

A Guide to Housing Matters



State of Connecticut Judicial Branch
Superior Court



www.jud.ct.gov



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History of Housing Court

Connecticut created its housing courts in 1979 in what is now the Hartford and New Britain Judicial Districts. Today, these courts also help the judicial districts of Bridgeport, New Haven, Waterbury and Stamford-Norwalk. A list of these courts and their addresses and telephone numbers is in this pamphlet.

In parts of the state, housing cases are handled by judicial district courts instead of housing courts. A listing of the judicial district courts where housing cases are heard is in this pamphlet. You can get all housing forms and instructions at those court locations.

Housing Court Structure

In housing court there is a judge, a clerk to assist people who are representing themselves, and housing mediators.

Clerk's Office

The clerk's office provides booklets that explain court procedures and forms for use in housing cases.

What is a housing mediator?

A housing mediator is a trained employee of the court. The mediator will meet with you and the other parties in your case to try to work out an agreement (also called a settlement) so you do not need to have a trial. After your case is called in court, you will be asked to wait in the lobby until a mediator calls you for mediation (a discussion with you and the other parties in the case).

Do I have to make an agreement?

No, you don't have to make an agreement, and no one will ever force you to make an agreement to settle a case. But many cases do settle after people have the chance to talk with the housing mediator.

Housing Docket

The Housing Court hears civil and criminal matters. Criminal cases begin when a housing code inspector brings housing complaints to the housing prosecutor who may start a criminal case. Civil cases may be started for many reasons, including actions for back rent, property damage, return of security

deposits, injunctions, entry and detainer (lockouts), administrative appeals, and receiverships. Most civil cases fall into three categories: housing small claims, summary process (evictions), and housing code enforcement by tenants.

Court Entry Fees

Summary Process (Evictions) – \$175.00
Small Claims – \$95.00
Housing Code Enforcement – \$25.00
Civil Cases Landlord/Tenant – \$175.00

How to Sue in Housing Small Claims Court

The Housing Small Claims Court works the same as regular Small Claims Courts. If you have a claim for unpaid rent, damages to the premises, return of a security deposit, etc., you can start a housing small claims lawsuit for amounts up to \$5,000.00.

Summary Process (Eviction)

When a landlord wants to remove a tenant from an apartment, the landlord must go to housing court and begin an eviction. The following steps must generally be followed in order to evict a tenant.

1. Notice to Quit:

The notice to quit asks the tenant to leave the apartment by a certain date. The notice also gives the tenant the reason why the tenant is being asked to leave. The notice to quit is only a request that the tenant voluntarily leave the apartment. The notice to quit is not an order to leave.

2. Summons and Complaint:

A summons asks the tenant to come to court and file a written appearance form on or before the second day after the return date. The complaint lists the reasons for the eviction. A summons and complaint is delivered after the date in the notice to quit.

The State of Connecticut created a **Right to Counsel** program (CT-RTC) to provide **free legal representation** to income eligible tenants facing eviction or loss of housing subsidy.

The program began in a few communities on January 31, 2022 and will grow over time.

To find out if **free legal representation** is available where you live and if you qualify call **1-800-559-1565** or visit **evictionhelpct.org**.

- **Online Legal Help:** Go to ctlawhelp.org/eviction to learn about the eviction process and how to respond to eviction notices.
- **2-1-1 Helpline:** Call 211 for information and referrals for housing, utility, and food assistance or go to 211ct.org.
- **Guide and Form Filler:** Go to cteviction.guide to learn about the eviction process and prepare court forms for your case.
- **Eviction Prevention Fund:** Check your eligibility for UniteCT's Eviction Prevention Fund by visiting unitectprescreen.formstack.com/forms/eviction_prevention

3. Appearance:

Once the summons and complaint is served, the tenant may then file an appearance form with the court within two (2) days after the return date. Filing a completed Appearance form is critical. It: allows the court and the parties in the case to contact you, ensures that you receive a copy of everything filed in your case, and is required before you file anything in the case.

4. Answer to Complaint:

The tenant may also file an answer to the complaint. The answer allows the tenant to respond to the complaints. The answer also lists special defenses, or reasons the tenant should not be evicted.

5. What happens if I do not file an Appearance and Answer?

You must file your completed Appearance form before you file anything else in your case, including your Answer. Filing a completed Appearance ensures that you are given a copy of all future filings in your case, like hearing notices and court decisions. It also indicates that you are choosing to participate in the court process. You could be evicted from your apartment if you do not file an Appearance. After your Appearance is filed, you may file your Answer on or before the Answer Date. As with the Appearance, failure to file your Answer could cause you to be evicted.

6. Trial:

Shortly after an answer is filed, the court will send the parties a notice of court hearing, which will give the time and date of the trial. At the trial, the landlord will give evidence to prove the complaint. The tenant should be ready to answer the landlord's claims. The landlord and tenant may have witnesses testify. All parties, on the day of trial, will have a chance to settle their case with the help of a housing mediator.

7. Judgment and Execution:

After trial, the court will inform the parties of the judge's decision. A judgment for the landlord means the landlord may ask for an execution requiring the tenant to move.

After the execution is issued, it must be given to a state marshal to serve on the tenant. The marshal will use reasonable efforts to inform the tenant of the date and time of the eviction.

8. Stay of Execution:

A tenant may ask to delay the eviction by filing an application for a stay of execution. The length of the stay is determined by the judge.

In some cases, the tenant may be required to deposit with the clerk of the court the full amount of rent due within five (5) days of the date judgment was entered.

Housing Code Enforcement

A tenant may file a case against the landlord to correct certain housing code violations.

To start the case, the tenant files forms at the court clerk's office and begins paying the rent into the court clerk's office. If the tenant is successful, the court may issue orders. When the case is over, the court may order the rent that was paid to the court to be paid to the landlord, the tenant, or to both.

Conclusion

This pamphlet is not a substitute for an attorney. If you have a housing problem, you should talk to an attorney. If you do not know an attorney, you may call a Lawyer Referral Service, which will help you find an attorney. If you cannot afford an attorney, call your local legal aid office.

Superior Court Housing Session Locations

Address	Telephone
Bridgeport Judicial District Housing Session at Bridgeport 1061 Main Street Bridgeport, CT 06604	(203) 579-6936
Hartford Judicial District Housing Session at Hartford 80 Washington Street Hartford, CT 06106	(860) 756-7920
New Britain Judicial District Housing Session at New Britain 20 Franklin Square New Britain, CT 06051	(860) 515-5180
New Haven Judicial District Housing Session at New Haven 121 Elm Street New Haven, CT 06510	(203) 789-7937
Stamford-Norwalk Judicial District Housing Session at Stamford 123 Hoyt Street Stamford, CT 06905	(203) 965-5308
Waterbury Judicial District Housing Session at Waterbury 300 Grand Street Waterbury, CT 06702	(203) 591-3310

Superior Court Judicial District Court Locations

Address	Telephone
Ansonia-Milford Judicial District 14 West River Street Milford, CT 06460	(203) 877-4293
Danbury Judicial District 146 White Street Danbury, CT 06810	(203) 207-8600
Litchfield Judicial District 50 Field Street Torrington, CT 06790	(860) 626-2100
Middlesex Judicial District 1 Court Street Middletown, CT 06457	(860) 343-6400
New Haven Judicial District at Meriden 54 West Main Street Meriden, CT 06450	(203) 238-6666
New London Judicial District at New London 70 Huntington Street New London, CT 06320	(860) 443-5363
New London Judicial District at Norwich 1 Courthouse Square Norwich, CT 06360	(860) 887-3515
Tolland Judicial District 69 Brooklyn Street Rockville, CT 06066	(860) 896-4920
Windham Judicial District 155 Church Street Putnam, CT 06260	(860) 928-7749