

What's new with HOME Line?

July through September 2010

Tenant Hotline

- Our tenant hotline served a record number of callers for this quarter. 3,297 callers contacted the hotline. We prevented 33 evictions, and helped tenants recover over \$21,000 in wrongfully withheld security deposits and rent abatement (rent returned for substandard living conditions).
- These numbers continue to show the growing use of technology to help tenants get the information they need. 7,360 people visited our website this quarter, a 9.3% increase over the same quarter last year, 3,969 accessed legal forms, a 52% increase the same quarter last year, and 231 people emailed our attorneys for legal advice, a 53% increase from last quarter.
- The top four caller issues were: repairs, security deposits, evictions and foreclosures. Foreclosures continue to affect renters, accounting for over 10.6% of all calls.

Tenant Organizing

- Tenants in a Section 8 townhouse development organized a 35+ household letter-writing campaign and also met with the owner of their building to discuss preserving the affordability of their homes.
- Six Minnesota Justice Foundation law student volunteers helped initiate our 2010 Section 8 survey of landlord participation in the Housing Choice Voucher program. This year we've surveyed over 100,000 market-rate units in the Twin Cities metro area.
- Organizers began a project to catalog and analyze how local rental housing ordinances affect renters in different cities across Minnesota.
- Organizers assisted tenants via organizing, doorknocking, or other advocacy efforts in 5 project based Section 8 buildings and 4 USDA Rural Development apartments representing 368 units of affordable housing.

Policy Advocacy

- HOME Line is surveying people who participate in our programs about what we should address in the coming legislative session. The "Minnesota Tenant Bill of Rights Poll" was included in our newsletter to 10,000 renter households, brought to every tenant-landlord law training we held (i.e. Bemidji, Duluth, Fergus Falls, Minneapolis, Rochester, Roseville), is available online, and is frequently reported on HOME Line's Public Policy Blog. Over 350 surveys have come in from 57 Senate Districts and 90 House Districts. This means we have covered 85% of the Minnesota Senate and 67% of the Minnesota House.
- Public Policy Interns have helped us conduct a 50-state review of tenant-landlord law. To date, we have produced legal memos reviewing the following issues: statewide heat codes, the right to repair and deduct from rent, caps on security deposits, and duty to mitigate.