



City of Hopewell
Office of Intergovernmental
and Public Affairs
300 North Main Street
Hopewell, VA 23860

MEDIA RELEASE

Contact Information:
Stacey English,
Economic Development Specialist
senglish@hopewellva.gov
PH: (804) 541-6008

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State of Virginia Announces Relief for Tenants Who Have Lost Income due to COVID-19

HOPEWELL, VA – In April 2020, Virginia passed emergency measures to help tenants who have lost income during the COVID-19 crisis and are being sued for eviction based on unpaid rent. Many tenants who are eligible may be able to get a 60-day delay in their court case.

Tenants who lost income between March 12 and June 28, 2020 and who have a first court date for an eviction case (and “unlawful detainer”) scheduled for September 10, 2020 or earlier are eligible to delay their eviction case. On June 1, 2020, the Supreme Court of Virginia extended the Declaration of Judicial Emergency in Response to COVID-19 Emergency until June 28, 2020.

In order to get the 60-day delay, tenants need to: show up to their first court date; bring written proof that you lost income between March 12 and June 28; and ask the judge for 60-day “continuance”. Tenants can use the following as their written proof: a paystub showing zero dollars in earnings, a furlough notification letter from your employer, an “essential employee status letter” stating that you were “nonessential”, or a signed affidavit by you stating that you lost wages during this period due to a COVID-19 emergency. Tenants can find an affidavit template on the Virginia Poverty Law Center’s website: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1dN8VKZ-NyaklJcWnu6EgclVTGsJJ03b94FfPziFanA/edit>.

Governor Northam will announce a comprehensive rent relief program in response to COVID-19, which will be supported by Federal CARES Act funding in the coming weeks. Tenants are encouraged to know their rights and responsibilities. Visit www.stayhomevirginia.com for more information and resources on tenant rights.

Depending on the situation, or the property, tenants may be eligible for other protections from eviction. For example, if tenants live in federally subsidized housing or in a property with a federally backed mortgage, the federal CARES Act protects you from eviction for unpaid rent until August 25.

This information was derived from the Virginia Poverty Law Center, and www.stayhomevirginia.com, and is general legal information, not legal advice about a specific case. If tenants have questions or want advice on their individual case, they can call the Eviction Legal Helpline (833-NoEvict) or the legal aid office (866-LEGLAID).