

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

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- ❖ Washington's laws affecting renters have changed as of July 23, 2023. Please read [2023 changes to Washington State's laws affecting renters](#).
  - ❖ Renters with low incomes may be appointed a lawyer free of charge before a court may proceed with an eviction. Call our **Eviction Defense Screening line** at **1-855-657-8387** or apply online at [nwjustice.org/apply-online](https://nwjustice.org/apply-online) to find out if you qualify.
  - ❖ You can find all the fact sheets we link to here at [WashingtonLawHelp.org](https://WashingtonLawHelp.org).
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## Should I read this?

Yes, you should read this if you live in a Public Housing Project. You will learn about the eviction process from Public Housing. It is a little different from the process for tenants with private landlords. You have rights that tenants in other kinds of housing may not have.

## How do I know if I am in Public Housing?

Usually you can tell that you are in Public Housing because your landlord is a Housing Authority.

If you have a section 8 voucher, read [Protecting Your Section 8 Voucher](#) to learn more. If some other HUD program is in charge of your housing, read [HUD Housing](#)

[Evictions](#) to learn more.

## 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 repeatedly break a rule in the lease.
- You, someone living with you, or your guest causes “criminal activity” that threatens other tenant’s safety or health.
- You, someone living with you, or your guest causes “drug activity.”
- The Housing Authority has some other “good cause” to evict you.

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

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❖ **Act fast** if you get a written notice saying you are breaking the rules. If you do nothing by the deadline in the notice, the Housing Authority may then start an eviction lawsuit against you.

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In most cases, the notice will give you a deadline (like 10 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.

**First, read the notice 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. See contact info below.

**Next**, if you do not agree with the notice, do these things:

- Write the landlord to ask for a grievance hearing before the deadline (usually 10 days).
- Keep a copy of your letter with your important papers. You will need it later.

- Try to talk to a lawyer. See contact info below.

## **What is a grievance hearing?**

It is your chance to bring witnesses and evidence to an impartial third party to show that you are not breaking the rules of the lease. This procedure is not a court case. Read [Public Housing Grievance Procedure](#) to learn more about the procedure and how to get ready for your hearing.

## **What if the Housing Authority's notice claims I committed a crime?**

It depends. If the Housing Authority believes that you, someone in your household, or your guest has committed a crime, or is involved with drugs on the property, the Housing Authority might not give you a grievance hearing.

If this happens to you, try to talk to a lawyer. See contact info below.

## **What if I lose 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 receive court papers, a "Complaint" and a "Summons." You will have a short time to respond in writing to the lawsuit and explain your defenses.

Read [I need to respond to an eviction lawsuit as soon as possible](#) to learn more about the eviction process and how to respond. You should also try to talk to a lawyer as soon as possible.

## Get Legal Help

- **Apply online:** [nwjustice.org/apply-online](https://nwjustice.org/apply-online)
- **Facing Eviction?** Call 1-855-657-8387
- **Facing Foreclosure?** Call 1-800-606-4819
- **Facing a legal issue in King County** (other than Eviction or Foreclosure)? Call 211 (or toll-free 1-877-211-9274) weekdays 8:00 am to 6:00 pm. They will refer you to a legal aid provider.
- **Facing a legal issue outside of King County** (other than Eviction or Foreclosure)? Call the CLEAR Hotline at 1-888-201-1014 weekdays between 9:15 am and 12:15 pm or apply online at [nwjustice.org/apply-online](https://nwjustice.org/apply-online).
- **Seniors (age 60 and over)** with a legal issue outside of King County can also call CLEAR\*Sr at 1-888-387-7111

**Deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired callers** can call any of these numbers using the relay service of your choice.

Interpreters provided.

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