



Get an eviction notice? Here's the first thing you should do

Florida has distributed \$25.7M in rental assistance

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – Nearly 14,000 eviction notices were filed with Florida courts between May and July.

A new 60-day moratorium, which took effect earlier this week, is likely to be challenged in court.

Legal Services of North Florida has already seen as many eviction cases so far this year as it saw all of last year.

But Legal Services attorney Patrick Jennings told us if you get an eviction notice, the first thing to do is call a lawyer.

“Many times there are legal defenses, or the landlord has not pursued this properly, and it can at least be delayed,” said Jennings.

A new CDC eviction moratorium issued this week only offers protection if you live in a county with high or substantial virus transmission.

All of Florida is covered for now, but that could change quickly.

“It might provide some protection, immediately, that was not available just last week,” said Jennings.

The State has nearly \$800 million in rental assistance money available, but much of it has not yet been distributed.

“We’ve gotten a confirmation letter from the organization, the rental assistance organization, have been able to show that to the landlord and they’ve been willing to hold things off for a little while,” said Jennings.

Legal challenges to the new moratorium, which runs till early October, are expected.

And the Florida Apartment Association said the new moratorium doesn’t address the underlying issue of tenants not being able to pay rent.

“We really feel that the important thing to do here is to ensure the quick delivery of those rental assistance funds,” said Amanda White with the Association.

And the bottom line is that if someone can avoid eviction because of the moratorium, they are still on the hook for everything they owe.

In a statement, DCF, which administers renter relief, told us OUR Florida has paid out \$25.7 million to 5,942 households.

The agency says a two-party application process is causing delays because the landlord must verify the information provided by the tenant.

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