



Tenant Rights and Responsibilities During the Government Shutdown

Introduction

Tenants in government-funded housing may be worried about how the government shutdown affects them. The following information is a general overview of tenant rights and responsibilities during the shutdown that is current as of January 23, 2019. **Tenants affected by the shutdown may call our hotline at (800) 950-5817 to talk to an attorney for free about their rights and responsibilities.**

How does the shutdown affect my housing?

That depends on which type of housing you live in. Each federal housing program will be affected differently by the shutdown. Generally, most housing funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is funded through at least the end of February 2019. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) should pay owners of its rental housing through the end of February, although payments may be delayed.

Should I keep paying rent even if the government stops paying its portion of the rent?

Yes. You must continue to pay your portion of the rent even if the government stops paying its share. You could be evicted if you do not pay your share.

Can I be evicted because the government doesn't pay its share of the rent?

Probably not. That will depend on what type of housing you live in and the terms of your lease. There are laws that expressly protect tenants in some kinds of federal housing from eviction if the government fails to pay its share of the rent. This does not mean that the landlord will not try to evict you. Arkansas tenants who get an eviction notice due to the shutdown can talk to an attorney for free at **1-800-950-5817**.

Can my landlord make me pay the portion of the rent that the government normally pays?

Probably not. Your landlord still has to follow your lease agreement and laws that say how your rent is calculated. Even if your landlord is able to raise your rent, it should take at least thirty days in most cases.

What if the contract between my landlord and the government expires during the shutdown? What if my lease expires?

What may happen depends on several factors. You can call our hotline at (800) 950-5817 for a review of your specific case.

What should I do if my landlord starts an eviction proceeding against me because of the shutdown?

It is generally a good idea to talk to an attorney as soon as you are threatened with eviction. Save any proof of rent payments, notices you have received, and any other related documents. You can continue to try to pay your portion of the rent. You should record or keep other proof of your attempts to pay if your landlord will not accept your rent. Your landlord cannot legally change the locks without an eviction order or writ of possession. Under Arkansas law, you can generally stay in your home until a court date when a *Judge* orders you to leave even if your landlord says that you have to leave sooner.

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