

November 5, 2021

The Honorable Max Baer
Chief Justice, Supreme Court of Pennsylvania
c/o Office of the Prothonotary
468 City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107

**Re: Response in Support of Pennsylvania Supreme Court Order No. 21 EM 2020
Authorization for Continuation of the Philadelphia Municipal Court
Landlord-Tenant Diversion Program**

Dear Justices of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania,

I am a volunteer mediator for Philadelphia's Eviction Diversion Program (EDP). I am writing to request your ongoing support for Philadelphia's nationally renowned use of Alternative Dispute Resolution in eviction proceedings. I appreciate your leadership in continuing to extend authority for Philadelphia to require landlords to apply for rental assistance and participate in Philadelphia's pre-filing Eviction Diversion Program, most recently via your Order dated October 28, 2021, No. 21 EM 2020. I would like to request that you continue to extend this authority beyond November 30, 2021. I further request that you grant this authority to other counties, so that residents there can also benefit from collaboration between the courts, rental assistance, and other stabilizing measures. To do so, I respectfully request that you issue a rule that allows a local county's President Judge to issue their own local rule creating or coordinating with Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) procedures in eviction proceedings, if they so choose. Below are a few *highlights* of this remarkable program.

- I mediated a case that involved a family with a special needs child. Childcare issues, medical expenses, and COVID 19 put the family at risk of being evicted. Through mediation, the landlord and tenant reached an agreement that kept the family in their home and arranged a realistic payment plan for the landlord.
- Philadelphia's EDP has helped over 2,300 landlord-tenant pairs in reaching an agreement or resolution with the support of housing counselors and trained mediators in over 90% of cases.
- The Program has also helped an additional 7,000 landlords and tenants access rental assistance without the need for mediation.
- Philadelphia has avoided the wave of evictions predicted. Eviction filings in Philadelphia are less than a third of what they were pre-pandemic.
- Philadelphia has received national attention for these programs and the collaboration between the Court, the Diversion Program, and the rental assistance program.

Respectfully Submitted,


Tracy Hornig, Volunteer Mediator, Philadelphia Eviction Diversion Program


Date