

Cincinnati eviction prevention program launches with \$400,000 in help

Sharon Coolidge, Cincinnati Enquirer Published 6:42 p.m. ET Jan. 9, 2019 | Updated 6:43 p.m. ET Jan. 9, 2019



(Photo: The Enquirer/Meg Vogel)

"Requesting tenant to leave the premises."

Those six words bring dread to more than 200 Hamilton County families every week who find eviction notices with those words emblazoned at the top on their door. For the most part, the families have fallen behind on their rent.

Cincinnati City Councilman Greg Landsman said he's making it his mission to keep more families in their homes so he and Councilwoman Tamaya Dennard championed the creation of an eviction prevention fund, which council approved Wednesday.

The program launches with \$403,000, \$167,000 of which will flow to the West End since the money comes from the city's sale of Lower Price Hill land to Tri-State Wholesale, which is moving to make way for the FC

Cincinnati stadium in the West End.

Under the eviction program, money will be given to help people who fall behind in rent after suffering a crisis. The idea is bridge the shortfall, not push off inevitable eviction. Success will be monitored by looking at how many people stay in their homes.

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"With almost half a million dollars, we're talking about helping thousands of families," Landsman said. "It's so much less expensive than trying to help sort things out with a family after they've been evicted."

He said it's less expensive to help people stay in their homes than to help after they're kicked out.

A University of Cincinnati [study shows](https://www.lascinti.org/wp-content/uploads/Eviction-Report_Final.pdf) (https://www.lascinti.org/wp-content/uploads/Eviction-Report_Final.pdf):

- Nearly half of Hamilton County residences are renter-occupied. From 2014 to 2017, an average of 12,439 residential evictions each year were filed in Hamilton County.
- People facing evictions do not have the right to a public defender, so if a person can't afford a lawyer, fighting eviction can mean he or she goes to court with a landlord who does have one.
- There are thousands of landlords in Hamilton County, but a few of them account for a bulk of the evictions. The top 10 eviction-filing landlords consistently represent about 20 percent of all evictions in the county.

Council voted 6-1 for the program, with Councilwoman Amy Murray the lone no vote. Vice Mayor Christopher Smitherman and Councilman Wendell Young were excused.

"If we're serious about lifting people up, helping people lift themselves out of poverty, we have to be serious about housing," Dennard said.

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Murray explained with a looming \$19 million deficit, she doesn't believe it's the time to create a new program.

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For the study, author Elaine Johns-Wolfe examined data from 2014-2017 in partnership with Housing Opportunities Made Equal Inc. and the Legal Aid Society through the Cincinnati Project at the University of Cincinnati.

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The program comes on the tails of council's creation of affordable housing trust fund, an initiative led by Councilman David Mann. This year, council pledged to find the money to begin dedicated work on the issue, though council members have long talked about its importance.

REQUESTING TENANT TO LEAVE PREMISES

To: _____

If to the Tenant, this notice is directed towards all residents (tenants and subtenants) in possession and all other in possession.

The premises herein referred to is located in the City of _____ County of _____ State of Ohio. Zip Code _____ designated by the number and street as _____ Apt. _____

In accordance with your lease agreement signed on the _____ day of _____ 20____ and the laws in the State of Ohio after service on you of this notice, you are hereby required:

You are being asked to leave the premises. If you do not leave, an eviction action may be initiated against you. If you are in doubt regarding your legal rights and obligations as a tenant, it is recommended that you seek legal assistance.

(Check Appropriate Box)

NONPAYMENT - Within three (3) days you shall pay to the undersigned or an authorized agent, the rent of the premises hereinafter described, or such other legal consideration according to the rent of _____ Dollars (\$ _____) enumerated as follows: Due from _____ to _____ or quit and deliver up the possession of the premises.

NONCOMPLIANCE - Within three (3) months the violation described as _____

This is non-compliance with your lease agreement. You shall notify the landlord by the end of the notice period that the violation has been cured or quit and deliver the possession of the premises.

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Sample eviction form (Photo: Sample eviction form)

