

FAQ: COVID-19 and Housing in Albany, NY

What is the New York State eviction moratorium?

- **The New York State eviction moratorium applies to all tenants in New York.**
- Effective March 16th, 2020, all eviction proceedings and pending evictions were **suspended until further notice** by the Chief Administrative Judge of New York State.
- Effective March 20th, 2020, the NYS Governor implemented a 90-day eviction moratorium. This means evictions cannot be enforced for 90 days, including pre-existing petitions and lockouts.
- For now, the eviction moratorium will last until mid-June. Tenants are still obligated to pay rent.
- While the governor's order ensures that eviction orders will not be enforced for a full 90 days, tenants might be petitioned to court sooner. For now, we don't know when courts will reopen.
- Help us advocate for the cancellation of rent during the crisis by signing and sharing this petition: https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/reclaim-our-homes-rent-suspension-now?clear_id=true

What is the Federal (national) eviction moratorium?

- Effective 3/27/2020, there is a 120-day eviction moratorium for **federally subsidized housing** that covers evictions for nonpayment of rent, until July 25 2020.
- **This order only applies to Public Housing, Section 8 Tenants, and other federally subsidized housing. This does not apply to unregulated tenants and privately owned rental dwellings.**
- This **does not** protect tenants from evictions for reasons other than nonpayment, such as holdover and lease violation proceedings.
- This **does not** cancel petitions and actions that were filed prior to this act.
- If you are covered by this order and have a lease, your landlord cannot give you a notice to vacate and/or pursue eviction until the expiration of the moratorium.
- For more information, visit: <https://www.nhlp.org/>

What if my landlord tries to lock me out?

- **Do not agree to leave.**
- If your landlord tries to force you out by changing the locks, removing your possessions, shutting off your utilities, or denying you access, they are committing an illegal eviction
- Tenants in Albany should call UTA at 518-436-8997 x 3 if they are illegally locked out. If the lockout is an emergency, they should also reach out to the Albany Police Department at 518-438-4000 for a response to an unlawful eviction.
- Tenants can also call Legal Aid at 518-462-6765 for court assistance if they are illegally locked out. Designated courts are still addressing landlord lockouts in Albany County. To find out which court is currently designated in Albany County, call the Statewide Hotline: 833-503-0447.

What if I can't pay my rent?

- Currently the eviction moratorium is in place so no one can be evicted for any reason right now.
- However, there is no rent relief or cancellation in place at this time and tenants will be responsible for all rent payments once the moratorium lifts.
- Many organizations and coalitions are advocating for the implementation of rent cancellation. To learn more, call UTA at (518)436-8997 or visit <https://www.housingjusticeforall.org/covid19>



What if I need repairs in my apartment?

- First, you should communicate with your landlord about the repair in writing. Talk to us about how to do that at UTA: (518)436-8997.
- If your landlord does not respond, you should call your local code enforcement department. Currently, the City of Albany Code Enforcement is conducting inspections on a restricted basis. To see if they can respond to your complaint, call 518-434-5995
- Serious code violations and/or serious repair orders are essential matters that are still being addressed by specific designated courts. To find out which court is currently designated in Albany County, call the OCA Statewide Hotline: 833-503-0447.
- Legal Aid Society may be able to provide legal representation for these cases at 518-462-6765.

What if I was previously petitioned to housing court?

- All housing courts statewide are closed and not hearing eviction cases until further notice. All eviction court cases have been postponed.
- Effective March 13th, 2020, Albany City Court adjourned all housing cases for at least 45 days. You should receive an adjournment date from the court.
- If you have been petitioned to housing court in the City of Albany, call United Tenants of Albany at (518)436-8997 x 3 or Legal Aid Society at (518)462-676
- If you have specific questions about a court case, call the OCA Hotline: 833-503-0447.

What if I can't pay my rent?

- Currently there is an eviction moratorium in place and no one can be evicted right now.
- However, there is no rent relief or cancellation in place at this time and you will be responsible for any rent payments that become due and owing once the moratorium lifts unless your landlord agrees to reduce or waive your rent.
- Many organizations and coalitions are advocating for the implementation of rent cancellation. For more information, call United Tenants of Albany at 518-436- 8997 x3 or visit: <https://www.housingjusticeforall.org/covid19>

Is there any financial assistance available to help me pay my rent?

- The Department of Social Services is still accepting applications for benefits. You can complete an application for emergency assistance over the phone, by mail or fax. (518)447-7653
- United Tenants of Albany has some funding to assist tenants in Albany who are facing eviction due to back rent. For more information, call the housing hotline at 518- 436-8997 x 3.

What if I can't pay my utilities?

- Utility companies working under NYS authority have been ordered to halt shut off's until further notice. If the utility company still shuts off your utilities, you should file an emergency complaint with the Public Service Commission by calling: 1-800-342-3355.
- You can also call the Public Utility Law Project hotline for help with Utility issues at 877-669-2572



Can my landlord show my apartment during this outbreak?

- Real estate agents and brokers are not considered essential businesses and therefore should not be operating. In accordance with the "New York State on PAUSE" executive order, the landlord must follow the guidelines put in place such as:
 - "Non-essential gatherings of individuals of any size for any reason (e.g. parties, celebrations or other social events) are canceled or postponed at this time"
 - "Any concentration of individuals outside their home must be limited to workers providing essential services and social distancing should be practiced"

I am laid off due to COVID-19. Can I receive unemployment benefits?

- If you have lost work due to COVID-19, you should apply for NYS unemployment immediately. You may be eligible for NYS benefits and an additional federal pandemic disaster relief benefit of \$600 per week. For more information, see: <https://labor.ny.gov/unemploymentassistance.shtm>

Am I eligible to receive a check from the federal stimulus package?

- Single adults with an income of \$75k or less will get a one-time check of \$1,200. Married couples with no children earning \$150k or less will receive a total of \$2,400. Parents will receive an additional \$500 per eligible dependent. You do not need to apply for this. The IRS will direct deposit or mail the payment if you have filed your taxes and/or have a social security number.
- Dependents that are not considered children and claimed on someone else's taxes will not receive a payment nor will the claimant receive a payment for them.
- For more information visit: <https://www.irs.gov/coronavirus>

**What else can I do? Can I get involved in advocating for myself and other tenants?*

YES you can!



Please contact the following organizations, depending on where you reside:

- **City of Albany** or surrounding areas: UTA hotline at 518-436-8997 x 3.
- **Troy NY:** Troy@capitaldistrictdsa.org
- **New York City** you can: Text "Rent Strike" to 646-542-1920 OR call the Met Council on Housing's hotline at: 212-979-0611
- **Central NY** Legal Services of Central NY: 315-703-6500
- **Western NY** Citywide Tenant Union: 585-653-8352
- **New York State:** Citizen Action of NY: 518-465-4600
- **Hudson Valley:** Nobody Leaves Mid-Hudson: 845-481-0703

To learn more about the statewide movement for housing justice and to sign the rent suspension petition, please visit: <https://www.housingjusticeforall.org/covid>

