

Lackawanna County – Eviction Prevention Program

In a continuing effort to prevent homelessness, Lackawanna County is piloting an Eviction Prevention Program. The rationale of the proposal is that if a situation could be resolved before a magistrate hearing, the landlord would be spared the expense of court costs and further aggravation involved in an eviction process. The tenant would benefit by remaining in the apartment, accepting responsibility and receiving services such as budget counseling and debt management.

The program is voluntary and relies heavily on the cooperation of landlords. The intention of the Eviction Prevention Program is that a Team of community agencies will be contacted by the landlord at the time that he or she is prepared to file the eviction. During the initial contact the referral form would request the tenant's name, address and, if possible, the phone number as well as any pertinent information about the eviction. Next a team of at least two community agencies would attempt to work with the tenant to alleviate the issues causing potential eviction (e.g. attain rental assistance from community providers or get mental health assessment). The goal is to intervene and conclude the process within five days working days of the initial contact. The team will also insure follow through with the appropriate community agencies.

The Eviction Prevention Program recognizes that all of the concerns that lead to an eviction are not easily solved and therefore this program will not necessarily work for everyone. However, if an eviction is ever to be prevented it is always easier to do so before court proceedings have begun. With this program the only thing a landlord stands to lose is a few days and possibly a good tenant.

Community Partners include:

- ✓ United Neighborhood Centers One Stop Shop for Housing Program
- ✓ Lackawanna Susquehanna MH/MR
- ✓ Scranton Counseling Center
- ✓ Tri-County Human Services
- ✓ Advocacy Alliance: A Mental Health Association
- ✓ North-Penn Legal Services
- ✓ St. Joseph's Center
- ✓ Community Intervention Center
- ✓ Women's Resource Center