoiscourts.gov).

Information about how to e-file court documents can be found at [efileillinoiscourts.gov](http://efileillinoiscourts.gov). If you cannot e-file, you can file in person at the Circuit Clerk's office in the courthouse by using an [Exemption from E-Filing](#) form.

For more information on evictions, visit the Chicago Volunteer Legal Services (CVLS) website [cvls.org](http://cvls.org).

### Tenants:

#### What happens after an eviction has been filed against me?

Tenants will receive notice of an eviction case filed against them through service of an eviction Summons and Complaint by the Sheriff or a Special Process Server. Tenants will also receive information about the **Early Resolution Program (ERP)** with the [ERP Summons and Complaint](#).

The Summons lists the court date and time that the tenant must appear. Tenants should attend their court dates to fully participate in their case.

#### How do I go to my first eviction court date?

All eviction cases are currently being heard remotely on Zoom or by phone for the first court dates. You do not need to go to the courthouse to appear for your first court date. The Eviction Summons has information you need to go to court on Zoom or by phone. You can also find this information on the Court's website [cookcountycourt.org/HOME/Zoom-Links](http://cookcountycourt.org/HOME/Zoom-Links).

If you need help using Zoom to appear for your court date, there are a limited number of Zoom stations with court staff available to help at courthouses throughout Cook County.

### **What is the Early Resolution Program?**

The Early Resolution Program (ERP) assists unrepresented tenants and landlords in eviction court. ERP is a part of the [Cook County Legal Aid for Housing and Debt Program](#) (CCLAHD).

All unrepresented tenants and landlords who appear in court will be referred into ERP on their first court date, where they will have access to free legal aid, mediation services, negotiation assistance, and rental assistance. Residents can call the CCLAHD hotline at **855-956-5763** or visit [cookcountylegalaid.org](http://cookcountylegalaid.org) for assistance.



# Cook County **LEGAL AID** for Housing and Debt



*Helping you resolve eviction, foreclosure,  
debt, and tax deed issues.*

## **FREE LEGAL HELP FOR RESIDENTS OF COOK COUNTY**

**Are you dealing with an eviction or unresolved debt issue?**

**Do you live in Cook County?**

**You are not in this alone. You may be eligible for FREE legal help.**

**Learn more by calling 855-956-5763 or visiting [www.cookcountylegalaid.org](http://www.cookcountylegalaid.org)**

Evictions and unresolved debt issues can have a long-lasting, negative impact on your future. Call the **Early Resolution Program (ERP)** to speak with a lawyer and get connected to other resources. This program is available to all residents of Cook County free of charge. You do not need to have a case in court to get help.

### **You can use the program if:**

- ▶ **You are a renter and your landlord is trying to evict you;**
- ▶ **You are a landlord who is not represented by a lawyer;**
- ▶ **You were sued by someone who wants to collect an unpaid debt (for example a credit card company trying to collect unpaid charges); OR**
- ▶ **You need to sue someone who owes you money and do not have a lawyer.**

The Early Resolution Program (ERP) includes free legal aid, mediation services, and connections to other resources including rental assistance. Mediation is a chance for a landlord and tenant, or debtor and creditor, to resolve issues with the help of a knowledgeable and neutral person.

The Early Resolution Program is being provided through Cook County Legal Aid for Housing and Debt (CCLAHD), a county-wide initiative to help resolve eviction, foreclosure, debt, and tax deed issues. Visit [www.cookcountylegalaid.org](http://www.cookcountylegalaid.org) for information about other programs and services.



CARPLS Legal Aid  
Center for Conflict Resolution  
Center for Disability & Elder Law  
Chicago Volunteer Legal Services

Greater Chicago Legal Clinic  
Lawyers' Committee for Better Housing  
Legal Aid Chicago  
Legal Aid Society