

# Navigating Eviction Court

Navigating eviction court can be confusing. However, it is always better to go to court if you have been served. Going to court allows you to access resources and potentially help you resolve your case.

## When can evictions be initiated?

- The tenant falls behind on rent.
- The tenant violates the lease.
- The lease is up, and the landlord decides to terminate the tenancy.

No matter what, the landlord needs to give the tenant notice before filing a case, and the tenant must be served.

## What happens at the first hearing?

Tenants without lawyers are referred to legal aid, rental assistance, and court-appointed mediation (the Early Resolution Program). The case is usually continued (extended) for 14 or 28 days. Requests for a jury trial should be filed before the second court hearing.

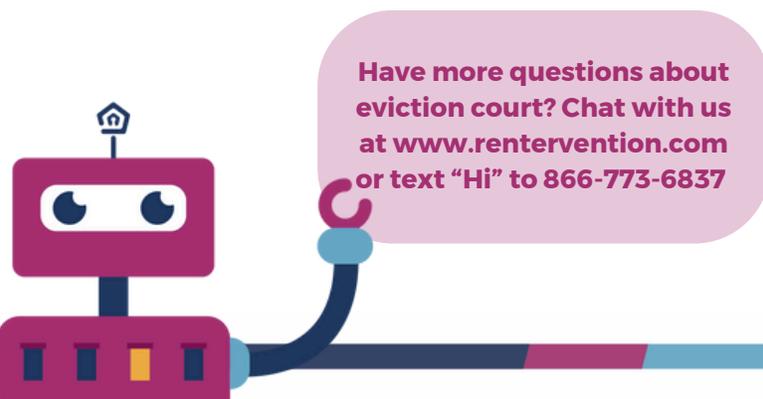
## What happens at the second hearing?

- A few outcomes can happen:
  - Case Dismissed - the parties can resolve the dispute through rental assistance, a payment plan, a move-out date, or other agreement.
  - Case Continued - the parties can agree to more time.
  - Case Sent to Trial Room - the parties cannot reach an agreement, and the Judge transfers the case to be set for trial.
  - Default Eviction - if the tenant fails to appear, the Judge can issue an eviction order.

## What happens if the case goes to trial?

In Cook County, most eviction cases are heard by judges. The case may be dismissed if:

- Tenant agrees to move to avoid an eviction
- Parties secure rental assistance or agree to a payment plan
- Tenant presents defenses to all claims
- If the Judge decides in favor of the landlord, they can enter an eviction order and/or a judgment for rent owed.



Have more questions about  
eviction court? Chat with us  
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