



PREPARING FOR THE END OF THE EVICTIONS MORATORIUM

On June 30, the national moratorium on housing evictions will end. This will occur even as an estimated [one-third of Pennsylvania renters are behind on payments](#). Here's what you and your congregation can do now to help prevent a surge in evictions and to help those who may be facing homelessness because of pandemic-related hardship.

RIGHT NOW: Take ONE MINUTE to [send this letter to your state lawmakers](#), urging them to make fixes to the Emergency Rental Assistance Program to enable counties to speed the millions in already-allocated federal funds to struggling renters and landlords in time.

NEXT:

- 1. PREVENTION IS BEST!** Eviction disrupts lives and creates legal and other barriers to thriving that can last for years. [Check out these strategies and toolkit for preventing evictions](#). As a faith leader/community, reach out to your local district magistrates, asking them to refer landlords and tenants in eviction cases to the eviction redirection programs in your county. This has been a successful intervention. Many landlords and tenants do not know of the services available that would benefit both parties.
- 2. PREPARATION.** Be ready to meet the needs of those who are unsheltered or facing homelessness before they arrive at the church building:
 - Become familiar with possible causes of being unsheltered, such as, eviction, job loss, divorce, addiction, mental health issues
 - Research which services are available in your community and how to access.
 - Contact the shelters, food banks, rental assistance offices, area homeless coalitions, nonprofits, other congregations, etc. and gather information on all of the services they provide. Develop relationships with these agencies.
 - Identify which services are not available in your community.
 - As these agencies may be overwhelmed, be prepared to help neighbors in need apply for emergency supports, including [rental assistance](#) and [food assistance](#).

[Find more resources here.](#) If your congregation agrees to provide a service to those who arrive unexpectedly at the church building, define and document the process to be followed.

WHEN SOMEONE COMES TO YOUR DOOR:

[Bridge of Hope](#), a ministry for families facing homelessness, offers this guidance to churches: *Know that they may be in a very vulnerable place, having experienced trauma of various forms. They will likely have to tell their story several times to find the help they need, which can be painful. Although listening to someone's story can be ministry, it is often helpful to politely offer to spare them from sharing details with you if they wish and reassure them that your goal is to connect them to person or agency that can help them find the resources they need.*

- + Refer individuals and families to your local [211](#) – a resource line, as well as the list of agencies you have collected. Help the person make the connection to service provider(s) if they choose to accept services. The person may not have access to a phone.
- + Follow through on your congregation's process of providing service(s).
- + If you are unsure what to do with the person's situation due to lack of services available, etc., contact one of the service providers directly.
- + Contact Bridge of Hope to learn how your community can offer this supportive program.

GROUND AND GROW YOUR SERVICE: Study our ELCA Social Message, "[Homelessness: A Renewal of Commitment](#)." Join advocates whose faith leads them to address injustice and improve systems of care for the marginalized and vulnerable. [Learn more about this issue](#), including Pennsylvania's growing youth homelessness, and get involved with [LAMPa](#) and [ELCA Advocacy](#).

We are grateful to Bridge of Hope and Robin Shearer, Executive Director of Friends and Neighbors of Pennsylvania (which includes a street outreach program in York supported by a grant from Lower Susquehanna Synod), for sharing guidance from their ministries.