



# RESOURCES & INFORMATION FOR TENANTS

Updated December 2020

## Required by the Housing Stability Notification Act

If you are a Boston tenant, you may be eligible for help from the following agencies. Some income limits and other eligibility criteria may apply.

For help resolving landlord/tenant matters, including evictions, housing search assistance, referrals for legal services, and applications for financial assistance, visit: [boston.gov/housing-stability](http://boston.gov/housing-stability) or call (617) 635-4200.

For help with rental assistance, rent arrears, and/or moving expenses, visit:  
**State Rental Relief Fund (RAFT)**  
[mass.gov/covid-19-getting-help-with-housing-costs](http://mass.gov/covid-19-getting-help-with-housing-costs) or contact 211  
**City Rental Relief Fund**  
[boston.gov/rental-relief](http://boston.gov/rental-relief) or contact 311

For legal help and advocacy in evictions, contact:  
**Great Boston Legal Services**  
(617) 371-1234  
**Harvard Legal Aid Bureau**  
(617) 495-4408  
**Legal Services Center of Harvard Law School**  
617-390-2535

## OFFICE OF HOUSING STABILITY TENANTS' RIGHTS IN AN EVICTION CASE

It is important that you consult with a lawyer as soon as possible. As a tenant, you may choose to, **but do not have to**, move by the move out date in the notice to quit. **ONLY THE COURT CAN ORDER YOU TO LEAVE YOUR HOME.** The Office of Housing Stability can refer you to an attorney and provide other eviction resources. Visit [boston.gov/eviction-questions](http://boston.gov/eviction-questions) for more information. There is a Federal moratorium on evictions. You might qualify but need to fill out a CDC declaration form on [boston.gov/eviction-questions](http://boston.gov/eviction-questions).

### NOTICE TO QUIT

**Landlord provides the tenant with a Notice to Quit (in most cases)**

- The amount of notice will vary depending on the type of tenancy. In most cases, it will be 14 or 30 days or a rental period notice.

### COURT COMPLAINT

**Landlord provides the tenant with a summary process Complaint**

- The Summons and Complaint will be hand-delivered by a constable/sheriff OR left at the tenant's apartment and sent by first class mail.
- The Summons and Complaint will likely list the court date, answer date, the court location, and how to access your hearing by phone or teleconference. **PAY ATTENTION TO THESE DATES.**
- Most hearings will held by Zoom. If you need access to a computer, please call one of the legal resources listed above.
- The tenant will likely have at least 2.5 weeks' notice of the court date. More information about your court date can be found on [masscourts.org](http://masscourts.org).
- **During your hearing, you may have access to a free lawyer. YOU MUST ASK TO SPEAK TO THIS LAWYER.**

### FILE ANSWER AND DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL

**Tenant has the right to file an Answer and Demand for Jury Trial, and other documents by the deadline ("Answer Date") in the Complaint**

- The tenant may file with the court and give the landlord (or landlord's attorney) an Answer and Demand for Jury Trial by the Answer date listed in the Complaint.
- The Answer explains any defenses or counterclaims the tenant has to the landlord's claim for possession, any rent due, and any lease violations. Counterclaims are claims that the tenant has against the landlord such as bad conditions or mishandling a security deposit.
- By the same deadline, the tenant has the right to file and serve discovery requests (requests for information from the landlord about the case) and a Demand for Jury Trial.



Use the QR code or visit [boston.gov/tenant-notification](http://boston.gov/tenant-notification) to view this document in additional languages.

This document is for informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice from or on behalf of the City of Boston.

