

Tacoma tenants have additional protections under local laws

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- ❖ The eviction moratorium in Washington State ended June 30, 2021. But certain federal and state protections remain for those with unpaid rent due to COVID-19. Read about the latest changes to the law at [WashingtonLawHelp.org/resource/eviction](https://www.WashingtonLawHelp.org/resource/eviction)
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What's special about Tacoma?

Washington State law already limits the “good causes” or reasons landlords can use to terminate a tenancy or evict a tenant. Read [New Washington State Law: Landlords must give a "good" reason to end a tenancy or not renew a lease](#) to learn more.

If you are a tenant (you rent the place where you live) in Tacoma, Washington, city law gives you these additional rights:

- Financial help in certain cases if you have to move and you have a low income.
- The chance to pay your security deposit and other move-in costs in installments instead of all at once.
- If your landlord tries to evict you, in many cases they must give you written information about how to apply for relocation assistance (money to help you move).
- If your landlord breaks (violates) the new law, you might have a defense to an eviction. The City could fine the landlord.

Do the local laws apply to all tenants living in Tacoma?

No. They do not apply if

- You live outside city limits. Check to see if you live inside city limits [here](http://www.govme.org/Common/MyTacoma/MyTacoma.aspx): www.govme.org/Common/MyTacoma/MyTacoma.aspx.
- You are renting from an immediate relative.

Does the local law apply to all Tacoma landlords?

It applies to all landlords inside city limits who meet the definition in the state [Residential Landlord Tenant Act](#) at [RCW 59.18.030](#) and [59.18.040](#).

Notice to Vacate for Change in Use or Demolition

When do I have the right to 120 days' notice from the landlord?

- When the landlord plans to demolish (tear down) the place
- When the landlord is making major renovations (repairs or improvements) that force you to move
- When the landlord changes the building's use to non-residential, so you cannot live there anymore

❖ You do **not** have the right to 120 days' notice because the City has condemned the place (it is unfit to live in).

Can I get relocation assistance?

Yes, if one of these is true:

- You get a 120-day notice for a reason in the previous section and you have a low income.
- The City has condemned your rental. Your income does not matter in this situation.

❖ In 2021, you can get up to \$2,000 to help you move.

Along with the 120-day notice, the landlord must give you a packet explaining how to apply with the City for relocation assistance. You have 20 days from the date you got the notice and packet to apply. You must have good cause to apply late.

How low does my income have to be to get relocation assistance?

If the relocation is **not due to condemnation**, your total household income must be at or below half of the median income for a family your size in Pierce County.

How do I apply for relocation assistance?

If you believe your household qualifies based on your income and the reason your tenancy was terminated, you can fill out and submit a **Relocation Assistance Packet**. Your landlord should have given you this packet along with the 120-day notice to vacate. If they did not, call Tacoma's Customer Support Center at 3-1-1 or (253) 591-5000. If the landlord did not give you this packet, you may also have a defense against your eviction!

You can return the completed Relocation Assistance Packets (and copies of any eviction notices and any documents that verify your income)-

By mail: Relocation Assistance Program

747 Market Street #836

Tacoma, WA 98402

By email: tenantrelocationassistance@cityoftacoma.org

When and how do I find out if I am getting relocation assistance?

The City will let you know by mail within fourteen days of getting your application.

Can I appeal the City's decision?

Yes. You must file a written appeal with the city's Hearing Examiner within ten days of getting the City's decision on your eligibility. Your written appeal should state

- Why you disagree with the City's decision
- What you want

[TMC 1.95.080\(B\)\(9\)\(a\)](#).

What happens after I file my appeal?

There will be a hearing. The Hearing Examiner must rule on your appeal within 30 days of getting your hearing request. If you disagree with that decision, you can file a Petition in Pierce Superior Court. [TMC 1.95.080\(B\)\(9\)\(b\)](#). Our [How to Petition for Superior Court Review - Administrative Decision Relating to Public Benefits](#) packet can help give an idea of that process and what your forms should look like. Talk to a lawyer.

Who cannot get relocation assistance?

If you do not have a low income, you cannot get relocation assistance if you get a 120-day notice.

Payment Plan for Security Deposit, Last Month's Rent, and Other Move-In Fees

I cannot pay the security deposit, last month's rent and other move-in fees at the same time. What can I do?

If you are required to pay last month's rent at the beginning of the tenancy and the total of the security deposit plus any other move-in fees you must pay is more than $\frac{1}{4}$ of the first month's rent, you can ask in writing for a payment plan.

- **Tenancies that are three months or longer:** you can ask for a three-month payment plan that starts when your tenancy starts.
- **Two-month or month-to-month tenancies:** you can ask for a two-month payment plan that starts when your tenancy starts.
- **The landlord does not have to accept payment of the first month's rent in installments.**

I have a payment plan. What happens if I miss a payment?

The landlord can serve you a 10-day Notice to Comply or Vacate. [RCW 59.12.030\(4\)](#). If you do not pay what you owe along with your next rent payment, the landlord can file a court case (called an unlawful detainer action) to evict you. You will have to defend yourself in court.

Where can I read the local laws?

<https://cms.cityoftacoma.org/cityclerk/Files/MunicipalCode/Title01-AdministrationAndPersonnel.PDF>.

Where can I learn more?

The City has posted information the landlord must give you at various times here: cms.cityoftacoma.org/OEHR/rentalhousing/TenantInformationPacket.pdf.

Get Legal Help

- **Facing Eviction?** Call 1-855-657-8387.
- **Apply online** with [CLEAR*Online](#) - nwjustice.org/apply-online
- **Facing Foreclosure?** Call 1-800-606-4819.
- **Facing a legal issue in King County** (other than Eviction or Foreclosure)? Call 2-1-1 (or toll-free 1-877-211-9274) weekdays 8:00 am - 6:00 pm. They will refer you to a legal aid provider.

www.WashingtonLawHelp.org

- **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 - 12:15 pm or apply online at 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.

CLEAR and 2-1-1 will provide interpreters.

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