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Justice Served, Housing Preserved: The Ramsey County Housing Court Model

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**JUSTICE SERVED, HOUSING PRESERVED:
THE RAMSEY COUNTY HOUSING COURT MODEL**

Colleen Ebinger and Elizabeth Clysdale

I. ABSTRACT	57
II. THE METRO AREA RENTAL MARKET	58
A. <i>Ramsey County Rental Market</i>	58
III. THE CREATION STORY	59
A. <i>Minnesota's Housing Court Model</i>	59
IV. THE MODEL: THREE PRIMARY CHANGES	60
A. <i>A Series of Changes to Court-issued Forms</i>	60
B. <i>Improved Intergovernmental Coordination Between Court and County Administration</i>	62
C. <i>Expanded Access to Legal Representation and Mediation Both at Court and Before Eviction Filings</i>	63
V. THE RESULTS	64
VI. LESSONS LEARNED	65
VII. MOVING FORWARD	68
APPENDIX A: 2ND ORDER AND AGREEMENT	69
APPENDIX B: HOUSING STATISTICS 2014-2019	71
APPENDIX C: HOUSING COURT FINAL REPORT	75
ABOUT THE AUTHORS	91

I. ABSTRACT

In July 2018, a new Housing Clinic launched at the Ramsey County Courthouse. It had been a year in the making. The goal was a bold one: to reduce evictions by fifty percent in five years. The idea sprung from a chief district court judge and group of community partners who were able to identify gaps in the current system and work together to agree upon the most promising interventions that could improve access to justice for all parties and create better societal outcomes. Eighteen months later, the court clinic has demonstrated its impact: eviction judgements are down; settlements are up; the court trial calendar has been reduced; and expungements have doubled.

II. THE METRO AREA RENTAL MARKET

Nearly 150,000 households in the Minneapolis-Saint Paul metropolitan area, or approximately one in eight households, spends fifty percent or more of their income on housing.¹ Rental vacancies have dipped to historic lows and the cost of rent has risen quickly. The Space Between, a 2013 study conducted through the Minnesota Preservation Plus Initiative, found that unsubsidized units comprise fifty-seven percent of Twin Cities rentals affordable at fifty percent of area median income (AMI).² In the next decade, the supply of subsidized affordable housing production and preservation will not increase quickly enough to make a dent in these cost-burdened residents' lives.

A. Ramsey County Rental Market

Looking closely at Saint Paul, fifty-one percent of residents live in rental housing and fifty-two percent of them are considered to be "cost burdened," meaning they spend more than thirty percent of their income on rent.³ Nearly three out of four households of color in Saint Paul rent their housing and "[i]n 2015, over 50 percent of African-American households in the Twin Cities were cost-burdened, which is double the rate of white households."⁴ They disproportionately experience poor quality housing and higher rates of evictions. An analysis of data from Minnesota's Second Judicial District's Housing Court (Ramsey County) found that

1. KRYSTEN RYBA-TURES, METRO. COUNCIL, METROSTATS: HOUSING COST BURDEN IN THE TWIN CITIES REGION 3 (2014), <https://metro council.org/getattachment/a6216685-af2c-405c-a300-06f2f1f4dcea.aspx>.

2. GREATER MINNESOTA HOUSING FUND, MINN. PRES. PLUS INITIATIVE, THE SPACE BETWEEN: REALITIES AND POSSIBILITIES IN PRESERVING UNSUBSIDIZED AFFORDABLE RENTAL HOUSING v (2013), <https://gmhf.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/gmhf-space-between.pdf> (Strategic partners of this study include Family Housing Fund, Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, and Greater Minnesota Housing Fund. Project team members include One Roof Global Consulting, Housing Preservation Project, and Urban Land Institute of Minnesota).

3. RAMSEY COUNTY DEP'T PUB.HEALTH, RAMSEY COUNTY COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT: HOUSE COST BURDEN AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING 1 (2018) available at https://www.ramseycounty.us/sites/default/files/Departments/Public%20Health/CHA/House%20Cost%20Burden%20and%20Affordable%20Housing_final.pdf; see also, MINNESOTA HOUSING PARTNERSHIP, RAMSEY COUNTY, (2019), <http://www.mhponline.org/images/stories/images/research/SOTS-2019/Twin-Cities-Profiles/Ramsey.pdf>

4. *Id.*; see generally Minnesota Compass Analysis of 2013 ACS Data, <http://www.mncompass.org/profiles/custom/minneapolis-saint-paul>.

approximately 3,000 evictions have been filed annually in recent years, the vast majority for non-payment of rent.⁵

III. THE CREATION STORY

A. *Minnesota's Housing Court Model*

To understand the Housing Court Clinic, it is important to understand how Housing Court works in Minnesota. All evictions in Minnesota are governed by Minnesota Statutes 504B.181 to 504B.391.⁶ State statutes require that service be provided seven to fourteen days before an initial hearing. In Ramsey County, all initial appearances occur as one large housing calendar. This calendar is held two mornings per week. These two calendars have a capacity to hear up to fifty initial eviction hearings and are scheduled to last three hours. On average, twenty-seven cases are typically heard, and the average calendar length is two hours.

At first appearances, parties have three options: a) reach an agreement via a settlement, b) dispute the facts and set the case for trial, or c) have an order issued by the judicial officer, resulting in either an eviction or a dismissal that same day. If a case is sent to trial, state statute requires that it be held within seven days of the initial hearing.⁷ In fifty-one percent of cases, landlords are represented by legal counsel, while only three percent of tenants have legal representation.⁸

In 2017, Ramsey County Chief Judge John Guthmann invited a group of stakeholders to consider potential changes to the Housing Court with the goal of improving access to justice and bringing in a suite of resources that could help address the root causes of eviction. Judge Guthmann brought in the McKnight Foundation and Family Housing Fund, who then contracted with the National Center for State Courts, to facilitate a six-month planning process to identify

5. MINNESOTA JUDICIAL BRANCH, *Ramsey County Workgroup Earns Statewide Award for Efforts to Improve Housing Court*, (Dec. 18, 2017), <http://mncourts.gov/About-The-Courts/NewsAndAnnouncements/ItemDetail.aspx?id=1552>.

6. See Minn. Stat. §§ 504B.181–504B.391 (2019). Ramsey and Hennepin Counties are the two counties with the highest populations in the State of Minnesota. These two counties are further governed by additional Housing Court rules found in the Minnesota General Rules of Practice 601–612. MINN. R. 601–612 (1991).

7. MINN. STAT. § 504B.335(a) (2019).

8. MINNESOTA JUDICIAL BRANCH, IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE FOR THE PROPOSED LEGAL PARAPROFESSIONALS PILOT 1 (NOV. 8, 2019)

<http://www.mncourts.gov/mncourtsgov/media/Implementation-Committee/Legal-Paraprofessional-Implementation-Committee-flyer.pdf> (describing the Minnesota Supreme Court's pilot program to expand paralegal representation for landlord and tenant cases, improving access to legal resources).

current gaps in the system and potential strategies to close those gaps. Additional partners included the Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services (“SMRLS”), the Volunteer Lawyers Network (“VLN”), the Dispute Resolution Center, a landlord attorney, the owner of a tenant screening company, a director of the county’s financial assistance program, the city attorney, and representatives of the city’s housing and planning department. Several additional judges, referees, and court administration staff also participated.

All stakeholders agreed to come together and work collaboratively toward a common goal over a six-month planning period. All ideas were on the table and partners agreed to collectively seek system improvement and to each take a “step forward” to improve together.

The group ultimately agreed on three key areas of action: 1) implement a series of procedural changes to improve Housing Court outcomes for all parties and better pursue justice, 2) improve coordination among government entities to narrow service gaps, and 3) expand access to mediation and legal services and add proactive interventions in the eviction process. After several more months of implementation planning, the Ramsey County Housing Court Clinic launched in July 2018.⁹

IV. THE MODEL: THREE PRIMARY CHANGES

The Ramsey County Housing Court model identified three interlocking strategies that, implemented together, could create a more highly functioning Housing Court and improve outcomes for litigants. The strategies are:

With feedback from the many stakeholders, the Housing Court agreed to make a number of process changes. These changes include:

A. A Series of Changes to Court-issued Forms

The Housing Court amended the court-issued summons to add information about legal, mediation, and financial assistance resources. This information is placed in the two-page document that defendants receive to notify them of an eviction hearing. The summons also includes a brief description of each resource, along with a direct phone number to access these resources. Implemented Housing Court process changes included:

9. SOUTHERN MINNESOTA REGIONAL LEGAL SERVICES, RAMSEY COUNTY HOUSING COURT CLINIC, <https://www.smrls.org/volunteer/current-volunteer-resources/ramsey-county-housing-court-clinic/#> (last visited Mar. 17, 2020).

- Court-issued settlement forms: The Court made a critical change to the court-issued settlement form by asking parties whether they agreed to an expungement of the case. This change did two things. First, it prompted parties to ask a question that many tenants did not previously know to ask. Second, it nearly automated the expungement action upon compliance with the settlement. This improved the previous process where a tenant's only option was to open a new, completely separate expungement case. Third, the Housing Court changed the affidavit of compliance to allow both landlords and tenants to file the document. Previously, only the landlord was able to file the affidavit of compliance and they rarely had a strong incentive to do so.
- Amendments to the order template: The Housing Court also amended the order template to allow for an immediate expungement of the eviction. Further, the amendment allowed either party to file an affidavit of compliance in the event the expungement was conditioned upon compliance with a settlement agreement. This benefited litigants using an affidavit of compliance by removing requirements for either party to file a motion to expunge. Additionally, it eliminated the need to appear at another court hearing.
- Court calendar: The Housing Court changed multiple aspects of the court calendar. First, the Court started earlier to allow time for the litigants to access services. Second, the Court began working with partners to develop a script that the court clerks and referees now read from the bench at the start of proceedings. Third, the Court required all parties talk with each other before their case is called to attempt to settle their cases (while not requiring them to settle or mediate). The court agreed to call parties with a written settlement agreement to the bench first, which created an incentive to work out the issue amicably and find a mutually agreeable option. Finally, the court allowed parties to waive their appearances if there was a written and signed settlement agreement. This allowed landlord's attorneys to continue to work with other tenants appearing on the same calendar. It also allowed tenants to leave for other obligations.

- Infrastructure support: The court made four private meeting rooms available to the court partners, an essential element to ensuring the clinic can productively and confidentially serve litigants. It also made the court's Wi-Fi and electronic court records system accessible to all service providers, along with a technology access terminal with a printer and extra paper. Court staff also worked closely with service partners to develop helpful informational resources that are posted on court monitors prior to the start of each court calendar.

B. Improved Intergovernmental Coordination Between Court and County Administration

One of the key challenges that stakeholders identified was the mismatch in timing between the eviction process and the typical application process for county emergency assistance. Stakeholders voiced strong support for locating a county financial worker at the courthouse during the twice-weekly Housing Court calendars to initiate assistance and to help a tenant discern the likelihood that they would qualify for assistance. As a result, the court and the county agreed to work more closely together to address the challenges these tight timelines presented. These challenges included:

- Office space for financial workers: The court made office space available to financial assistance workers representing two different funding sources. Where previously these funding sources did not work together, the clinic now allows them to work together to address the financial needs of a tenant who is behind on rent. Additionally, previously, these two financial sources operated independently of one another, requiring a tenant to first apply to one source and be denied before submitting a separate, distinct application to the second source. This was onerous, confusing, and time consuming and often involved repeat trips to multiple locations. The updated Housing Court arrangement allows financial assistance workers to close the financial gap more rapidly and reliably, helping landlords receive the money they are due and helping renters remain in their housing.
- Providing all partners with litigant information: The Court now sends all partners the list of litigants on the Housing Court calendar one day in advance. This allows partners to come to court more prepared, particularly in

cases where litigants are existing clients. At the initial hearing, tenants are encouraged to meet with the financial workers prior to obtaining legal advice or talking to landlords. If the tenant knows financial resources are available to them, this information will have a direct impact on the settlement discussions.

*C. Expanded Access to Legal Representation and Mediation
 Both at Court and Before Eviction Filings*

Group stakeholders recognized the importance of providing legal counsel to low-income tenants and landlords. Understanding one's legal rights and responsibilities makes the court process less overwhelming and protects litigants from being denied justice solely due to their inability to pay for a lawyer. Group members also emphasized the importance of offering mediation to address possible underlying issues that may not be reflected in any official court documents. The implementation of these recommendations included:

- Staff court calendars with attorneys for consultations: The court fully staffed all court calendars with at least two attorneys to provide free consultations to all tenants who request it and to unrepresented income-qualifying landlords.
- Staff court calendars with mediators: The court fully staffed all court calendars with certified mediators who can help litigants achieve a mutually agreeable settlement agreement when unable to do so through direct negotiations. Mediators are particularly helpful when disputes include non-legal issues, such as the way one party has acted to the other, feelings of disrespect, and the unique challenges when family members rent to each other. In some of these cases, the chance for both parties to feel heard is an essential step to get to a lasting settlement agreement. When successful, these settlements better meet the interests of both parties than could have been achieved through litigation.
- Promote attorney and mediator use: The court began promoting the use of services from the bench, ensuring all litigants know what resources are available and understand that the judicial officer will not call their case while they are meeting with a lawyer or mediator.

V. THE RESULTS

The Housing Court Clinic launched in July 2018 and Court Administration has faithfully tracked all court statistics since the launch date (resulting in a half-year of statistics for 2018, and a full year for 2019). The results are both compelling and point to areas of further work. Specifically, the Clinic identified four improvements in housing court since 2018.

First, the numbers indicate the clinic is moving toward its goal of reducing evictions by fifty percent in within five years. Eviction judgements as a percentage of court filings decreased eight percent in 2019. This is the lowest eviction rate in ten years. Over half of cases are now settling, the highest percentage in five years, and a five-point increase over 2018. One of the most inspiring and surprising findings was the increase in expungements, which doubled in 2019. Given how tight the housing market is, this ability to clear one's legal record of an eviction is a significant accomplishment with long-ranging, positive consequences for families.

Second, the judicial branch closely identifies and monitors various indicators of (in)efficiency in court proceedings. Of particular concern at the beginning was whether court calendars would take dramatically longer once certain services were available outside of the courtroom. Additionally, some individuals worried the court would face an increase in the number of cases set for trial, resulting in further backlog of court cases and challenging the court's ability to meet its statutory timing requirement. However, ongoing monitoring of the court start and end times found that the overall calendar time increased by only ten minutes, with the average calendar lasting two hours and twenty-one minutes. Perhaps even more important, the increase in settlement agreements, often brokered with the help of legal counsel and mediators, reduced the number of cases set for trial. The ratio of trials to settled agreements decreased to 1:20 from 1:11.

Third, the Clinic received reports on increasingly prepared defendants. Particularly, judges report that defendants appear to better understand the hearing process, and when and how to raise legal defenses that they may have. Judges also noted the benefits of financial assistance at the courthouse. While tenants are rarely able to get an official financial award decision at court, they can begin the application process, get a sense of whether they are likely to qualify (and for how much), and use that information to create a durable settlement agreement with their landlord.

Finally, numerous landlords have reported that they appreciate having financial assistance workers at court. One example is Neighborhood House, a community-based organization that issues one of the financial assistance sources. Neighborhood House staff

often uses their time at court to speak with landlords and landlord attorneys. This contact allows financial assistance workers and landlords to build relationships. Neighborhood House invites landlords to reach out directly to their financial worker before filing an eviction the next time a similar situation arises. As a result, Neighborhood House has reported an uptick in inquiries from landlords who are on the verge of filing an eviction but are waiting to first see if the tenant can qualify for emergency assistance.

VI. LESSONS LEARNED

This partnership of diverse stakeholders has produced a comprehensive model that is now in its second year. Since the launch of the Ramsey County Housing Court Clinic, other judicial districts have communicated their interest in adapting the model for their own jurisdiction. Anoka and Dakota County Courts are currently launching similar clinics in their districts. Both districts have agreed to condense their housing cases to two and three calendars per week, down from three and seven calendars, respectively. This consolidation makes it viable for social service agencies and legal aid organizations to be present at more calendars per week, which better utilizes their time. The two districts are changing their court forms to mirror the changes made in Ramsey. Local service providers are staffing the clinic to provide tenants with wrap-around social services that can address the root causes of eviction. The housing clinic in Hennepin County (Minneapolis) has long had lawyers and mediators on hand to help tenants, but recently added a county financial assistance worker who is now available during court calendars. Hennepin County also added a question about expungement to the court settlement form. Taken together, this expanding regional approach to eviction prevention places the courts at a critical point of intervention to help stabilize a family in crisis, while remaining neutral arbiters of justice.

While we will continue to monitor our progress and track our outcomes, our group's three years of working together has resulted in a number of lessons learned. The top lessons are:

1. A collaborative attitude between partners is critical to success.

This work is a marathon, not a sprint. Groups seeking to establish a housing clinic must have an attitude of joint problem solving and performance improvement. Pointing fingers at others or becoming defensive to criticism is counterproductive. Our group started with the assumption that we all could do better, and we attempted to approach the challenge with a sense of curiosity and a desire to improve, assuming that all potential changes were on the table. We

spent consistent time together over six months of planning, then met on a monthly basis as we launched the clinic. The group now meets for quarterly check-ins. The time spent building relationships has been critical and the social capital that resulted has carried us through difficult decisions and discussions. Additionally, the group starts each meeting by reviewing court statistics and monitoring progress. This focus on data helps the group prioritize high-level goals.

2. Small changes can make the biggest impact.

While it may seem more exciting to talk about big policy changes at the state and federal levels, administrative and implementation policies are often just as important. In our case, the court's willingness to work closely with partners, test out new approaches, and respond to criticism has allowed us to achieve some of our most important successes. The changes to the court-issued settlement form provide an excellent example of this. The addition of a simple check box indicating that the parties agree to an expungement – together with allowing defendants to file the affidavit of compliance – has resulted in a 100% increase in the number of successful expungements.

3. Still, state law matters. A lot.

Through this process, we learned that Minnesota is an outlier in granting civil expungements, which are governed by Minnesota Statute section 484.014, subdivision 2 (2019). The statute allows for an eviction to be expunged when a judge finds that expungement is clearly in the interests of justice, and those interests are not outweighed by the public's interest in knowing about the record. The district court was able to change the court-issued forms to create better results only because the court took advantage of existing state law that allows for expungement in the first place.

Preliminary legal research indicates that Minnesota may be the only state that permits near-immediate expungement of the eviction filing once settlement terms have been fulfilled, when a case is dismissed, or when parties otherwise agree to do so. Few other states are as forgiving as Minnesota in this regard. To the contrary, many states have virtually no provision for the expungement of housing court civil records.

Additionally, state law gives tenants the right to redeem and avoid eviction if they come to court with sufficient funds or pay the amount owed within a certain number of days after the hearing. This important protection means that tenants cannot be forced out only

because they did not pay on time and offers a window of time for wrap-around services and financial assistance to come together to resolve the emergency.¹⁰

4. Financial service providers can solve emergencies more efficiently than when individuals are left to navigate the social service system on their own.

One of the surprises of this clinic was the entry of a new neighborhood-based partner after the housing clinic launched. Neighborhood House brought a state financial assistance funding source, separate from Ramsey County's emergency assistance program (which combines state and federal funding sources). The financial workers from these two programs are able to do a single intake together and determine between themselves which funding sources they could draw from to most effectively address the tenant's financial emergency that initiated the eviction. Left on their own, the tenant would otherwise have to first go to the county office to apply for assistance. If denied, the applicant would then need to submit an application to a second funding source, such as Neighborhood House, which has different requirements and criteria. This often feels like an overwhelming process to navigate for someone who is in the midst of a crisis. We should improve this collaboration between funding sources, like Neighborhood House, and expand such use of "bundling."

5. Different situations call for different service interventions and solutions.

Legal advice is always important for someone unfamiliar with the court process. This is particularly true when a tenant has legal defenses that they otherwise would not have known to raise at the court hearing. Issue spotting is the first and most important step to determine whether the tenant has a strong legal case that they should pursue with a lawyer, whether this is primarily a financial issue that can be resolved with money, or whether the dispute is something more personal where mediation can support a more effective and stable solution. Each partner brings a critical value proposition.

6. As settlements increased, so did settlement failures.

While the percentage of eviction cases that resulted in a settlement between parties has increased significantly, we have also seen an increase in affidavits of non-compliance.

10. MINN. STAT. § 504B.291, subdiv. 1 (2019).

An affidavit of non-compliance means that the tenant ultimately failed to comply with the terms of the agreement. We do not yet know why this is occurring. Is it because someone promised to move out, but then didn't because they could not find a place to move? If so, this might lead us to improve our connections with organizations that can rapidly help individuals find new housing. On the other hand, did the tenant intend to pay and stay, but then fail to come up with the money required to do so? This, in turn, might lead to questions about the sources of funds pursued, why they were not ultimately secured, and whether there was a specific shock to the household's finances that resulted in their original inability to pay the rent. Whatever the answer, we know that we have more to learn about failed settlement agreements. This is an area of research that we hope to undertake soon

7. Resources at court are essential, but more upstream resources are needed.

Jurisdictional requirements permit the court to lend resources and support only after an eviction case has been filed. Yet we know that acting swiftly during the brief window after a tenant realizes they will be unable to make rent and before a landlord files an eviction is the most helpful moment to provide support and resources. As a result of the close-working relationships and trust built between partners in the clinic, the group has begun early efforts to test a similar community clinic approach outside of the courthouse. While it's too early to gauge the impact of this effort, it's an important area for further testing as we continue pushing to provide interventions upstream before they result in the crisis of an eviction.

VII. MOVING FORWARD

As we take the lessons learned in Ramsey County and apply them to other judicial districts in our region, we recognize that the issues we are addressing are hardly unique to Minnesota. We cannot open the newspaper or listen to a news program without some mention of the affordable housing crisis facing so many Americans. At the federal level, the newly proposed Eviction Crisis Act aspires to make changes that are similar in many respects to our Housing Clinic model.¹¹ We applaud the bipartisan effort at the federal level

11. See Ellen Sahli & Maya Brennan, *Four Lessons from Minnesota Can Inform the Eviction Crisis Debate*, URBAN INSTITUTE BLOG, Dec. 16, 2019,

to identify the root causes of eviction and to direct resources toward addressing these causes.

We believe the Ramsey County Housing Clinic can provide a blueprint for many jurisdictions across the nation to learn from, adapt, and further test. We invite you to do so and we hope to hear how you are doing it better so that we can continue improving here at home.

APPENDIX A: 2ND ORDER AND AGREEMENT

STATE OF MINNESOTA COUNTY OF RAMSEY	DISTRICT COURT SECOND JUDICIAL DISTRICT HOUSING COURT DIVISION
_____ PLAINTIFF _____, (Landlord) Vs. _____ Defendant(s) _____, (Tenant)	DECISION AND ORDER CASE NUMBER 62-HG-CV-_____

This (residential/commercial) case was heard by the undersigned Referee of District Court on _____.

PLAINTIFF:

☐ appeared in person

☐ represented by (counsel/Agent) _____

DEFENDANT(S):

☐ appeared in person

☐ did not appear and is in default

☐ appeared with counsel _____

THE COURT FINDS AND ORDERS THAT:

☐ the allegations of the complaint are ☐ true/ ☐ untrue

☐ the parties have ☐ reached a settlement per the settlement agreement filed with the court today. The agreement is incorporated into this order OR ☐ the parties have reached a settlement as follows:

☐ upon compliance and filing of an affidavit this case may be expunged.

☐ the case be expunged ☐ immediately OR ☐ 15 day stay.

☐ the case is dismissed ☐ for non-appearance / ☐ by motion / ☐ for payment.

☐ Other: _____

☐ Plaintiff is entitled to recovery of the property plus filing fees and service costs paid for this court action only if the writ issues.

☐ the rent now on deposit shall be released as follows:

☐ \$ _____ to Plaintiff ☐ \$ _____ to Defendant

THE WRIT OF RECOVERY SHALL:

☐ issue immediately ☐ issue after _____

☐ issue if any of the above settlement conditions are not met and after an Affidavit of Non-Compliance has been filed

☐ children/other hardship

☐ **Let Judgment Be Entered Accordingly**

RECOMMENDED BY: _____ Referee	BY THE COURT: _____ Judge of District Court
_____ Date	_____ Date

I hereby Certify that the above Order Constitutes entry of Judgment of the court. You are notified that Judgment was entered on _____.

Michael F. Upton, Court Administrator
Deputy

<https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/four-lessons-minnesota-can-inform-eviction-crisis-debate>.

STATE OF MINNESOTA
 COUNTY OF RAMSEY

DISTRICT COURT
 SECOND JUDICIAL DISTRICT

Plaintiff(s)

Court File No. 62-HG-CV-_____

vs.

SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

Defendant(s)

IT IS HEREBY STIPULATED AND AGREED between the parties as follows:

☐ Parties agree to the following payment schedule:

Date Payment is Due	Time Due (if applicable)	Amount Due	Form of Payment (Money Order, Certified Funds, etc.)
/ /	AM / PM	\$	
/ /	AM / PM	\$	
/ /	AM / PM	\$	
/ /	AM / PM	\$	
/ /	AM / PM	\$	
/ /	AM / PM	\$	

- ☐ No Writ of Recovery is requested at this time. This signed agreement serves as settlement.
- ☐ Case may be expunged, upon ☐ Plaintiff ☐ Defendant filing an Affidavit of Compliance and an Affidavit of Service. The parties agreed and request the court to make a finding that the expungement is clearly in the interests of justice and those interests are not outweighed by the public's interest in knowing about the record.
- ☐ If the terms of this settlement agreement are met, Plaintiff will not oppose a motion for an expungement.
- ☐ Defendant(s) shall vacate on or before _____ or a Writ of Recovery shall be issued by default by request and payment of fee.
- ☐ If there is a violation of the above terms, judgment may be entered and Plaintiff will obtain a Writ of Recovery, upon filing of an affidavit establishing the violation and an Affidavit of Service.
- ☐ If a Writ of Recovery issues, Plaintiff may file an affidavit requesting costs and disbursements allowed by statute, and the Court shall award a judgment against Defendant for allowable costs and disbursements.

I have read, understand, and agree to be bound by this Settlement Agreement without appeal or further litigation:

PRINT Plaintiff(s) NAME

PRINT Defendant(s) NAME

SIGNATURE OF OWNER/AGENT/ATTORNEY

SIGNATURE

Date _____

SIGNATURE
 Date _____

APPENDIX B: HOUSING STATISTICS 2014-2019



**MINNESOTA
JUDICIAL BRANCH**
SECOND JUDICIAL DISTRICT
Ramsey County Civil Division

Housing Statistics

Yearly Case Filings by Case Type

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Evictions	3021	2870	2746	2638	2408	2416
Rent Escrows	32	28	43	31	37	45
TRA	19	8	8	5	4	4
Lockouts	6	4	11	8	11	5
Total Filings	3078	2910	2808	2682	2460	2470

Percentage of Cases Initiated by PHA

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total Evictions Filed	3021	2870	2746	2638	2408	2416
Cases Initiated by PHA	72	99	72	64	64	85
%	2.4%	3.4%	2.6%	2.4%	2.7%	3.5%

Dispositions of Cases Filed

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Dismissed	410	392	482	527	554	577
Eviction	1135	1038	1019	862	840	776
Settled	1753	1650	1420	1525	1351	1605
Closed Administratively	106	55	94	28	47	51

Disposition of Cases as a Percentage by Type

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Dismissed	12%	12%	16%	18%	20%	19%

Eviction	33%	33%	34%	29%	30%	26%
Settled	52%	53%	47%	52%	48%	53%
Closed Administratively	3%	2%	3%	1%	2%	2%

Yearly Breakdown of Cases Resulting in Eviction by Disposition

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Non-Payment of Rent	76%	64%	77%	89%	88%	94%
Failure to Vacate	7%	20%	5%	8%	8%	2%
Other*	17%	16%	18%	3%	4%	4%

*Other includes Breach of Lease, Violations of Covenant (Minn. Stat. §504B.171), and Hold Over for Mortgage Foreclosure/

Number of Writs Issued

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Writs Issued	1267	979	905	938	892	988
Writs issued as a % of Eviction Filings for the Year	42%	34%	33%	36%	37%	41%

Number of Affidavit of Non-Compliance Filed on Settled Cases

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Number of Affidavits Filed	390	376	346	382	366	474
Affidavits Filed as a % of Cases Settled	22%	23%	24%	25%	27%	30%

Fail to Appear (FTA) Rate on Eviction Cases

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Number of FTA on	1167	857	989	939	686	794

Eviction Cases*						
% of FTA on Eviction Cases	39%	30%	36%	36%	28%	33%

Comparison of Trials and Settlements

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Number of Trials*	123	122	120	112	128	82
Number of Cases Settled	1753	1650	1420	1525	1351	1605
Ratio of Trial-to-Settled	1-to-14	1-to-13	1-to-12	1-to-14	1-to-11	1-to-20

* Trial numbers do not include cases set for trial canceled due to non-deposit of rent, continued, or settled prior to the trial commencing.

Outcome of Motions to Expunge by Year

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Granted	315	329	252	261	280	329
Denied	40	32	28	25	52	34
Stricken for Non-Appearence	16	22	10	18	33	37
Canceled for Non-Service	27	42	1	3	7	9
Total Filings	398	425	291	307	372	409

Outcome of Motions to Expunge by Year as a Percentage

** Current as of 11-22-19

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Granted	79%	77%	87%	85%	75%	81%
Denied	10%	8%	10%	8%	14%	8%
Stricken for Non-Appearence	4%	5%	3%	6%	9%	9%

Canceled for Non-Service	7%	10%	0%	1%	2%	2%
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Additional Housing Clinic Information

Average per Calendar	2018¹	2019
# of Cases	26	27
# of Cases Expunged	.8	1.6
# of Court Trials Set	1.65	1.1
Start Time	9:03 AM	9:01 AM
End Time	11:10 AM	11:22 AM

By Percent of Cases per Calendar	2018*	2019
# of Cases Expunged	3.1%	6%
# of Court Trials Set	6%	4%

*The Housing Clinic began on 7-24-18

APPENDIX C: HOUSING COURT FINAL REPORT

Second Judicial District of Minnesota Housing Court



Report of Opportunities and Recommendations

July 20th, 2017

Funded by the
McKnight Foundation



Facilitated by the
National Center for State Courts



Second Judicial District of Minnesota Housing Court

Report of Opportunities and Recommendations

Table of Contents

Overview1

 The Ramsey County Rental Market1

 Multi-Stakeholder Coalition Examines the Issue1

 Appointment of the Workgroup.....2

 June 12th Meeting.....2

Section One: Priority Recommendations4

 On the Day of the First Appearance Calendar4

 With the Issuance of the Summons5

 At the Filing of the Eviction Complaint6

 Before a Complaint is Filed7

 General Recommendations.....8

Section Two: Recommendations to Consider at a Later Date.....9

Section Three: Appendices11

 Appendix A: Roster of Participants.....11

 Appendix B: Second Judicial District of Minnesota Inventory of Legal, Financial, and Social Services12

Overview

The Ramsey County Rental Market

Nearly 150,000 households in the Minneapolis-Saint Paul metropolitan area (approximately 1 in 8) spend 50% or more of their income on housing.¹ Rental vacancies have dipped to historic lows, and rents have risen quickly. The supply of subsidized affordable housing production and preservation will not increase sufficiently to make a dent in these cost-burdened residents' lives in the next decade. *The Space Between*, a 2013 study conducted through the Minnesota Preservation Plus Initiative, found that unsubsidized units comprise 57% of Twin Cities rentals affordable at 50% area median income (AMI).²

Looking closely at Saint Paul, 51% of residents live in rental housing and 52% of them are considered to be "cost burdened," meaning they spend more than 30% of their income on rent. Nearly three out of four households of color in Saint Paul rent their housing.³ They are disproportionately subjected to poor quality housing and high rates of evictions.

An analysis of data from Minnesota's Second Judicial District's Housing Court (Ramsey County) found that approximately 3,000 evictions have been filed annually in recent years, the vast majority for non-payment of rent. More than half of those filings resulted in a settlement and another 13 - 17 percent were dismissed, yet the parties still incurred court expenses, attorney's fees, and lost time. Further, the mere filing of an eviction permits a tenant's rental history to be reported by tenant screening agencies. Thus, regardless of the outcome of the case, a stigma follows the tenant and may impair the formation of future landlord-tenant relationships. To landlords utilizing a tenant screening agency, a settlement often has the same effect as a judgment in favor of the landlord.

Multi-Stakeholder Coalition Examines the Issue

To address challenges in the rental market that frequently find their way into the Second Judicial District Housing Court ("Housing Court" or "Court"), Chief Judge John Guthmann convened a group of relevant stakeholders and potential partners, in partnership with The McKnight Foundation and the National Center for State Courts. One of the goals of the group was to determine the extent to which a problem-solving approach

¹ <http://www.metrocouncil.org/getattachment/a6216685-af2c-405c-a300-06f2f1f4dcea/.aspx>

² <http://www.gmhf.com/downloads/publications-research-reports/The-Space-Between.pdf> Strategic partners of this study include Family Housing Fund, Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, and Greater Minnesota Housing Fund. Project team members include One Roof Global Consulting, Housing Preservation Project, and Urban Land Institute of Minnesota.

³ ACS 2013 data. Some data in this section identified via Minnesota Compass analysis of 2013 ACS data. <http://www.mncompass.org/profiles/custom/minneapolis-saint-paul>

could to be applied to the Housing Court. The group met three times as a whole in 2017: February 17, March 31, and June 12. A working group (described in more detail below) met between the second and third meetings, both in person and by phone, to develop a set of recommendations. The group agreed that the quality of and fair access to rental housing was inadequate, and it sought to identify potential remedies that would address market challenges, and ensure a fair and effective process for all litigants appearing in the Housing Court.

Appointment of the Workgroup

At the second meeting on March 31, 2017, the Honorable John Guthmann appointed a workgroup to develop strategies and recommendations to strengthen access for landlords and tenants to legal, financial and social services—before, during and after the Housing Court first appearance calendar. The workgroup met April 25, 2017 to observe the first appearance calendar and then discuss potential strategies and recommendations to offer the broader group at its third meeting on June 12, 2017.

The following members participated on April 25, 2017: Pa Zao Vang; Carol Buche; Patricia Whitney; Laura Busian; Jeanne Zimmer; Michal Upton; Bridget Blomer; Referee Clysdale; Traci Joseph; Gerry Kaluzny; Colleen Ebinger; Patti Tobias; and Hon. Judge Guthmann.

The workgroup discussed potential recommendations and opportunities to strengthen access to financial, social, and legal services on the day of the first appearance calendar, with the issuance of the summons, at the filing of the complaint, and before a complaint is filed. Workgroup members were also encouraged to submit recommendations following this meeting.

A draft report of opportunities and recommendations summarized those discussions and included recommendations received from workgroup members. The draft report was refined by conference call on May 26 and circulated to the workgroup inviting priorities and omissions.

Recommendations and opportunities were organized into five (5) categories:

- 1) On the day of the first appearance calendar
- 2) With the issuance of the summons
- 3) At the filing of the complaint
- 4) Before a complaint is filed
- 5) General recommendations

June 12th Meeting

The Honorable Chief Judge John Guthmann presided over the third meeting to “Apply a Problem-Solving Approach to the Second Judicial District Housing Court.” Judge Guthmann led a discussion of the *Report of*

Opportunities and Recommendations submitted by the first appearance workgroup. The purpose of the discussion was to identify priorities, next steps and responsible persons to act on the recommendations, once authorized to move forward by Judge Guthmann. Judge Guthmann asked that an updated *Report of Opportunities and Recommendations*, categorized by Priority, be circulated for review. The *Second Judicial District of Minnesota Inventory of Legal, Financial, and Social Services* identified for both landlords and tenants will also be updated and circulated for review.

The *Report of Opportunities and Recommendations* is divided into three sections:

- 1) Priority Recommendations
- 2) Recommendations to consider at a later date
- 3) Appendices, including a roster of participants and the *Second Judicial District of Minnesota Inventory of Legal, Financial, and Social Services* available to landlords, tenants and those working with landlords and tenants in Ramsey County

Section One: Priority Recommendations

On the Day of the First Appearance Calendar

1. Strengthen the information available and announcements made in the courtroom to improve understanding of the proceeding.

Action Steps: Announcements which explain what will happen procedurally at the beginning of each court session should be made by both the Clerk and the Judicial officer. The announcements should describe the services available and the expectations of the Court; the order in which cases will be called; if a settlement is reached, that your case may be called sooner; and that the court will call your case in priority order. Develop a script of the recommended announcements. Develop and provide an information sheet at “check-in” to assure the same information is available in writing for the landlords and tenants. Slides should also be developed to be shown on screens in the courtroom.

Responsible Persons: Referee Clysdale (lead).

2. Continue to incorporate the principles of procedural fairness in all interactions with landlords and tenants to ensure understanding, provide “voice”, demonstrate respect, ensure neutrality and to be helpful.

Action Steps: Distribute quality and complete information to landlords and tenants that describes what to expect before, during and after the calendar. Provide on-going feedback to Judicial Officers.

Responsible Persons: Referee Clysdale (lead) and Michael Upton; with all Housing Court Judicial Officers, Patricia Whitney, and Gerry Kaluzny.

3. Continue to give parties the opportunity to explain their side of the court case. When a case is called, Judicial Officers may wish to make direct referrals from the bench if the parties have special needs.

Action Steps: Ensure all Judicial Officers and court personnel are aware of the services available and contact information to provide to the parties.

Responsible Persons: Referee Clysdale and Michael Upton.

4. Provide space outside the courtroom on first appearance calendar days to Ramsey County Human Services Emergency Assistance (EA) personnel to provide immediate information and screening on financial resources and eligibility. For those who have already accessed EA within the last 12 months or are not eligible for a different, immediately ascertainable reason, workers can quickly provide a denial letter which expedites access to community-based financial resources.

Action Steps: Court personnel can provide court calendars to EA personnel (seven-14 days in advance) so they can search their records and prepare for the day of the calendar. EA personnel may contact landlords for information and/or may reach out to tenants. The Court is a tenant in the County Courthouse but can begin to work out logistical details about the use of space.

Responsible Persons: Michael Upton (lead); and a representative from Emergency Assistance.

5. Expand representation options at the first appearance calendar for both landlords and tenants, whether through limited scope representation, pro bono, law school clinics or by adding a full-time volunteer lawyer through the Volunteer Lawyers Network.

Action Steps: Arrange a meeting to discuss funding, how Housing Court calendars will be staffed, and a plan to provide that staffing.

Responsible Persons: Gerry Kaluzny and Laura Busian.

6. Ensure availability of mediators the day of the first appearance calendar. This should be done in coordination with legal representation to avoid a power imbalance.

Action Steps: Judicial Officers should add to their announcements at the beginning of the calendar that mediators are available, and if a settlement is reached that same day, the case will go to the beginning of the line. Secure space for mediators to meet with the parties. Develop a roster of interested mediators and how those mediators might be available prior to the first appearance calendar.

Responsible Persons: Jeanne Zimmer (lead) and Michael Upton.

7. On the settlement agreement form, add a box requesting expungement. If the case is settled and/or rent is paid by a date certain, require the attorney for the landlord to be authorized to approve or oppose the expungement. Communicate to the parties that expungement can be recommended to the court and by agreement and affidavit, if the parties desire that result.

Action Item: Referee Clysdale will review the Settlement form and add necessary language.

Responsible Persons: Referee Clysdale (lead).

With the Issuance of the Summons

1. Develop information about “what to expect on the day of the first appearance calendar” and steps that can be taken before the date of the calendar, and distribute this information with the issuance of the summons.

Action Steps: This information should also be provided on the Housing Court website, and should additionally be provided in the courtroom. The information should include a brief description of financial, legal and social service resources available, contact information, and useful websites for the parties. Expand description of EA services available and describe what eligibility information should be provided by the tenant. Encourage tenants to seek information immediately and, if eligible, submit an application. Add a description of the "same day" EA application to information provided to tenants and landlords. Add links to various websites to the Housing Court website.

Responsible Persons: Michael Upton (lead collector), with all persons representing financial, legal and social services providing Michael with the information they recommend be included.

At the Filing of the Eviction Complaint

1. Develop a "pilot" mediation program for eviction actions so that at the filing of the eviction action the parties will be ordered to consult with a mediator in advance of, or the same day as, the first appearance calendar.

Action Steps: Determine if any cases should be excluded from the pilot mediation program, for example if an order of protection or harassment restraining order exists. Essential elements of a mediation "pilot" program should include the use of mediators experienced in housing law, that all parties have full settlement authority, and that counsel is provided for all parties, if possible. The first appearance calendar(s) may need to be staggered to accommodate the "pilot" mediation program. A variety of models could be explored and outside funding should be pursued.

Responsible Persons: Jeanne Zimmer and judicial officer to be named from the Second Judicial District (co-leads); convening a small group to develop and market the availability of this service.

Before a Complaint is Filed

1. Encourage parties, both landlords and tenants, to consider voluntary mediation offered by a neutral entity outside the court.

Action Item: Widely promote the availability of this service and encourage its use at every opportunity. For example, EA could provide an information sheet from the Dispute Resolution Center (DRC) when meeting with a tenant.

Responsible Persons: Jeanne Zimmer (lead), convening a small group to develop and market the availability of this service.

2. Provide comprehensive online resources to financial, legal and social services to help the parties resolve disputes. Widely market the availability of this information at every opportunity. Develop marketing and education strategies to expand the availability of information about options, strategies and solutions.

Action Steps: Provide information on the court's website 1) to landlords, "have you considered certain options before filing a complaint?" and 2) to tenants, "financial, social and legal resources that may assist you." Add links to the EA website and perhaps others taken from the Court's website.

Responsible Persons: Gerry Kaluzny and Patricia Whitney (lead); working with a coalition of interested others to design intervention strategies, including representatives from both landlords and tenants.

General Recommendations

1. Explore the viability of a Housing Court administrative order to maintain the confidentiality of an eviction filing until the case is determined on the merits, or explore amending the General Rules of Practice – Housing Court Rules – Hennepin and Ramsey County or Minnesota statutes to provide that an eviction filing be maintained confidentially until a judicial officer has determined the case on its merits and the tenant has been ordered evicted. Alternatively, research the effect of inaccurate eviction records on children, families and people who are disabled and, if appropriate, propose a rule change that would make evictions confidential at filing, like domestic abuse cases and CHIPs cases; or amend the expungement statute to provide that if the tenant prevails, an automatic expungement of the record would occur.

Action Steps: Circulate a copy of the minutes of the 2016 expungement discussions by the public access committee to inform the workgroup on possible options.

Responsible Persons: Michael Upton (lead) will obtain the minutes and circulate them to the group.

2. Communicate the opportunity for a waiver of court fees and costs for the expungement of an eviction record by the filing of an in forma pauperis (IFP) application, including a motion, affidavit, and proposed order.

Action Steps: Develop uniform information and a plan to make it available.

Responsible Persons: Michael Upton and Gerry Kaluzny.

3. Expand awareness of the Ramsey County Law Library Housing Clinic and supplement these clinics with services provided by the Volunteer Lawyers Network and Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services.

Action Steps: Representatives from the Law Library and other entities will meet and develop a plan to supplement the clinics.

Responsible Persons: Sara Gillin (lead); Gerry Kaluzny and Laura Busian.

4. Strengthen coordination and communication with Saint Paul Public Housing Authority to ensure broad understanding among both landlords and tenants regarding requirements and responsibilities related to the Section 8 Housing Choice voucher program.

Action Steps: Representatives will meet, discuss options, and make recommendations.

Responsible Persons: Patricia Whitney and Gerry Kaluzny.

Section Two: Recommendations to Consider at a Later Date

The group decided to focus on the immediate priorities outlined in section one. The “other recommendations” included in this section will take more time to develop. Any member interested in pursuing any of these recommendations should contact Chief Judge Guthmann.

1. After some refinements are implemented, experiment with staggering court start times to balance the use of the court’s time and the need to minimize litigant and attorney time in the courthouse. Experiment with the availability of resources, staffing and services. Technology, such as kiosks that permit parties to check-in, should also be considered. The use of electronic check-in systems can help ensure that parties are not mistakenly overlooked and their case not heard timely.
2. Given some litigants will have limited English understanding and are culturally diverse, continuously assess all signs, forms, and key information for understanding and ensure court interpreters are accessible when needed. The availability of interpreters will also need to be aligned with other services available—i.e., mediation, financial assistance, pro bono attorneys, etc.
3. To curb misunderstandings, provide standardized guidelines to all litigants and parties concerning how settlement negotiations are conducted and the consequences of all settlements. Develop a neutral, one-page information sheet that describes the settlement process.
4. Before accepting settlements, judicial officers should ascertain that all parties understand the agreement and its implications. See recommendation 11.4 of the CCJ Civil Justice Initiative (CJI). Request examples from other jurisdictions.
5. Provide Housing Court “advocates” (like the model of domestic violence advocates) to assist tenants not represented by counsel. Housing Court “advocates” could sit at the counsel table and offer support to the tenant but would not speak on behalf of the tenant, and would only provide non-legal assistance. If a gap still exists after other priority recommendations are implemented, this model may provide a much-needed resource to the parties. The service could be developed by statute, court rule, or order of the Supreme Court.

6. Explore the use of "Housing Court navigators" to link tenants to financial, legal and social service resources. Like Housing Court advocates, these potential resources should be examined at a later date if a gap in services exists.
7. Amend standard lease agreements to provide information regarding legal, financial and social services for tenants and landlords. This could be undertaken by the Office of the Attorney General.

Section Three: Appendices

Appendix A: Roster of Participants

Name	Organization	Title
Chief Judge John Guthmann	Second Judicial District of Minnesota	Chief Judge
Judge Shawn Bartsh	Second Judicial District of Minnesota	Judge
Referee Elizabeth Clysdale	Second Judicial District of Minnesota	Referee
Lynae Olson	Second Judicial District of Minnesota	Court Administrator
Michael Upton	Second Judicial District of Minnesota	Court Operations Manager, Civil Division
Pa Zao Vang	Second Judicial District of Minnesota	Court Operations Supervisor
Sara Galligan	Ramsey County Law Library	Director
Juin Charnell	Ramsey County Financial Assistance Services	Manager of Operations
Traci Joseph	Ramsey County Financial Assistance Services	Emergency Assistance Supervisor
Tenecia Johnson	Ramsey County Financial Assistance Services	Homeless Services Supervisor
Bridget Blomer	Ramsey County Financial Assistance Services	Financial Worker
Scott Williams	Ramsey County Safety and Justice Services	Deputy County Manager
Amy Geisler	City of Saint Paul Department of Planning and Economic Development	Principal Project Manager, Housing
Samuel Clark	City of Saint Paul	City Attorney
Carol Buche	Twin City Tenant Check	Owner
Patricia Whitney	Patricia Whitney Attorney at Law	Owner & Attorney
Laura Busian	Volunteer Lawyers Network	Housing Resource Attorney & Program Manager
Gerry Kaluzny	Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services	Supervising Attorney, Housing
Jeanne Zimmer	Dispute Resolution Center	Executive Director
Ellen Sahli	Family Housing Fund	President
Lee Sheehy	The McKnight Foundation	Director, Region and Communities
Colleen Ebinger	Impact Strategies Group	Founder/CEO
Patti Tobias	National Center for State Courts	Principal Court Management Consultant

Second Judicial District of Minnesota Housing Court
 Report of Opportunities and Recommendations

Appendix B: Second Judicial District of Minnesota Inventory of Legal, Financial, and Social Services

Second Judicial District of Minnesota Inventory of Legal, Financial, and Social Services
 Draft-Updated July 12th, 2017

#	Category	Title	Description	Income Eligibility	Contact
1	Legal Assistance	Housing Conciliation Court Brief Advice Clinic	https://www.ramseycourt.us/sites/default/files/Libraries/Housing%20and%20Conciliation%20Court%20Brochure.pdf Informative session on self-representation in court which takes place at the Ramsey County Law Library Tuesday afternoons from 1PM-4PM; residential requirement or party must be taking a case through the Court.	None	(651) 266-8391
2	Legal Assistance	Law Help MN	http://www.lawhelpmn.org/issues/housing http://www.lawhelpmn.org/issues/evictions?channel=legal%2Dinformation&category=fact%2Dsheets http://www.lawhelpmn.org/resource/tenants-rights-in-minnesota?ref=XR5qM Links to numerous Minnesota housing legal resources, tenant rights, and fact sheets. Also offers live chat and legal advice online.	N/A	Also available in the RC Law Library: Ref. Desk and Browsing Shelf
3	Legal Assistance	HOME Line	https://homeinmn.org/ Provides free and low-cost legal, organizing, education, and advocacy services so that tenants throughout Minnesota can solve their own rental housing problems. Provides assistance in English, Spanish, and Somali. HOME Line works to improve public and private policies relating to rental housing by involving affected tenants in the process. Offers legal advice and help obtaining representation.	None	(612) 728-3767 OR (866) 866-3546
4	Legal Assistance	Volunteers of America-MN & WI	https://www.voa.org/offices/volunteers-of-america-of-minnesota-wisconsin Provides some legal advice in the areas of housing issues.	Sliding-fee scale	(612) 676-6300
5	Legal Assistance	Ramsey County Law Library	The Ramsey County Law Library provides residents with free law-related resources including books, journals, electronic databases, informational workshops and legal assistance. Law Library staff members are trained in legal research and can assist patrons in locating legal information in the library.	None	(651) 266-8391
6	Legal Services	Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services ⁴	http://www.smrfs.org Staff and volunteer attorneys provide full representation, brief legal services, advice and referrals on senior law issues including health program eligibility, nursing home discharge, and government benefits. On staff translators for Hmong, Khmer, Lao, Russian, Somali, Spanish and Thai.	Priority for the most economically needy elders	(888) 575-2954

⁴ Source: Call for Justice, LLC State-Wide Legal Resources Cheat Sheet
 National Center for State Courts

Page | 12

Second Judicial District of Minnesota Housing Court
 Report of Opportunities and Recommendations

7	Legal Services	Volunteer Lawyers Network	www.vlnmn.org OR www.vlnmn.org/intake Provides civil legal services to low-income people through volunteer attorneys; unavailable for fee generating (money damage) cases. VLN offers both full representation and advice.	125%-300% depending on program	(612) 752-6677
8	Legal Services	Ramsey County Bar Association Referral Service	http://www.ramseybar.org/find-a-lawyer/ The RCBA program offers full representation for those who don't qualify for Legal Aid due to income. RCBA staff will explain the case to an attorney and will set up a date and time for an appointment. There is a \$20 referral fee. All attorneys work at a rate of \$55/hr with a \$600 initial retainer fee. There is no charge from the attorney for the first 30 minute consultation. This representation is unavailable for fee generating (money damages) cases.	N/A	(651) 224-1775 ars@ramseybar.org
9	Legal Services	Cancer Legal Line	Phone line which provides legal advice and full representation to Minnesotans affected by cancer in the areas of housing and financial needs. ⁵	Advice-None Representation-up to 300% FPG	(651) 917-9000
10	Legal Services	Band Member Legal Aid	Provides free legal services to enrolled members of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe in areas of housing and other law. Provides full representation and brief legal advice. ⁶	Only enrolled members	(320) 532-7798; (800) 709-6445
11	Legal Services	Spanish Legal Services (SLS)	Provides advice and brief services in Spanish on housing issues, including assistance with writing letters and filling out forms. ⁷	200% FPG	(612) 752-6677
12	Legal Services	Veterans Legal Services	Provides services to veterans in the area of veteran housing. Provides full representation and brief legal advice. ⁸	125% FPG	(612) 332-8151
13	Legal Information	Landlords and Tenants: Rights and Responsibilities (Office of the Minnesota Attorney General)	https://www.ag.state.mn.us/Consumer/Handbooks/LT/default.asp https://www.ag.state.mn.us/Brochures/pubLandlordTenants.pdf Certain rights and duties apply to landlords and tenants everywhere in Minnesota. This handbook attempts to explain those rights. This booklet should not be considered legal advice to use in resolving specific landlord-tenant problems or questions. It is a summary of the laws that govern the landlord-tenant relationship. Minn. Statute § 504B.181, subd. 2(b) requires landlords to notify residential tenants that this handbook is available to them.	None	Also available in the RC Law Library: Browsing Shelf
14	Legal Information	MN Legal Services State Support	http://www.mnlegalservices.org/ State Support's unique role is to provide information, connections, and tools for the public and for advocates, and to support the civil legal aid programs who share their mission.	None	(651) 228-9105 OR (651) 842-6913 (Jessica)

⁵ Source: Call for Justice, LLC State-Wide Legal Resources Cheat Sheet

⁶ Source: Call for Justice, LLC State-Wide Legal Resources Cheat Sheet

⁷ Source: Call for Justice, LLC State-Wide Legal Resources Cheat Sheet

⁸ Source: Call for Justice, LLC State-Wide Legal Resources Cheat Sheet

National Center for State Courts

Page | 13

Second Judicial District of Minnesota Housing Court
Report of Opportunities and Recommendations

					Nault) statesupport @mnlegalserv ices.org
15	Legal Information	Tenant Rights, Laws and Protections: Minnesota	https://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/states/minnesota/renting/tenantrights Federal website providing state specific tenant rights resources. HUD also handles complaints about housing discrimination, bad landlords in federal housing and many other issues, and the website contains a link to the complaint form.	None	N/A
16	Legal Information	Law Help MN	http://www.lawhelpmn.org/issues/housing http://www.lawhelpmn.org/issues/housing/evictions?channel=legal%2Dinformation&category=fact%2Dsheets http://www.lawhelpmn.org/resource/tenants-rights-in-minnesota?ref=XR5qM Links to numerous Minnesota housing legal resources, tenant rights, and fact sheets. Also offers live chat and legal advice online.	None	Also available in the RC Law Library: Ref. Desk and Browsing Shelf
17	Legal Information	How to Be the Smartest Renter on Your Block (Book for purchase)	https://homelinemn.org/publications/how-to-be-the-smartest-renter-on-your-block/ HOME Line wrote <i>How to Be the Smartest Renter on Your Block</i> to help renters through the process of finding, getting, and maintaining rental housing. Reflecting upon the real-life concerns we hear through thousands of questions on our tenant hotline, this book gives advice on the best ways to handle and avoid the most common rental problems. This book follows the rental process from beginning to end with several additional chapters on unique rental housing situations. The book begins with advice regarding finding and applying for an apartment and moves on to understanding the terms of a lease. Next, some of the most common issues renters run into once they've moved in are covered—getting repairs made, dealing with neighbors, right to privacy, and more. Later, the book addresses what to expect when a renter intends to move out of an apartment and how to make sure a security deposit is returned. Furthermore, several immediate emerging issues in the rental market are covered: What does a renter do when a landlord is in foreclosure? Who is responsible for paying when an apartment becomes infested with bedbugs? Lastly, we take a detailed look at community organizing and how tenants can work collectively to hold their landlords and elected officials accountable. How to Be the Smartest Renter on Your Block answers these questions and more	\$20 book w/\$3 shipping; \$9.99 online; Free at the library	Also available in the RC Law Library: Circ. KFM 5517 .H68 2011
18	Legal Information	The Landlord's Guide to Minnesota Law (Book for purchase)	https://homelinemn.org/publications/landlordsguidetomnlaw/ <i>The Landlord's Guide to Minnesota Law</i> addresses every landlord-tenant legal issue that is likely to arise over the course of a lease. From how to find a tenant to what to do once they leave, it is a practical and thorough legal analysis of what Minnesota landlords need to know about complying with the relevant federal, state and local laws.	\$25 book w/\$5 shipping; \$9.99 online; Free at the library	Also available in the RC Law Library: Circ. KFM 5517 .V72 2015

National Center for State Courts

Page | 14

Second Judicial District of Minnesota Housing Court
Report of Opportunities and Recommendations

			At the end of each chapter you'll find "Tips from a Tenant Attorney." These tips offer more creative advice on how landlords can solve difficult legal situations or prevent them from ever occurring. Also included is our exclusive line-by-line analysis of the Minnesota State Bar Association's Model Residential Lease. Instead of guessing what your lease terms mean, this guide tells you why each term exists and how it applies to your situation. This book was written by practicing attorneys in Minnesota who work exclusively in landlord-tenant law. There are dozens of legal guides available online for landlords, but none of them focus on Minnesota statutes and regulations, and when it comes to landlord-tenant legal issues, state law is key.		
19	Legal Information	Residential Eviction Defense and Tenant Claims in Minnesota, Sixteenth Edition	http://poverylaw.homestead.com/files/Reading/Residential_Eviction_Defense_in_Minnesota.pdf Addresses legal action that can be taken by tenants against landlords in a variety of instances.	None	(612) 492- 6795; McDonough, Lawrence@D orsey.com; mcdono56@u mn.edu
20	Legal Information	MMHA-Minnesota Multi Housing Association "How to File an Eviction Action in Minnesota"	http://www.mmha.com/Portals/33/docs/Eviction%20Brochure.pdf Briefly addresses legal action that can be taken by landlords against tenants when trying to file an eviction.	None	N/A
21	Legal Information	Disability LinkAge Line*	Phone only information and referral service for people with disabilities, including housing and benefit referrals.	None	(800) 333- 2466
22	Financial Services	Ramsey County Emergency Assistance	Website Coming Soon-Policy effective August 22, 2014 Outlines the process for obtaining emergency assistance (EA).	N/A	N/A
23	Financial Services	Supportive Housing for Families	http://www.rpl-inc.org/the-hub/housing/rpl-supportive-housing-programs/ Provides supportive housing opportunities throughout the Metro Area for individuals and families from specific populations, including those who have experienced homelessness, are living with a disability, have experienced chemical dependency, or who have a criminal background.	Eligibility requirements vary depending on the program.	(612) 455- 5100
24	Financial Services	Ramsey County Emergency General Assistance (EGA)	https://www.ramseycounty.us/sites/default/files/Assistance%20and%20Support/EGA%20Policy%202016.pdf Eligibility and application information for Emergency General Assistance (EGA). This does not include the application itself, which can be accessed by speaking to a representative at 651-266-4444.	No greater than 200%; Eligibility will be determined by speaking	(651) 266- 4444

* Source: Call for Justice, LLC State-Wide Legal Resources Cheat Sheet
National Center for State Courts

Page | 15

Second Judicial District of Minnesota Housing Court
 Report of Opportunities and Recommendations

25	Social Services	Neighborhood House	http://neighb.org/programs/ Offers services in the areas of basic needs and lifelong learning, and has six Family Centers to help people with food support and housing. Neighborhood House's lifelong learning programming takes place at their West Side location in the Paul & Sheila Wellstone Center for Community Building. All of their programs and services are offered free of charge to participants.	with a case worker. None	(651) 789-2500
26	Court Services	Minnesota Judicial Branch: Landlord & Tenant Issues	http://www.mncourts.gov/Help-Topics/Landlord-and-Tenant-Issues.aspx Provides information about landlord and tenant issues as well as links to resources.	None	N/A
27	Court Services	MN Courts Self-Help Center	www.mncourts.gov/selfhelp A virtual self-help center available by phone and email through the Minnesota Judicial Branch that helps parties fill out various forms.	None	(651) 259-3888
28	Housing Services	Project for Pride in Living	http://www.ppl-inc.org/ http://www.ppl-inc.org/the-hub/housing/housing-resources-from-ppl/ http://www.ppl-inc.org/the-hub/housing/ppl-affordable-housing-rental-criteria/ PPL develops and sustains quality, affordable housing for lower-income families and individuals through new construction, renovation, and management.	See website for application criteria.	(612) 455-5100
29	Housing Services	HousingLink	http://www.housinglink.org The goal of HousingLink is to improve housing conditions and provide greater awareness of housing options in different neighborhoods for families participating in the Section 8 voucher and public housing programs. HousingLink's mission is "to improve people's lives through information expanding their affordable rental choices." There are over 45,000 searches each month for affordable rental housing on our website. HousingLink also publishes the status of subsidized housing waiting lists in the Twin Cities through the Housing Authority Waiting List. Renters and service agencies also use Housing Tips and training they provide to solve housing problems. Staff at human service agencies in Minnesota use HousingLink's resources to help their clients overcome barriers to their housing search, and to answer questions about subsidized housing programs in Minnesota. Landlords and property managers use HousingLink to advertise their rental housing openings for free. Finally, HousingLink conducts research that is used by policymakers and research organizations to shape affordable housing policy in the Twin Cities and the state of Minnesota.	Income eligibility requirements depend on property chosen.	(612) 522-2500
30	Housing Services	CommonBond Communities	http://properties.commonbond.org/ CommonBond Communities, the Midwest's largest nonprofit provider of affordable housing with services, has served the region for over 40 years. They develop, own or manage more than 5,600 affordable rental apartments and townhomes throughout	Income eligibility requirements depend on	(651) 291-1750

National Center for State Courts

Page | 16

Second Judicial District of Minnesota Housing Court
 Report of Opportunities and Recommendations

			50 cities in Minnesota, Wisconsin and Iowa. Over 10,000 people – including families, older adults, and people with disabilities and other barriers – call CommonBond home, more than 2,500 of which are children.	property chosen.	
31	Housing Services	Aeon	https://www.aeonmn.org/properties/ Affordable housing is necessary for individuals, families and communities to succeed. Aeon is committed to strengthening lives and communities by investing millions of dollars in under-capitalized neighborhoods and transforming blighted areas into vibrant places to live and work. Affordable apartment homes are especially critical for households with very low incomes (at or below 30% Area Median Income) who are not candidates for home ownership and have few rental options.	Income eligibility requirements depend on property chosen, but all properties are affordable to those with 60% of AMI. ¹⁰	(612) 341-3148
32	Housing Services	St. Stephens	https://ststephensmpls.org/programs/housing St. Stephen's housing programs offer people experiencing homelessness the range of support they need to stabilize their lives using the Housing First service approach. This strategy moves people into stable housing first. Once this basic need is met, they work with families and individuals to address other challenges they may be facing (unemployment, chemical addiction, mental health care, financial literacy). They then connect them to support services that enable them to keep their housing and avoid a return to homelessness.	N/A	(612) 874-0311
33	Housing Services	Amherst H. Wilder Foundation Supportive Housing Sites and Services	https://www.wilder.org/Programs-Services/Housing-Services/Pages/Supportive-Housing.aspx Provides links to different programs that help end homelessness and provide affordable housing such as the ROOF Project, Project Quest, Jackson Street Village, and Minnesota Place Apartments.	Income eligibility requirements depend on property chosen.	(651) 215-2262
34	Housing Services	Coordinated Access to Housing and Shelter (CAHS)	http://www.ramseycountycvcahs.com/ Coordinated Access to Housing and Shelter is the coordinated entry system in Ramsey County for families experiencing homelessness. CAHS connects HUD homeless families with supportive housing programs as openings are available.	A housing assessment must be completed to determine eligibility.	(651) 215-2262
35	Housing Services	Ramsey County Housing Resource List	http://www.ramsey.headinghomeminnesota.org/sites/ramsey.headinghomeminnesota.org/files/RC-HOUSING-RESOURCE-LIST.pdf Resource list for homelessness prevention and intervention. The resource list specifically focuses on housing designed for families with children, single adults, single women with children, youth, and victims and survivors of domestic violence.	Income eligibility requirements depend on property chosen.	N/A

¹⁰ Area Median Income

National Center for State Courts

Page | 17

Second Judicial District of Minnesota Housing Court
Report of Opportunities and Recommendations

36	Other Resources	United Way 211 Call for Justice Twin Cities Metro Cheat Sheet	http://callforjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Metro-CS-Merged-05-23-2017.pdf Identifies various Twin Cities legal resources, and provides the listings by service area (bankruptcy, family law, landlord/tenant, etc.).	N/A	N/A
37	Other Resources	Dispute Resolution Center	www.disputeresolutioncenter.org DRC works with individuals, families, community groups, government agencies, and businesses to assist them in resolving conflict. DRC handles many types of community problems, including matters of public safety, traffic and parking, rental arrangements, consumer-merchant disputes, neighborhood conflicts, complaints about noise or pets, property line disputes, and small claims concerning money, property damage, or breach of contract. DRC recruits and trains a diverse group of volunteer mediators and maintains a roster of approximately sixty to seventy-five volunteers who represent a broad cross-section of the community and serve as mediators, staff assistance, and board members. DRC offers services on a sliding scale, and they never turn away someone who is unable to pay.	Sliding Scale	(651) 292-7791
38	Other Resources	Domestic Abuse Resources in Ramsey County	https://www.ramseycounty.us/residents/assistance-support/intervention-protection/domestic-abuse Provides resources for those experiencing domestic violence.	N/A	Various phone numbers are listed on the website.
39	Other Resources	Saint Paul Handbook of the Streets, 2016-2017 13 th Edition	https://ststephensmpls.org/sites/default/files/shb-1617.pdf An extensive resource guide for poor and homeless Minnesotans which provides resources broken down into the following categories: food, shelter, public assistance, health care, education, employments, veteran services, and legal services.	N/A	Also available in the RC Law Library: Ref. 4506.5
40	Other Resources	Saint Paul Tenant-Landlord Resources	https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/planning-economic-development/housing/tenant-landlord Resources for tenant/landlord issues in the Saint Paul area.	N/A	N/A
41	Other Resources	Saint Paul Tenant-Landlord Safety Registration and Complaints	https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/safety-inspections/city-information-complaints/resident-handbook/how-make-housing-o Resources for tenant/landlord safety concerns in the Saint Paul area. Provides guidance for tenants when their landlords are not making requested repairs, and provides guidance for landlords when they are registering their property.	N/A	N/A
42	Other Resources	Community Stabilization Project (CSP)	http://csp50dale.wixsite.com/communitystabilizationproject CSP's mission is to build tenant stability that will lead to community by informing, educating, advocating for and organizing tenants to take action to preserve and increase the supply of healthy, safe and affordable housing 43in the City of Saint Paul. Their goals are to work with tenants, landlords and community stakeholders to:	N/A	(651) 225-8778

National Center for State Courts

Page | 18

Second Judicial District of Minnesota Housing Court
Report of Opportunities and Recommendations

			1)Prevent rental property condemnation/foreclosures and tenant evictions; 2)Prevent homelessness for tenants affected by condemnation, foreclosures, and evictions; 3)Increase awareness of tenant/ landlord responsibilities and rights to ensure housing stability 4)Strengthen relationships between tenants and landlords		
43	Other Resources	LegalCORPS	http://legalcorps.org/ LegalCORPS provides free assistance in non-litigation business law matters to low-income owners of small businesses, small nonprofit organizations and low-income innovators in Minnesota — through the services of volunteer attorneys.	N/A	(612) 206-0780; info@legalcorps.org
44	Law Library Resources	Every Landlord's Guide to Managing Property	Nolo, 2015. Circ. KF 590 .Z9 B69 2015	N/A	N/A
45	Law Library Resources	Every Landlord's Legal Guide	Nolo, 2016. Circ. KF 590 .Z9 S74 2016	N/A	N/A
46	Law Library Resources	Every Tenant's Legal Guide	Nolo, 2015. Circ. KF 590 .Z9 P67 2015	N/A	N/A
47	Law Library Resources	The Landlord's Guide to Minnesota Law	HOMELine, 2015. Circ. KFM 5317.V72 2015	N/A	N/A
48	Law Library Resources	Leases and Rental Agreements	Nolo, 2015. Circ. KF 590 .Z9 S744 2011	N/A	N/A
49	Law Library Resources	Renter's Rights	Nolo, 2015. Circ. KF 590 .Z9 P673 2015	N/A	N/A
50	Law Library Resources	Every Landlord's Guide to Managing Property	Nolo, 2015. Circ. KF 590 .Z9 B69 2015	N/A	N/A
51	Law Library Resources	Every Landlord's Legal Guide	Nolo, 2016. Circ. KF 590 .Z9 S74 2016	N/A	N/A
52	Law Library Resources	Every Tenant's Legal Guide	Nolo, 2015. Circ. KF 590 .Z9 P67 2015	N/A	N/A

National Center for State Courts

Page | 19

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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Referee Elizabeth Clysdale is a Family and Housing Court Referee in the Second Judicial District (Ramsey County). She has been on the bench for five years. Prior to joining the bench, she was a partner at Collins, Buckley, Sauntry & Haugh, PLLP, in St. Paul., where she practiced in the areas of Family Law and Professional Responsibility. Referee Clysdale is a graduate of William Mitchell College of Law, where she graduated with honors and was an editor of the Law Review. Prior to attending law school, Referee Clysdale worked as project manager at the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.
