

STATEMENT FROM LEGAL AID OF SONOMA COUNTY:

Sonoma County Eviction Moratorium Protects Tenants Beyond September 30, 2021

The statewide COVID-19 eviction protections end on September 30, 2021. However, Sonoma County tenants are still protected under the local eviction moratorium (Ordinance Nos. 6301 and 6337).

If you are at risk of eviction (i.e., you receive an eviction notice or a summons and complaint), if you are facing landlord harassment, or if you have any questions about whether you are protected under the local eviction moratorium, please contact us immediately:

Legal Aid General Hotline: 707-542-1290

Legal Aid Housing Hotline: 707-843-4432

We are continuing to provide free, confidential legal services for low-income tenants, as we have throughout the pandemic.

Evictions Based on Nonpayment of Rent due to COVID-19

Sonoma County Ordinance No. 6301 creates a legal defense for tenants who live anywhere in Sonoma County and are being evicted due to non-payment of rent and who can demonstrate financial losses due to lost work or medical expenses resulting from the coronavirus pandemic. The ordinance requires that tenants who use this defense share that information with their landlord to support claims for mortgage relief.

- Legal Aid interprets these protections to continue for 60 days after the local emergency is declared over. As of now, the local emergency is ongoing.
- **WARNING**: The County interprets these protections as expiring on September 30, 2021, putting tenants who fail to pay rent in full on October 1st at risk of eviction.
- Therefore, tenants should pay rent in full, if they can, as of October 1, 2021.
- If unable to pay in full as of October 1, 2021 because of financial losses due to COVID-19, tenants should apply for the **Sonoma County Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP)**, as discussed further below, which also provides additional eviction protections.

In order to be as protected as possible, tenants who have been financially impacted by COVID-19 should submit a [COVID-19 hardship declaration](#) to their landlord and, if they can, pay 25% of their total rent owed from September 1, 2020 through September 30, 2021 by September 30, 2021.

Just Cause for Eviction:

Sonoma County Ordinance No. 6337 requires landlords to state a “[Just Cause](#)” reason to evict tenants in any eviction notice and prove that is the real reason for the eviction in court.

The only allowable “Just Cause” reasons for eviction are:

- The tenant poses an imminent threat to health or safety (like violence);
- The landlord is removing the property from the rental market; or
- Nonpayment of rent (but there may be protections in place for tenants who cannot pay rent because of COVID-19).

Ordinance No. 6337 creates a legal defense for tenants who live anywhere in Sonoma County and receive an eviction notice based on any other reason.

The COVID-19 Just Cause protections apply to all Sonoma County tenants, including those who are unable to pay rent and those who are able to pay rent.

The COVID-19 Just Cause protections are in effect until June 30, 2022.

Sonoma County Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) Still Available for Tenants Beyond September 30, 2021

Additionally, Sonoma County tenants who have been impacted by COVID-19 may be eligible for a grant for up to 18 months of back rent, future rent, and utilities from the [Sonoma County Emergency Rental Assistance Program](#).

Eligible tenants are urged to apply as soon as possible. Tenants can still apply after the statewide protections end on September 30th.

Immigration status is not a bar to eligibility.

Tenants should apply even if they borrowed money to stay current on rent, they moved, their landlord or master tenant refuses to apply, or they have already received rental/utility assistance in the past.

You may submit an application for rental assistance by mail or online at:
<https://portal.neighborlysoftware.com/erap-sonomacountyca/Participant>

If you need assistance with the application, contact one of these local community-based organizations: <https://socoemergency.org/emergency/novel-coronavirus/finance-housing/housing-and-renter-support/>