



44 Court Street, Suite 1206
Brooklyn, NY 11201
718-624-3894 Phone
718-624-3926 Fax
INFO@ACCESSJUSTICEBK.ORG
ACCESSJUSTICEBROOKLYN.ORG

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, our office is open by appointment only. Walk-ins for clients or visitors is not permitted at this time and we have paused in-person intakes (new requests for legal help). However, we remain committed to providing our clients with the same high level of service that we have delivered for the past 32 years. We have adopted a hybrid-remote model allowing staff to safely meet with clients in-person, our phone hotline assistance remains open, and we continue to deliver an array of legal services – meeting with clients virtually and coordinating with our dedicated volunteers. We will continue to work tirelessly to address our clients' needs during these challenging times and remain a vital legal resource for thousands of Brooklynites.

If you need legal help, please call (718) 624-3894 or start an [online intake](#). If you need to make an appointment, please contact your appointed attorney or call (718) 624-3894.

As COVID-19 persists, public health remains a primary nationwide concern. Unfortunately, we are also now seeing the most vulnerable communities having to deal with financial challenges and pandemic-related scams. Like most, you may be experiencing a great deal of uncertainty and fear around COVID-19 and its impact on your economic stability.

To help alleviate community concerns, we have compiled a list of useful homeowner and renter information that will be updated on our [website](#) as new developments emerge.

IMPORTANT CONTACT PHONE NUMBERS

Kings County Clerk: (347) 404-9123

Coronavirus Court Hotline: (833) 503-0447

COVID-19 HOMEOWNER AND RENTER INFORMATION

Mortgages: If homeowners cannot make mortgage payments, contact mortgage servicers to request payment forbearances or other loss mitigation options. Forbearances do not forgive the debt, but they may extend loan terms with no late payment fees and no negative reporting to credit bureaus. Mortgage lenders/servicers are required to offer mortgage forbearance plans to a New York borrower of a "home loan" who is "in arrears or on a trial period plan, or who has applied for loss mitigation and demonstrates financial hardship".



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Foreclosure: The state-wide moratorium for residential foreclosure cases ended on January 15, 2022. Residential foreclosure cases are now allowed to be commenced, and pre-existing cases are allowed to proceed.

Some homeowners may be eligible for funds through the Homeowner Assistance Fund (HAF). The American Rescue Plan passed by Congress in March of 2021 provided New York with funds to help homeowners at risk of default, foreclosure, and displacement as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The NYS HAF program is being administered by the NY State affordable housing agency, NYS Homes & Community Renewal (HCR), in partnership with Sustainable Neighborhoods LLC, a non-profit dedicated to foreclosure prevention and homeownership preservation. To determine eligibility, contact Access Justice Brooklyn. The last day to submit an application for HAF funds is February 18, 2022.

Rental Assistance: For information on NYC rental assistance programs, see:

- <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/hra/help/rental-assistance.page>
- <https://otda.ny.gov/programs/emergency-rental-assistance>

Evictions: No eviction proceedings for holdover or nonpayment of rent can be commenced against applicants until determination of program eligibility is made. A newly passed Emergency Rental Assistance Program (“ERAP”) is available to provide funds to pay for up to 12 months of past due rent from March 13, 2020, plus three more months of payments, for tenants currently struggling to pay.

New eviction proceedings are still being filed, but tenants cannot be defaulted for not appearing. Additionally, the Tenant Safe Harbor Act creates an affirmative defense for tenants in eviction cases, was recently expanded by Governor Cuomo’s Executive Order 202.66. The Act now prohibits landlords from evicting tenants for rent that accrued during the state’s shutdown prior to March 7, 2020. This period expires January 1, 2021. For tenants who qualify, warrants or judgments of eviction may not be executed during that period. While a landlord may not evict a tenant for rent not paid during this period, the landlord may still seek and receive a money judgment against a tenant for that past due rent.

Utilities: The moratorium on utility service shutoffs during the COVID-19 state of emergency ended on December 21, 2021. However, New York State is offering financial assistance and consumer protections to assist customers maintain their utility service and pay down their arrears.