

NEWS ADVISORY

# Bernalillo County Metropolitan Court

## Landlord-Tenant Settlement Program to launch mid-May



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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A mediation program specifically for people involved in landlord-tenant disputes is slated to get off the ground on May 11th. The Landlord-Tenant Settlement Program will give landlords and tenants the opportunity to work out business agreements beneficial to both sides. To be eligible, participants must have an active landlord-tenant case in the Metropolitan Court.

“This could be a game-changer in terms of providing long-term housing stability for tenants and their families while ensuring steady rental payments for local landlords,” said Judge Frank A. Sedillo, who helped in developing the program and presides over the court’s Civil Division.

The service is free, and parties in a case will work with a volunteer settlement facilitator specially trained in housing matters. Many of the facilitators are retired judges and experienced attorneys who will provide services *pro bono*.

The court partnered with the Honorable Nan Nash with the Equal Access to Justice Commission and Karen Meyers with the City of Albuquerque’s Consumer Financial Protection Initiative in creating this specialized program in response to the COVID-19 crisis. In late March, the state Supreme Court entered orders staying evictions in cases where both parties appeared in court and where the tenant provided proof of inability to pay.

“We are hopeful that this program will continue long after the current public health emergency. We’ve seen meaningful resolutions come out of our general mediation program and are confident that this specialized settlement program will have similar results,” added Judge Sedillo.

The court’s general mediation program has been serving the community for 34 years and has evolved into the largest, ongoing court mediation program in the State of New Mexico. Mediation staff, along with professionally trained mediators, help people

resolve more than 600 cases per year. The program recruits and maintains a pool of approximately 75 professionally trained mediators who provide well over 1,000 hours of volunteer time to the court each year.

Those interested in participating in the Landlord-Tenant Settlement Program or serving as a volunteer settlement facilitator are asked to contact the court's Mediation Division at: (505) 841-8167.

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