

History and Sponsors

The Housing Mediation Service began in 1995 as a joint project of the Tenant Resource Center and the Apartment Association of South Central Wisconsin.

The **Tenant Resource Center** is a non-profit, membership organization dedicated to promoting positive relations between rental housing consumers and providers throughout Wisconsin. By providing information and referrals, education about rental rights and responsibilities, and access to conflict resolution, we empower the community to obtain and maintain quality affordable housing.

As a non-profit organization, the Tenant Resource Center has a small staff and relies primarily on volunteers to provide housing counseling, mediation services and office assistance. The majority of the Tenant Resource Center's funding comes from Dane County, the Associated Students of Madison (University of Wisconsin), the City of Madison and Community Shares of Wisconsin. The remainder of our funding comes from memberships, donations, workshops, and publication sales.

The **Apartment Association of South Central Wisconsin** is a non-profit membership association of Dane County apartment owners and managers who work to provide a successful rental property environment while serving tenants professionally and fairly. The AASCW provides other services to help landlords manage their property, including educational seminars, management handbooks, forms, newsletters, and insurance programs.



Other Tenant Resource Center Services

Housing Counseling

The Tenant Resource Center offers counseling for tenants and landlords interested in learning more about their rental rights and responsibilities. Information on state and local rental laws and regulations, as well as lease screening services are available at the TRC. For housing counseling, you can stop in or call during business hours.

Tenant Resource Center Main Office
1202 Williamson St., Suite 102, Madison, WI 53703
9:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m., Monday – Friday
Rental Rights (608) 257-0006
Toll-free (877) 238-RENT (7368)
asktrc@tenantresourcecenter.org
www.tenantresourcecenter.org

Tenant Resource Center Campus Office
Student Activity Center, ASM Office, Room 4301
(608) 561-3727 or: uw@tenantresourcecenter.org

Housing Help Desk

The Housing Help Desk is located in the Dane County Job Center and provides in-depth housing counseling on looking for housing, subsidized housing, rental rights and responsibilities and can provide limited rental assistance. The Housing Help Desk also has available a weekly list of available rental units in Dane County.

1819 Aberg Ave., Room 2
Madison, WI 53704
Dane County Job Center
10:00am - 2:00pm, Monday - Friday
(608) 242-7406

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Funded in part by the Associated Students of Madison. ASM does not necessarily endorse the beliefs or actions of this organization.



Mediation for Housing Problems



Housing Mediation Service

1202 Williamson St. #102,
Madison, WI 53703
For mediation intake services,
call **(608) 257-2799**

Tenant Resource Center
1202 Williamson St. #102, Madison, WI 53703
9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m., Monday – Friday
www.tenantresourcecenter.org

Rental Rights (608) 257-0006
asktrc@tenantresourcecenter.org
En Español (608) 237-8913
Toll-free (877) 238 RENT (7368)
Business Line/TTY (608) 257-0143
Campus Office (608) 561-3727
Housing Help Desk (608) 242-7406

See back of brochure for further contact information.

If you need an interpreter, materials in alternate formats, or other accommodations, call our office at (608) 257-0143.

What is mediation?

Mediation is a voluntary process in which people with a disagreement meet together with a trained, impartial mediator. The mediator listens to both sides and guides the parties in clarifying and discussing the issues, identifying areas of agreement, developing possible solutions, and writing their own mutually satisfying agreement.

What is the Housing Mediation Service?

Housing Mediation Service began as a joint project of the Tenant Resource Center and the Apartment Association of South Central Wisconsin and is designed to provide low-cost mediation services for the resolution of rental housing-related disputes. The service provides a quick, inexpensive alternative to small claims court.

For non-eviction cases, the cost is \$25 per party. This is a donation to help cover the costs of providing this service. For low-income individuals or families there is a sliding scale.

Why mediate?

It's voluntary. No one is obligated to take part in mediation.

It's inexpensive. Mediation is \$25 per party, much less than small claims court. For low-income individuals or families there is a sliding scale. If an eviction case is already pending, the fees are waived.

You get quick results. A meeting can be set up within about a week of the request, depending on the availability and willingness of both parties to mediate. In small claims court, you may wait weeks to have your case heard.

It's confidential. The mediation files and written agreements are kept strictly confidential.

What disputes might mediation resolve?

Tenant-Landlord

Eviction, noise, security deposits, nonpayment of rent, nonrenewal of lease.

Roommate-Roommate

Noise, guests, privacy, common areas, household duties.

Neighbor-Neighbor

Pets, noise, communication problems.

What if we're already going to eviction court?

The Housing Mediation Service also provides eviction mediation services before and during small claims eviction court hearings in Dane County.

A court-enforceable agreement (or "stipulation") can be reached through mediation and filed with the court. These agreements are typically either payment plans that allow the tenant to remain in the apartment or move-out dates that enable the tenant to secure alternate housing. If the terms of the agreement are met, the tenant will not be evicted. However, the court proceedings will be on their record. Mediated agreements have the same enforceability as those written by the court commissioner.

Mediations can be scheduled prior to the court hearing, or even in the place of a court hearing.

The process to set up eviction mediation is the same as for other disputes: Call (608) 257-2799.

About the mediators

Housing Mediation Service volunteer mediators have received professional mediation training.

The mediator's role is to facilitate communication between the parties and exploration of the options and possible solutions. Mediators cannot guarantee that the problem will be solved, provide legal advice, or take sides. The ultimate resolution is up to the parties in dispute.

What is the mediation process?

The first step

Call the Housing Mediation Service at (608) 257-2799 and leave your name and phone number. Someone will return your call.

Gathering Information

We will ask you for information about the dispute and how to contact the person with whom you are in conflict.

Scheduling a mediation

If our services can help, we will contact the other party in the dispute by letter and/or phone. We will discuss the merits of participating in mediation. If the other party agrees to mediate, we will schedule a meeting time when our mediators are available. The entire process is completely voluntary.

At the mediation

At the mediation session, a trained volunteer mediator will listen to both parties and guide them in clarifying the issues, identifying areas of agreement, developing possible solutions, and writing their own agreement. The sessions for non-eviction cases usually take 1–2 hours.

The mediator does not take sides, nor decide who is "right" or "wrong," but simply helps facilitate open and constructive discussion of the issues involved in the dispute and guide the parties toward resolution.

Reaching an agreement

When an understanding is reached, the terms are written down by the mediator. All parties sign the agreement as an acknowledgment of their commitment to abide by the terms of their mutual agreement.

Preparing for mediation

Mediation is intended to be less adversarial than a court proceeding, but you may still want to prepare for your mediation by writing out your concerns and your suggestions for how you hope they might be addressed. When appropriate, you may also wish to bring copies of relevant laws or ordinances.