

Evictions from Public Housing (Housing Owned by a Housing Authority)

Intro

If you live in a Public Housing Project, your landlord is a Housing Authority. The eviction process from Public Housing is a little different from the process for tenants with private landlords. For example, you have the right to ask for a hearing to explain your side of the story if the Housing Authority believes you have broken a rule in your lease.

Keep reading to find out more about the eviction process from Public Housing.

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- ❖ If you have a section 8 voucher, read How to [Protect Your Section 8 Voucher](#). If some other HUD program is in charge of your housing, read [HUD Housing Evictions](#). Both are available at [WashingtonLawHelp.org](#).

Can I be evicted from Public Housing?

Maybe. The Housing Authority may evict you if any of these is the case:

- You do not pay your portion of the rent on time every month.
- You break a serious rule in the lease.
- You break a rule in the lease repeatedly.
- You, someone living with you, or your guest causes “criminal activity” that threatens the safety or health of other tenants.
- You, someone living with you, or your guest causes “drug activity.”
- The Housing Authority has other “good cause” to evict you.

The Housing Authority gave me a notice that says I am breaking a rule in the lease. What can I do?

In most cases, the notice will give you a deadline (like ten days) to stop breaking the rules. The notice may say you can ask for a meeting or a “**grievance hearing**” with the Housing Authority to explain your side.

Read the notice very carefully. If you do not think you are breaking the lease, or you do not understand what the notice says, try to talk to a lawyer.

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- ❖ If you are very low-income, call CLEAR at 1-888-201-1014.

If you live in King County, call 211 or toll-free 1-800-621-4636.

If you do nothing, the Housing Authority may try to evict you using the court eviction process called an “Unlawful Detainer Action.” **Act fast** if you get a written notice saying you are breaking the rules.

DO THIS if you do not agree with the notice:

- Write the landlord to ask for a grievance hearing before the deadline (usually ten days).
- Keep a copy of your letter with your important papers. You will need it later.
- Try to talk to a lawyer.

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What is a grievance hearing?

It is your chance to bring witnesses and evidence to show that you are not breaking the rules of the lease. [Public Housing Grievance Procedure](#), available on [WashingtonLawHelp.org](#), explains how to get ready for your hearing.

What if the Housing Authority's notice says I committed a crime?

In some very serious cases, the Housing Authority will not give you a grievance hearing. Usually, this is because they believe that you, someone in your household, or your guest has committed a crime, or is involved with drugs on the property.

Try to talk to a lawyer if the Housing Authority accuses you of allowing crime or drug activity to happen at the Public Housing project.

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If you live in King County, call 211 or toll-free 1-800-621-4636.

What if I lose at the grievance hearing? Or the Housing Authority doesn't even give me a grievance hearing?

The Housing Authority may file a lawsuit to evict you, called an "Unlawful Detainer Action." You will get served with court papers, a "Complaint" and a "Summons." You will have a very short time to respond in writing to the lawsuit and explain your defenses.

[Eviction and Your Defense](#), available on [WashingtonLawHelp.org](#), has more about how to respond to the Unlawful Detainer Action. You should also try to talk to a lawyer as soon as possible.

This publication provides general information concerning your rights and responsibilities. It is not intended as a substitute for specific legal advice. This information is current as of September 2019.

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