

Nevada County governments to weigh halting evictions this week

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Thousands of Nevada County residents will find out whether they could be forced to move out of their homes this week, as local governments decide whether to take on authority granted to them by the state.

In remotely held meetings with limited public participation, the Nevada County Board of Supervisors and Grass Valley City Council will consider resolutions halting evictions and foreclosures for residences and businesses economically affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Last week Gov. Gavin Newsom authorized local jurisdictions to stop eviction, foreclosure and utility shut-off enforcement, which Nevada City took advantage of through executive order last Wednesday. The order will need to be ratified by the council at its next meeting.

Under Nevada City's order, a moratorium on enforcement will be in place for people financially affected by the pandemic until May 31, at which time residents will have six months to pay any rent due. Late fees for rent and utilities will be suspended during that time.

No specific documentation is required, but tenants must notify their landlords in writing (including text or email) within 30 days after the date their rent is due in order to take advantage.

GRASS VALLEY

In Grass Valley, the city council will consider an urgency ordinance prohibiting commercial and residential evictions specifically during the period of the COVID-19 state of emergency.

Under the ordinance, residents will have up to six months after the state of emergency is lifted to pay rent they owed during the emergency, however the rent normally due during that six month period "shall be due as the landlord and tenant have agreed," meaning late fees for that portion may apply.

Grass Valley residents will have 10 days after their rent is due to notify their landlords of their inability to pay and must have supporting documentation. The ordinance also allows landlords to collect a pro-rated share of the rent if the tenant suffers a partial loss of income. The ordinance will need to reach four-fifths approval to pass.

NEVADA COUNTY

The county will also consider suspending commercial and residential evictions for those impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic or the government response to the crisis. However, further details on its implementation were not available.

"We want to make sure we're not creating more homeless people, we want to protect our residents and businesses every way we can," Board of Supervisors chairwoman Heidi Hall said. "We're trying to cover everything that the governor's order is going to allow us to cover at this point and we'll figure out the details as we go along."

The ordinance will also ask public housing authorities in the county to extend deadlines for housing assistance applicants and recipients to hand over eligibility documents that are within that housing agency's discretion.

It further empowers County Executive Officer Alison Lehman, along with other department heads and county officers, to take actions necessary to carry out the proposed resolution.

"There's so much fear and legitimate concern in the community about people who are losing their jobs, either temporarily or permanently, and their ability to pay for food, pay for their kid's needs, to pay for rent," Hall said. "It's a fluid situation but we're following what's happening at the state level."

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