

## **Community Legal Aid**

A non-profit law firm serving the legal needs of low-income individuals and families in central northeast Ohio

[www.communitylegalaid.org](http://www.communitylegalaid.org)

---

My landlord is suing

## **My landlord is suing me. How is that different from my eviction?**

The first step is to understand what your landlord is suing you for.

Landlords can sue for eviction, but they can also sue you for money you owe them or any damage they say you did to the property. These may show up in your court papers as a “first cause” and a “second cause.”

The court has to decide on these two things separately. So, just because you’re evicted, it doesn’t mean you owe your landlord the money they’re asking for. Some courts will decide both these things in one hearing, and others will schedule separate hearings.

If your landlord is suing you for money (remember, this is called a “second cause” in your court papers), you have to file an answer with the court. This is a legal form that explains why you do or do not owe the money your landlord is asking for. [You can download a sample here to file with your court.](#)

You need to file your answer within 28 days, but you can also ask the court for more time, if you need it. To ask for more time, you need to file a different form called a “continuance.” If you don’t file the right paperwork in time, the court can decide to tell you to pay all the money your landlord is asking for. [Download a sample here to file with your court.](#)

Remember: The eviction process moves very quickly, and it’s important that you don’t miss any dates or deadlines. So if you move at any point during this process, make sure the court and your attorney have your new address, so you keep getting paperwork on time.

---

Printed: May 14, 2021

<http://www.communitylegalaid.org/node/1303/my-landlord-suing-me-how-different-my-eviction>

©Community Legal Aid