



Hon. Craig J. Doran
7th Judicial District
Administrative Judge



City of Rochester, NY
Lovely A. Warren, Mayor

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Local Leaders Announce Community Effort to Assist in Eviction Cases *Collaboration between Monroe County, City of Rochester and the 7th Judicial District*

Rochester, NY – Monroe County Executive Adam Bello, Congressman Joe Morelle, 7th Judicial District Administrative Judge Craig Doran and Rochester Mayor Lovely Warren today announced a new Monroe County Special COVID Intervention Part (SCIP) court structure that will streamline landlord/tenant cases and link people facing eviction with legal and housing support services. This initiative includes a groundbreaking community collaborative which will help provide emergency rent assistance to prevent people from being evicted from their homes due to COVID-19-related hardship.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has uprooted individuals and families throughout Monroe County and our region, just as it has in countless other communities across the nation. This collaboration will help to ensure Monroe County residents suffering from economic hardship have every opportunity to remain in their homes, and aren’t punished for financial circumstances beyond their control,” **said Monroe County Executive Adam Bello**. “By working together, the county, city, court system and community-based organizations, we will make it easier for people to access the help they need during this time of unprecedented crisis.”

Monroe County has committed \$6 million in CARES Act funding for the Eviction Prevention Pilot Initiative. This program, administered by area community-based organizations, will provide direct funds to landlords/banks for individuals and families in need of up to five months of back rent/mortgage. The program uses a universal application process that helps people more easily obtain aid from available programs by starting with Lifeline/211, a community-based organization or the courts rather than starting the process at the Department of Human Services.

“Every person has the right a safe, secure place to call home,” **said Congressman Joe Morelle**. “But COVID-19 has left families in our community and across the country struggling, and too many people live in fear that they will be thrown out of their homes while they are already in crisis. I’m proud to have helped secure funding through the CARES Act to ensure families have access to the help they need to prevent eviction, and I’m grateful for the collaboration of my partners in government as we work to support our community through these unprecedented times.”

Applicants will be pre-screened by Lifeline/211 and referred for the program. Program applicants must be able to make payments on their own going forward, and will be referred to free financial counseling. Income eligibility is capped at 275% of the Federal Poverty Level, or about \$72,050 for a family of four.

“I am proud to collaborate with our partners in Monroe County and the New York Courts to ensure that city residents and families remain stably housed,” **said Mayor Lovely Warren**. “The City of Rochester has committed more than \$5.6 million toward a number of worthwhile initiatives that will address eviction prevention, homelessness, street outreach and more. We will continue to support tenants and landlords as the community recovers from the financial devastation brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.”

The Monroe County Special COVID Intervention Part court structure will oversee and manage the high volume of landlord/tenant cases expected due to COVID-19. SCIP will consolidate all tenant/landlord cases in the City of Rochester and Monroe County's towns and villages into a single court structure housed at the Hall of Justice, with an initial term running through Dec. 31.

"Collaboration is the 'lifeblood' of our ability to maximize access to justice in our community, while at the same time enhancing the trust the community has in our ability to provide that justice. That is why I, and the judges and staff I supervise in our region, are extremely grateful to our community partners-both government and not-for-profit organizations - who have made SCIP and countless other innovative efforts possible," **Hon. Craig J. Doran, 7th Judicial District Administrative Judge** said. "SCIP makes our courts, and our community uniquely well-positioned to meet the challenges COVID-19 has presented. I am extremely proud of the judges and court staff in our region who have joined our community partners to assure that residents particularly hard hit by the pandemic will have the access to justice they're entitled to expect."

"United Way invests over \$800,000 annually to support local eviction prevention programs, yet we know the impacts of COVID-19 have dramatically increased the need for these critical services," **said Jaime Saunders, President and CEO of United Way of Greater Rochester**. "Thanks to our generous community, we are able to invest an additional \$528,000 to our nonprofit partners who are a part of the community's infrastructure and this innovative and united effort to support families and property owners during this most difficult time."

An additional investment was made possible in part by thousands of generous donors who came together in collective giving to support United Way's annual campaign. The organizations receiving these funds are Catholic Family Center, Empire Justice Center, Goodwill of the Finger Lakes/2-1-1 LIFE LINE, Housing Council at Pathstone, Legal Aid Society, Legal Assistance of Western New York, and Volunteer Legal Services Project.

Attorneys from area legal services providers will be on-site at SCIP to provide free consultations to tenants. Additionally, representatives from the Monroe County Department of Human Services and various non-for-profit agencies will be on-hand to provide litigants with assistance. Alternative Dispute Resolution services will be offered and virtual court appearances will be allowed on an as-needed basis. Court interpreters will be provided for those who speak English as a second language.

Residents interested in either program should call 211.

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