

The background features several concentric circles of varying radii, some solid and some dashed, creating a ripple effect. A large, solid red speech bubble is centered on the page, pointing downwards. The text is white and centered within the speech bubble.

Community Mediation & Eviction Diversion

The Eviction Landscape in Pgh

- Approximately 5,000 evictions are filed in the City of Pittsburgh every year
- Landlords win judgement in roughly 85% of these cases at the Magisterial District Court level
- An eviction filing- even if the tenant wins the case, stays on their record and impacts future housing options
- The vast majority of evictions are filed against tenants paying less than \$1,000/month in rent.
- 1/3 of the cases are filed against those paying less than \$500/month in rent
- Evictions are costly to landlords, detrimental to tenants, and erode a strong sense of community

Why Mediation?

- Mediation offers a neutral third-party model to resolve conflict
- Mediation gives equal time and weight to both parties, unlike the court process which favors landlords
- The proposed model would be free to landlords and tenants, incentivizing them to try mediation before filing for eviction
- Similar programs in other cities consistently have an 80-90% success rate
- Mediation would not happen in a vacuum- we have to wrap in referrals for other forms of assistance

Where has this worked?

- Cambridge, Massachusetts utilizes CDBG funds for housing mediations (most of them are before an eviction is filed and *prevent* eviction)- 90% success rate
- Baltimore, MD piloted mediation in housing court and had an 81% success rate
- Palo Alto, CA utilizes community mediation to resolve all levels of housing disputes- from rentals to homeowner and condo associations- with an 80% success rate
- Philadelphia, PA piloted a pre-eviction filing program in 2019 with Good Shepherd Mediation and is starting a second phase of the pilot in 2020

Key Components of Eviction Diversion

- **Mediation:** a single service provider utilizing a pool of pro-bono, trained mediators who can provide a rapid response to housing conflicts
- **Rental Assistance:** issues with non-payment of rent necessitate a rental assistance fund. This could be coordinated through URA and or a direct referral system to a housing service provider (HSP)
- **Financial Coaching:** Since many financial situations are bigger than a one-time need, utilizing the city's Financial Empowerment Centers (FEC) would be a helpful addition to services
- **Social Service Supports:** Mediations may bring to light other issues like food insecurity or healthcare issues. A referral system through 211 or DHS would add wraparound supports

How is the program utilized?

- **The process could start in multiple ways:**
 - Referral through MDJ's for eviction filings
 - The landlord or tenant voluntarily seeks mediation/eviction diversion and contacts us
 - A landlord or homeowner utilizes mediation as a mandatory step before an eviction
 - Agencies like the Commission on Human Relations refer cases that are out of their jurisdiction to mediation/eviction diversion
 - Housing Authorities may utilize eviction diversion in the first month of issues, instead of filing for eviction

Interested? Find
out more:

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