

# Homeowner Responsibilities



# Overview

Who We Are

Landlord Responsibilities

Eviction Process



# Disclaimer

*The guidelines in this presentation are for informational purposes only.*

*The laws, regulations, and requirements informing this presentation can change without notice, so **please make sure to check for the most up-to-date city, state, and federal (including CDC) requirements when pursuing an eviction case.***

# Who We Are

## Volunteer Lawyers Project's COVID Eviction Legal Help Project (CELHP) Landlord Advocacy

- Statewide project supporting **low-income tenants** and **low-income owner-occupants of two-to-three-unit properties** before or during the eviction process by providing legal information, assistance, and legal representation



# Who We Are

## Volunteer Lawyers Project's COVID Eviction Legal Help Project (CELHP) Landlord Advocacy

- Supported by the **Volunteer Lawyers Project (VLP)**
  - Legal organization providing free and low-cost legal assistance through CELHP to eligible owner-occupants
- Part of the **COVID-19 Eviction Diversion Initiative**
  - Larger initiative funded by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to provide comprehensive support to tenants and landlords throughout the financial challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic



# Who We Are: Landlord Eligibility

Homeowner must live in and rent out part of the multi-family home.

The case must be COVID-related.

The household income must be at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines for free services and at or under 300% for low-cost services.

Must be a US Citizen, green card holder, or fall under certain legal immigration statuses



VLP

CELHP

# Landlord Responsibilities: Choosing a Tenant

- **DO** consider a potential tenant's ability to pay, past evictions, references, and the impact of COVID
- **DO** prepare a rental agreement/lease
- **DO** establish in writing who is responsible for utilities
- **DO** decide whether to take security deposit and/or last month's rent
- **DON'T** discriminate against potential tenants
- **DON'T** charge a fee to hold the apartment, an application fee, a credit check fee, or a finder's fee (unless landlord is also a licensed broker)
- **DON'T** take a security deposit unless you can abide by all requirements when doing so

# Landlord Responsibilities: Caring for the Property

- **DO** ensure the property complies with state and federal laws
- **DO** provide each tenant with paperwork about the condition of the property in advance, as well as a copy of the lease within 30 days of them signing it
- **DO** regularly inspect the property
- **DO** check in and communicate with tenants
- **DON'T** enter the property without advance notice (unless in an emergency)
- **DON'T** retaliate against tenants for exercising their legal rights
- **DON'T** charge tenants late rent fees until the rent is 30 or more days late





# Landlord Responsibilities: Lease Violations & Other Tenant Issues

- **DO** try to resolve issues with tenants using federal or state-sponsored agencies and resources
- **DO** provide tenant with a Notice to Quit if pursuing eviction
- **DON'T** attempt to force tenants out by shutting off their utilities or changing their locks
- **DON'T** physically remove tenants' belongings or tenants themselves



# QUESTIONS?

## Contact Us:

- To learn more, visit: [www.vlpnet.org/celhp/](http://www.vlpnet.org/celhp/)
- To speak to us, call: 857-320-6452 or email [ycarrion@vlpnet.org](mailto:ycarrion@vlpnet.org)
- To find a lawyer, visit: [www.legalsquirrel.com/vlp](http://www.legalsquirrel.com/vlp) or use your mobile device to scan the QR code below.

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