

Oregon tenants could soon receive rent protections

Lawmakers vote to protect them from eviction for 60 days

By **JAMIE GOLDBERG**
The Oregonian

SALEM — Oregon tenants who are continuing to struggle to pay their rent due to the coronavirus pandemic may soon be protected from eviction if they apply for rent assistance.

The Oregon Senate voted 26-3 Tuesday, June 22, to approve legislation that would protect residential renters from eviction for 60 days if they apply for rent assistance and notify their landlords. The vote came less than a week after the Oregon House unanimously approved the legislation.

The bill will now head to Gov. Kate Brown's desk for final approval.

"None of us want to go back home when this session ends and see families and children being evicted because they are unable to come up with the money,"

said Sen. Kayse Jama, D-Portland, who carried the bill.

Democratic lawmakers introduced the new legislation last week in an attempt to prevent an onslaught of evictions after the state's moratorium on evictions expires at the end of June.

Lawmakers gave Oregon renters until Feb. 28, 2022, to repay overdue rent accumulated between April 2020 and this month, averting massive bills for past-due rent July 1.

But the new bill is the first legislation that would offer eviction protections to Oregon renters who can't pay their rent on time on July 1 and beyond.

The state is in the process of distributing \$204 million in federal rent assistance through the new Oregon Emergency Rental Assistance Program, but Oregon Housing and Community Services officials and community organizations that provide rent assistance warned lawmakers earlier this month that they wouldn't be able

to get much of that money out before the eviction moratorium expired at the end of June.

The state agency said it couldn't roll out the new rent assistance program until it received guidance from the federal government on how the funds could be spent. That delayed the launch until mid-May. Community organizations distributing rent assistance said technical issues with the state's application system have further slowed down the process.

After learning about the rent assistance delays, Democratic lawmakers rushed to introduce the new legislation last week to protect struggling renters from eviction if they are caught up in the rent assistance backlog. Under the legislation, renters who apply for assistance will be protected from eviction for 60 days after they've informed their landlords that they've applied. The provision will remain in effect until March 1, 2022.

The initial version of

the bill received significant pushback from Republicans and landlord groups, who said that housing providers had already been pushed to the limit and contended that the new legislation amounted to yet another extension of the eviction moratorium.

But lawmakers worked last week to add new provisions to the legislation to provide more support for landlords.

Under the legislation passed June 17, landlords who apply or have applied for compensation through the state's Landlord Compensation Fund will receive assistance for 100% of unpaid rent they are owed by tenants. Previously, landlords who received assistance were required to forgive 20% of unpaid rent.

Landlords could apply for assistance through the Landlord Compensation Fund through June 23. Those that have already received aid through the fund will be compensated for the 20% in back rent

that they were required to forgive.

The legislation also includes a provision allowing landlords to apply for relief if their tenants' rent assistance applications are rejected or they don't receive payment within 60 days after their tenants submit documentation proving they've applied for rent assistance. That relief would cover any missed rent their tenants accumulated while their rent assistance applications were being processed, with landlords receiving up to \$5,000 per tenant.

The U.S. Census Bureau surveyed more than 940,000 Oregon renters in their most recent Household Pulse Survey in May. More than 51,000 of the Oregon households surveyed said they were behind on rent payments. And nearly 17% of Oregon renters surveyed said they had no confidence or only slight confidence that they could pay next month's rent.

The new legislation could help many of those

renters, if they apply for assistance. However, the bill will not help tenants who may not qualify for rent assistance or may be unaware of the aid available to them. The Oregon Emergency Rental Assistance Program is available to renters who have incomes less than 80% of the area median income, have experienced financial hardship due to the pandemic and are in danger of experiencing homelessness or housing instability. For a family of four in the Portland metro area, 80% of area median income is \$77,350.

Delays in distributing the funds could also free landlords to move ahead with eviction proceedings after 60 days.

Nearly 11,000 Oregon households had applied for more than \$73 million in rent and utility assistance through the Oregon Emergency Rental Assistance Program as of June 15. Applications for the program have been open since May 19.

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- Baker City Herald
- Dollar Tree
- Black's Distributing
- Ryder Bros
- VFW
- Baker Elk's Lodge
- Main Event
- Lefty's Tap House
- Little Bagel Shop
- Baker City Fire Dept.
- Haines Sell-Rite
- Idle Hour
- Salvation Army

114 Self-Help Group Meetings

UNION COUNTY AA MEETINGS LA GRANDE

MONDAYS
Brown Baggers
12:00 PM
First Christian Church
901 Penn Ave
South Door downstairs.

TUESDAYS
Into Action Group
12 - 1:00 pm
Presbyterian Church
1308 Washington Ave.
(entry 6th & Spring St.)

Brown Baggers
6:00 PM
First Christian Church
901 Penn Ave
South Door downstairs.

City of Elgin
Greater Elgin Group
7 - 8:00 pm
St. Mary's Catholic Church
93 S 12 St., Elgin

WEDNESDAYS
Island City
Soul Sister's
5:30 p.m.
10801 Walton Rd.
Blue Springs Apartments
Community Room

Turning Point Group
7 - 8:15 pm
63161 Gekeler Lane
Fort Union Grange Hall
(Corner of McAllister & Gekeler)

THURSDAYS
City of Cove
Cove Group
7 - 8:00 pm
Baptist Church
707 Main St.

FRIDAYS
Brown Baggers
12:00 PM
First Christian Church
901 Penn Ave
South Door downstairs.

City of Elgin
Elgin Group
(Winter only)
6:00 PM
70564 Valley View Rd
(in shop)

SATURDAYS
Grande Ronde Valley Group
7 - 8:00 pm
Presbyterian Church
1308 Washington Ave.
(entry 6th & Spring St.)

BEARCO LOCATION HAS BEEN PERMANENTLY CLOSED.

Virtual Zoom AA Meeting
Everyday at 7:00 PM
To link to meetings, go to:
www.oregonaadistrict29.org

Questions call
AA Hotline: 541-624-5117

114 Self-Help Group Meetings

AL-ANON, Cove. Keep coming back. Mondays, 7-8pm. Calvary Baptist Church. 707 Main, Cove.

AA MEETINGS
Wednesday Nights, 7-8:15pm. Fort Union Grange Hall, corner of McAllister & Gekeler Lanes. For more info, call 541-786-1222

AL-ANON Attitude of Gratitude. Wednesdays, 12:15-1:30pm. Faith Lutheran Church. 12th & Gekeler, La Grande. 541-786-2051

Call 541-963-3161 or 541-523-3673 to place your ad.

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS
Monday, Thursday, & Friday at 8pm. Episcopal Church 2177 First St. Baker City

Drug Problem? We can help!
Narcotics Anonymous
Phone: 541-805-2229
www.neo-na.org

T.O.P.S.
Meets every Tuesday Morning 8:30 a.m.-10 a.m.
LDS Church in Island City.
Fragrance Free Group

CELEBRATE RECOVERY
Calvary Baptist Church
Third & Broadway
Baker City, OR
EVERY THURSDAY
6:15 - 8:00 PM

DO YOU HAVE... HURTS, HABITS and/or HANG UPS?
12 Step Biblical Support
Harvest Church
3720 Birch St. Baker City
Thurs., 6:30 - 8:30 PM

LA GRANDE NOW HAS A GAMBLERS ANONYMOUS MEETING!
Every Friday Night @5pm, 2107 Gekeler Ln, LG, Church of Christ basement. For more info please call 971-219-8411

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS
Go in' Straight Group
Meetings:
Mon., Tues. Thurs. & Fri.
Start at 8 PM
Episcopal Church Basement
2177 1st Street, Baker City

PEOPLE with PARKINSON'S
Caregivers, Family, Friends
SUPPORT GROUP
Contact Judith at 208-855-9199
Meetings resume @GRH when restrictions ease.

AL-ANON FAMILY GROUP
(Support for family & friends of Alcoholics)
Tuesday evenings
Joseph Methodist Church
(basement on northside)
Joseph, OR
6-7pm. Contact 541-398-1398

Classified are worth looking into when you're looking for a place to live ... whether it's a home, an apartment or a mobile home.

114 Self-Help Group Meetings

Someone's drinking a problem? AL-ANON
Meetings available by phone Info for Baker City Meetings
Call: 541-523-5851 or 541-239-7323

OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS
Tues., Noon - 1 PM
(Weather Permitting)
Geiser Pollman Park
Baker City
Call: 541-540-5326
-or- 541-523-5128
Please Leave a Message

Are You Lonely? Do You Need Help? Are You Looking For A New Direction? A.C.T.S.
Alcohol Chemical Treatment Series

Meetings at:
Lighthouse Church
10501 W 1st Street
Island City, OR 97850
Tuesdays @ 7PM

BAKER COUNTY AA MEETINGS BAKER CITY

MONDAYS
Survivor's Group
12 -1:00 pm
Baker Presbyterian Church
1995 4th St.
(4th & Court, Side Door)

TUESDAYS
K.I.S.S.
(Keep it Simple Sister)
12 - 1:00 pm
1645 Eldon St. Eldon Court
Apts Community Room

WEDNESDAYS
Survivor's Group
12:05 pm
Baker Presbyterian Church
1995 4th St.
(4th & Court, Side Door)

THURSDAYS
Survivor's Group
12:05 pm
Baker Presbyterian Church
1995 4th St.
(4th & Court, Side Door)

NEW MEETING
Huntington Christian Center
Thursday's 7pm
595 E Monroe Street
Huntington, OR

FRIDAYS
Been There Done That
(Grapevine Meeting)
5:30 -6:30 pm 2970 Walnut
(Corner of "D" & Grove St.)
Grove Apts. Community Rm

A.A. Book Study
6:00 - 7:00 pm

SATURDAYS
As Bill Sees It Group
10:00 am 2970 Walnut
(Corner of "D" & Grove St.)
Grove Apts. Community Rm

SUNDAYS
Been There Done That
5:30 pm 2970 Walnut
(Corner of "D" & Grove St.)
Grove Apts. Community Rm

Questions call AA Hotline:
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