



# Alternatives to Eviction of Elderly Tenants: A How-to Manual

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A guide to developing a holistic program to  
avoid eviction of elderly tenants.

# Alternatives to Eviction of Elderly Tenants

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## **I. Introduction**

### **A. What is the Alternatives to Landlord/Tenant Court for the Elderly Project?**

Legal Counsel for the Elderly (LCE) of Washington, DC began the Alternatives to Landlord/Tenant Court for the Elderly Project (the “Alternatives Project”) during January 1999. The Alternatives Project was founded upon the principle that alternative and more humane methods could be developed in dealing with elderly tenants who, through no fault of their own, are experiencing problems that could potentially lead to eviction from their apartments.

The Alternatives Project assists landlords who seek solutions to dealing with elderly tenants through an informal, yet coordinated, network of service providers, alleviating a landlord’s need to resort to eviction proceedings against elderly tenants. Alternative solutions engage various social service agencies and/or legal service providers before a lawsuit is filed. Often, with the appropriate community, social and financial support services put into place, elderly tenants may continue to safely reside in their apartments.

Evictions or threatened evictions of elder tenants are often the result of a tenant’s deteriorating mental and/or physical capacity or from financial abuse or exploitation by others. The mere threat of an eviction, especially for someone in frail mental and/or physical health, can be disastrous. Given the lack of available resources to assist clients, as well as the chronic nature of problems facing elders, a more holistic approach to the delivery of social and legal services for older clients is being sought. When social services and housing providers collaborate with legal service organizations on an elderly tenant’s problems, there is a greater likelihood that the root cause of the legal problem will be addressed and the problem will not recur.

Further, if housing providers are trained to take proactive steps in identifying an elderly tenant at the initial signs of trouble, and to seek legal and social services help in assisting the tenant, the need to file lawsuits against most elderly tenants may be averted. Alternatives to Landlord/Tenant Court for the Elderly creates such a possible network.

### **B. Alternatives Create a “Win-Win” for Tenants, Housing Providers and the Legal Service Community**

There are many elder tenants who face evictions as a result of landlords’ lawsuits for possession. Evictions of older tenants result too often in homelessness or in avoidable nursing home placement. Many elderly tenants appear in court unrepresented or may not appear at all to defend against their eviction action.

During the first year of the Alternatives Project, the focus was on building a strong foundation – the service provider network. Nonetheless, more than 50 elderly tenants benefited from project intervention. During its second year, more than 100 tenants avoided eviction actions because of the “Alternatives Project.” This was accomplished with one tenant attorney devoting about 10 hours a week consulting with social workers, landlord attorneys and, if necessary, elderly tenants.

Given the reductions in funding for legal services, fewer tenants have attorneys. Further, the number of cases a tenant attorney can handle through the litigation process is limited. Thus, most tenants facing eviction have no legal representation. For an elderly and/or disabled tenant, lack of legal representation can be disastrous. They may not understand that they have defenses, and often either fail to appear in court or agree to a judgment for possession.

The benefits are also clear for housing providers. First, landlords will expend no costs for services through the “Alternatives Project.” They will not incur attorney fees, court costs, or eviction fees. Although not all housing providers may use this project, many housing providers understand that they have a higher obligation to their elderly tenants. Housing providers often mention how their elderly tenants are very similar to members of their own family. They also understand that they too may need assistance one day and many believe this will help ensure that they will be afforded the same dignity that they show their own elderly tenants.

### **C. Using the “Alternatives Project” as a Reasonable Accommodation Pursuant to the Fair Housing Act**

Under the Fair Housing Amendment Act (FHAA) “a refusal to make reasonable accommodations in rules, policies, practices or services” to allow a disabled person to participate in a housing program or activity is considered discrimination. A reasonable accommodation requires that a housing provider use “non-traditional” management techniques in order to allow a person with a disability to remain in a setting in which he or she interacts and participates equally with people who do not have disabilities. To be entitled to an accommodation under the Fair Housing Act, a person must make a request for an accommodation showing that 1) he or she has a disability as defined in the Act; 2) the housing provider knew of or should reasonably be expected to know about the disability; 3) accommodation of the disability “may be necessary” to afford the person an equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling; and 4) the housing provider refused to make such an accommodation.

The Alternatives Project certainly should be considered a “reasonable accommodation” because necessary support services are made available so that an elderly disabled tenant may continue to live independently. The Project also goes a step further. It trains housing providers on how to become aware of the “red flags” when elder tenants begin exhibiting signs that they may need support services in order to remain in their apartments. It also provides them with direct access to community social service providers so that support services may be put into place before a crisis occurs.

“Red flag” situations occur when it is evidenced, for example, that: 1) elder tenants are becoming physically frail or are using assistive devices to walk; 2) an odor begins to emanate from the tenant’s apartment due to the tenant’s inability to clean his or her unit or remove the trash; or 3) other tenants begin to complain about the tenant’s conduct. Depending on the jurisdiction, the housing providers may be required to provide a notice to cure or vacate or the tenant may face an imminent eviction action. In this case, the landlord either knows or should have reason to know that the tenant is disabled and it is arguable, pursuant to the Fair Housing Act, that the landlord should reasonably accommodate the disabled tenant so that the individual can continue to reside in his or her apartment.

Another “red flag” situation occurs when a tenant who otherwise has paid rent promptly for years, begins to remit late payments or forgets to pay at all. The Alternatives Project can be of great benefit in these instances to both the tenant and housing provider. A “reasonable accommodation” that the housing provider can make is to contact his or her community social service provider and make a referral for support services on behalf of the tenant. The social worker or case manager can make an assessment, determine the underlying problem and assist the tenant by providing necessary support to ensure that the tenant may continue to live independently.

In the aforementioned “red flag” situations the tenant may only require homemaker services or a financial power of attorney or a voluntary bill payor. In other cases, the housing provider may not be aware that the tenant is running into problems because of his or her health and has already issued a notice to cure and vacate because of an alleged lease violation. A letter may need to be sent to the housing provider or the provider’s attorney alerting him or her to the problem(s) faced by the tenant.

## **Example A**

### **Sample Request for a Reasonable Accommodation**

Dear (Ms. Landlord Attorney),

I am writing regarding the 30-day notice (tenant) received dated June 12, 2001. Your client's notice to (tenant) relates to the upkeep of the unit itself. (Tenant) is disabled and requires the use of a walker. It is clear that she is not able to clean her unit independently.

(Tenant) presently has two social workers, Pam Hill from Adult Protective Services and Christine Jackson from IONA Senior Services, both of whom are in contact with the resident manager, Joyce Beaver.

Pam Hill is obtaining heavy cleaning services for (tenant) which is scheduled for Monday, July 24, 2001. Subsequent to the heavy cleaning, ongoing support services will be put into place for (tenant). In light of (tenant's) disability, please ask your client to consider extending the 30-day notice in order that (tenant) may be reasonably accommodated with necessary services so that she may continue to live independently.

I am including information again on the Alternatives to Landlord/Tenant Court for the Elderly Project for you and your client's review and use. Thank you for your consideration in this matter and please call me at (202) 434-2155 should you have any questions or concerns regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

**Project Coordinator**

cc: (social workers)

## **II. Selecting a Project Coordinator**

When selecting the most appropriate person to coordinate an Alternatives Project, a number of factors should be considered. First and foremost, the Coordinator must be a tenant advocate. There should be no doubt in any party's mind that the Project Coordinator is always on the side of the tenant and in support of the tenant living independently for as long as possible.

### **A. Knowledge of the aging services community**

A Project Coordinator should have basic knowledge of the existing aging services within the community prior to project startup. It is important to know which services are available and readily accessible and where service gaps may exist in addressing various client problems. At the outset, find out if your community has Meals on Wheels, heavy housekeeping services, ongoing housekeeping services, home health care services, a Medicaid Waiver Program, or a Bill Payor Program. Initially, you will be utilizing services that are readily available. As the project develops, you may consider developing more support services, such as a friendly visitor's project through the interfaith community.

### **B. Knowledge of community organizing**

Having some knowledge of community organizing is helpful for any person developing this type of project. The goal behind any successful project is ownership. To facilitate ownership among numerous coalition members with diverse interests, the Project Coordinator should understand and capitalize on the interests of each coalition member. For example, interests of a housing provider will not be the same as a tenant advocate. Each coalition participant should be able to influence the project's growth and progress. The ability to accomplish this, in spite of the diverse interests involved, requires that the Coordinator be experienced in coalition building and/or community organizing.

### **C. Ability to work with housing providers and social workers**

Since the Coordinator's duties will include building bridges between housing providers and social workers, the Project Coordinator must have the ability to work effectively with both housing providers and the social worker community. That does not mean the Coordinator represents the interests of any housing provider. It does mean, however, that the Coordinator is forthright with housing providers and is attentive to their concerns. As this project challenges housing providers to "step out of the box" and to resort to alternatives to litigation in resolving problems, it likewise requires the Project Coordinator to step out of his or her box. If a housing provider comes to the Coordinator with a tenant who is at risk of eviction, one should presume it is with the best of intentions.

Further, the Project Coordinator will be working with many social workers/case managers. As in any professional field, you will work with persons with varying degrees of ability. You will need to forge strong working relationships with all social workers and be completely available with legal support if necessary.

#### **D. Knowledge of landlord/tenant laws in the jurisdiction**

It is essential that the Coordinator have a basic knowledge of the landlord/tenant law in his or her jurisdiction. The Coordinator will be working closely with social workers and case managers who will be seeking advice in dealing with different cases. Likewise, it is also important for social workers participating in the project to have basic knowledge of the eviction process in their jurisdiction, each party's rights and obligations, and how this may impact both their work and their clients.

#### **E. Knowledge of available alternatives for tenants who need support services**

Creating alternatives to eviction actions by housing providers will often engage multiple parties, including the tenant attorney, the social worker/case manager and providers of direct services, as well as the housing provider. It may also include mental health professionals.

It also will require versatility and creativity among the parties in their dealings with one another. For example, the social worker may need to serve as a liaison between the housing provider and the tenant. There may be things housing providers themselves can do to ameliorate a difficult situation which often arises where there is animosity between the housing provider and the tenant.

Social workers also need to have the Project Coordinator's full support. It requires the Project Coordinator to make her or himself completely available to the social worker. The social worker may need the Project Coordinator to speak with certain tenants regarding their legal options or to send a letter to an unrepresented housing provider. Often, tenants are more apt to listen to an attorney than their social worker. Tenants may be less responsive to a social worker when it comes to accepting support services and may be more apt to listen to a "lawyer" who can help tenants understand their rights and obligations pursuant to their lease.

### **III. Creating a coalition**

Building an effective coalition for this project is essential. Before deciding on the members of the Coalition, you need to step back and envision what type of coalition will work best for such a project.

Generally, there are two types of coalitions. Those that concentrate on a single issue or event and those that focus on larger, more complex issues. Even though there is generally one goal in mind – that of creating alternatives to evictions for elderly tenants – the work of the Alternatives Project Coalition should be considered ongoing, multi-faceted, and requiring frequent meetings for the first year or two.

#### **A. Understanding the goals and purpose of an “Alternatives Project” coalition**

Coalition building is generally an organizing tool when one organization understands that it alone does not have the technical capability or people power to have a genuine impact on an issue. For this particular type of project, it involves more than that. Understand that the coalition brings people and organizations together that may not have any apparent commonalities. For example, the organization may decide to have housing providers, tenant advocates, and Court representatives on the same coalition. The members of the coalition must share and support the same goal of seeking alternatives to eviction of elder tenants. Whatever the reason for pursuing this goal is not as important as the common adoption of the goal itself. For example, Courts may become involved in the coalition because it frees them from difficult cases; whereas housing providers are likely to be involved because it saves them attorney’s fees and other expenses.

#### **B. Considering possible coalition members**

Before inviting members to join the coalition, take time to look at the organizations within your community and the possible roles they can play within the coalition. The Project Coordinator will want to look at a number of organizations as well as individuals and, at a minimum, include the adult protection agency and community social services agencies – both public and private.

You will also need to have representation from the housing provider community. You may want to include a large property management company, the Public Housing Authority (PHA), as well as tenant advocate organizations.

Depending on when you are seeking institutional support for such a project, you may initially want to include the Court and the local Bar Association in the coalition. However, be aware that the more players you include, the more challenging the task of keeping the coalition on track. Before you make your coalition member selections, you need to be very clear on your vision of the project.

### **C. Making the Public Housing Authority a coalition member**

If at all possible, you will want to make your PHA a major coalition member. By obtaining its firm support of this project, you will have the capability to more easily locate those elderly tenants who are in most need of support services. When sending out invitation letters, start with the Executive Director of your PHA and send a letter to its general counsel as well as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) counselor. District of Columbia's Alternatives Project has four members of the PHA on its coalition including two attorneys, one social worker and one property manager. While they do not attend all coalition meetings, the PHA's support of the project has been critical.

### **D. The coalition letter**

It is important to have maximum participation at the initial kick-off meeting of the coalition. To ensure that everyone has adequate notification, invitation letters should be sent to prospective coalition members at least three weeks prior to the first meeting. The invitation letter should provide an overall description of the project as well as an invitation to the individual or organization to participate.

Approximately one week after sending the invitation letter, follow-up with telephone calls to those particular individuals and/or organizations from whom you seek participation. You may wish to meet with particular groups of individuals prior to the initial meeting. For example, you may consider meeting individually with the attorney(s) who bring the PHA's lawsuits into landlord/tenant court. The attorneys' support of this project is critical and the time taken to meet individually could be essential for their support of and participation in the project

## **Example B**

### **Letter of Invitation to Coalition Kick-Off Meeting**

Dear Ms. \_\_\_\_\_ :

Legal Counsel for the Elderly is developing a city-wide project called Alternatives to Landlord/Tenant Court for the Elderly. This project will assist elderly tenants who face legal actions by their landlords because of situations beyond their control, e.g., financial exploitation, self neglect, and competency issues. Alternative solutions will engage social service agencies and the legal community in providing social and financial support services for elderly tenants so that these tenants may safely reside in their homes or transfer to more appropriate housing without the threat of eviction.

An initial organizing meeting will take place on Friday, January 28, 2000, 3:00 p.m., at Legal Counsel for the Elderly in Room A4- 149, 601 E Street, NW, Washington, DC. The following will be discussed:

1. Goals and objectives of the project;
2. Identifying who needs training, what kind of training, date and place of training;
3. Selection of topics and speakers; and
4. What kind of information is needed in a referral packet?

This will be a working meeting. If you have ideas regarding the agenda, please call me at (202) 434-2155 prior to the meeting. Project success will depend on a combined effort and cooperation among subsidized housing providers, social service agencies and the legal community. I look forward to seeing you.

Sincerely,

Project Coordinator

cc: (social workers)

## **E. Ownership of the project**

The most essential aspect of any coalition work involving the project is guaranteeing that each member of the coalition “owns” the project. With such possible divergent interests, the biggest hurdle any Coordinator faces is keeping coalition members actively engaged on an ongoing basis. Housing providers and social workers, in particular, need to “own” this project because without their combined support there is no project. “Ownership” is essential because of the proactive nature of this project. Each participant within each case must be proactive in order to effectuate the best result.

Generally, housing providers may not immediately react to a lease violation such as a build up of trash in a tenant’s unit. Instead, the provider may wait until the problem gets so severe that what started out to be a rather simple problem becomes untenable. This also applies to social workers and tenant attorneys. Everyone is busy working on emergencies. When a social worker is called on a case, this is only the beginning of what could be a larger problem. The tendency is to concentrate on emergencies and to avoid work on non-emergency cases. If that attitude is brought into the coalition work, the project will ultimately fail. The **proactive nature** of this project is its most important aspect and must be understood by all participating housing providers and community social workers.

## **F. Avoiding conflict within the coalition**

It is important that the prospective coalition members respect the other individuals and organizations who will be represented within the coalition. When a strong tenant advocate meets the PHA attorney across the table, there is the potential for conflict. An important role for the meeting facilitator, as the name implies, is to engender dialogue and ensure that comments are constructive and that all ideas and opinions are aired. Experience has shown that those who cannot remove themselves from the often conflictive nature of landlord/tenant relations will eventually weed themselves from the coalition.

# **IV. Coalition meetings**

## **A. The first meeting**

The first meeting is very important. One person should be designated to take minutes of the meeting. The Project Coordinator or meeting facilitator must be very clear on what is to be accomplished at each and every meeting. You will want everyone in attendance to have an overview of what an “Alternatives Project” will entail. It would be beneficial to have at least one landlord attorney or a representative from the PHA assist in creating the agenda and to play a major role in the meeting to create balance on the coalition.

## **Example C**

### **Sample Coalition Kick-off Meeting Agenda**

#### **Alternatives to Landlord/Tenant Court for the Elderly**

Agenda (date)

- 1. Welcome and introductions**
- 2. Goals and objectives of the project**
- 3. Developing a strong foundation for the project**
- 4. Discussion of available support services**

#### **B. Developing objectives on which everyone can agree**

Coalition objectives should reflect the broad interests of the combined coalition membership. For example, while ending homelessness of the elderly may be the foremost concern of tenant advocates and social workers, it may not be the objective of all coalition members. Coalition objectives also need to reflect the concerns of housing providers. A housing provider with a fragile elderly tenant will be most concerned about the health and safety of all the tenants in his or her building. While the end result of the Alternatives Project may very well be decreasing homelessness among the elderly, it does not necessarily have to be stated as an objective of the coalition. Some objectives considered to reflect the broad interests of the coalition members are:

1. Training social services providers about the project; (Social worker training may also include a basic overview of landlord/tenant law.)
2. Building partnerships with housing providers and the social services community;
3. Training housing providers on the project and obtaining their support;
4. Developing an effective outreach campaign in your community;
5. Working with local funding sources to ensure support services for elderly tenants are implemented and/or sustained with adequate funding; and
6. Obtaining court support for such a project so long as it is understood that participation in the Alternatives Project will be voluntary and not mandatory.

### **C. Understanding the role of each coalition member**

It is important to understand the role of each coalition member. Social workers and landlord attorneys are critical members of the coalition. However, they may not be able to assume “hands on” responsibility for coalition tasks. For example, landlord attorneys are unlikely to write a landlord/tenant advocacy manual for social workers. However, as you get to know each coalition member, you will be able to discover their individual talents. For example, a social worker may be able to assist in editing training manuals and developing training for housing providers. Further, landlord attorneys may have very innovative ideas regarding outreach to the housing provider community. All resources in the development of the project should be considered, including board members of your organization. Tasks do not need to be limited to coalition members.

### **D. Challenges to using a proactive approach**

Ours is a society built on reactions. If a tenant is having a difficult time keeping his or her apartment clean, the housing provider tends to wait until the situation becomes untenable. Eventually, the housing provider feels that he or she has no choice but to pursue legal action.

The work of social workers and tenant attorneys typically entails reacting to crisis and responding to the reactions of the housing provider. This is also evident in ways that landlords and tenants relate to each other. The success of the project, however, depends upon taking a proactive approach in working with “at-risk tenants.”

It takes a social worker less effort to assist an elder tenant in obtaining support services than finding him or her alternative housing because of an imminent eviction. Social workers may be working with many cases and usually prioritize among them based on their urgency. Taking a proactive approach means that when a landlord calls for assistance for their tenant, it becomes a “front burner” case.

Tenant attorneys run into the same problem. How often does a tenant come into a legal service office with a notice to correct or vacate and are advised to return if and when he or she receives the court summons?

To turn reaction into proaction takes a conscious effort. While at first it may be perceived as more burdensome, you will notice that it will require less individual effort. For such a proactive approach to work, all the participants, including housing providers, must step out of “the box” and understand the working relationship we have with each other to resolve issues without drawing the matter into further unnecessary conflict.

## **V. Building a strong foundation**

The key to a successful Alternatives Project starts with building a strong foundation. Ownership of the project by social workers and housing providers alike is the key to a strong foundation. **However, before approaching housing providers, the project must have the support of the social service community.** Among case managers and social workers there may be concern that this project will increase their workload. While the project may increase the overall number of tenants a social worker may have in his or her caseload, it reduces the likelihood that these cases will be of an “emergency” nature. If social workers understand that their current smaller efforts will alleviate future emergency situations, i.e. evictions that may result in homelessness, they are more apt to support, and ultimately “own” the project.

### **A. Training social workers**

Training social workers accomplishes two objectives. The first objective is the opportunity to meet with and develop relationships with social service providers in the community and become aware of the services these providers offer. A strong working relationship with community providers will facilitate a successful outcome for individual cases. Project Coordinators should focus initially on building strong relations with the social service providers.

The second objective is to provide social workers with training on both the project as well as the basics of landlord/tenant law in their jurisdiction, as well as providing them with direct access to tenant attorneys to advise them regarding the rights of their elder tenant clients. Training can take place in two ways. One approach is to bring together all the social service providers in the community in a single training session. This may be most efficient if you are working in a smaller community.

The second and more advisable approach, especially in a larger community, is to meet with individual agencies. It is easier to build an esprit d’corps in a smaller group setting, while at the same time, developing rapport with individual social workers using the project as common ground.

In larger communities, agencies may be located in different areas of the city. Agencies face different issues depending on what area of the city they are located. For example, one agency may deal with mostly private landlords who may have different interests than other areas of the city where subsidized housing is more predominant. Because each individual agency may have different priorities, it is important that each agency have their concerns met and their questions answered in a way that is meaningful to them and their relationship to the Project.

## Example D

### Letter to Social Service Providers' Training

Dear Social Service Provider:

Legal Counsel for the Elderly (LCE) is offering a seminar/training with your agency on the Alternatives to Landlord/Tenant Court for the Elderly Project. (See attached project description). The seminars will begin on \_\_\_\_\_ and run through \_\_\_\_\_. Social workers and case managers will learn how they can help reduce the number of legal actions taken against elderly tenants in \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of jurisdiction). To schedule a seminar for your organization, please call \_\_\_\_\_.

The seminar will include:

- Overview of the Alternatives to Landlord/Tenant Court for the Elderly Project;
- Ways that social workers (with the assistance of tenant attorneys) can help prevent lawsuits against, and evictions of, the elderly; and
- The ABC's of landlord/tenant law in the (Name of the jurisdiction).

These seminars are being organized by a coalition of landlord attorneys, D.C. Housing Authority, social workers and tenant attorneys. This project will assist elderly tenants who are facing lawsuits or are having difficulties with their landlords and/or property managers. The project will encourage and assist housing managers to seek alternative solutions to landlord/tenant court for alleged lease violations by elderly tenants. I look forward to meeting with you.

Sincerely,

Project Coordinator

# LEGAL COUNSEL FOR THE ELDERLY

## Alternatives to Landlord/Tenant Court for the Elderly Project

### Project Description

#### OBJECTIVE

Assist elderly tenants facing lawsuits from their subsidized housing landlords by encouraging and helping housing providers seek less punitive alternatives to litigation when dealing with housing problems.

#### PURPOSE

The purpose of the Alternatives Project is to prevent law suits and evictions against older tenants who face legal actions because of financial abuse from community or family members, or who are victims of self-neglect. This project will encourage and assist housing managers in seeking less punitive solutions to alleged lease violations by elderly tenants. Alternative solutions engage social service agencies and/or public legal services prior to filing a law suit. With appropriate community, social and financial support services in place, an elderly tenant may safely remain in his or her own apartment or transfer to a more appropriate housing accommodation.

This project will:

- a. Coordinate a coalition of service providers to inform housing managers about the availability of alternative solutions to housing problems affecting the elderly;
- b. Foster a working relationship with governmental social service and public housing agencies, community-based organizations serving seniors, and landlord attorneys so that the elderly can be protected from eviction;
- c. Expand outreach to a wider circle of housing providers, tenants and social workers;
- d. Train resident managers in subsidized housing to identify potential evictees;
- e. Teach social workers the basics of landlord/tenant law in the jurisdiction; and
- f. Inform seniors residing in subsidized housing about advance directives.

**LCE would like to provide a short seminar on this project to each social service agency beginning in \_\_\_\_\_. We will be glad to come to your agency and meet with social workers and case managers. To schedule a presentation, please call \_\_\_\_\_.**

## **B. Locating social service providers**

Consider including both public and private social service agencies in the Project. Your local Office on Aging should have a list of public social service providers and may also know about those private social service agencies serving seniors. Check the yellow pages for listings of private agencies.

## **C. Developing training for social service providers**

Before training social service providers, you will want to first introduce them to the project. An introductory letter and description of the project may be all that is needed. The letter not only should describe the project, but it should explain their role and the benefits derived from their participation

## **D. Learning the basics of landlord/tenant law in your jurisdiction**

The possibility of learning landlord/tenant law is a big draw for social workers as it empowers them with a better understanding of the grounds for eviction, what the eviction process entails, and what rights their clients have when facing a threat of eviction. Participation in the Alternatives Project enables social workers direct access to a tenant attorney or advocate with whom they can collaborate regarding their tenant/client problem. They need to feel that they are not “out there” alone working on some very critical cases. As the Project Coordinator meets with agencies and individual case-managers and social workers, it is critical that the social workers completely understand and support the project. The most successful social service agency work comes from those agencies that have taken the project as their own.

The training manual should be very basic and written in layman’s terms. It should be very specific in addressing the role of social workers as an advocate for their elder tenants.

**Example E**

**ABC'S OF DISTRICT OF  
COLUMBIA  
LANDLORD/TENANT LAW**

**A practical legal guide for social workers and case managers**

Prepared and presented by

Coalition for Alternatives to Landlord/Tenant Court for  
the Elderly Project

**(202) 434-2120**

Sponsored by Legal Counsel for the Elderly, AARP and AARP Foundation

## **Example F Introduction**

This manual provides social workers and case managers with an overview of District of Columbia landlord/tenant law as it applies to various types of rental housing in the District of Columbia. It is not intended to provide answers to every question arising from landlord/tenant disputes. Social workers/case managers may call any of the legal service providers listed in this manual to discuss particular housing problems facing their clients.

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(The body of the manual is specific to each jurisdiction and, therefore, this example applies only to the District of Columbia. However, the following Do's and Don'ts for Social Workers apply to all jurisdictions and should be highlighted on a separate page as well as interspersed within the applicable areas of the manual.)

## **Do's and Don'ts for Social Workers and Case Managers Before a problem arises:**

1. Determine the type of housing in which your client resides, e.g., public or other subsidized housing, or private housing.
2. Obtain a copy of your client's lease.
3. Advise your client to keep all rent receipts.
4. Get to know your client's landlord and/or property manager.
5. Determine if your client has received a thirty-day notice to correct or vacate and the reason for the notice.

### **When you suspect a problem:**

6. Obtain a copy of the thirty-day notice to correct or vacate. (If this applies to your client, also contact the Project Coordinator, or a legal service provider.)
7. Assess whether your client understands the nature of his or her thirty-day notice.
8. Assist in developing a "reasonable accommodation" plan for your client and the landlord, if your client is disabled and requires support services in order to remain in his or her setting.
9. Obtain copies of any correspondence between tenant and landlord or resident manager.
10. Verify income and social security number of your client and obtain photo identification.
11. Assist client in obtaining receipts and a copy of the rental ledger, if there is a payment issue.
12. Identify any housing code violations. If housing code violations threaten the health and welfare of your client due to a landlord or housing provider's negligence, contact a legal service provider immediately.

### **DON'T:**

1. Assist or encourage a tenant to sign any agreement with his or her landlord without first discussing it with an attorney.
2. Negotiate a settlement with the landlord if your client has received a summons and complaint.
3. Disregard a summons and complaint because you think the situation has been resolved. **GET IT IN WRITING!** Otherwise, make sure your client gets to court on time.
4. Assume that a landlord knows that a tenant has paid his or her rent; accounting mistakes happen.
5. Lead the landlord/property manager to believe you are advocating on his or her behalf. Your responsibility is always to the tenant. Working with a landlord towards resolution of a dispute does not mean you have to agree with the landlord's interpretation of the dispute.

### **D. Additional training materials**

You may want to include other materials with the training manual, such as:

1. Sample lease
2. Notice to cure or vacate
3. Summons and complaint
4. Writ of Restitution
5. Landlord/tenant interview sheet
6. Directory of legal service providers
7. Housing inspection list

## **VI. Obtaining the support of landlord attorneys**

It may be very difficult to obtain the support of landlord attorneys, but it should not be overlooked. This project was conceived initially by a landlord attorney who stated “I wish there was another way other than landlord tenant court when dealing with elderly tenants.”

Why would a landlord attorney support such a project? Some attorneys believe it is in their interests to save their clients money where feasible. Moreover, elderly tenants are sympathetic defendants. Few landlord attorneys enjoy opposing a fragile elderly tenant in landlord/tenant court and asking the judge to issue an order evicting the elderly tenant.

### **A. Setting up a meeting**

If you choose to set up a meeting for landlord attorneys, it is best to do so in a way that is most convenient for them. You might want to schedule meetings during the court’s lunch break. Don’t be discouraged if you do not have a large turnout. In reality, most landlord attorneys will continue to view the loss of their own fees as more important than saving their client money. However, it is important that you allow space for the attorneys that do wish to support the project. Their knowledge of the project will bar them from feigning ignorance if it arises within litigation as a reasonable accommodation defense.

### **B. Introducing the project to landlords and their attorneys**

Landlord attorneys should be introduced to the project by letter. The letter should explain the project and what role the attorney is expected to play in it. (If the Project Coordinator is also a tenant attorney, he or she may be already familiar with the landlord attorneys who practice in landlord/tenant court. If the Project Coordinator is not a tenant attorney, contact other legal service providers to assist you in identifying landlord attorneys.)

**Example F**  
Letter to Landlord Attorneys

Dear (Landlord attorney)

I am writing to introduce you to a project, the Alternatives to Landlord/Tenant Court for the Elderly. The “Alternatives Project” is a new proactive landlord and tenant intervention program being developed by a coalition of landlord attorneys, legal services attorney, and social services professionals.

The mission of the “Alternatives Project” is twofold. First, it will provide a network of supportive services to help elderly tenants who are experiencing problems avoid evictions from their homes. Second, it will assist landlords who seek solutions to dealing with elderly tenants through an informal, yet coordinated system of service delivery; thereby alleviating the need for them to resort to legal proceedings against elderly tenants. Often, landlords are faced with situations where long-time elderly residents suddenly become withdrawn, suddenly stop paying their rent, no longer open their doors for maintenance workers, or exhibit signs of poor housekeeping. If housing providers were aware of available community services, they might avail themselves of these services rather than evicting elderly tenants for what appears to be lease violations. The project provides landlords access to a range of supportive services to assist elderly tenants identified by public housing managers and private landlords.

Here is just one example of how this project has benefited both the housing provider and the elderly tenant:

Ms. D is 72 years old and has lived in her subsidized apartment for over twenty years. She has had difficulties paying her utility bills for the past several months; and, as a result, her gas and electric were cut off. She also had a difficult time keeping up with her housekeeping. The property manager called a social worker who was trained through the Alternatives to Landlord/Tenant Court Project. Within three weeks, Ms. D’s apartment was thoroughly cleaned, and she has an agent under a financial power of attorney to pay her monthly bills. Ms. D’s electric was turned back on and Washington Gas Company restored service within a week. Lastly, Ms. D was assigned a home health care worker who is providing regular home and health care.

With cooperation among landlords, their attorneys, social workers, legal service providers, and concerned family and friends, the elderly may continue to reside independently. Further, housing providers will save unnecessary legal fees associated with eviction actions against elderly tenants.

The “Alternatives Project” coalition offers a free seminar for subsidized housing managers and private landlords describing how the project works as well as recognizing early warning signs of elderly persons in distress. We also provide housing providers with a resource guide listing senior service agencies that can service each building or complex.

First, we would like to meet with attorneys who do landlord/tenant work to provide you with more information about the project and solicit your input about tenant scenarios that could benefit from this project. We will be arranging short seminars in landlord/tenant court for the convenience of everyone. We have scheduled two meeting times - July 19, 2000 and July 20, 2000. Each meeting will take place at 12:30 in the ante room of the landlord/tenant court.

In the meantime, we ask for your support by speaking with your housing provider clients and by encouraging them to participate in the project as well. If you know of other interested clients, please give us their names and addresses so we can provide them with information on our upcoming seminar. Lastly, if you are thinking of issuing a thirty-day notice to an elderly tenant, please consider using the "Alternatives Project" first.

If you would like more information about this project or would like to meet individually with coalition members, please call \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_. The coalition will be happy to schedule a personal meeting with you to further explain the benefits of this project.

Sincerely,

Project Coordinator

## **VII. Housing provider training**

### **A. Identifying training objectives**

After you have built a strong foundation of social work support, you can then begin your outreach and education of housing providers. Before developing the training curriculum, first decide what you want it to accomplish. Some objectives may include:

1. Introducing the concept of eviction avoidance and less punitive ways of addressing tenant problems;
2. Explaining to housing providers the benefits in seeking alternatives to eviction proceedings;
3. Educating housing providers on the warning signs of common disabilities experienced by the elderly that may affect their tenancies;
4. Training housing providers about the value to using community social workers; and
5. Informing housing providers about the role of adult protective services and how their role differs from community social workers.

### **B. Resources for locating housing providers to invite**

#### **1. Local public housing (PHA for 202) facilities and federally subsidized (Section 8) senior buildings**

Your local Public Housing Authority (PHA) can provide you a listing of senior housing in your community. Your PHA and/or your local Housing and Urban Development (HUD) office will also be able to provide you with a listing of all federally subsidized Section 8 senior buildings.

#### **2. Social service agency listing of buildings having large numbers of elderly tenants**

This is where your foundation building will assist you and enable you to deepen your connection with each participating social service agency. **It will also help to foster a sense of project ownership among the agencies.** Prior to housing provider training, obtain from each social service agency a list of apartment buildings in their service area with a moderate to high volume of elderly tenants. This will strengthen the connection between training the social workers and their ongoing participation in the project.

## **Example G**

### **Sample Letter to Social Service Agencies To Identify Housing Providers**

Dear Social Service (Agency):

Thank you for participating recently in training on the project, Alternatives to Landlord/Tenant Court for the Elderly. This training has been a great success. Over 100 social workers and case managers learned how to effectively reduce the number of legal actions taken against elderly tenants in the District of Columbia.

As part of your continued participation in this project, please fill out the enclosed form, detailing the geographical service area(s) for your agency, as well as any landlords or property managers with whom your agency comes into contact. We will be inviting landlords and property managers throughout the city to an upcoming seminar on the "Alternatives Project". We want to be sure to include landlords and property managers with whom you have had personal contact. Please either type or clearly print this information on the enclosed form.

The completed form may be either faxed to my attention at \_\_\_\_\_, or mailed in the self-addressed, stamped envelope. Thank you for your continued participation which is critical to the continued success of this exciting project.

Sincerely,

Project Coordinator

### **3. Landlord attorneys supporting the project**

You will also want to continue to foster support among landlord attorneys. For those attorneys who wish to support the project, they may want to personally invite their clients to the training. You should send each landlord attorney both a letter and informational brochures explaining the project. Although **you will provide landlord attorneys with the first opportunity to inform their clients of the project and training event, you also should** send their clients an invitation about three weeks prior to training.

### **4. Yellow pages of property management companies**

Last, but not least, you will want to let your fingers do some walking through the yellow pages. An invitation should be sent to at least all the large and medium-sized property management companies within your community. If you are not familiar with the management companies in your area that should be invited, speak with your local legal services provider.

## Example H

### Sample Invitation Letter to Landlord Attorney

Dear (landlord attorney):

This is in follow-up to my letter to you dated June 28, 2000 regarding The Alternatives to Landlord/tenant Court for the Elderly Project. The “Alternatives Project” is a new proactive landlord and tenant intervention program being developed by a coalition of landlord attorneys, legal service providers, and social services professionals. I am enclosing flyers for the upcoming seminar for you and your housing provider clients. **Please include this flyer in your upcoming billing statements to your clients or take the time to send it to your housing provider clients who would be interested in participating in this project.** The seminar will include training on the project as well as training providers to identify warning signs of elderly persons in distress. We will also provide housing providers with a resource guide listing senior service agencies that can service each building or complex.

The mission of the “Alternatives Project” is twofold. First, it will assist landlords who seek solutions to dealing with their elderly tenants through an informal, yet coordinated system of service deliverers; thereby alleviating the need to resort to legal proceedings against elderly tenants. Second, it will provide a network of supportive services to help elderly tenants who are experiencing problems avoid possible evictions from their homes.

If you would like more information about this project or would like to meet individually with coalition members, please call (Name of Social Worker) at (301) 587-5500 or (Project Coordinator) at \_\_\_\_\_. Thank you for your participation in this project.

Sincerely,

Project Coordinator

### **C. Setting up a seminar for housing providers**

Of course, when setting up the meeting, you will want to schedule it for a date around the middle of the month. This avoids the first of the month rent collections and end of the month court appearances resulting from nonpayment of rent on the first of the month. You should try to make your invitational flyer an attention grabber. Make sure you include all pertinent information in the flyer.

### **D. Educational materials**

Each housing provider who attends the seminar should receive an informational packet including the following materials:

1. Program of meeting
2. Senior Service Network Telephone Directory
3. Brochure and informational materials from the Alzheimer's Association that includes the warning signs of Alzheimer's disease
4. Brochure from local adult protective services agency
5. List of common health problems faced by the elderly (See appendix)
6. Voluntary emergency contact information form
7. Rolodex card with names and telephone numbers of key Project staff (Great idea from a landlord attorney because it provides housing providers direct fingertip access to the Project.)

### **E. Speakers**

As previously discussed, identifying your objectives will assist you in determining your speakers for the seminar. It is helpful to have a representative from a governmental agency welcome participants. This gives the seminar a formal, public endorsement and a level of institutional respectability. If possible, get a landlord attorney to speak to the housing providers regarding why it is in their best interests to participate in the Project. You will also want someone from the medical profession to discuss the warning signs that housing providers should be aware of when interacting with elderly tenants.



***ALTERNATIVES TO LANDLORD/TENANT COURT  
FOR THE ELDERLY PROJECT***

***FRIDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2000  
601 E STREET, NW, WASHINGTON, DC***

***Program***

- 9:00-9:30 Registration/continental breakfast
- 9:30-9:40 **Introduction**  
Rhonda K. Dahlman, Esq.  
Project Coordinator  
Staff Attorney, Legal Counsel for the Elderly
- 9:40 - 9:50 **Welcoming Remarks**  
Reverend Reginald Blaxton,  
Community Relations Coordinator  
D.C. Office on Aging
- 9:50 - 10:00 **A landlord attorney's perspective on the benefits  
of the "Alternatives Project" for housing providers**  
Ana Faberge, Esq.
- 10:00-10:45 **Recognizing the warning signs of common  
disabilities experienced by the elderly and  
financial/physical abuse of the elderly.**  
Kathy Brenneman, M.D.  
Department of Geriatric Medicine  
Providence Hospital
- 10:45-11:30 **The role of community social workers  
with elderly tenants**  
Karen Currie, MSW, LGSW, Advocacy Coordinator,  
Emmaus Services for the Aging
- 11:30 -12:00 **When to call Adult Protective Services; its role in the  
elderly community**  
Carmen Rodriguez, MSW, LGSW, Supervisory Social Worker,  
Continuing Services and Gloria Jenkins, LGSW, Continuing Services  
Social Worker  
Adult Protective Services
- 12:00 Questions and Answers

**Social service providers will have tables set up. Please take the time to meet with your community social workers prior to leaving.**

**F. Resource tables of social service agencies and community organizations**

Social service providers should be encouraged to set up tables at the housing providers seminar where representatives from the community's social service agencies and community organizations can talk to housing providers. By including social services providers at this training and enabling them an opportunity to network with housing providers, it reinforces their role in the project. It further guarantees that the social service provider will understand the priority of the cases that come to them through the project.

## **Exhibit J**

### **Letter to Social Service Providers Requesting Their Attendance at Seminar for Landlords and Property Managers**

IONA Senior Services  
4125 Albermarle St., NW  
Washington, DC 20016

Dear Social Service Provider,

The Alternatives to Landlord/Tenant Court for the Elderly Project is well underway and is an extraordinary success. More than 25 District of Columbia elderly tenants have been assisted through the project to date - most of whom were risking evictions.

As a part of the project, we are presenting a seminar for Landlords and Property Managers on October 20, 2000 from 9:00 a.m. until 12:30 p.m., at 601 E Street, NW, Washington DC, Learning Center, Rooms B2-120 and 130. (See attached flyer.) Please arrive at the Learning Center by 8:30 a.m. to set up your table.

This will be the first opportunity for housing providers to meet with you. We need your participation. Tables will be available for your organization, which will be shared by other service providers in your area and will be arranged by city quadrants. Please bring information about your organization, and assign someone to talk to participating housing providers.

Thank you again for your continued support of the Alternatives to Landlord Tenant Court Project. Please call me at 434-2155 if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

## **VIII. How the project works**

The Project tends to evolve and adjust to each tenant's personal set of circumstances. While the objective is to eliminate the need for attorneys, use of attorneys on either side may be unavoidable, and in some cases, even desirable.

There are essentially three ways that an elderly tenant can come into the project:

### **A) Client initiated**

A tenant may have received a lease violation notice from the landlord. If the tenant already has a social worker, the tenant will generally contact his or her social worker. Once notified, the social worker will call the Project Coordinator or a tenant attorney to apprise him or her of the situation. At that point, the social worker will contact the housing provider and invite his or her participation in the project. (These two steps are interchangeable.)

If the housing provider's legal counsel is unknown, the tenant's attorney may send a letter directly to the landlord inviting him or her to participate in the project. In the letter you should ask them to apprise you of the name of their attorney. If the housing provider has legal counsel, the tenant's attorney may, of course, only contact the attorney. If the letter is sent to the landlord attorney as a settlement agreement, the landlord attorney is obligated to bring the invitation to his or her client.

### **B) Landlord attorney makes contact with project coordinator/tenant attorney.**

Once the project is underway, it is not uncommon for a landlord's attorney to call the Project Coordinator from court. A landlord attorney supporting the project may not be aware of the client's age or whether the case would be best served through the Alternatives Project. In that situation, the attorney, after speaking to his or her client, will agree to continue the matter until such time as the case may be resolved outside of the landlord/tenant court process. Once referred to the project, the Project Coordinator will contact a social worker, if necessary, to become actively involved in the case. Also, the Project Coordinator, after assessing the case, may decide other legal avenues need to be explored, which may include setting up a voluntary bill payer or financial power of attorney.

### **C) Housing provider contacts project coordinator or community social worker.**

Housing providers may contact the community social worker or Project Coordinator prior to or after a formal notice has been served on the tenant. If a housing provider contacts the Project Coordinator directly, it is important to ascertain if there is any attorney involvement. If he or she has retained an attorney, explain to the housing

provider that you, if you are an attorney, will need their attorney's authorization to speak to them regarding their tenant.

## **IX. Typical cases**

Below is a list of typical cases that have come through the Alternatives Project. The ways in which these problems are resolved often require a creative, multidisciplinary approach that may include input from all parties:

1. 79 year-old client had a writ of eviction and case was referred to the Alternatives Project by social worker at Family and Child Services. Client was in Court on return date, but did not know what to do. Plaintiff's attorney received judgment and had writ issued. Social worker spoke with housing provider who was willing to resolve matter through the Alternatives Project, but did not want further assistance from her attorney as she did not wish to pay the attorney fees. Client was being sued for \$641.00 rental arrears and fees. A settlement agreement was entered into whereby writ was quashed, default judgment was set aside, and parties agreed that client owed only \$294.00, which she could pay in installments. Also, through the social worker, the date when client's rent was due was changed from the fifth of each month to the eighth of each month. This guaranteed that client would not be late in her rent. Saved client from eviction and \$437.00.
2. 72 year-old client was sued for failure (refusal) to recertify with public housing. She was referred to the Alternatives Project by landlord attorney from court. With assistance from social worker at Washington Urban League and counsel for both parties, client was recertified and lawsuit against client was dismissed.
3. 62 year-old client received 30-day notice for nonpayment of rent. (Client got behind on rent because his bank account was wrongly attached in a case in Maryland which is being resolved.) With assistance of Emmaus Services for the Aging, landlord agreed to resolve case through the Alternatives Project. Client paid back rent in installments and avoided court proceedings.
4. 85 year-old client received 30-day notice for poor housekeeping (client is hoarding). Social worker from IONA senior services was contacted directly by landlord through the Alternatives Project and heavy cleaning was utilized for the tenant. Avoided eviction proceedings.
5. 81 year-old tenant threatened with third eviction action due to her ongoing inability to pay rent. Landlord seeking intervention contacted a social worker through Project Keen. Landlord agreed to utilize Alternatives Project. Tenant, who lacked capacity was provided a guardian and conservator so that support services could be put into place and the tenant was able to continue living in her community.
6. 84 year-old Section 8 tenant was being exploited by people coming into the building. Resident Manager referred case to Project Coordinator. Tenant is an alcoholic and

people from the neighborhood would bring client alcohol and use his unit for drug business. Manager needed authority to keep them out. Client had previously provided his niece with power of attorney. Alternatives Project sent a letter to resident manager on behalf of niece by virtue of her power of attorney. The letter included a list of authorized people who could enter the building to see client and authorized resident manager to remove any other visitors.

7. 74 year-old tenant was sued for nonpayment of rent in the amount \$3,325.00. Tenant was referred to the Alternatives Project by the resident manager and the landlord. Tenant's neighbor had been helping to pay his rent since he got behind in his rent in 1994. Client signed financial power of attorney over to neighbor. Alternatives Project was able to trace alleged checks not credited to his account and now the Housing Authority owes client \$116.57 which was credited to his account. Case was dismissed.
8. 70 year-old public housing tenant was not able to keep unit clean. Resident manager referred case to the Alternatives Project. A social worker was assigned, who obtained heavy cleaning for the client. Further, client's family was contacted and they are assisting client in ongoing cleaning. Client is no longer at risk of an eviction.

## **X. Conclusion**

Using a holistic approach to help elderly tenants avoid eviction can be one of the most rewarding professional and personal experiences on which you may embark. It will offer participants a new perspective on landlord/tenant relationships and enable housing providers to explore more humane alternatives than rigid adherence to litigation. These solutions enable the elderly to retain self respect and independence. In addition, it enables all parties to an eviction to truly work together for the best possible results for both housing providers, and more importantly, for elder tenants.

# DO YOU KNOW WHERE YOUR GRANDPARENTS ARE TONIGHT?

**Do you know an elderly person who:**

- τ Is receiving complaints from his or her landlord?
- τ Has received a thirty-day notice to vacate or an eviction notice?
- τ Has stopped paying rent for no apparent reason?
- τ Would have difficulty getting to Court?
- τ Doesn't understand that he or she could be evicted?



If you answer yes to any of these questions, this elderly person may benefit from the

## **ALTERNATIVES TO LANDLORD/tenant COURT FOR THE ELDERLY PROJECT**

A coalition of housing providers, social workers, legal service providers, and landlord attorneys committed to helping elderly tenants remain in their homes with necessary support services.

**For assistance or more information  
call Legal Counsel for the Elderly (202) 434-2120.**

**) SABE USTED DÓNDE ESTÁN SUS  
ABUELOS ESTA NOCHE?**

**) Conoce usted a una persona anciana que:**

- τ Está recibiendo quejas de su arrendador?
- τ Ha recibido un aviso mandandola a mudarse dentro de 30 días o un aviso de desalojo?
- τ Ha dejado de pagar alquiler sin tener ninguna razón evidente para hacerlo?
- τ Le sería difícil ir a la corte?
- τ No entiende que podría ser desalojada?

Si usted responde Así@ a cualquiera de estas preguntas, esa persona anciana podría beneficiarse del

**PROYECTO DE ALTERNATIVAS A LA CORTE DE  
ARRENDADORES Y ARRENDATARIOS PARA  
PERSONAS ANCIANAS.**

Una coalición de entidades de viviendas, asistentes sociales, entidades de servicios legales y abogados de arrendadores dedicada a ayudar a las personas ancianas para que permanezcan en sus hogares con los servicios de apoyo necesarios.



**Si necesita asistencia o más  
información, llame a  
Legal Counsel for the Elderly al (202) 434-2120.**

### Senior Social Service Providers

**Iona Senior Services**  
4125 Albermarle St., NW  
Wash., DC 20016  
Tel: 202-966-1055  
**Service Area:**  
Ward 2 (Foggy Bottom & Dupont Circle areas), Ward 1 (Kalorama Hgts.), and Ward 3

**Barney Neighborhood House Senior Program**  
504 Kennedy St., NW  
Wash., DC 20002  
Tel: 202-939-9020  
**Service Area:**  
Ward 1 & 4

**Family & Child Services Of Washington, DC**  
1250 Taylor St., NW  
Wash., DC 20001  
Tel: 202-328-3270  
**Service Area:**  
Wards 1&4 (NW) (other areas if not already serviced)

**Emmaus Services for the Aging**  
5 Thomas Circle, NW  
Wash., DC 20005  
Tel: 202-745-1200  
**Service Area:**  
Downtown/Shaw Area

**EOFULA Educational Organization For United Latin Americans**  
1844 Columbia Rd., NW  
Wash., DC 20009  
Tel: 202-483-5800  
**Service Area:**  
Spanish Speaking Clients

**Asian Services Center**  
477 G Pl., NW  
Wash., DC 20001  
Tel: 202-842-4376  
**Service Area:**  
City wide serving Asian community

**Downtown Cluster's Geriatric Day Care Center**  
900 Mass. Ave., NW  
Wash., DC 20001  
Tel: 202-347-7527  
**Service Area:**  
All Wards

**Dwelling Place**  
2812 Penn. Ave., SE  
Wash., DC 20020  
Tel: 202-582-7138  
**Service Area:**  
Ward 6C (East of the Anacostia) & Ward 7

**Phillip T. Johnson Senior Center**  
4323 Bowen Road, SE  
Wash., DC 20019  
Tel: 202-398-5948  
**Service Area:**  
Ward 7

**Senior Citizen Counseling & Delivery**  
2451 Good Hope Road, SE  
Wash., DC 20020  
Tel: 202-678-2800  
**Service Area:**  
Ward 8

**United Planning Organization/Project KEEN Comprehensive Senior Program**  
4025 Minnesota Ave, NE  
Wash., DC 20019  
Tel: 202-279-5871  
**Service Area:**  
Wards 6,7 & 8

**Greater Washington Urban League, Aging Division**  
2900 Newton St., NE  
Wash., DC 20018  
Tel: 202-529-8701  
**Service Area:**  
Ward 2 & 5

**Adult Protective Services**  
2146 - 24th Pl., NE  
Wash., DC 20018  
Tel: 202-541-3950  
**Service Area:**  
City Wide  
**NOTE:** (Referrals taken for suspected abuse, neglect, or Exploitation of an elderly or disabled adult.)

### Alternatives to Landlord/Tenant Court for the Elderly Project



A project committed to helping elderly tenants remain in their homes with necessary support services.

Tel: (202) 434-2120

### **Alternatives to Landlord/Tenant Court for the Elderly Project**

Elderly tenants may find themselves in situations where they are facing eviction through no fault of their own.

The Alternatives to Landlord/Tenant Court for the Elderly Project provides a network of supportive services to help elderly tenants who are experiencing problems that could potentially lead to evictions from their apartments.

The "Alternatives Project" assists landlords who seek solutions to dealing with their elderly tenants through an informal, yet coordinated system that would alleviate the need to resort to legal proceedings against elderly tenants. Alternative solutions can include involving various social service agencies and/or legal service providers before filing a lawsuit. With the appropriate community, social, and financial support services put in place, an elderly tenant may continue to reside in their homes.

The Alternatives to Landlord/Tenant Court for the Elderly project is made up of a coalition of housing providers, legal service providers, landlord attorneys, and social workers committed to helping the elderly remain in their homes with necessary support services.

### **If you have an elderly tenant who:**

- \* Is having trouble keeping his or her apartment clean
- \* Is without utility services due to his or her failure to make payments
- \* Has stopped paying rent regularly for no apparent reason
- \* May be in violation of various terms of his or her lease
- \* Is in threat of receiving a thirty-day notice to vacate or an eviction notice
- \* Would have difficulty getting to court if sued
- \* Doesn't understand that he or she could be evicted
- \* Needs social support services to continue to live independently

### **Contact Alternatives to Landlord/Tenant Court for the Elderly Project.**

**If you need assistance or more information  
about the Alternatives to Landlord/Tenant  
Court for the Elderly Project, call:**

**Legal Counsel for the Elderly  
(202) 434-2120.**

