I'm having a problem or disagreement with the housing authority. What can I do?

First, talk to the housing authority and try to fix the problem. If you cannot fix the problem, you can use the *grievance procedure*. A *grievance* is a formal complaint that tells the housing authority what your issue is and how you want it resolved.

When can I use the grievance procedure?

You might file a grievance if:

- You have been told you cannot get public or subsidized housing.
- Your rent has been increased unfairly.
- The housing authority has not repaired problems or conditions in your apartment.
- You have been told you cannot get a transfer.
- The housing authority won't add someone to your lease.
- You were charged late fees even though you paid your rent on time.
- Your lease has been terminated.

Important: Even if you have a disagreement with the housing authority or they haven't made repairs to your apartment, **you must keep paying your rent** or you could be evicted.

You cannot file a grievance if you are being evicted because:

- You are accused of threatening or injuring other tenants (and not the housing authority).
- Someone in your household was convicted of a felony.
- Someone in your household was involved in criminal activity that is violent, drug-related, or threatens other tenants or housing authority workers.

For more detailed info, go to:
www.CTLaw.Help/ha-problems
March 2025

Need help?

Statewide Legal Services

www.slsct.org
1-800-453-3320 or 860-344-0380
SLS provides free advice to low-income people who have legal problems in Connecticut. For some legal problems, they may send you to another legal aid program or to a volunteer attorney.

eviction HELP CT

Got a housing problem?
1-800-559-1565
www.EvictionHelpCT.org

How to contact your local legal aid office:

New Haven Legal Assistance Association
203-946-4811

Greater Hartford Legal Aid
860-541-5000

Connecticut Legal Services

Bridgeport
203-336-3851

New Britain
860-225-8678

New London
860-447-0323

Stamford
203-348-9216

Waterbury
203-756-8074

Willimantic
860-456-1761

This booklet was produced by Connecticut Legal Services, Greater Hartford Legal Aid, New Haven Legal Assistance Association, and Statewide Legal Services of Connecticut. It is not intended as legal advice. For advice on your situation, call Statewide Legal Services or contact a lawyer.
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Are You Having Problems with Your Housing Authority or Subsidized Housing?



March 2025

Statewide Legal Services
1-800-453-3320

How do I file a grievance?

Call the housing authority and ask how to file a grievance. The grievance will start with either an *informal* or a *formal* hearing:

Informal Hearing

1. Ask for a hearing. Send a letter to the housing authority that explains the problem and asks for a hearing. Visit www.CTLaw.Help/ha-grievance for sample letters. Send the letter right away so you don't miss the deadline. Keep a copy of your letter for yourself.

Mail the letter to the housing authority using certified mail with a return receipt requested or **bring it to the housing authority** and ask them to give you a receipt.

The housing authority will send you a letter with your hearing date.

2. Get ready for your hearing. Make an appointment to go to the housing authority and read your case file. Note anything negative in the file that might be used against you at the hearing.

You are allowed to bring witnesses who can tell the housing authority about your problem.

Look for evidence to support what you say. You can bring papers or photographs that you think might help you at the hearing.

3. Go to your hearing. Tell the housing authority about your problem and ask them to fix it. You can ask your witnesses questions and show the housing authority any papers and photographs you brought. The housing authority will tell you what they plan to do about your problem.

Important: If you make an agreement with the housing authority, get it in writing.

4. Read the summary of the hearing. After the informal hearing is complete, the housing authority will mail you a summary of what happened. Read it carefully. If you are happy with what the summary says, the grievance procedure is over.

If you are not happy with the summary of the informal hearing or you think it is wrong, ask for a formal hearing right away. The summary should explain how. See www.CTLaw.Help/ha-grievance for sample letters you can use.

Formal Hearing

The process to ask for a formal hearing is the same as explained at left under *Informal Hearing*.

After the formal hearing, the housing authority will mail you a summary of what happened (see Step 4, left). If you are happy with what the summary says, the grievance procedure is over.

If you are not happy with what the summary says, your options are usually limited. Call Statewide Legal Services at 1-800-453-3320.

What are my rights at the formal hearing?

You have the right to have an attorney or any other person represent you at the formal hearing. You may keep the hearing private or open to the public—it is your choice. You have the right to present evidence and witnesses and to question any of the housing authority's witnesses.

What happens if I don't go to the hearing?

It is very important that you go to your hearing. If you don't go, your hearing might be postponed or the hearing officer could decide that you have lost your right to have a hearing. If you cannot go to the hearing, call the housing authority right away and ask to have it rescheduled. If the housing authority won't change the hearing date, a friend can go to your hearing and explain why you couldn't go.

What should I do if I have been denied public or subsidized housing?

If you are denied public or subsidized housing, you will get a letter that explains why you were denied and how to ask for a hearing so you can appeal the denial. You must appeal right away. If you miss the deadline, you won't get a hearing and you'll have to reapply for housing. For sample letters, see www.CTLaw.Help/ha-grievance.

Mail the letter to the housing authority or bring it to them (see Step 1 at left). After you send the letter, follow the grievance procedure described in Steps 2 through 4.

If you were denied because of bad credit, the denial letter should name the credit agency used. Visit that agency's website to request your free credit report.

If there are mistakes on the report, dispute them with the credit agency. At your hearing, explain what you've done to fix your report.

If the credit report is correct, explain how you are managing your money now. For example, if past debt was related to a disability like bipolar disorder, share that you are now on medication and are better managing your finances.

What if I was denied housing because of a criminal record?

Check your criminal record to see if there are mistakes. You can get an unofficial copy of your record on the CT Judicial Branch website at www.CTLaw.help/ jd-crim-search, but if your conviction is from more than ten years ago, it won't appear there.

You can get an official copy of your criminal record from the CT State Police. You will have to submit your fingerprints on a special form. If you can't afford the fee, request a fee waiver. See:

- www.CTLaw.help/crim-check
- www.CTLaw.help/pardons

What if I was denied housing because of a past eviction?

Tell the housing authority the story behind the eviction, but keep it short. If you didn't pay the rent because you couldn't afford it, say that. Explain that having subsidized housing will make your life better because you will be able to afford your bills. Show the housing authority how you were able to manage any other bills that you were able to pay. **Important:** Ask for the hearing as soon as you get the denial letter.