

# Legal Services of Northern Virginia Housing

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## Information about LSNV's Housing Practice

Low-income residents of Northern Virginia face many obstacles in maintaining decent, safe and affordable housing for themselves and their families. LSNV's Housing-Law Program provides:

- legal representation;
- advocacy;
- outreach; and
- education.

The program's primary goal is to prevent homelessness caused by unnecessary evictions, illegal lockouts, illegal utility cut-offs, or discrimination based upon a mental or physical disability. An emphasis is put on cases where tenants are at risk of having their subsidized housing improperly terminated.

Housing attorneys file rent escrow actions against landlords to improve living conditions for tenants and to force landlords to comply with building and housing codes materially affecting health and safety. They also file affirmative fair housing lawsuits.

In addition to or in lieu of in-court representation, housing attorneys provide assistance by:

- handling administrative hearings;
- providing advice and counsel;
- negotiating settlement agreements;
- assisting with drafting *pro se* answers or motions; and
- referring cases to *pro bono* attorneys, other legal service providers, legal aid organizations, government agencies or charitable organizations.

LSNV also makes presentations to volunteers, *pro bono* attorneys, agencies, low-income tenants, and tenant organizations throughout the region.

The LSNV Housing Practice Group meets regularly to discuss case acceptance and strategize on existing cases.

LSNV acceptance of a case depends upon:

- whether that case fits within LSNV's priorities;
- whether the members of the household are within LSNV's income guidelines;
- the merits of the case;
- the availability of attorneys;
- whether the opposing party is represented by counsel; and
- the possibility of making positive changes to Virginia housing law.

## Pamphlets, Forms and Outlines

What are [Your Rights as a Tenant?](#) (in [Spanish](#))

<a href="#">Housing Discrimination in Virginia</a>
<a href="#">Evictions in Virginia</a>
<a href="#">Repairs in Rental Housing Your Rights and Responsibilities</a>
<a href="#">The Ten Most Important Things You Need to Know About Defendant's Residential Landlord Tenant Practice in Virginia</a> ® 2004

<a href="#">Summons for Unlawful Detainer</a> [Form DC-421]
<a href="#">Tenant's Assertion</a> and Complaint [Form DC-429]
<a href="#">Instructions</a> for DC-429

## Housing Vignettes

For information on writing vignettes to be posted on this Website, click [Legal Vignettes](#).

### PRE-TRIAL —

1. [Summons for Unlawful Detainer – Chart](#)
2. [Answer with Grounds of Defense – Unlawful Detainer](#) (LSNV) (pdf)