RENTER'S RIGHTS & EVICTION PREVENTION

What Your Landlord Can't Do, and Where to Get Help Before It's Too Late

Know your rights · Illegal lockouts · The eviction process · Emergency rental help

A free resource from the Bulletproof Grace Foundation

From Survival to Purpose

Why This Guide Exists

Most eviction problems start small and become urgent because tenants don't know their rights, or don't know help exists until it's almost too late. This guide is built so you can act early — before a notice on your door becomes a court date.

22–57%	2,960	30 Days
of homeless women cite DV as the cause	people homeless in ABQ, Jan. 2025 single night	typical minimum notice required in NM

1. What Your Landlord Cannot Do

Under the New Mexico Uniform Owner-Resident Relations Act, your landlord cannot:

- Change the locks or shut off utilities to force you out (an illegal 'self-help' eviction)
- Remove your belongings without a court order
- Evict you without proper written notice and a court process
- Retaliate against you for reporting a habitability issue (like no heat or unsafe conditions)
- Discriminate based on race, disability, family status, or source of income in most cases

If You've Been Illegally Locked Out

Call the police non-emergency line — an illegal lockout is a civil rights violation, not just a landlord-tenant dispute

NM Legal Aid — 1-833-LGL-HELP — free help for illegal lockout situations, no income limit for emergency cases

2. The Eviction Process in New Mexico

What Actually Has to Happen

■ Landlord must give written notice (typically 3 days for non-payment, 7 days for lease violations)

■ If you don't move or fix the issue, landlord must file in court — they cannot evict you themselves

■ You will be served court papers and have the right to appear and respond

■ A judge decides the case — only a sheriff can carry out a legal eviction, and only after a court order

If anyone tries to remove you or your things without a sheriff and a court order, that is illegal — call NM Legal Aid immediately.

3. If You're Behind on Rent — Act Now, Not Later

Emergency Rental & Utility Assistance

211 New Mexico — free, 24/7 — connects to emergency rental/utility assistance funds as they open

NM Mortgage Finance Authority — housingnm.org — emergency rental assistance and affordable housing listings statewide

Salvation Army ABQ — (505) 842-7766 — rent and utility assistance for households facing shutoff or eviction

LIHEAP — NM Human Services Dept — helps pay heating/cooling bills, 1-800-283-4465

Talking to Your Landlord Before It Escalates

If you're going to be late on rent

"I want to be upfront that I'm short this month. Can we set up a partial payment plan?"

"I'm actively getting help from 211/emergency rental assistance — can I share an update with you in one week?"

Why it works: Landlords are often more flexible with a tenant who communicates early than one who goes silent.

4. Legal Help for Eviction Cases

Where to Get Free Legal Support

New Mexico Legal Aid — 1-833-LGL-HELP — free representation and advice for eviction cases, no income limit for emergencies

NM Courts Self-Help Center — nmcourts.gov — free forms and guidance if you need to respond to a filing yourself

You have the right to show up to your court date and explain your situation. Missing it almost always makes things worse — even if you can't pay in full, appearing matters.

A Note From BGF

Housing instability is one of the hardest things a family can face. If you're worried about losing your home, reach out before it becomes an emergency — we're here to help you find the next step.

Contact Bulletproof Grace Foundation

Email — bulletproofgracefoundation@gmail.com

Location — 600 Central Ave SW Suite 107, Albuquerque, NM 87102