

53 Affordable Housing Landlords Pledge to Avoid Evictions

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Over four dozen owners and operators of affordable housing units announced a joint pledge this morning to work with their tenants in financial trouble due to the COVID-19 recession and avoid evicting them over missed rent payments.

The 53 community development corporations, nonprofit developers and for-profit developers and property managers represent 57,654 units across the state. Additional owners and operators [are being encouraged to sign the pledge](#) by its organizers, the Baker administration, MassHousing, CHAPA and the Massachusetts Association of Community Development Organizations.

“Preventing evictions is going to require a team effort with involvement from government at the local, state and federal levels, as well as the full engagement of landlords, tenants, philanthropy, the faith community and others,” MACDC President Joe Kriesberg said in a statement. “We are proud that so many affordable housing owners are stepping up to their mission by going the extra mile to ensure housing stability during this pandemic.”

The pledge [comes days after 10 firms](#) – including some who signed this new pledge – also promised to hold off on evictions until 2021 and pursue payment plans with residents who fell behind on rent due to the pandemic.

Signatories to the new pledge, called the “Eviction Diversion Pledge,” promise to:

1. Abide by and support the current CDC eviction moratorium, which ends Dec. 31
2. Proactively engage with residents and create payment plans
3. Support and accept rental assistance payments
4. Promote rent adjustments for Section 8/MRVP families
5. Encourage structured and interactive mediation

The pledge is predicated on the idea that communities across the state, and the state’s recovery from the COVID-19 recession itself, could be significantly disrupted by a wave of evictions.

“As the owner of over 18,000 affordable and mixed-income homes, with 9,000 in the commonwealth, we helped to develop this pledge to demonstrate our commitment to keeping tenants stably housed during this time of uncertainty and to encourage other owners across the state of Massachusetts to join us,” Beacon Communities CEO Dara Kovel said in a statement. “Housing is a right – not a privilege – and stable, affordable housing is crucial to the health and well-being of our communities.”

Current signatories to the new pledge are: Asian CDC, Beacon Communities, Berkshire Housing Development Corporation, Capstone Communities, Caritas Communities, Codman Square NDC, Community Development Partnership, Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corp., Fenway CDC, First Realty Management, Harborlight Community Partners, Hilltown CDC, Homeowners Rehab, Inc., Housing Management Resources/Home City Housing, Housing Nantucket, Inquilinos Boricuas en Acción, Jamaica Plain NDC, Just-A-Start Corporation, Lena Park CDC, Lawrence Community Works, Madison Park Development Corporation, Main South CDC, Maloney Properties, Metro West Collaborative Development, Mission Hill Neighborhood Housing Services, NeighborWorks Housing Solutions, Neighborhood of Affordable Housing, NewVue Communities, North Shore CDC, Nuestra Comunidad Development Corporation, OneHolyoke CDC, Peabody Properties, Preservation of Affordable Housing, Somerville Community Development Corp., Southwest Boston CDC, Spring Meadow Association of Responsible Tenants, Inc., The Community Builders, The Neighborhood Developers, Trinity Financial, Urban Edge, Victory Programs Inc., WATCH CDC, Way Finders, Winn Cos. and Worcester Common Ground.

The Baker administration revealed a plan last month that included [over \\$65 million in new rental assistance funding](#), channeled through the RAFT program, an amount that many real estate figures and housing advocates say will not cover all missed rent payments, particularly for tenants of small landlords who may not have the reserves needed to make payment plans or rent restructurings work.

A [new eviction tracking dashboard](#) published by the state court system shows only 173 such cases have been filed in the three weeks since the state eviction moratorium ended, about 7 percent of a typical month’s cases, pre-pandemic. The bulk of those cases come from Essex County – 49 – and Bristol County – 26.

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