Libraries and Eviction: Continuing the Conversation

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Agenda

• Overview

• Effective Community Partnerships around Evictions:
  • Beth Hill, Kansas City Public Library
  • Catherine Duarte, City of Colorado Springs

• Open Q&A – Prevention, Tenants’ Rights, Legal Reference – Eviction, Marketing & Advocacy

• Wrap Up
Housing insecurity remains a critical challenge

- An estimated 7 million tenant households are behind on their rent.

- Black and Hispanic families are twice as likely to report being behind on their housing payments than white families.

- After eviction:
  - More difficult to find housing, apply for credit, borrow money
  - Mental and physical health diminish
Role of libraries

- People feel comfortable walking into a library
- Libraries typically have more patron-friendly hours
- Legal Reference Interview
- Finding basic information on forms and processes
- Referrals
- Providing access to technology and information literacy instruction
WebJunction’s Eviction Resources

Eviction Resources for Libraries

WebJunction | 15 November 2021

Housing insecurity is widespread, in part due to pandemic impacts of months of unemployment and related financial issues. The civil legal process of eviction is complex, confusing to renters and landlords alike. Those experiencing eviction can have difficulty finding safe and decent housing options, become separated from families, jobs, and schools, and face poor health outcomes. (Cost of Eviction Summary Report). The effects of eviction can be far-reaching and long-lasting.

Libraries are well positioned to provide access to legal information—particularly helpful during the early phases of the eviction process. By leveraging their reference skills and partnering with law libraries and legal aid services, library staff can help patrons understand their options and navigate legal services. As part of the Informed Access to Civil Legal Justice initiative, OCLC’s WebJunction is partnering with the Legal Services Corporation to collect these resources that focus on strengthening library staffs’ ability to respond to eviction questions with confidence.

Upcoming Events

November 18 webinar: Understanding Eviction and How Libraries Can Help
Join this webinar to understand the current state of the eviction crisis, recognize the basic stages of the process, and discuss options for preventing evictions through rental assistance. With presenters Kristel Wong, Financial Analyst, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and Rent Content Lead, Federal Housing Help Portal, and Deb Hamilton, Strategic Services Librarian, Mesa Public Library District (CO).

Key Resources

Five Phases of Eviction
While the details of the eviction process are determined by state, county or local laws, the general phases of eviction are consistent. This document provides an excellent overview, with particular attention to the earlier phases when eviction is more preventable. For background information on the eviction process in the courts, see LSC Briefs: A Common Story: The Eviction Process in Shelby County, TN and Do the Math of Eviction: Trends in Evictions under State and Federal Jurisdictions.

Glossary of Eviction Terms
The Glossary of Eviction Terms defines key terms in the eviction process in plain English.

CPR Resources: Notifying Patrons with Rental Assistance
This job aid on CPR resources for library staff assisting patrons (both renters and landlords) who are inquiring about or applying for rental assistance through the federal Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) program.

Eviction Resources for Libraries

Courses: Creating Pathways to Civil Legal Justice
If legal reference is new to you, WebJunction offers a series of self-paced courses that will strengthen your knowledge and ability to help identify when there is a civil legal issue at play and how to direct library users to relevant, helpful information and services. These courses, developed as part of the Access to Civil Legal Justice initiative, are foundational for providing reference on eviction issues.

oc.lc/eviction-resources
Phases of Eviction

Overview of the Formal Legal Eviction Process*

* The legal process of eviction varies greatly by location; this exhibit provides an overview of the key stages of the process.

The Importance of Prevention

- Connecting patrons to ERAP is very helpful
- Once an eviction is filed it generally moves quickly through the courts
- Providing information on laws and rights can help prevent evictions
- Providing access to legal assistance is key
Beth Hill - Sr. Community Resource Specialist
Catherine Duarte - Senior Analyst
Most jurisdictions have a department (or person!) who handles housing and block grants.

**COS Community Development Division’s mission:** create strong, sustainable, inclusive communities and quality affordable homes for all people in Colorado Springs.

**Finding a Shared Mission + Audience**

- Low-income families
- At risk of eviction
- Vulnerable to discrimination
- Those experiencing homelessness

**Questions to ask**

- Where do your community’s HUD funds go?
- How are they awarded?
- How do people find out about these resources?
Using Traditional City-Library Relationships to Prevent Eviction

Space
- Meeting rooms for City public hearings and listening sessions
- Meeting rooms for Renter Rights workshops
- Make City plan drafts available for public review

Forums
- Host virtual and in-person community conversations about evictions

Collections
- April is Fair Housing month! Creative displays!
- Develop housing and community development collection
- Collect digital resources from local service providers
Finding New City-Library Relationships to Prevent Eviction

Co-Leadership

- Board membership of local continuums of care (CoCs)
- Board membership of local nonprofits
- Volunteer with local initiatives, planning projects, etc.

Storytelling

- Use maker spaces, galleries, studios to spread awareness
Thank you to our Partners!
Final thoughts

- WebJunction courses: oc.lc/civil-legal-course
- Libraries and Eviction: Further Questions and Answers
  Free session on January 12, 12:00 Pacific / 3:00 Eastern
- Eviction Resource page: oc.lc/eviction-resources
Thank you!

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