

# 3 WAYS TO HELP PATIENTS WITH EVICTIONS & FORECLOSURES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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The COVID-19 pandemic has led to increased rates of unemployment. As a result, more and more people are facing housing evictions and foreclosures that threaten their health and well-being, and this trend will continue in the coming months. As health care providers and staff, there are many things you can do to help patients facing a possible eviction or foreclosure by working with legal aid attorneys in your community.

## 01

### Talk to an attorney about free housing legal services available for your patients.

Legal aid attorneys provide free advice and representation to individuals around a variety of civil legal issues, including potential housing evictions and foreclosures. If your health care organization has a [medical-legal partnership \(MLP\)](#), talk with your MLP attorney(s) about the volume of housing issues you are seeing, any requirements a patient must meet to be eligible for housing-related legal services, and how to make a referral. If your organization does not yet have an MLP, find and contact a civil legal aid organization in your community to talk through these questions. While not a comprehensive list of legal aid organizations, the Legal Services Corporation's [list of federal-funded legal aid organizations](#) is a good place to start.

## 02

### Review the COVID-19 Housing Policy Scorecard to find out what protection measures are in place in your state so that you can better inform patients of their housing rights.

To help prevent homelessness during the COVID-19 pandemic, partial emergency eviction and foreclosure moratoriums have been issued at the federal, state, and local levels. These emergency measures vary greatly in form, degree, and length of protection. The Eviction Lab and Columbia Law School's Professor Emily Benfer developed the [COVID-19 Housing Policy Scorecard](#), which includes a scorecard for each state that clearly outlines what measures are in place and where policies still leave people vulnerable. Review your state's scorecard and work with attorneys to create and distribute "know your rights" information to patients who may be facing housing struggles. Propublica also created a [tenant search engine](#) that a renter can use to look up their address and see what state and federal protections apply to them.

## 03

### Advocate for stronger housing protections in your state.

The COVID-19 Housing Policy Scorecard identifies areas in each state where protections are lacking. Work with colleagues at your health care organization and with local legal partners to advocate for stronger policies that can prevent future evictions and foreclosures, and make sure to talk to policymakers about solutions that will last beyond the current pandemic. Areas for advocacy might include talking with policymakers about extending the moratoriums beyond the current state of emergency, adopting a moratorium on the initiation of evictions, increasing rental assistance funding, advocating for a right to legal counsel for civil matters, sealing eviction files, and adopting policies of no late fees, no rent raises, and no credit reporting.

The National Center for Medical-Legal Partnership receives funding from HRSA to provide training and technical assistance to health centers interested in embedding legal services in their clinics. Visit our website to [download a variety of MLP resources](#), and explore trainings on [The Social Determinants of Health Academy website](#).