GUIDELINES FOR EVICTION COURT WATCHING

Meridian Street UMC Housing Justice Task Force June 2022

**Prepare by studying some Indiana eviction laws; refer to:**  <https://propertymanagement.com/laws/Indiana-eviction-process>

 proceed with eviction; diversion; https:/indyrent.org (American Rescue Plan monies for Marion County); consensual agreement between tenant and landlord.

**Prior to attending a court session:**

Call the township small claims court to learn when eviction cases are heard. If the responder does not understand your question, ask to speak to the judge. Identify who you are and the purpose of your call. (Hello, my name is a member of and our group wants to observe eviction hearings to better understand the Indiana legal process for tenants. (Eviction cases are a public hearing).

Check the docket of the specific court in which you plan to observe before going. Listed will be the time frame, case number and name, description (i.e. eviction, damages hearing, etc), judicial officer.

 <https://public.courts.in.gov/CourtCal/#/49>

Print the docket for the morning or afternoon cases, whichever time frame you are observing. Highlight each case. Encircle the plantiff and the defendant, so that in court you can # each data form with the same # as the case.

 **Attending court:**

Some courtrooms are small, allotting for 2-3 persons to observe at one time. Hearing may be a problem depending on if the judge is wearing a mask, is using a mic, or has plexiglass between he(she) and the court.

Each case is called by the bailiff.

Observe the presence (or absence) of an attorney for the tenant; for the landlord. Listen to what is said by each. Does the judge ask many questions of the tenant or landlord before making a decision? What is the decision made by the judge? Note the approximate time of each case. Is there a difference in the proceedings if the tenant has an attorney?

After your observing the court eviction process, discuss with your group. What questions do you have? What are your next steps?

Maintain your forms until the court watching teams have collected enough data to give to Dr. Fran Quigley, IU law professor, and Andrew Bradley, Prosperity Indiana Policy Director.

While in court, if you heard a story offered by a tenant that would help “paint a picture” of the many challenging issues many tenants in Indiana face, please type your story in Word document format and forward a copy to: Cheryl Shore, cheryls51@gmail.com. These stories along with the collected data sheets will be given to Fran and Andrew.

Contacts: Carolyn Kingen, cskingen80@gmail.com 317-403-0752

 Dick d’Alton, dickdalton@comcast.com 317-439-2436