

Eviction Prevention in Washington State

Janet Bittenwieser, Judicial Extern to the Hon. Mary Jo Heston

1. Eviction Resolution Pilot Program

The COVID-19 pandemic brought with it several measures on a national and statewide level to help tenants and landlords with rental assistance and eviction prevention. One of the few state resources in Washington that has not yet expired is the Eviction Resolution Pilot Program (ERPP). The ERPP’s purpose is to ensure that tenants and landlords have adequate opportunities to access state and local rental assistance and reimbursement programs.¹

The ERPP, codified under RCW 59.18.660, took effect statewide on November 1, 2021, and expires on July 1, 2023. The ERPP “must be used to facilitate the resolution of nonpayment of rent cases between a landlord and tenant before the landlord files an unlawful detainer action.”² The ERPP provides for pre-filing dispute resolution, access to civil legal aid for qualifying low-income tenants, and rental assistance funding with the goal of sustaining housing stability.³

The ERPP connects landlords and tenants with a specialist at a local Dispute Resolution Center (DRC) to help them resolve the dispute over rent arrears. DRCs are nonprofit public service organizations established in 1984 by the Washington State Legislature to provide avenues for informal resolution of disputes.⁴ Landlords initiate the process by issuing the tenant an ERPP notice that the landlord would like the tenant to take part in the ERPP.⁵ The DRC, upon receiving a copy of the notice, contacts the tenant and invites the tenant to engage in the dispute resolution

¹ SB 5160, <https://legiscan.com/WA/text/SB5160/2021>

² RCW 59.18.660(2)

³ Sale, Laurie. Administrative Office of the Courts. “Eviction Resolution Pilot Program: Helping Tenants and Landlords Avoid Eviction Proceedings During COVID-19, p. 7. July 1, 2022. Accessed at <https://www.courts.wa.gov/newsinfo/pdf/ERPP%20Full%20Legislative%20Report%20to%20the%20Legislature.pdf>

⁴ RCW 7.75.010

⁵ *Id.*

process.⁶ Landlords are required to participate in the process if the tenant voluntarily engages.⁷

The DRC connects tenants and landlords to any available rental assistance, offers to help the landlord and the tenant solve the dispute, and provides referrals to other resources as needed.⁸ The overall goal is to help tenants retain housing and to help landlords receive rents owed.⁹ **Appendix B** provides a list of DRCs by County.¹⁰

In the first year of the program, the ERPP served more than 85,000 tenants and landlords: 38,985 cases were closed and completed; 76% of closed cases reached agreements; and 94% of cases preserved tenancy.¹¹ The ERPP has been very effective at preventing evictions and saving both court costs and time in court.

2. Rental Assistance Programs

Households that received rental assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic can still apply for rental assistance through local programs. **Appendix A** provides a list of rental assistance programs by county.¹² In Clark County, for example, the Council for the Homeless (CFH) provides rent assistance to eligible residents.¹³ To qualify for rent assistance at CFH, residents must be behind on their rent and the adults' combined income must be at or below 80% of the Area Median Income.¹⁴ The amount of assistance available fluctuates monthly due to funding sources.¹⁵ CFH screens

⁶ Resolution Washington. "Eviction Resolution Pilot Program." <https://www.resolutionwa.org/erpp>

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ ERPP Notice and Resource Information, accessed at <https://www.courts.wa.gov/content/publicUpload/Eviction%20Resolution%20Program/ERPP%20Notice%20and%20Resource%20Information%20Form%20July%202021.pdf>

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² ERPP Notice and Resource Information, accessed at <https://www.courts.wa.gov/content/publicUpload/Eviction%20Resolution%20Program/ERPP%20Notice%20and%20Resource%20Information%20Form%20July%202021.pdf>

¹³ <https://www.councilforthehomeless.org/rent-assistance/>

¹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵ *Id.*

renters for assistance eligibility on the 6th and the 20th of each month.¹⁶ On those dates, applicants can be screened by phone, in person, or via online portal, beginning at 12:30 pm.¹⁷

3. Looking Ahead

During the 2023 Washington Legislative session, Resolution Washington — the organization that oversees the ERPP — seeks continued funding of \$7.5 million to maintain the ERPP.¹⁸ The organization also has recommendations for improving the program, including:

- educate tenants and landlords on policies and programs,
- improve consistency in program implementation throughout the state,
- modify the program to focus on cases most needing services,
- continue engagement for Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) and limited English proficiency residents.¹⁹

As of mid-March 2023, there were several proposed housing-related bills on track for approval.²⁰ Among these is Senate Bill 5197, which addresses Landlord-Tenant relations by providing technical changes to eviction notice forms and modifies certain eviction processes.²¹ These measures, like the ERPP, could provide beneficial services to both landlords and tenants in Washington State.

¹⁶ *Id.*

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ Resolution Washington. “ERPP and the Future of Dispute Resolution Centers in Housing Stability Programming.” November 2022.

https://www.resolutionwa.org/files/ugd/eb99c8_d8ca86e866834b79803fb6552279465d.pdf?index=true

¹⁹ *Id.*

²⁰ For a complete list of bills, see <https://www.rhawa.org/blog/2023-leg-session>

²¹ <https://legiscan.com/WA/bill/SB5197/2023>

The following appendices, and additional information, can be found at <https://www.courts.wa.gov/content/publicUpload/Eviction%20Resolution%20Program/ERPP%20Notice%20and%20Resource%20Information.pdf> The appendices are included here for convenience; WAWB Best Practices cannot ensure the accuracy of the website or email contact information.



Appendix A: Rent Assistance

County/Service Area	Where to apply for rental assistance	Website	Email
Asotin	Quality Behavioral Health	http://www.qbhs.org/	
Benton/Franklin	Benton County Department of Human Services	https://www.co.benton.wa.us/pview.aspx?id=20883&catid=0	housing@goodwillotc.org
Chelan/Douglas	Chelan Douglas Community Action Council	https://cdcac.org/affordable-housing/	info@cdcac.org
Clallam	Serenity House	https://www.serenity-houseclallam.org/	housinghelp@serenity-houseclallam.org/
Clark	Council for the Homeless	https://www.council-forthehomeless.org/	
Columbia/Garfield	Blue Mountain Action Council	http://www.bmacww.org/	
Cowlitz	Lower Columbia CAP	https://lowercolumbia-cap.org/	
Grant/Adams	Housing Authority of Grant County OIC Of Washington for Utility Assistance Hope-Source-Serving Youth18-24	Housing Assistance: https://hopesource.us/ Utility Assistance: https://www.yvoic.org/	
Grays Harbor	Coastal Community Action Program	http://coastalcap.org/	
Island	Housing Support Center	https://www.island-countywa.gov/Human-services/Pages/Housing-Support-Center.aspx	
Jefferson	OlyCAP Olympic Community Action Programs	http://www.olycap.org/ “Documents for Print” on this website may be completed and emailed, or printed and delivered to OlyCAP	housingteam@olycap.org
King	King County	https://kingcounty.gov/depts/community-human-services/COVID/eviction-prevention-rent-assistance.aspx	DCHSRentalAssistance@kingcounty.gov
Kitsap	Kitsap Community Resources	https://www.kitsapgov.com/hs/Pages/HH-KEPA.aspx	
Kittitas	Hope Source	https://hopesource.us/	

Klickitat/Skamania	Washington Gorge Action Program (WAGAP)	https://www.wagap.org/	info@wagap.org
Lewis	Salvation Army	https://centralia.salvationarmy.org/centralias/rental-assistance	

Mason	Shelton Family Center, Crossroads Housing, (office located in Shelton & Belfair)	https://masoncountywa.gov/health/community-family/housing-homelessness.php	CrossroadsHousing@hcc.net Susan@sheltonfamilycenter.org
Okanogan	Okanogan County Community Action Council	https://creatorapp.zohopublic.com/communityactionok/oc-cac-coordinated-entry/form-perma/Application for Assistance/VfbUqgnsJIAKejfnQw-J5Xm1AHffjEEzGgq-MzX1n2pZGZFuPV09Y-QWYIXEexBBXXSsfS4fd27qOqdJTCAXSs-HO0KZXkVWf5EsyS2	jennifers@occac.com
Pacific	Pacific County Health and Human Services	https://co.pacific.wa.us/covid-19/ERAP/index.html	rentassistance@co.pacific.wa.us
Pend Oreille	Family Crisis Network	https://www.pofcn.org/housing-assistance	
Pierce	Pierce County	https://www.pierce-countywa.gov/7142/Rental-Assistance	hsrent@piercecountywa.gov
San Juan	Opportunity Council	https://www.opppo.org/basic-needs/housing/	
Skagit	Housing Authority Skagit County, Community Action of Skagit County	https://www.skagitcountyha.org/ , https://www.communityactionskagit.org/	
Snohomish	Snohomish County Human Services	https://snohomish-county-coronavirus-response-snoco-gis.hub.arcgis.com/pages/emergency-rental-assistance	
Spokane (City)	City of Spokane	https://my.spokanecity.org/covid19/resident-assistance/	spokanechhs@spokanecity.org
Spokane (County)	Spokane Neighborhood Action Program	https://www.snapwa.org/snap-rental-assistance/	
Stevens/Lincoln	Rural Resources	https://ruralresources.org/	
Thurston	Community Action Council, Community Youth Services (18-24 only)	https://caclmt.org/?%20page_id=3379/#tab-id-6	

Wahkiakum	Wahkiakum County Health and Human Services	https://www.co.wahkiakum.wa.us/542/Homeless-Prevention-Services-Rent-Assist	cor@co.wahkiakum.wa.us
Walla Walla	Blue Mountain Action Council	http://www.bmacww.org/	
Whatcom	Opportunity Council	https://www.oppco.org/	
Whitman	Community Action Center	https://www.cacwhitman.org/	jefft@cacwhitman.org
Yakima	Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic Northwest Community Action Center, Yakima Neighborhood Health Services, Latino Community Fund, OIC of Washington	https://www.yakima-county.us/2453/For-Tenants-and-Landlords	



Appendix B: Dispute Resolution Services

County	DRC Name	Email	Website	Address	Phone
Adams	Columbia Basin DRC	cbdrcepintake@gmail.com	http://www.cbdrdc.org	256 Basin St. NW, Suite B Ephrata, WA 98823	(509) 237-8401
Asotin	Neutral Ground DRC	director@neutralgrounddrc.org	https://www.neutralgrounddrc.org/	1200 SE 12th Street Suite 6 College Place, WA 99324	(509) 730-1317
Benton	DRC of Tri-Cities	erpspecialist@drctc.org	http://www.drctc.org	5219 W. Clearwater Avenue – Suite 11, Kennewick, WA 99336	(509) 783-1043
Chelan	Wenatchee Valley DRC	info@wvdrc.org	http://www.wvdrc.org	5 S Wenatchee Avenue, Suite 210 Wenatchee, WA 98801	(509) 888-0957
Clallam	Peninsula DRC	renee@pdrc.org	http://www.pdrc.org	319 S. Peabody Street Port Angeles, WA 98362	(360) 452-8024
Clark	Community Mediation Services	info@mediation-clarkcounty.org	http://www.mediacionclark-county.org	303 East 16th Street Vancouver, WA 98663	(360) 334-5862 x 1
Columbia	Neutral Ground DRC	director@neutralgrounddrc.org	https://www.neutralgrounddrc.org/	1200 SE 12th Street Suite 6 College Place, WA 99324	(509) 730-1317
Cowlitz	Center for Constructive Resolution and Conversation	erpp.cowlitz.crc@gmail.com	https://lewis-countyccrc.org/	Satellite Office: 1338 Commerce Ave D2 Longview, WA 98632	(360) 232-8622
Douglas	Wenatchee Valley DRC	info@wvdrc.org	http://www.wvdrc.org	5 S Wenatchee Avenue, Suite 210 Wenatchee, WA 98801	(509) 888-0957
Ferry	Northwest Mediation Center	erppintake@nw-mediationcenter.com	http://www.nw-mediationcenter.com	35 West Main, Suite 230 Spokane, WA 99201	(509) 456-0103 x 1

Franklin	DRC of Tri-Cities	erpspecialist@drctc.org	http://www.drctc.org	5219 W. Clearwater Avenue – Suite 11 Kennewick, WA 99336	(509) 783-1043
Garfield	NeutralGroundDRC	director@neutralgrounddrc.org	https://www.neutralgrounddrc.org/	1200 SE 12th Street Suite 6 College Place, WA 99324	(509) 730-1317
Grant	Columbia Basin DRC	cbdrcerpintake@gmail.com	http://www.cbdrcc.org	256BasinSt.NW, Suite B Ephrata, WA 98823	(509) 237-8401
Grays Harbor	DRC of Grays Harbor & Pacific Counties	erp@drcghp.org	http://www.drcghp.org	207 S Chehalis Street #301 Aberdeen, WA. 98520	(360) 532-8950
Island	Volunteers of America Dispute Resolution Center	earlyresolution@voaww.org	http://www.voaww.org/drc	117 N First St, Ste 30 Mount Vernon, WA 98273" Mail: POBox 839 Everett, WA 98206-0839	425-339-1335 (press #3) Toll Free: (800) 280-4770 (press #3)
Jefferson	Peninsula DRC	renee@pdrc.org	http://www.pdrc.org	319 S. Peabody Street Port Angeles, WA 98362	(360) 452-8024
King	King County DRC	housing@kcdrc.org	http://kcdrc.org/get-help/	4649 Sunnyside Ave. N, Suite 520 Seattle, WA 98103	(206) 443-9603 x 111 Spanish: (206) 443-9603 ext. 103
King	Bellevue Conflict Resolution Center (For Properties in Bellevue and Kirkland) <i>Landlords must send ERPP notices for tenants living in Bellevue and Kirkland to the Bellevue Conflict Resolution Center only.</i>	bcrc@bellevue-wa.gov	https://bellevue-wa.gov/city-government/departments/community-development/conflict-assistance/eviction-resolution-program	450 110th Avenue NE Bellevue, WA 98004	(425) 452-4090
Kitsap	DRC of Kitsap County	Housing@KitsapDRC.org	http://www.kitsapdrc.org	9004 Washington Ave. NW Silverdale, WA 98383	(360) 517-5800

Kittitas	DRC of Yakima & Kittitas Counties	ERP@drcyakima.org	http://www.drcyakima.org	132 North 1st Avenue Yakima, WA 98902	(509) 388-0366
Klickitat	Six Rivers DRC	earlyresolution@6rivers.org	http://www.6rivers.org	PO Box 1594, Hood River, Oregon 97031	(541) 386-1283 #2 Direct: (509) 606-6363 Toll Free: (888) 628-4101
Lewis	Center for Constructive Resolution and Conversation	erpp.lewis.ccrc@gmail.com	https://lewis-countyccrc.org/	500 W. Main St., Centralia, #11 (2nd floor) Centralia WA 98531	(360) 623-8788
Lincoln	Northwest Mediation Center	erppintake@nw-mediationcenter.com	http://www.nw-mediationcenter.com	35 West Main, Suite 230 Spokane, WA 99201	(509) 456-0103 x 1
Mason	DRC of Thurston County	cstead@mediatethurston.org	http://mediatethurston.org	PO Box 6184, Olympia, WA 98507	(360) 956-1155 ext. 113
Okanogan	Okanogan County DRC	okcodrc@live.com	http://www.okanogandrc.org	113 N Main St. Okanogan, WA 98840	(509) 826-1776
Pacific	DRC of Grays Harbor & Pacific Counties	erp@drcghp.org	http://www.drcghp.org	207 S Chehalis Street #301 Aberdeen, WA. 98520	(360) 532-8950
Pend Oreille	Northwest Mediation Center	erppintake@nw-mediationcenter.com	http://www.nw-mediationcenter.com	35 West Main, Suite 230 Spokane, WA 99201	(509) 456-0103 x 1
Pierce	Center for Dialog & Resolution	SolveIt@Center-ForResolution.org	https://center-forresolution.org	717 Tacoma Ave. South Tacoma, WA 98402	(253) 572-3657 Spanish: (253) 572-3657 ext. 123
San Juan	Volunteers of America Dispute Resolution Center	earlyresolution@voaww.org	http://www.voaww.org/drc	Physical: 117N First St, Ste 30 Mount Vernon, WA 98273 Mailing: PO Box 839 Everett, WA 98206-0839	(425) 339-1335 (press #3) Toll Free: (800) 280-4770 (press #3)

Skagit	Volunteers of America Dispute Resolution Center	earlyresolution@voaww.org	http://www.voaww.org/drc	Physical: 117N First St, Ste 30 Mount Vernon, WA 98273 Mailing: PO Box 839 Everett, WA 98206-0839	(425) 339-1335 (press #3) Toll Free: (800) 280-4770 (press #3)
Skamania	Six Rivers DRC	earlyresolution@6rivers.org	http://www.6rivers.org	PO Box 1594, Hood River, Ore- gon 97031	(541) 386-1283 #2 Direct: (509) 606-6363 Toll Free: (888) 628-4101
Snohom- ish	Volunteers of America Dispute Resolution Center	earlyresolution@voaww.org	http://www.voaww.org/drc	Physical: 2801 Lombard St Everett WA 98201" Mailing: PO Box 839 Everett, WA 98206-0839	(425) 339-1335 (press #3) Toll Free: (800) 280-4770 (press #3)
Spokane	Fulcrum Institute DRC	housing@fulcrumdispute.com	http://www.fulcrumdispute.com	1212 N. Wash- ington Street, Ste 206 Spokane, WA 99201	(509) 838-2799
Spokane	Northwest Mediation Center	erppintake@nwmediationcenter.com	http://www.nwmediationcenter.com	35 West Main, Suite 230 Spokane, WA 99201	(509) 456-0103 x 1
Stevens	Northwest Mediation Center	erppintake@nwmediationcenter.com	http://www.nwmediationcenter.com	35 West Main, Suite 230 Spokane, WA 99201	(509) 456-0103 x 1
Thurston	DRC of Thurston County	cstead@mediatethurston.org	http://mediatethurston.org	PO Box 6184, Olympia, WA 98507	(360) 956-1155 ext. 113
Wahkia- kum	DRC of Grays Harbor & Pacific Counties	erp@drcghp.org	http://www.drcghp.org	207 S Chehalis Street #301 Aberdeen, WA. 98520	(360) 532-8950
Walla Walla	NeutralGroundDRC	director@neutralgrounddrc.org	https://www.neutralgrounddrc.org/	1200 SE 12th Street Suite 6 College Place, WA 99324	(509) 730-1317

Whatcom	Whatcom DRC	gayle@whatcom-drc.org	http://www.whatcomdrc.org	206 Prospect Street Bellingham, WA 98225	(360) 676-0122 x 122
Whitman	Northwest Mediation Center	erppintake@nw-mediationcenter.com	http://www.nw-mediationcenter.com	35 West Main, Suite 230 Spokane, WA 99201	(509) 456-0103 x 1
Yakima	DRC of Yakima & Kittitas Counties	ERP@drcyakima.org	http://www.drcyakima.org	132 North 1st Avenue Yakima, WA 98902	(509) 388-0366