

About Community Legal Services of Mid-Florida (CLSMF)

The mission of CLSMF is to provide access to justice through high quality legal assistance to low-income persons.

CLSMF is a nonprofit legal aid organization which provides free legal assistance to low-income people with civil legal problems in twelve counties across Central Florida. Since 1966, dedicated CLSMF lawyers, paralegals, legal assistants and advocates have worked diligently to solve civil legal problems for people facing life-changing situations, such as domestic violence, unlawful eviction, or the loss of veterans' health or public benefits. We are committed to delivering the highest quality legal aid, with dignity and respect, for those who are seeking access to justice.

**We do not provide legal assistance in criminal or traffic matters*



The Florida Bar Foundation, with *Interest on Trust Accounts* program funding, provides support for this service.



CONTACT US

Helpline: 1-800-405-1417

Monday - Thursday, 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Florida Relay TTY calls Dial 711

www.clsmf.org

OFFICE LOCATIONS

DAYTONA BEACH OFFICE

128 Orange Avenue, Daytona Beach, FL 32114

Administrative Office Phone: (386) 255-6573

INVERNESS OFFICE

106 N. Osceola Avenue, Inverness, FL 34450

KISSIMMEE OFFICE

800 North Main Street, Kissimmee, FL 34744

OCALA OFFICE

1610 SE 36th Avenue, Ocala, FL 34471

ORLANDO OFFICE

122 E. Colonial Dr., Ste 200, Orlando, FL 32801

PALATKA OFFICE

216 S. 6th Street, Palatka, FL 32177

SANFORD OFFICE

315 Magnolia Avenue, Sanford, FL 32771

TAVARES OFFICE

226 West Main Street, Tavares, FL 32778



DISASTER INFORMATION FOR RENTERS



1. The apartment I live in is in really bad shape from the hurricane, but the landlord told me that if I want to stay I must pay full rent - what should I do?

Your landlord may be experiencing financial hardship until his/her insurance company pays out money for repairs. Review your lease to determine what your rights and obligations are in the event of a natural disaster. Talk to your landlord to see if the rent can be reduced until the apartment is repaired. See if the landlord will allow you to move to another unit in the building that is livable.

2. What if my landlord won't negotiate?

Unless your lease provides otherwise, you have the right to reduce your rent in proportion to the damage to the unit. If your apartment is unlivable, you can move out. In either case, you should send a certified letter to your landlord telling him/her of your actions. Please contact Community Legal Services of Mid Florida, Inc. (CLSMF) for more information on what you can do based on your specific situation.

3. All my stuff was destroyed when the roof fell in on the place I rent - what help can I get?

If you had renter's insurance at the time of



the natural disaster, contact your insurance company. If your situation is desperate, make sure you describe your situation to the insurance company. If the insurance company agrees your loss is covered, you can ask for an advance payment to cover a part of your loss.

4. What if I do not have any insurance on my property?

If you did not have renter's insurance, see if your landlord had insurance to cover your belongings. If your losses are not covered by any insurance policy, you may be able to get Individual and Household Program (IHP) money from FEMA to replace necessary items of personal property such as clothing, household items, furnishings and appliances. You may apply for these benefits through FEMA at 1-800-621-3362 (hearing/speech impaired 1-800-462-7585).

5. My landlord told me to move out the next day because he wants the apartment for his daughter who lost her house in the hurricane, and told me if I wasn't out, he'd change the locks - do I have to move?

Florida law does not allow a landlord to just lock you out or turn off the utilities or to use any other "self help" means to get you to leave. The landlord must file an eviction action in court and, then you only have to move out if the judge in your eviction case enters a final judgment of eviction. Also, the landlord must first give you some type of written notice to move before filing an eviction case against you in court.

If you get any eviction court papers, you



can call CLSMF for information on how to file your answer to the eviction lawsuit. If the landlord does lock you out, you can call the police, and you should consult a lawyer to find out about an action for damages.

6. My apartment is so bad I cannot live in it and I am going to move. I want my security deposit returned - what are my rights?

If you have a written lease, read your lease to see what it says. If you do not have a written lease, or your lease does not say anything about deposits, then the landlord must either return your deposit within 15 days after you move out or send you a letter by certified mail within thirty (30) days, saying why he will not return your deposit. You then have fifteen (15) days to object in writing, or the landlord will be allowed to keep the security deposit.

Before you leave your apartment, you must give your landlord your new address. If you and your landlord disagree about whether you should get your deposit back, you can call CLSMF. We can explain how you can take your landlord to small claims court to get back your security deposit.