March 25, 2020

Dear Housing Provider:

Last week, we wrote to ask that you stop all eviction actions in the face of this public health crisis, and we have heard that some of you have decided to suspend the issuance of 21/30 notices and notices of eviction related to nonpayment of rent. If you are among the housing providers that have already taken this action, thank you!

We are urging all of you to take this and additional actions to protect your tenants and your community as this crisis continues. As Governor Northam has said during every press briefing, it is essential that everyone stay home whenever possible in order to flatten the curve and protect the capacity of our health care system to handle the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, the National Multifamily Housing Council has put out recommendations for housing providers to follow. (See https://www.nmhc.org/news/press-release/2020/apartment-industry-committed-to-supporting-residents-impacted-by-covid-19/. ) Their recommendations include:

- Halting all evictions based upon nonpayment of rent for 90 days for tenants financially impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. We suggest you implement this proactively by inviting tenants to submit a written request for hardship explaining that they meet this qualification.
- Offering repayment plans that allow impacted tenants twelve months to catch up on rent. We urge you to adopt a “no questions asked” policy for these plans.
- Waiving late fees for all impacted tenants.
- Avoiding rent increases during the crisis to help minimize the amount of any arrearage that tenants may accrue due to COVID-19 related financial hardships.

In addition, we urge you to reassure your tenants that you will continue to make necessary repairs to their units and promptly pass along information to your tenants that can help them get through this crisis. Federal and state agencies continue to roll out programs designed to help tenants remain in their homes. If you are having trouble finding information about these programs, please feel free to contact us or visit our website, www.vplc.org, where we will try to post updated information.

Thank you for your efforts to protect tenants and the community and flatten the curve.

Laura Wright
Equal Justice Works Housing Fellow

Christie Marra
Director of Housing Advocacy