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Genesee County Receives \$2.8 Million for Rental Assistance for Eviction Diversion Program

FLINT, Mich. – Governor Whitmer’s recent Executive Order (2020-134) encourages landlords to take advantage of COVID-19 rental assistance rather than evicting tenants once the eviction moratorium ends. The order also requires the creation of statewide eviction diversion programs.

Fortunately, the Genesee County Continuum of Care (CoC) and several of its member agencies have been actively planning the 67th District Court Eviction Diversion Program for the past year and are ready to launch it. The Eviction Diversion partners include the Michigan Department of Health & Human Services, Legal Services of Eastern Michigan, Center for Civil Justice, Metro Community Development, Oakland-Livingston Human Services Agency, Catholic Charities, Wellness Services, Salvation Army, GCCARD and Family Promise, together with the 67th District Court.

Catholic Charities is the Housing Assessment and Resource Agency (HARA) for Genesee County and will be administering the COVID-19 rental assistance funding. According to Vicky Schultz, its President & CEO, “the rental assistance is available to landlords in exchange for allowing tenants to remain in their homes, forgiving late fees and covering up to 10% of the past amounts due.”

Jill Nylander, Executive Director of Legal Services of Eastern Michigan (LSEM), explained that “the eviction case will end with a conditional dismissal rather than a credit-damaging judgment.” It will also allow for tenants to make payments if they are required to pay a share of the amount due, not covered by the rental assistance funding.”

Once the COVID-19 rental assistance funding is exhausted, the 67th District Court Eviction Diversion Program will continue to operate with other eviction prevention dollars, such as state emergency relief and emergency services grants.

“Eviction diversion is a win for everyone involved,” said Jim Perlaki, Executive Director of the Genesee County Youth Corporation and Chair of the CoC committee that planned the Eviction Diversion Program. “The landlord gets paid the majority of the rental arrearages, the tenant remains housed and the court has less eviction cases to resolve.”

LSEM [hyperlink to: <https://lsem-mi.org/>] provides free legal services to low-income people in 14 mid-Michigan counties, including Genesee.

Catholic Charities [hyperlink to: <https://catholiccharitiesflint.org/>] is a comprehensive health and human services agency.

Flint/Genesee Continuum of Care [hyperlink to: <https://www.facebook.com/FlintGCCoC/>] is a community working together to achieve access to safe and affordable housing for all residents of Genesee County.

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