

Community Mediation Services
of Central Ohio

Housing Stability/Eviction Prevention
Services Overview

Community Mediation Services
of Central Ohio

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www.communitymediation.com

CMS

- Not for profit organization established in 1989

- Currently celebrating 30 years of service delivery in Central Ohio

The CMS Mission

- To prevent the harmful effects of unresolved conflict by providing and teaching state-of-the-art dispute resolution strategies that empower disputants to create lasting resolutions to their conflicts while maintaining their critically important relationships

CMS Agency Services

- **Mediation of:** Tenant/Landlord, Family, Neighborhood/Workplace & Other Organizational Disputes
- **Skills Development Training:** Offer 4-40 hour Mediation & Personal/Professional Conflict Resolution Courses (open to the public classes offered throughout the year in Columbus; customized classes provided throughout Ohio and elsewhere upon request)

(Continuing education credit available for educators, legal and mental health professionals)

For more info on CMS training go to: www.communitymediation.com

CMS Housing Stability Services

Since 2011, has provided Tenant/Landlord Dispute Mediation Services to approximately 1200 families with 3,000 household members annually

- on-site at the FC Municipal Court
- by phone or by appt. in person at CMS' Columbus office

Since 2013, providing 2 Hr. Eviction Prevention Workshops in the community for approximately 900 low income at risk tenants annually:

(Offered at various locations including: FC Court's Self Help Center; FC veteran service provider locations; local area homeless shelters; churches and other non profit agencies, etc.)

Also, now offer ½ Day Eviction Prevention Education Workshops for helping professionals (open to the public and customized classes available continuing ed credit available)

FC Court Connected Services

- Currently, more than 17,000 court eviction summons issued each year in Franklin County
- Court inserts an informational post card about CMS' T/LL mediation services in every eviction summons issued by the court; post card encourages tenants to call CMS asap **before court hearing. (Landlords can call CMS for help too)**
- 96% of tenants CMS serves had eviction filed against them due to late or non payment of rent

Tenant Referral Process to Mediation

- Tenants call CMS after receiving court post card insert or after being referred by a community partner agency
- Legal Aid refers tenants to CMS when case not yet filed and when tenants are over their income limits or when there is no available legal defense
- Tenants self refer at eviction court on day of eviction hearing
- Tenants and Landlords referred to CMS at court by magistrates at the bench during eviction hearings

***Calls for mediation from landlords prior to eviction filing are also strongly encouraged**

Benefits of Mediation to Tenants

- Tenants are helped to understand eviction process and related vocabulary
- Tenants helped to develop very detailed settlement proposal for landlord's consideration
- Mediators screen tenants for eligibility for community resource help like emergency rent/utility/car repair payment assistance; help w/deposits for new place if move out is planned etc.;
- At court CMS mediators can link tenants immediately to reps on site at the court from Legal Aid and FC Job and Family Services (i.e., PRC emergency assistance)

T/LL Mediated Agreement Types

- **Pay and Stay Plan**- tenant enters payment plan for 30-120 days to repay landlord over due back rent and tenant stays in current housing; eviction vacated/dismissed in tenant’s housing record
- **Voluntary Move Out Plan**-Tenant negotiates for adequate time to move to alternative stable housing; a forced set out of tenant is avoided; landlord pays reduced court fees; landlord regains access to property so it can be re rented promptly

Documented T/LL Mediated Agreements

- When eviction case has been filed in court, copy of agreement is provided by parties to court and settlement details become part of court record
- Mediated settlement terms become enforceable by the court

T/LL Mediation Success

- 85% of the time, tenant and landlord reach voluntary agreement to their eviction related conflict
- ½ of agreements provide for tenant to get caught up on overdue back rent and **stay in their current housing**
- Other ½ of agreements call for a voluntary move out by tenant; tenant receives adequate time to relocate to alternative stable housing; often also includes provision for filed eviction to be dismissed or vacated; and for LL to get property returned in good condition to re rent

Benefits of Mediation to Landlords

Mediation of Pre Filed cases is encouraged

- Saves Landlord Case Filing Fees (\$133)
- Saves Landlord Legal Fees (\$200-\$300)
- Saves Landlord "red tag fee" (\$45) and "set out fee" (\$35)
- Saves landlord rental unit turn over costs
- Saves landlord costs for advertising and screening for new tenant
- Typically decreases amount of lost rent for landlord

Tenant Linkage to Community Resources

- CMS distributes hundreds of pieces of community resource information each week at court (rent/utility payment assistance, housing lists; food pantry info; job training services info, etc.)
- Work in partnership with health/mental health care providers to send/receive referrals
- Work in partnership to reduce infant mortality

Eviction Prevention Workshops

- Focus is on 10 biggest myths about eviction that tenants believe that often lead them to be evicted
- Participants complete post training quiz to measure their knowledge of how best to avoid eviction (90% of participants score 80% or higher)
- Participants receive certificates of completion that can be used to gain credibility with future would-be landlords
- After one year, 86% of participants have no subsequent eviction involvement per FC court records check

For More Information

Contact CMS: 614-228-7191

- Marcus Salter, Housing Stability Specialist for general program information ex 15
Msalter@communitymediation.com
- DiAnna O'Garro, Housing Stability Specialist for tenant community workshop registration; ex 17
Dogarro@communitymediation.com
- Shelley Whalen, Executive Director for Professional Trainings; ex 14
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