



Update: July 15, 2021

The COVID-19 pandemic has severely impacted the economy and there is a growing housing and eviction crisis. Eviction not only leaves a family without a home, it can lead to job loss, and make it harder to secure housing in the future. Landlords face loss of property and investment during the crisis. Eviction risk is a statewide problem that requires a multi-pronged approach. Dispute Resolution Centers have a long history of navigating housing challenges, serving as the state's primary provider of foreclosure mediation during the last recession.

The Walla Walla County Eviction Resolution Pilot Program is founded on three pillars;

- ***Neutral Ground Dispute Resolution Center, www.neutralgrounddrc.org***
- ***Northwest Justice Project: _ Eviction Defense Screening Line at [1-855-657-8387](tel:1-855-657-8387) or apply online for help at <https://nwjustice.org/apply-online>***
- ***Blue Mountain Action Council: <https://www.bmacww.org/programs/homeless-assistance> or call 509-529-4980***

We are working diligently to prepare ourselves for the predicted eviction crisis.

The ERPP is designed to resolve landlord and tenant disputes about rent owed before they lead to court filings and evictions. We are ramping up to assist with these landlord-tenant disputes as well as assisting clients in the process of obtaining rental assistance when the moratorium is lifted. The goal is to divert Unlawful Detainer cases from the courts through effective and fair conflict resolution.

On June 29, Governor Inslee announced a new proclamation that will suspend most evictions for non-payment of rent during July, August and September, 2021.

We are currently participating in weekly ERPP ramp-up meetings with Resolution Washington. Neutral Ground DRC is also working on expanding our office space to accommodate additional staffing and program requirements. We have hired new staff members to assist with the program. Training for new and existing staff in conflict resolution, trauma-informed practices, eviction resolution, and client support is provided through Resolution Washington. As we learn more, we are making connections with community leaders in efforts to prepare ourselves and to offer our support to those working with elements of the program (i.e., rental assistance).

We would like to connect with you and anyone else whose organization is affected by the crisis. We believe that collaboration is critical to providing successful mitigation of housing instability in our community.

For more information please visit: <http://www.resolutionwa.org/eviction-resolution-program>

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