

Resources and tactical support for tenants

Here is a link to a state produced guide for tenants and landlords, which provides some rights info, particularly on landlords failing to make repairs and payment issues.

<https://www.legislature.mi.gov/Publications/tenantlandlord.pdf>

You can also consult Legal Aid of West Michigan, which provides free legal counsel on issues, like the one you are facing. Their # is [\(616\) 774-0672](tel:6167740672).

Lease - Make sure you read your lease and before signing it read pages 4 - 6 <https://www.legislature.mi.gov/Publications/tenantlandlord.pdf>. If you need assistance with understanding to lease you can contact GRATU or Legal Aid of West Michigan. Before you sign a lease make sure you know what you are agreeing to. Also, request a printed and digital version of your lease.

Documentation - makes sure you document everything, all communications with your landlord/property management company, written documents, notices from landlords/property management companies, take pictures of the condition of your apartment/home you are renting, first just after you sign the lease and every year you live there. Document the failure of landlords/property management companies to make repairs in a timely fashion and keep track of the dates you have submitted a repair request.

If you feel like you are being exploited, that you rent is too high, that repairs are being made, if you have black mold, bed bugs or your landlord or property manager are showing up unannounced, the Grand Rapids Area Tenant Union can offer to organize and fight with you in the following ways:

1. We can send a message to your landlord, which would include demands that you create.
2. We can create a pressure campaign online, where you would write a short narrative about your situation and what you are demanding - possibly with pictures - then we post this to our Facebook page and ask others to send an e-mail and/or call your landlord, to pressure them to do the right thing.

3. We can hold a press conference about your situation, in order to get media attention, which would also apply pressure.
4. We can hold a demonstration outside the landlord's office or home, invite the news media and livestream the action on our Facebook page, which will also put pressure on them to comply with your demands.

We also do research on the landlords and Property Management Companies, to see if they have prior legal battles, what other properties they might own in the GR area, and if they have received PPP funds during COVID.

Eviction Defense:

If tenants receive an eviction notice, see below for steps they can take. Also, we can provide court support, a letter to the Judge, and recruit an eviction defense team to challenge landlords and property management companies from evicting tenants.



There is HELP!

If You're Facing Eviction ...

1

Don't Self-Evict or Move Out.

Legally, your landlord or property manager cannot evict you - they must go through the court system in order to do so.

2

Apply for Rent Assistance.

If your eviction is due to non-payment of rent, call the Salvation Army at 616.454.5840 (push option 1) or 211. Apply even if you don't think you'll be eligible to receive assistance.

3

Attend your Court Date.

We cannot emphasize enough - your landlord will win the case if you don't show up. GRATU can assist with talking points and court support.

4

Tell the Judge your Situation.

Even if you were turned down for rent assistance, show the judge that you applied (if you did). Explain your particular situation.

5

Make Note of Any Failure To Repair.

If there are any needed repairs in your dwelling that threaten your health or safety, see p. 27 of the Landlord/Tenant Handbook at www.legislature.mi.gov/Publications/tenantlandlord.pdf.

FOR FURTHER HELP, CONTACT:

GRAND RAPIDS AREA TENANT UNION (GRATU)
GRATUNION@GMAIL.COM / 616.422.5548