



For immediate release
November 1, 2007

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Tenant Resource Center minimally restores statewide toll-free renters' hotline and e-mail services

Office hours to remain at reduced level until end of year

On November 1, 2007 Tenant Resource Center (TRC) will re-open the statewide toll-free hotline and begin returning calls as resources allow. While TRC has not secured the level of funding necessary to staff this line full-time, as of November 1, callers are able to leave a message and staff will return calls on a regular basis. Because of very limited resources it may take anywhere from two days to two weeks to receive a return call. The toll-free number is 1-877-238-RENT(7368).

"The vast majority of our funding comes from sources within Dane County, and as a result, we must prioritize calls from Dane County residents, before we can assist others in the rest of the state," explains TRC Executive Director Brenda Konkel.

Responding to e-mail questions has also been reinstated, and a great deal of information is also available on the TRC website at <http://www.tenantresourcecenter.org/>.

Local office hours will continue to be reduced through December 31, 2007. TRC will close at 4:00 p.m. each weekday except Wednesday. On Wednesdays TRC will continue to remain open until 6:00 p.m. TRC will return to standard office hours (M-F, 9-6) on January 2, 2008.

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1202 Williamson Street, Suite A, Madison, WI 53703

Housing Counseling Line: 608.257.0006 or 877.238.RENT(7368) toll-free from outside of Dane County

Housing Mediation Service: 608.257.2799 **Administrative Office:** 608.257.0143 Fax: 608.286.0804

Email: asktrc@tenantresourcecenter.org office@tenantresourcecenter.org Website: <http://www.tenantresourcecenter.org/>

Housing Help Desk: 608.242.7406 Fax: 608.242.7490 1819 Aberg Avenue, Madison, WI 53704

Email: housinghelpdesk@tenantresourcecenter.org



Tenant Resource Center learned in early October that its funding for the statewide toll-free rental rights and responsibilities hotline was not renewed by the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the upcoming year. As a result TRC was forced to temporarily discontinue this statewide toll-free service while the agency assessed its capacity to continue to provide the service at a reduced level. The cut amounts to over \$41,000, approximately 20% of TRC's current funding from government sources and 13% of the 2007 budget overall.

In response to this reduction, HUD suggested that TRC refer people with rental housing problems to the other HUD-approved housing counseling agencies in Wisconsin. TRC contacted the eleven agencies that provide rental assistance and found that while the majority of them would like nothing more than to answer rental housing questions, they all either lack the knowledge or resources to be able to do so, or they provide financial assistance but not information and referrals for tenants and landlords to find out about their rental rights and responsibilities. Only eleven of the 28 HUD-approved housing counseling agencies in Wisconsin provide any assistance to renters—the rest focus on homeownership counseling.

Tenant Resource Center provides information about rental rights and responsibilities to tenants and landlords throughout Wisconsin. The most common problems discussed are eviction, repairs, security deposits and other consumer protections for tenants and landlords. There are no other organizations in Wisconsin that have the capacity to provide free rental housing counseling to the entire state.

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