



APRIL 2024



**Landlords in Mass. Sued for
Discrimination Following
Watchdog Sting Operation**

**Contact Your Rep, Senator and
Renters to Oppose 193 H.4356
and H.4138 Eviction Sealing,
Debt Cancellation**

**The Complete
Guide to the
MassLandlords vs.
EOHLC Loss and
How it Hurt Renters**

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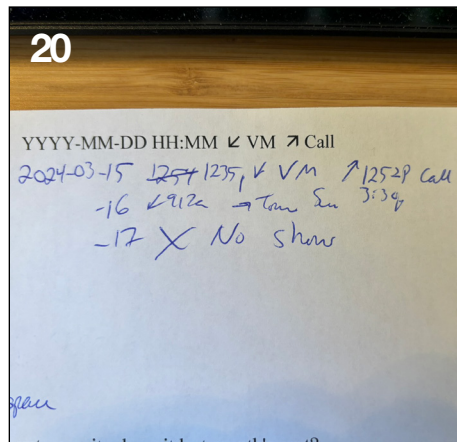
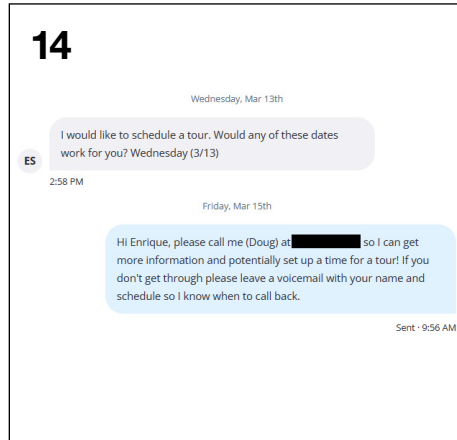
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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Oppose Eviction Sealing

Our Letter from the Executive Director for April 2024 focuses on our month-long broadcast opposed to eviction sealing, and gives some idea of the work team members have been doing on core services.



In March, we broadcast our opposition to eviction sealing in the HOMES Act (193 H.4356) and the Housing Bond Bill (193 H.4138). We also worked very hard on some medium-term projects to improve our training presence in search results and to update our rental forms.

Eviction sealing absorbed most of our time by far. They propose to block public access to MassCourts.org so landlords cannot use evictions in background checks. To make matters worse, the latest bill text also contains a debt cancellation pathway. This would eliminate up to \$700 million of judgments going back 20 years and millions each month going forward. Watch our [4-minute video for details](#). We are also asking you to [engage your renters](#).

Engaging renters on this issue is extremely important. The so-called renter advocates have proudly testified to the legislature that they have been taken to court many, many times. But the most recent [data shows](#) that 96% of renters avoid court each year. Of those taken to court, they have won only 29 out of 8,617 cases decided (2021 outcomes). Eviction for any reason indicates a problem, including so-called “no fault” evictions. “No fault” doesn’t mean the renter was blameless. It just means the landlord couldn’t meet evidentiary standards in court. Usually good renters are afraid or unable to testify against their bad neighbors.

Eviction is most often different from poverty. Housing providers fight poverty on a daily basis by arranging rental assistance, signing new roommates or negotiating move-outs. Eviction means the parties stopped being able to talk to one another. Sometimes landlords are to blame. But not usually.

If eviction sealing passes, it will be the good renters who suffer most. Problems like smoking in a no-smoking building, unlawful use of firearms, noise and worse will all become state-enabled as bad renters bounce from sealed eviction to sealed eviction.

So please, [follow our instructions](#) and ask your renters to write to their representatives and senators opposed to both H.4356 and H.4138.

Switching gears to talk about operations: March was a foundation-building month. We firmed up plans to offer the option of paying dues monthly. We also revised our notices to quit and rental application internally, new versions to come out next month. Our phone screening prompt sheet was also revised and is now available.

We have also been working hard to reorganize the way our events appear on our website. We produce many great training opportunities. Soon we’ll be easier to find online.

Thank you for supporting our mission to create better rental housing. We’ve got your back only because you’ve got ours. Please [join as a member](#), encourage others to join, become a [property rights supporter](#) or increase your level of support. We aim to hire both a full-time educator and policy advocate.

Point your camera app here to read more online.



Sincerely,
Douglas Quattrochi
Executive Director
MassLandlords, Inc.

The Complete Guide to the MassLandlords vs. EOHLC Loss and How it Hurt Renters

By Eric Weld, MassLandlords, Inc.

The Superior Judicial Court's recent weak denial for further appellate review of our public records lawsuit erodes public information law.

With its dismissal in February 2024 of our 2 and a half-year public records lawsuit against the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC), the Superior Judicial Court (SJC) took us a step backward as one of the least transparently governed states in the nation.

In this article, we will do what the media would not: examine and question how it came to be that Massachusetts spent \$800 million with zero public oversight, and blocked our attempts to shine light on it.

On Feb. 15, 2024, the SJC rejected an application for further appellate review of the MassLandlords lawsuit to gain

access to thousands of addresses (but not applicants' names) on applications that were denied rental assistance during the Covid pandemic. More than half the applications for pandemic rental assistance were denied despite ample federal funding. Almost all of those were "timed out" for various reasons. Worst of all, 47,000 applications were printed and set aside in boxes, lost to supervision. As a result of this mismanagement by EOHLC and regional administering agencies under its supervision, tens of thousands of families and individual renters were denied rental assistance when they needed it. Many evictions surely resulted from this oversight.

We noticed early during pandemic rental assistance that application time-outs were inordinately high, and wondered why. In 2021, we made several public information requests to EOHLC (which was then called the Department of Housing and Community Development). They were all denied for procedural,

unrelated reasons.

In December 2021, we filed our lawsuit. Initially, the EOHLC attempted several defenses. The department first stressed that the records we sought were not available. Retrieving them – including those 47,000 boxed and unsupervised – would require hiring 39 full-time employees, plus \$200,000 for printing and mailing, it claimed. (It sounds like a lot of money, but it still would have been a drop in the bucket of the billion dollars the state received to cover all costs, including administrative; and well-spent considering what was at stake.)

The defense also argued that our access to the applications would be a breach of privacy for people living at the addresses we sought; though, as we emphasized, we were not seeking people's names, only addresses. Still, the EOHLC (DHCD) argument was logically inconsistent: If the right to privacy applies to a recipient of rental assistance, then why does someone who did not get rental

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assistance also have a right to privacy? We were seeking addresses of both.

After a motion to dismiss the suit was filed by EOHLC and granted, we filed in superior court. Our complaint was dismissed in June 2022 by Superior Court Justice Jackie Cowin. [Read details about the dismissal.](#) We appealed the case to the Court of Appeals, and were denied appeal after long delays on the part of the court. We immediately [filed an application](#) in late 2023 for further appellate review, called a FAR, in the Superior Judicial Court, ending with the February rejection.

PUBLIC RIGHT TO KNOW

We pursued our complaint all the way to the SJC because we were convinced that the state’s obstruction could not be legally sustained.

Public records law states that the starting assumption is that everything in the executive is a public record. It grants exemptions for personally identifiable information. Addresses are not private records. Addresses, in many contexts, are public: deeds, tax records, evictions, when you show a bartender your license. There are only three public information exemptions for addresses, none of which were met in the EOHLC’s claim.

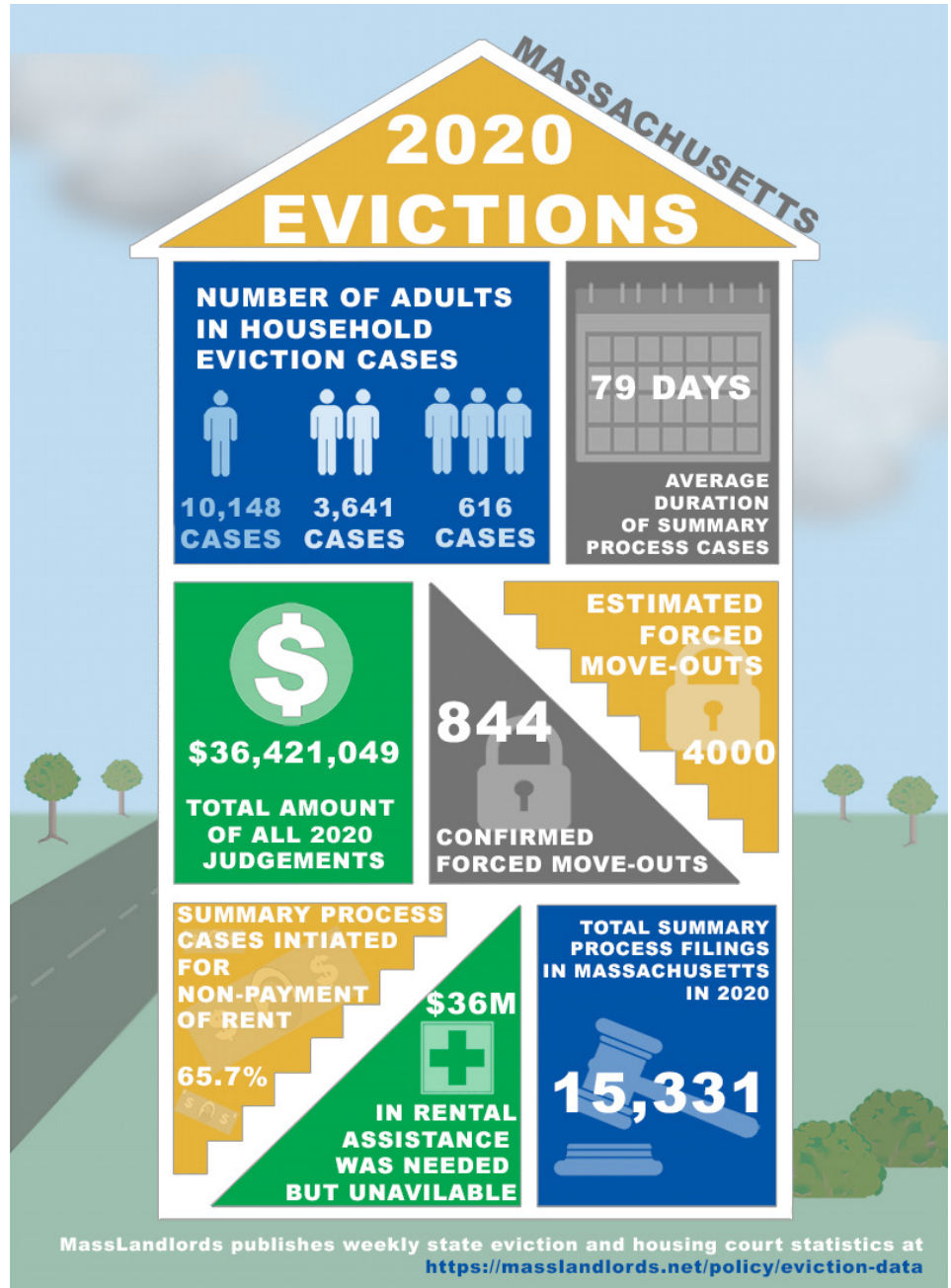
By comparing the addresses of rejected rental assistance applications against publicly accessible addresses of tenants involved in eviction cases, we hoped to illustrate a correlation between denials and protected classes. This would prove what we already know: that state applications were discriminatory.

Why should the applications for rental assistance have been printed in English with only unreliable Google translations for other common languages? This discriminated on the basis of national origin. Why should the applications have required lengthy essays? This discriminated on the basis of disability, particularly people sick with Covid who couldn’t write. Why should the applications have required listing all children? This discriminated on the basis of family status. Lastly, because of intersectionality, the applications ultimately discriminated on the basis of race.

Our argument emphasized the public’s right to know what happened within state agencies that resulted in tens of thousands of rental assistance applications being timed out or rejected. More importantly, we sought to force potential accountability and assist more renters in remaining in their homes going forward. If, as we suspect, rental

assistance denials were incongruently impacting people of color, immigrants and others, whether inadvertent or not, we argued, the public should know about it.

Our public records litigation was to get access to information that would have enabled us to make that determination.



As shown in this infographic, \$36 million was needed but unavailable in 2020 for renters to avoid evictions. Yet, more than 65% of summary process cases were for nonpayment. Why were so many renters, who were unable to pay their rent, turned away for rental assistance during the pandemic year? Image: cc by-sa 4.0 Jennifer Rau MassLandlords.

MASSACHUSETTS PUBLIC RECORDS LAW?

The public’s right to know what is happening behind the scenes of government is at the heart of the public records law. Some version of laws requiring the disclosure of public records has been in place in Massachusetts for more than 150 years.

The Massachusetts public records law is a version of the federal Freedom of Information Act, which was enacted in 1966. However, Massachusetts is unique among U.S. states in the extent of its exemptions from the law. In fact, Massachusetts stands alone as the only state in which the legislature, governor’s office and judiciary enjoy exemptions from having to disclose public records.

The state’s current public records law was written in 2017 and signed by Governor Charlie Baker amid promises for more government transparency. But was that lip service? The governor claimed exemption from the law, too, when he was sued for public information by the *Boston Globe* in 2017. His exemption claim was upheld by then-Attorney General Maura Healey, who, as governor, has also exempted herself from filling public records requests.

The new law removed some obstacles to gaining access to public records, such as exorbitant fees. But it did nothing to clear away some of the exemptions. Municipalities and state offices have a long list of reasons to exempt themselves from providing public records, and redacting them when they do comply with requests.

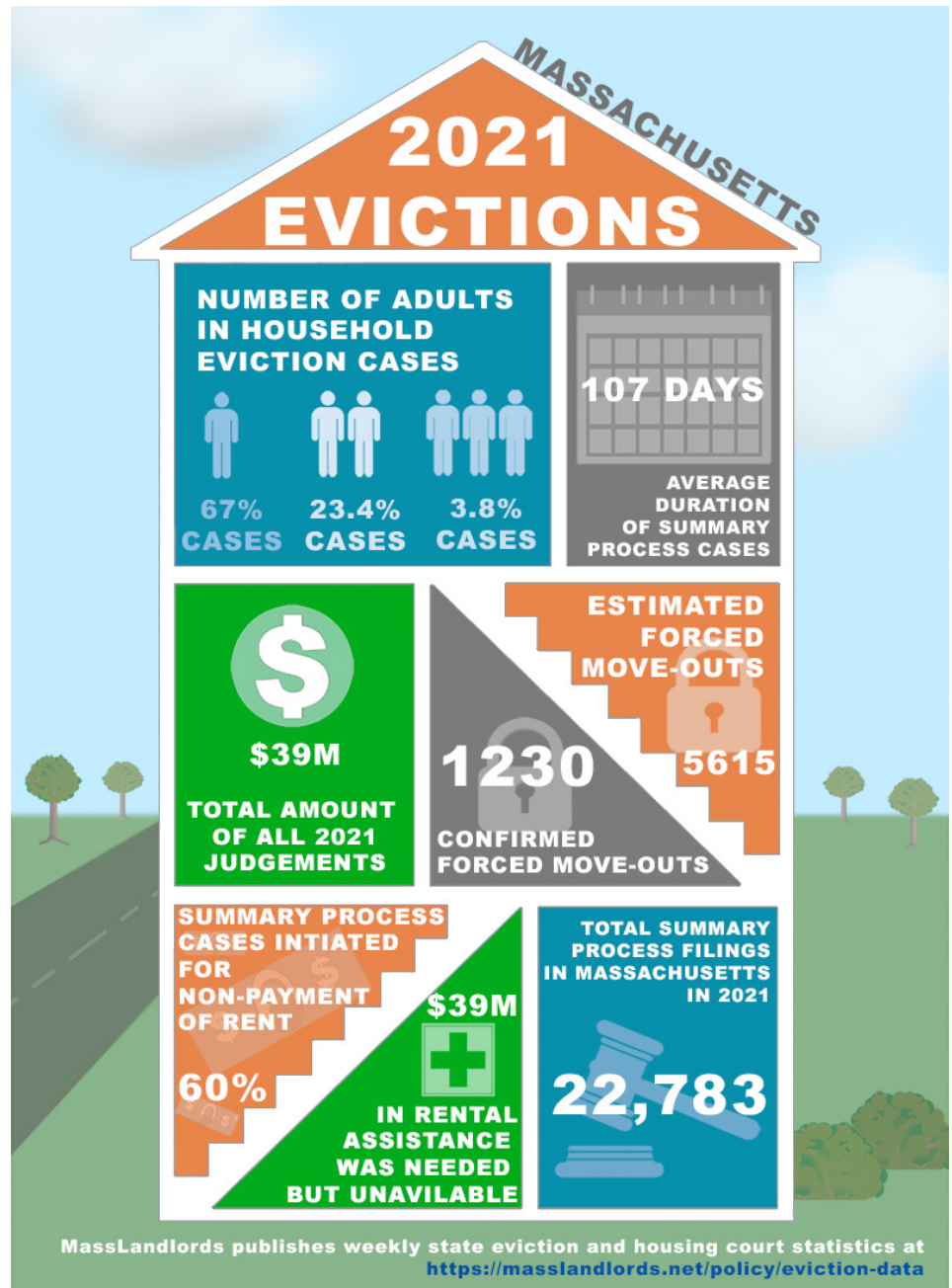
The new law also did nothing to ease the claim of privacy rights that government officials often overuse to deny requests for public information.

Further, ignored public records requests are rampant in Massachusetts, with little oversight or enforcement. Thousands of public records requests are ignored and unfilled every year by public offices, most notably the MBTA and the State Police.

Combined, the exemptions crafted in Massachusetts’ public records law and the law’s weak enforcement make ours one of the least transparent states in the nation. Such public information opacity obviously lends itself to corruption,

cronyism and legal laxity, as we are witnessing.

Now, the state legislature is proposing yet another attempt to shield government process in the form of an eviction sealing bill.



By 2021, as pandemic RAFT was kicking in, the situation had not changed much, with 60% of summary process cases for nonpayment and \$39 million needed but not made available for rental assistance. We wonder: When evictions were paused during the pandemic pending RAFT, how could so many people have been evicted? How could the courts find that they owed and could not pay, yet the state decide they were ineligible to receive rental assistance? Image: cc by-sa 4.0 Jennifer Rau MassLandlords.

“FAILURE TO STATE A CLAIM”

The SJC’s reason for its denial for appeal was “failure to state a claim.” The full legal phrase is “failure to state a claim upon which relief can be granted.”

Dismissing a case based on “failure to state a claim” does not refute the complaint brought by the plaintiff or absolve the defendant. It only says that the court refuses to carry the case forward based on its perceived impossibility. “Failure to state a claim” is not a win or loss for either party, though it effectively benefits the defendant in this case by waiving its responsibility to comply. But importantly, the SJC’s dismissal does not declare the state’s innocence, or adjudicate that the state has done nothing wrong.

This spurious dismissal by the SJC leaves us perplexed and frustrated. We couldn’t have made our claim for cure any clearer: We demanded the release of records that would help us compile statistical data to determine trends in application denials and time outs.

The release of the records we sued for could help us create a correlative pattern that might have corroborated our suspicions of discrimination. Armed with that information, we and state agencies could have addressed the problem so it would not continue or happen again.

Public records lawsuits frequently seek only to retrieve information, as opposed to monetary damages from, or punishment for, the defendants. Such lawsuits, by their nature, are requesting non-material recompense, i.e., the release of public information. Therefore, the “claim for relief” would be the stated request to release public records that would have assisted us in determining fault.

TWO STEPS BACKWARD

With its dismissal of our FAR application, the SJC did two destructive things:

1. It created an example for future obfuscators to point to in denying public records requests.

2. By doing so, the court increased the barriers for obtaining public records in a state that already is one of the most opaque in terms of government transparency and accountability.

Public records law is an essential component of democracy. Academic researchers, journalists, trade associations and individuals have the right to review details about how their government works, makes policy and appoints people to positions of power.

Without that right, and the cooperation of government institutions to be transparent in their workings, democracy is threatened. Government by the people is potentially replaced by government by a small group of individuals behind closed doors.

QUESTIONS REMAIN

After 2 and a half years, multiple legal briefs, four affidavits, several courts and a community of judges, we are still left with our original question. Why were tens of thousands of applications for rental assistance timed out or rejected by authorizing agencies with no substantive explanation given by EOHLC?

Will we ever know?


Public records law is broken in Massachusetts. With its meek denial of our request for further appellate review, the SJC further strengthened the state’s ability to operate without accountability, out of public view, free to mismanage without scrutiny or oversight.

While the public records law is no longer an option for us, we are not giving up our fight for state government accountability. We have filed a bill in the legislature that would fix the gap in our public records law regarding rental assistance. Our bill, “An Act Relative to Residential Assistance to Families in Transition (RAFT),” includes the following clause in section 2: “In order to ensure the just, efficient and discrimination-free administration of housing services, a document made by the Department of Housing and

Community Development or its agent, whether a Regional Administering Agency or other person or entity, pertaining to rental assistance in any form described under Chapter 23B or Chapter 151B Section 4, shall be considered a public record under this chapter to the extent it identifies the lessor, owner, manager or other recipient of funds, the precise address at which housing services were rendered, and the amount and dates of such assistance, provided however that the names of renters, tenants, subtenants, and other occupants of the premises at time of such assistance shall not be public records.”

The bill has so far not gained traction in the legislature.

Also, the option remains for us to sue EOHLC directly for discrimination in rental assistance allotments. Through discovery of that process, we could obtain the addresses we originally sought and still make our comparison.

We will continue fighting for transparency in government and equity in rental assistance. Our democracy depends on it. It’s also essential for our mission of creating a better rental housing environment for both tenants and landlords. 

Point your camera app here to read more online



Landlords in Profile: Jo Landers

By Eric Weld, MassLandlords, Inc.

A Holyoke landlord for 25 years, MassLandlords member Jo Landers focuses on maintaining good rental properties and good tenant relationships.

Since she first became a landlord about 25 years ago, Jo Landers has learned a lot about the business. And while she has had to learn many landlording lessons the hard way, she says, her business philosophies remain solidly rooted in her background and penchant for helping others.

Landers, who lives in Easthampton, owns several residential and commercial rental properties in Holyoke. A MassLandlords member since 2015, Landers ran for a seat on the board of directors in 2023, and may run again in the future.

Landers' modest background and common experience with tenants who sometimes struggle to pay the rent helps inspire her consideration to someday serve on the association's board. Her administrative interests focus in part on educating tenants (and landlords) on their responsibilities.

"So many tenants have very wrong ideas about what the landlord responsibilities are versus their own," she says. "I've seen things from both perspectives. I've been poor and now middle income with some savings. I know what it's like to struggle. And as a landlord, I want tenants to understand their rights, and their responsibilities, especially first-time renters. It's important to have a low-income perspective."



Jo Landers. Image: cc by-sa jo landers

"A LITTLE BLOOD IN EVERY ROOM"

Landers wasn't necessarily planning to be a landlord back in 1998. But she was a seasoned businesswoman, having run her own accounting business in Holyoke since 1991, and was scouting a suitable investment for a small surplus of cash. When the opportunity presented itself to buy a rental property, she took it.

"While I was getting a haircut, I heard about a multifamily available for purchase in Holyoke," she recalls, "a two-family with the porch falling off the back." She took a look at the property, on Walnut Street, not far from the city center. It would need a lot of work, she could see. But she took to the area.

"When I walked the streets and alleys in the neighborhood, I had a good sense of the neighborhood. I could tell that people there were poor, but they were trying to take care of things. You can tell in the alleyway. You could tell it was a kid-friendly neighborhood."

She put her \$8,000 down for the purchase. It was the lowest-priced single

house sale in Holyoke that year, she says.

Then the learning began. The building needed deleading, so she procured a deleading loan from the state and hired a lead abatement contractor. "The deleading process was horrendous," she says. "It was supposed to be six weeks, but it took six months, and I had to pay up front."

She completed much of the needed renovation work herself. "I bought myself a table saw. Then I got a cell phone, in case I got hurt using the table saw, I could call someone." She tore down and reinstalled plaster walls. She replaced the flooring with laminate. "I've got a little bit of blood in every room," as she puts it. "Walls and flooring, most of it is about measuring correctly."

Since that first multifamily, Landers has gone on to purchase another multifamily, a rental home, and a commercial building, where she houses her business and leases space to two others.

INVESTING FOR RETIREMENT

Though she entered the landlording industry from an investment angle, Landers was always interested in low-cost housing. Even now, after a quarter century as a landlord, she considers her rental properties as more of long-term investments than as income generators.

"I got into this for retirement," she explains. "I'm not trying to max out rents, I'm more interested in long-term. All my rents are 20% or more below market. It kills me when I hear the greedy landlord stuff."

Landers enrolled at Smith College in 1989, in the school's Ada Comstock Scholars Program for nontraditional-aged students (disclosure: this writer was an employee at Smith College until 2022),

hoping to design her own major. It's a provision the college allows for students who want to study a subject with some focus outside the offered curriculum. Landers had completed a degree in graphic design at Northern Essex Community College, in Haverhill, and hoped to study building design at Smith.

Instead, she earned her bachelor's degree in computer science, graduating in January 1995. She has built her accounting business, and now employs two other employees.

Landers saw another opportunity to buy a two-family rental property on Oak Street and snapped it up. In 2014, she purchased a house two doors down from her first rental. In 2020, she bought the building in which her accounting business is located, and took over the commercial rents for two other businesses there, Smith Glass and Night Owl Tattoo.

And, in February 2023, Landers bought a house for the purpose of renting to a family she'd heard about that needed a place to live.

"They've been renting from me since, at cost," she says. "I'm not really making money."

RELATING WITH LOW-INCOME RENTERS

Landers' style of landlording may not be the way many in the business would go about it. But her business style is partly dictated by her empathy for other people living through lean financial times.

She worked to pay her way through community college, and later through Smith.

Having walked in the financial shoes of some of her tenants helps inspire her compassion for those for whom she provides housing, even when it's not easy.

"It's getting harder and harder to rent properties," says Landers, "especially to be concerned about your tenants."

She works with her renters when they have difficulties paying rent. She's applied for rental assistance three times on behalf of one of her tenants. And when she had to raise some rents this year to help offset spiking property taxes, she factored in the fixed income of one of her tenants in setting the new rate.



Jo Landers invests a lot of sweat (and blood) equity in her rental properties, including this historic Holyoke multifamily, where she completed many interior renovations herself. Image: cc by-sa jo landers

A VITAL LANDLORD RESOURCE

Landers first joined MassLandlords in 2015 when she worked as an accountant and property manager for a large complex in Worcester.

“I joined because I could see MassLandlords materials were good,” she says. “I realized MassLandlords was covering a lot of stuff,” through live events and published materials, “that couldn’t be covered by books

– authorization forms, and other details regarding forms. It’s a great resource for someone who can do self-study.”

It’s also about being part of a professional community, Landers says. “Being part of MassLandlords has provided valuable professional information and training as well as a place to say, ‘are you kidding me?’, and have people understand what you’re talking about.”


Also, Landers has appreciated MassLandlords’ policy work and lobbying on behalf of the industry. “Then there’s the bigger picture issues, like zoning reform, eviction sealing, eviction moratoriums, etcetera,” she says, “the fact that it takes three months for RAFT, three months for evictions.”

LEARNED ADVICE

Now that she’s been at it for a quarter century, Landers is eyeing a possible business exit strategy. She still carries mortgages for all but one of her properties. “I’m starting to think about rent-to-own arrangements,” she says. “I may not want to deal with court cases, flooded basements, etc., for much longer. My long-term goal is to sell to my tenants if they’re interested in buying.”

Her parting advice for other landlords reflects her attitudes about respecting her tenants and relating with their experiences. “Treat your tenants like you would want to be treated,” she recommends, “while maintaining professional boundaries.”

She also offers some hard-won practical advice regarding renovations and tenant screening. “Assume any repair estimate will end up costing 20% more, so budget accordingly. That way, you may be pleasantly surprised instead of scrambling for funds.”

And when it comes to prospective tenants? Screen thoroughly, she advises. “When you have good tenants, it’s a great experience,” she notes. “But when you have bad ones, it’s hell.” 

Point your camera app here
to read more online



When Jo Landers bought her first multifamily, she could see it needed a lot of work, she says, but she had a good feeling about it when she walked the family-friendly neighborhood. Image: cc by-sa jo landers

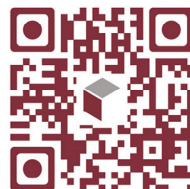
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Spring Notice for 2024 Annual Business Meeting and Elections: October instead of December

Our 2024 Annual Business Meeting and Annual Election will be held electronically in October 2024. Now is the time to volunteer.

Following last year’s bylaws change, we are advancing our annual business meeting and election from December to October. One reason why is to avoid year-end holiday schedule pressure. Also, we hope to preempt election fatigue in years like 2024.

Our annual election is one of two necessary and wholesome democratic

governance mechanisms. First, our ongoing Policy Priorities Survey helps us take positions on complex issues of public policy. Second, each year-end we hold our Annual Business Meeting and Annual Election, at which we elect a new director to the statewide Board of Directors.


We are a 501(c)6 trade association. Together, we all own and run MassLandlords, Inc. Our mission is to create better rental housing in Massachusetts by helping current, new and prospective landlords run sustainable, compliant and quality businesses.

Individual volunteers are welcome to

look at volunteer opportunities online. The best way to get involved is to be a regular event participant.

Regional Boards of Advisors help us to stay connected with local members, and advisors can help with planning events. Many events need help with setting up or tearing down.

Our statewide Board of Directors discusses operations, finances and political strategy. To run for election at the statewide level, nominate yourself or a friend. Some name recognition and history of contributions will be required to win. If you start now, you can build a reputation for productive contributions on the message boards and at local events.

We send this notice six months early so there is plenty of time before decisions are required. Let us know if you want to contribute or learn more! Contact us at 774-314-1896 or hello@masslandlords.net. 

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Landlords in Mass. Sued for Discrimination Following Watchdog Sting Operation

By Kimberly Rau, MassLandlords, Inc.

Twenty housing providers reportedly turned down applicants for claiming to have Section 8 housing vouchers, an unlawful action in Massachusetts.

Nearly two dozen housing providers are in hot water after a sting operation from the national housing rights group Housing Rights Initiative revealed that they had denied individuals a tenancy based on their source of income, a protected class in Massachusetts.

This lawsuit should serve as a reminder that it is important to know and comply

with all housing anti-discrimination laws. You never know why someone is asking you the questions they are.

HRI V. CHARLESGATE ET AL

In early 2023, people contacted individual landlords and realty groups to inquire about properties that were listed for rent on various rental websites. Once they confirmed the property in question was still available, the individuals informed the landlord or property manager that they had a Section 8 voucher. Twenty of those conversations allegedly led to denials because the purported applicants had a federal housing subsidy.

But these individuals weren't actually interested in renting an

apartment. They were trying to see if landlords were complying with laws in Massachusetts that prevent landlords from denying tenancies based on source of income. This includes people who receive Section 8 or other housing vouchers. When the testers reported their findings back to Housing Rights Initiative (HRI), the group filed a lawsuit against the individuals and companies behind the denials.

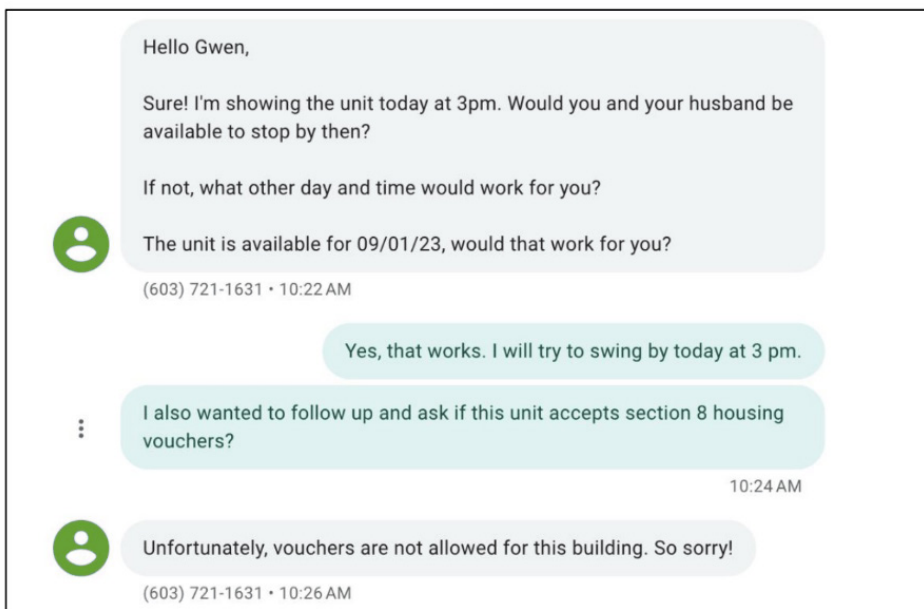
The lawsuit was filed in Suffolk County Superior Court on Feb. 21, 2023. HRI has called it the largest fair housing lawsuit by defendant size to date in Massachusetts.

The full court document details many of those conversations. Screen shots of messages begin on page 21. The ones we reference appear to be from the messaging platform offered through Zillow, a third-party real estate marketing company used by some of the housing providers mentioned in the lawsuit.

"Hi Ia," one tester wrote to Ia Iarajuli, a broker from Harvard Ave. Realty. "This is Noelle. We spoke about #1A at Browne St.? I wanted to clarify if I could use my Section 8 voucher at this property."

"No I'm sorry," Iarajuli replied. At the time of the conversation, the company was representing the owner of the property, Evelyn Saleh.

Another conversation reportedly happened between a tester and broker Mario Fiume, who was representing Anzalone Realty. Anzalone Realty was brokering a Boston apartment owned by Filippo Frattaroli. The applicant asked about Section 8, at which point Fiume told them he would have to ask the owner. The response Fiume came back



After confirming the rental unit was available and offering an appointment to see it in person, a representative of Charlesgate Realty Group violated fair housing regulations by telling the applicant Section 8 was not allowed for the property. (Image: fair use)

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with was short:

“No Section 8 I am sorry.”

Fines for violating the Fair Housing Act can be up to \$50,000 (third offense) for each offense, plus attorneys’ fees. (This lawsuit also asks for attorneys’ fees, though the testing was reportedly grant-funded.)

Is It Legal to Pretend to Be Someone You Aren’t?

Testing landlords to see if they’ll violate the Fair Housing Act is nothing new in Massachusetts. The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD) regularly sends out testers, and litigates thousands of discrimination cases every year. Occasionally, people question this: How is it legal to pretend to be someone you aren’t to get information, and then file a lawsuit based on that premise?

The precedent allowing such testing goes back to a 1982 U.S. Supreme Court case, Havens Realty Corp. v. Coleman.

The catalyst for the case happened when representatives of the Havens Realty Corp., of Richmond, Va., allegedly told a Black tester from the nonprofit Housing Opportunities Made Equal (HOME) that no apartments were available in a particular complex. The company then allegedly told a white tester from HOME that there were apartments available.

The court found that the Black tester, known by their last name, Coleman, had the right to sue. It cited section 804 of the Fair Housing Act, which prohibits discrimination when selling or renting properties.

“Section 804(d) establishes an enforceable right of “any person” to truthful information concerning the availability of housing. A tester who has been the object of a misrepresentation made unlawful under § 804(d) has suffered injury in precisely the form the statute was intended to guard against, and therefore has standing to maintain

a damages claim under the Act,” the Supreme Court decision reads.

In other words, it didn’t matter that Coleman had no intention of actually renting the apartment they were asking about. They were told that the apartment was unavailable. However, when a white tester applied, they were reportedly told it was available. That’s where the violation occurred.

“That the tester may have approached the real estate agent fully expecting that he would receive false information, and without any intention of buying or renting a home, does not negate the fact of injury within the meaning of § 804(d),” the decision reads.

In fact, court precedent allowing for discrimination testing goes back even farther. In the 1973 decision for Hamilton v. Miller, the United States 10th Court of Appeals defended the practice, saying:

“The trial court was critical of the conduct of University officials,

characterizing it as acting ‘under false pretenses’, not in ‘good faith’ and done for the purpose of ‘framing a law suit’. We give no comfort to such criticism. While actions intended to found a law suit are not favored they at times must be tolerated. ...It would be difficult indeed to prove discrimination in housing without this means of gathering evidence.”

ISN'T DISCRIMINATION TESTING A FORM OF ENTRAPMENT?

If you are a landlord who denies a tenant based on having Section 8, you are not likely to win in court on the grounds that you were entrapped.

State documents on entrapment state “[a] person is entrapped if law enforcement officials, either directly or through an agent, induced a person to commit a crime which they would not otherwise have committed.”

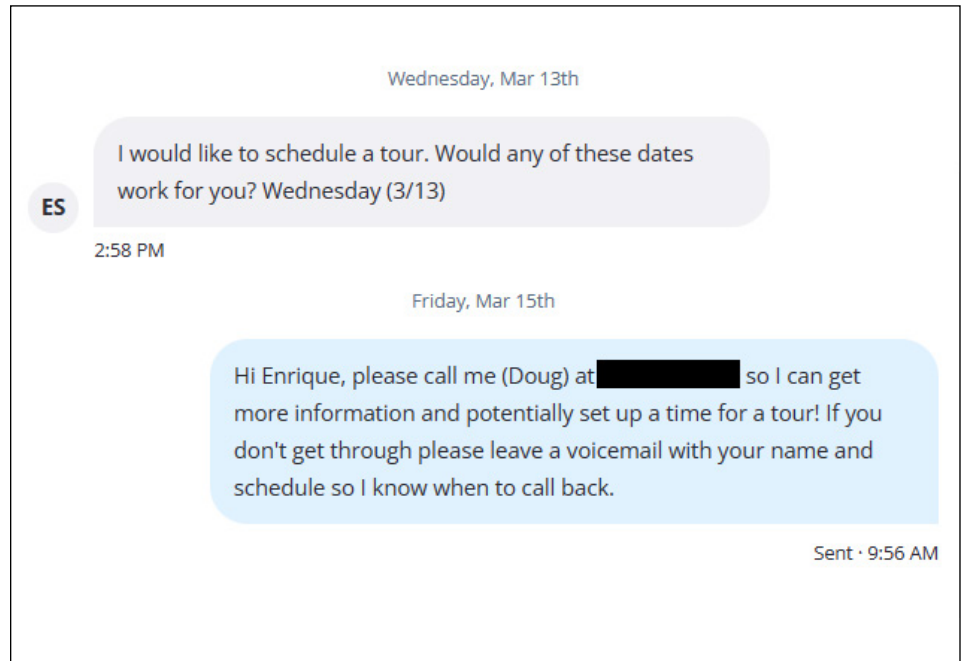
First, discrimination infractions are civil violations, not criminal, which is an important distinction. Entrapment is a defense for criminal charges.

Then, setting aside the fact that Housing Rights Initiative is not a law enforcement group, and was not acting on orders from a law enforcement group, the landlords in the lawsuit do not appear to have been forced to deny housing to anyone. Court documents show landlords and property managers denying tenancies upon merely being asked if Section 8 would be a problem.

“A request by law enforcement officials for the defendant to engage in criminal activity, standing alone, is not sufficient evidence of entrapment,” the document continues. It also states that “undercover methods” may be used by law enforcement, as long as they “merely afford opportunities for the commission of the offense by one ready and willing to commit it.”

In other words, being asked if you take Section 8 is not entrapment. Also, tangentially, undercover police officers are allowed to lie and pretend they aren't police officers, and they don't have to tell you the truth if you ask. The idea that it's entrapment if you ask a cop if they're a cop and they lie is a myth.

DON'T FIND YOURSELF AT THE



This Zillow message, from a prospective tenant to our Executive Director Doug Quatrocchi, shows an example of lawful communication about a rental property. Hint: Don't tell people you don't take Section 8. [Image: CC by SA 4.0 MassLandlords, Inc.]

CENTER OF A FAIR HOUSING DISCRIMINATION LAWSUIT

Fortunately, it's easy to avoid being sued for discrimination based on source of income/subsidy: Just don't do it.

If an applicant asks you if you take Section 8, or a state housing subsidy voucher, your answer in Massachusetts must be “yes.”

This doesn't mean you absolutely have to take anyone with a housing voucher who wants to rent your place. It does mean you should screen them exactly as you would screen someone who does not have a subsidy.


If the tenant has a large dog for a pet (not an emotional support or service animal) and you don't allow pets, you don't have to make an exception because they have Section 8. If the applicant smokes, and your property is non-smoking, you can deny them for that reason. Smoking is not a protected class.

But if the applicant passes your screening, denying them simply because you don't want to get involved with housing vouchers would be wrong, unlawful, and potentially very expensive for you.

CONCLUSION

Discrimination testing has a long history in Massachusetts. With court precedent to fall back on, agencies that conduct testing aren't likely to stop any time soon.

It would be interesting to see how a court would handle a challenge to this precedent, but as far as we know, no one has tried in recent years.

Regardless, there's no room for discrimination in your housing practices. Don't be caught violating the Fair Housing Act with testers or legitimate applicants. If you are unfamiliar with all of Massachusetts' protected classes, we recommend you visit our [discrimination page](#) and review the standards for providing fair access to housing for all. 

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to read more online



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Contact Your Rep, Senator and Renters to Oppose 193 H.4356 and H.4138 Eviction Sealing, Debt Cancellation



Eviction sealing and debt cancellation is bad for housing providers, the courts, journalists, good renters, good renters with housing barriers and more. Derivative of Licensed 123rf.com

193 H.4356 the HOMES Act would seal eviction records and cancel debts. It will hurt housing providers, good renters, the courts and many more.

On February 12 the Joint Committee on the Judiciary made a big mistake. They looked at a bill that would seal eviction records and create a process to nullify eviction debts. And they recommended it “ought to pass.” Separately, this eviction sealing bill was also added to H.4138 the “Housing bond bill.”

This bill ([full text](#)) comes from a place of wanting to help renters get an apartment with an eviction record. But let’s be honest: any time two parties end up in court, one or both of them are in the wrong. Either way, there’s a story that is highly relevant to the next housing provider. We need to understand



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whether this applicant will succeed in our community. We need to see prior evictions. We need to evaluate prior histories on a case-by-case basis.

Even worse, the eviction sealing bill has been expanded to nullify prior judgments administratively, without so much as a hearing. This could wipe out the last 20 years of debts, totaling 700 million dollars of unpaid rent. It could wipe out judgments going forward, as well. This could dramatically raise rents for good renters.

This bill is bad for the 96% of renters who avoid court every year. Your landlord or property manager will be unable to screen your new neighbors well enough. You may find your new neighbors smoking in a no-smoking building, throwing parties late at night, committing violent acts or worse.

This bill is bad for good renters with housing barriers. You may have low income and poor credit and need to show your clean eviction record to qualify. A

clean eviction record is the single most important factor on the MassLandlords applicant qualifier. If eviction records become unreliable, minimum required income and credit scores will increase.

This bill is very bad for the courts. You will have to hear each eviction twice with no additional funding.


This bill is bad for housing providers. You will be unable to do your job to screen tenants. We will have 700 million dollars of judgments canceled going back 20 years, and more going forward.

This bill is bad for democracy. We must have public courts. Secret courts are the stuff of dictatorship.

This bill is bad for journalists, researchers and law enforcement, all of whom would have to get court permission to access needed data.

This bill is bad for the legislature, who will have landlord-tenant law redefined in contradiction of long-established terminology. The changes we need will far further beyond reach.

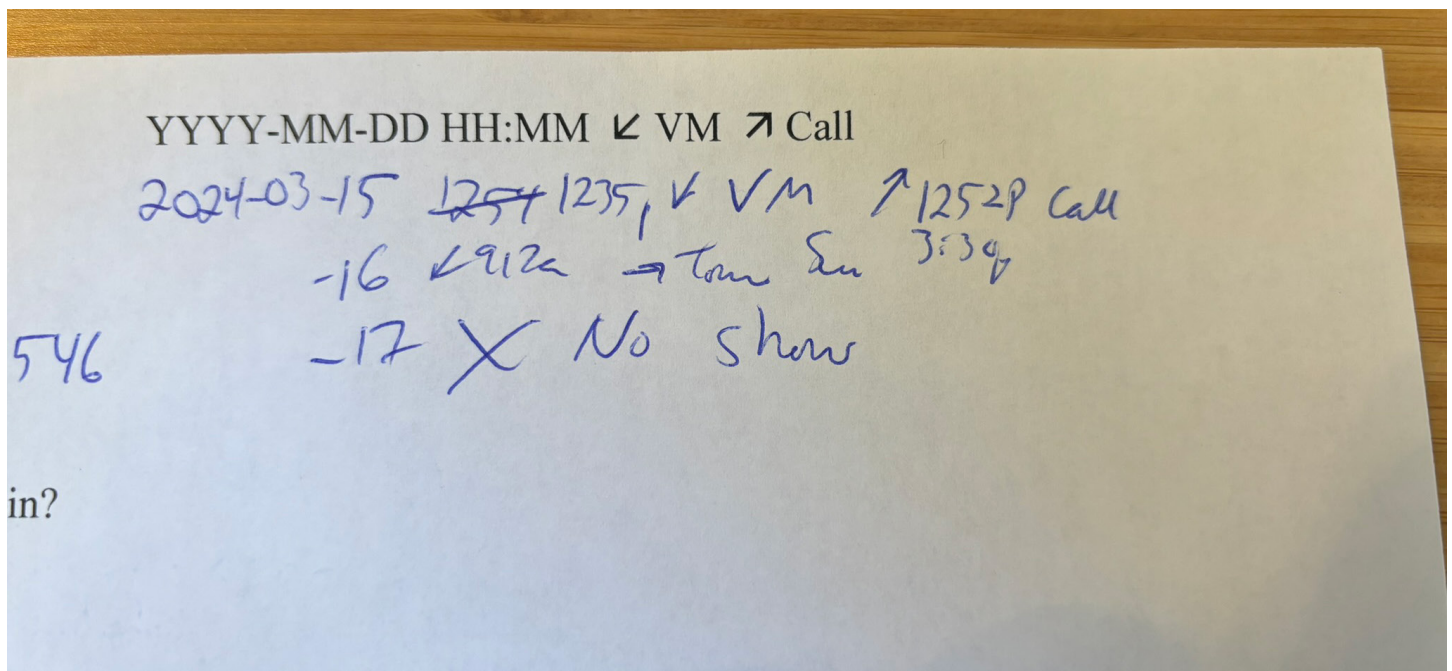
And this bill has been the result of unlawful, unreported lobbying by renter advocacy organizations.

Please contact your representative and senator to oppose eviction sealing and debt cancellation. Use the Find My Legislator tool at the State House website. This bill could pass any day. But we can stop it if you act now. 

Point your camera app here to read more online



Forms: Phone Screening Prompt Sheet Has New Questions and Customization Options



Our new form allows you to use a simple pattern to document your call history with a prospective tenant. Here, we can see our landlord left a voicemail for his applicant at 12:35 p.m. on March 15, which was followed by a phone call at 12:52 p.m. A second voicemail was left on March 16, followed by another phone call scheduling a walk-through the next day. The applicant was a no-show to that appointment. (License: CC by SA 4.0 MassLandlords, Inc.)

Our members-only phone interview form has been updated to allow you to screen your tenants with more accuracy, customized to your rental situation.

Our MassLandlords phone screening prompt sheet has been edited and updated to provide members with a set of phone interview questions that will help you choose the best possible tenant for your rental. From top to bottom, the updated form allows you to keep a comprehensive record of your applicant pre-screening process, with customizable

questions to provide an interview experience tailored to your needs.

Starting at the top of the page, the new form has a place for you to record the date and time of your interview, along with space to document whether the call was completed on the first attempt, or if you had to leave a voicemail. Repeat calls can be documented using the recommended pattern on the form (see image). It's best practice to keep a thorough, accurate record of all tenant interactions. This area will help you remember this crucial step.

Moving down the list, you'll see that many of the most basic questions remain the same. There are certain things

you need to know, such as when your applicants would like to move in. Our form helps you keep track of all the important details.

Some other questions have been tailored for customization by you. For example, a question about move-in monies now offers you the option to ask only about the various payments you accept. This helps ensure you're asking the questions that are right for you, so you get the answers you really need.

If your applicant is applying as a single tenant, then you need only ask about their credit score. But if there will be multiple adults on the lease, you'll want to know if they all can pass your

screening, not just the person making the call. We've reworded this question to encourage your potential renter to let you know how everyone's score is.

We used to suggest you ask your tenant if their current landlord would give them a good recommendation. But if your applicant is actually a nightmare tenant, an unscrupulous landlord may be compelled to lie to get them to move out as fast as possible.

Instead, we now suggest you ask for recommendations from the landlord prior to the current one. This person has no stake in the outcome of the rental application. Before, our form was out of sync with what we advised landlords, but now, it backs up what we've been saying all along.

Some leases have unique rules, such as quiet hours. If your tenancy agreement has such stipulations, it's best if everyone


knows about them as soon as possible. A new optional question allows you to find out if you and this applicant will be a good fit for each other.

If your potential renter passes the screen, you're on to setting up an appointment to view the property. Once you do so, new details on the form remind you to tell your applicant to text or call if they cannot make the appointment. No-shows may be disqualified.

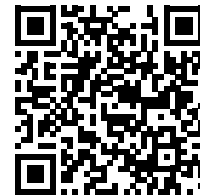
Remember, every landlord should use the process that's right for them. Some housing providers don't like to use the phone to pre-screen and would prefer to send a questionnaire to their applicant to fill out. Other landlords might want all interested renters to fill out a full application. Whatever your process is, our new sheet is designed to help you find the most compliant and informative

wording for every question.

Finally, we provide instructions on what to do if your applicant does not pass the screening. This is just as important as conducting the screening in the first place.

You can find this members-only content and many other forms online at masslandlords.net/forms. 

Point your camera app here to read more online



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ARTICLE YOU MAY HAVE MISSED

New MassLandlords Chapter to be Headed by 'Product of Cambridge' Sage Jankowitz

Sage Jankowitz, a real estate broker based in Cambridge, will assume the new role of managing a recently created MassLandlords chapter comprising the cities of Cambridge, Somerville, Malden and Medford.

Point your camera app here to read more online.



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To join, complete a pink sheet at any MassLandlords event or sign up online at [MassLandlords.net/property](https://www.masslandlords.net/property).



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REGIONAL

MassLandlords Upcoming events

See details under each region

2024 APRIL

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|-----------|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| | 1 SWCLA 7:00PM-9:00PM | 2 | 3 Virtual Meeting 5:00PM-6:40PM | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 7 | 8 | 9 MWPOA 5:30PM-8:00PM | 10 | 11 Springfield Dinner Meeting, NWCLA 5:30PM-8:35PM, 7:00PM-9:00PM | 12 Virtual Meeting 12:00PM-1:00PM | 13 Cambridge Crash Course 8:30AM-4:00PM |
| 14 | 15 | 16 Medford Dinner Meeting 5:30PM-8:35PM | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 28 | 29 Virtual Meeting 5:00PM-6:40PM | 30 | | | | |

2024 MAY

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|-----------|------------------------------------|--|---|---|--|-----------|
| | | | 1 Waltham Dinner Meeting 5:30PM-8:35PM | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5 | 6 SWCLA 7:00PM-9:00PM | 7 | 8 Virtual Meeting 5:00PM-6:40PM | 9 Virtual Meeting, NWCLA 5:00PM-6:40PM, 7:00PM-9:00PM | 10 | 11 |
| 12 | 13 | 14 MWPOA 5:30PM-8:00PM | 15 | 16 | 17 Virtual Meeting 12:00PM-1:00PM | 18 |
| 19 | 20 | 21 Medford Dinner Meeting 6:00PM-8:30PM | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | |

**STATEWIDE
NORTHERN WORCESTER COUNTY**

**Northern Worcester
County Landlord
Association
Fitchburg Dinner
Meeting: 1031
Exchanges**

THU
04/11

Join us for our monthly meeting, this month we will hear from Edmund & Wheeler, Inc. to learn from the experts about the different types of 1031 exchanges and how we can protect our profits.

As a real estate investor, you know it takes more than just buying and selling properties to achieve your investment objectives. In fact, you need to manage your investments in real estate as you would your other financial investments.

When preparing to sell a property, Edmund & Wheeler, Inc. can help you develop a plan to defer capital gains tax in order to re-invest your money into a replacement property or properties. A Section 1031 exchange is an excellent way to preserve capital and defer capital gains tax, depreciation recapture tax, and even sales tax on the sale of business or investment property.

Meetings are open to the public! Zoom tickets are \$10. Zoom meeting information will be provided the day of the event. First-time in-person visitors can attend for \$20 per person to “check us out,” with dinner included. If they decide to join, the \$20 will be applied to an NWCLA membership, or sponsorship of choice, that night. Become a member and the annual dues pay for all 10 meetings a year!

Public attendees can purchase your ticket in just a few clicks!

THURSDAY, APRIL 11TH

NWCLA DINNER MEETING AGENDA

Visit nwcla.com for any last-minute updates or changes.

7:00pm Dinner, Networking & Presentations

- o Networking draws from 25 towns including Fitchburg, Gardner, Leominster, Athol, Holden, Ayer,

Orange, Ashburnham, Spencer, Ashby, Lunenburg, Townsend, Westminster, Princeton, Sterling, Lancaster, Shirley, Groton, Pepperell, Winchedon, Templeton, and Hubbardston.

LOCATION

British American Club
1 Simonds Road
Fitchburg, MA 01420

FOOD

- Dinner will be provided.

PRICING

Open to the public. Membership is not required!

- Public and non-NWCLA members In Person: \$20
- Public and non-NWCLA members Zoom: \$10
- NWCLA members only In Person: No charge.

This event will not be recorded.

Slides and handouts if any will be uploaded to <https://www.nwcla.com/members/meeting-recordings/>. This event will be recorded and accessible for active NWCLA members only. Please note if you are not an active NWCLA but do purchase a ticket you will not be able to access the recording.

Public attendees can purchase your ticket in just a few clicks!

This event is operated by volunteers at a partner association.

METROWEST

**MetroWest Property
Owners Association
Marlborough
Dinner Meeting:
Massachusetts Code
Enforcement in the
City of Marlborough,
MA**

TUE
04/09

Ms. Pamela Wilderman, Code Enforcement Manager and Tin Htway, Building Commissioner presenting.

Pam has worked in code enforcement for over 25 years for the City of Marlborough, MA. and works with Tin to implement the City’s new system called IMPACT inspections that involves a

range of services working together.

We plan to explore questions like:

- 1) When should a landlord contact inspectional services?
- 2) Are there new areas of code that should be considered?
- 3) How can a landlord help the City and themselves working with inspectional services in general and for hoarder tenants?
- 4) How much do codes vary from City to City?

MWPOA Members must register for this meeting on the MassLandlords Website at this link: <https://masslandlords.net/spotlight-event/2024-04-09-marlborough/>. Non-MWPOA MassLandlords Members are welcome to also register at this link by purchasing a ticket located in the Public Column.

These are “hybrid” meetings both on Zoom and in person. When registering please click either the Zoom or In-Person orange button based on how you will be attending.

Please try to register by Monday, April 8th, 2024

TUESDAY, APRIL 9TH

**MWPOA DINNER MEETING
AGENDA**

5:30pm Networking Starts (In-person group has dinner at this time so Zoom participants have their own networking together)

6:20pm Business Update

6:40pm Presentation Starts

7:45pm Meeting Ends

LOCATION

Marlborough Fish and Game
1 Muddy Ln
Marlborough, MA 01752

PRICING

Open to the public. Membership is not required!

- Public and non-MWPOA members In Person: \$12
 - Public and non-MWPOA members Zoom: \$7
 - MWPOA members only Zoom: No charge. Registration is required.
 - MWPOA members only In Person: No charge. Registration is required.
- This event will not be recorded.

Slides and handouts if any will be uploaded to [MWPOA](#).

This event is operated by volunteers at a partner association.

SOUTHERN WORCESTER COUNTY

Southern Worcester County Landlord Association Southbridge Dinner Meeting: Cornerstone Bank: Rental Payments and Security Deposits

MON
04/01

Dan D'Amico, Alison Nugent and Robert A. Mangan from Cornerstone Bank are excited to share information about two dynamic services that will help landlords save time as well as organize how they track rental payments and

security deposits.

The two services are ZEscrow and ZRent. These two products will make rent collection and managing security deposit accounts easier for landlords by saving time while providing robust reports. The ZEscrow product also offers the ability for landlords to send and receive W9 forms electronically while managing sub accounts without having to go to the bank. ZRent gives landlords the option to offer tenants the option to pay rent electronically. Both services are free to Cornerstone Bank customers. As we discussed we can provide a demonstration using your projector.

Should any of your members have questions regarding the service, we can be reached at the following email address: CMLservices@cornerstonebank.com. This email will come to our entire team.

MONDAY, APRIL 1ST

SWCLA DINNER MEETING AGENDA 7:00pm Event Start

LOCATION

[Southbridge Community Center \(aka Casaubon Senior Center\)](#)
153 Chestnut St.
Southbridge, MA 01550

PRICING

Open to SWCLA Members only. Pay annual SWCLA dues then free.

- SWCLA members only: No charge.
- General public, in person meeting is free the first time, then pay \$50/yr for membership.

This event will not be recorded.

Slides and handouts if any will be uploaded to [SWCLA](#).

This event is operated by volunteers at a partner association.



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CHARLES RIVER (GREATER WALTHAM)
BOSTON, CAMBRIDGE AND
SOMERVILLE

Cambridge Crash Course: The MassLandlords Crash Course in Landlording: Give Your Business a Spring Cleaning

SAT
04/13

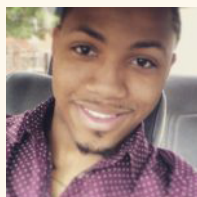
Learn everything you need to succeed as an owner or manager of residential rental property in Massachusetts.

This fast-paced course is strictly limited to 16 participants to allow for detailed discussion and Q&A. Course tuition includes:

- Small group session with the Executive Director, a trained presenter and experienced landlord, and the attorney.
- A comprehensive agenda, see below.
- Your choice of two books:
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- A bound summary of all material presented.
- Breakfast pastries, coffee, tea.
- Lunch sandwiches, sodas, chips, cookies; all dietary requirements satisfied, please notify us when you purchase a ticket.
- A MassLandlords ballpoint pen.
- A MassLandlords certificate of completion and permission to use "MassLandlords Crash Course graduate" on your marketing material.

You will receive a box packed with your personalized signed certificate, your choice of two books, course notes, pen, and half a dozen other pieces of literature.

Course Graduate Testimonials



"I simply wanted to reach out and express just how happy I am to have attended the landlording crash course. The

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- **Michael Murray**



"Mr. Quattrochi presented the course in a comprehensive and easy to follow step-by-step format. His PowerPoint

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"This has really been a great deal. 2 books, 8 hours 'class' time, bound notes/slides -- impressive value!" -Dawn

"I found this course extremely useful. It was completely professional and gave me a great new perspective." -**Nicholas**

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MassLandlords Executive Director Doug Quattrochi



Attorney Adam Sherwin of The Sherwin Law Firm

Part of this presentation will be given by **Doug Quattrochi**, Executive Director, MassLandlords, Inc. Doug was a founding member of MassLandlords in 2013. He became the association's first Executive Director under new bylaws in 2014. Since then, he has scaled the organization from a core of 160 members in Worcester to approximately 2,500 dues paying businesses from Pittsfield to the Cape, and from an all-volunteer team to approximately 20 full and part-time staff plus 50 volunteers. Doug has been instrumental in advancing democratic governance mechanisms, including score voting for policy priorities and a staggered and democratically elected Board of Directors. Doug also oversees the RentHelper spin-off, which is expanding access to electronic banking for those of us who are unbanked or underbanked. Prior to MassLandlords, Doug held leadership roles in various Massachusetts startups, two of which are still operating. Doug holds a Master of Science in Aerospace Engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

“Doug’s presentation was excellent. He was very clear and provided detailed explanations.” -Larry

“Doug always holds very informative classes full of substance and Very organized!” -Thomas

“Your answers to member’s questions were most helpful.” -Liz

Part of this presentation will be given by attorney **Adam Sherwin**. Adam is an experienced real estate litigator with years of experience representing landlords, property owners, and other real estate professionals. He has extensive experience litigating real estate disputes before judges and juries and has obtained favorable decisions from the Massachusetts Appeals Court and District Court Appellate Division. He is also a long-time crash course instructor at the Cambridge headquarters and over zoom.

Purchase your ticket in just a few clicks!

Public attendees can purchase your ticket in just a few clicks!

“No Sales Pitch” Guarantee

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SATURDAY, APRIL 13TH

CRASH COURSE AGENDA

IN-PERSON COURSE AGENDA

- 8:30 am - Introduction of MassLandlords and course participants
- 8:45am - Rental markets
 - o Urban, suburban, rural.
 - o Luxury, college, professional, working, subsidized, rooming houses.
 - o Airbnb.
- 9:00am - Property selection
 - o Lead paint.
 - o Charging for utilities.
 - o Climate change risk.
 - o Heat pumps.
 - o Vinyl plank vs. hardwood floors.
 - o Landlord trade-offs repairs vs. cleaning.
- 9:40am - Marketing and advertising
 - o Getting the right applicants.
 - o Small business branding tips and tricks.
 - o Where to advertise.
- 10:05am - Break for ten minutes
- 10:15am - Finish marketing and advertising
- 10:35am - Applications and tenant screening
 - o Criminal, credit, and eviction background checks.
 - o Discrimination and fair housing.
 - o Interactive tenant screening workshop.

o Section 8.

- 11:30am - Tenancies
 - o Lease vs Tenancy at Will.
 - o Move-in monies.
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 - o Pet rent.
 - 11:50am - Break and Lunch, with free form Q&A
 - 12:20pm - Warranties and covenants
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 - o Tax advantages.
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 - o Contractors.
 - o Building permits.
 - o Extermination
 - o LLCs and trusts.
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 - 3:10pm - Break for five minutes
 - 3:40pm - Overview of books and resources for further education
 - 3:45pm - Review of unanswered questions
 - 4:00pm - End Course
- Please note that end time may vary based on questions.

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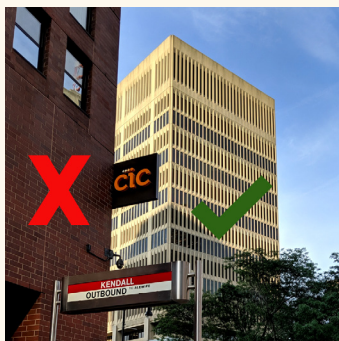
barbara@teamimpressare.com

617-935-3044

LOCATION

Cambridge Innovation Center
14th Floor, Charles Conference Room
One Broadway
Cambridge, MA 02134

Please note: CIC has several buildings in Kendall Square, two of them being adjacent to each other. The correct location for this event is the building with light colored concrete, vertical windows and a Dunkin Donuts on the ground level. You will NOT see a CIC sign. Refer to the image below.



ACCESSING FROM THE T

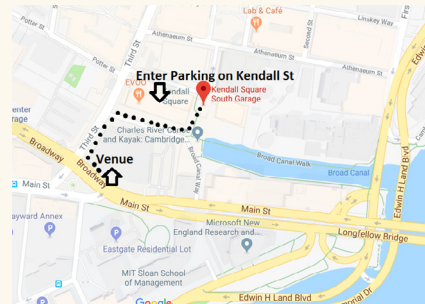
- Exit the Kendall T stop on Main St.
- Cross to the side of Main St. with the Chipotle and walk up the street towards Broadway, passing the Chipotle on your left.
- You will then round the corner to the left and One Broadway will be across the street diagonally.
- Cross over Third St. and Broadway to arrive at One Broadway.

For all attendees Upon entering One Broadway, you will need to check in

with the lobby security. You'll just need to show your ID and let them know you're going to the MassLandlords event and which floor.

PARKING

Accessible by T and highway. Parking available in several garages for weekend rates. See CIC Directions for details. Pilgrim Parking has affordable rates and is a short walk from the venue, [click here for details](#)



FOOD

- Breakfast:
 - o Fresh bagels, large muffins, cinnamon rolls, coffee cake slices and scones with cream cheese, butter, and jam
 - o Fresh fruit platter
 - o Assorted fruit juices and coffee

LUNCH:

- o Assorted gourmet sandwiches
- o Garden salad
- o Pasta salad
- o Assorted pastries
- o Soda, juice, water

*Please email hello@masslandlords.net if you have any dietary restrictions and

need a special meal.

*Dietary restrictions: Purchase a ticket and set your preferences at [My Account](#) one week prior to the event or earlier. Once set, preferences remain set for future events.

Masks welcome! Eating and drinking is not required. Please note: as we are unable to monitor the buffet, we are unable to offer a reduced ticket price for attendees who will not be eating.

PRICING

Open to the public. Membership is not required!

- Public: \$275
- Members: \$250

This event will not be recorded.

Slides and handouts if any will be uploaded to [Massachusetts Crash Course in Landlording and Rental Real Estate](#).

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This is part of the [Virtual rental real estate networking and training series.](#)



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Add just this event to your calendar:

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GREATER SPRINGFIELD

Longmeadow Dinner Meeting Thu Apr 11th: How to Defend Yourself Against the MCAD

THU
04/11

At MassLandlords we spend a lot of time teaching anti-discrimination. But doing things in compliance with the spirit and the letter of the law is no guarantee you won't be sued. These days we can be

sued for anything! So it's up to us to defend ourselves. This presentation will review:

- Common complaints received by the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD).
- Surprisingly, how your response to an MCAD letter could turn into your entire trial.
- Why it's important to get an attorney.
- "Finding of probable cause."
- Appeals.
- Settlements.

Attendees will leave knowing how to demonstrate that your actions were compliant and in the spirit of fair housing. This presentation assumes you have done things correctly to start. See [discrimination laws](#) if in doubt.

This will be a procedural discussion. We will not be giving legal advice.

(Are you an MCAD team member? Feel free to contact us to engage with us at a future MassLandlords event.)



Attorney Peter Vickery, Esq. Attorney and Counselor



The MCAD are not bad, but the nature of our adversarial system is sometimes complaints are without merit.

Part of this presentation will be given by **Peter Vickery, Esq.** Attorney Vickery practices law in Western Massachusetts where he focuses on landlord-tenant law (representing landlords in Housing Court) and discrimination defense

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Springfield 685 Boston Road (413)782-8664

Auburn 77 Southbridge Street (508) 791-920

(representing business owners in the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination). He graduated from Oxford University (Jesus College) with a BA in Modern History; obtained his Post-Graduate Diploma in Law from the University of the West of England in Bristol; his JD from Boston University School of Law; and his Masters in Public Policy & Administration from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Attorney Vickery served one term on the Governor’s Council (the elected 8-member body that approves or vetoes the governor’s choice of judges in Massachusetts) and on the State Ballot Law Commission. As Legislative Affairs Counsel for MassLandlords he drafts bills, bill summaries, and testimony in the area of housing law, and writes amicus briefs in cases that have strategic significance for rental-property owners.

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THURSDAY, APRIL 11TH

DINNER MEETING AGENDA

5:30 pm Check-in and networking. Mix and mingle but don’t be shy! Introduce yourself to someone and you might make a valuable local connection.

- o Networking draws from Springfield, West Springfield, Holyoke, Chicopee, Ludlow, Wilbraham, East Longmeadow, Longmeadow, Agawam, Southwick, Southampton, Easthampton, Northampton, Westhampton, Hadley, South Hadley, Granby, Amherst, Belchertown, Ware, Palmer, Warren, Monson, and Hampden.

6:15 pm Dinner

6:45 pm Introductions and short

business updates

6:55 pm Presentation

7:55 pm Presentation ends

8:35 pm Doors close

LOCATION

Twin Hills Country Club
700 Wolf Swamp Rd
Longmeadow, MA 01106

PARKING

Ample parking. Accessible for drop-off.

FOOD

Twin Hills always sets out an impressive spread:

- Cheese and crackers for networking time.
- Hot buffet dinner with choice of chicken, fish or vegetarian.
- Salad and rolls.
- Cash bar.
- Whisky bread pudding.
- Hot coffee and tea.

*Dietary restrictions: Purchase a ticket and set your preferences at [My Account](#) one week prior to the event or earlier. Once set, preferences remain set for future events.

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PRICING

Open to the public. Membership is not required!

• Door:

Public: \$105

Members: \$65

• Early-bird, reserve seven days prior by 12pm:

Public:\$90

Members:\$50

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Springfield Crash Course: The MassLandlords Crash Course in Landlording: Elevate Your Landlord Game

SAT 09/14

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- A bound summary of all material presented.
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MassLandlords Executive Director Doug Quattrochi



Attorney Peter Vickery, Esq. Attorney and Counselor at Law, is also MassLandlords Legislative Affairs Counsel

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3:45pm - Review of unanswered questions

4:00pm - End Course

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LOCATION

Realtor Association of Pioneer Valley
221 Industry Ave
Springfield, MA 01104

FOOD

- Breakfast:
 - o Fresh bagels, large muffins, cinnamon rolls, coffee cake slices and scones with cream cheese, butter, and jam
 - o Fresh fruit platter
 - o Assorted fruit juices and coffee

LUNCH:

- o Assorted gourmet sandwiches
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- o Pasta salad

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- o Soda, juice, water

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- ✓ Municipal fines or assessments,
- ✓ Building disasters
- ✓ Sleepless nights

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