



September 2, 2021

Dear Law School Community,

I write today concerning the looming eviction crisis. Even before the pandemic, our region had one of the highest eviction rates in the country and with federal and local eviction moratoria expiring, eviction filings are expected to increase significantly. Earlier this week, Attorney General Merrick Garland issued [an open letter to the legal community](#) encouraging us to use our training to help our communities. This week, I joined with law school deans across the country to issue our own [letter of support](#), urging lawyers and law students alike to find ways to support tenants, landlords, and the court system. As AG Garland noted, “Promoting access to justice to ensure that our justice system delivers outcomes that are fair and accessible to all, irrespective of wealth or status, is one of the highest ideals of the legal profession.”

As tenants face the loss of their homes and landlords face the loss of their income, members of the legal profession can provide some crucial services to these vulnerable communities. There are a number of ways to help – including opportunities for law students and non-lawyers:

City of Richmond Eviction Diversion Program

This program works with tenants at risk of eviction in coordination with their landlords and the court to keep people in their homes. Volunteers are needed to assist in the client intake process. You can join the Richmond Law training session on Wednesday, September 15 at 12 p.m. [Register here](#).

Virginia Poverty Law Center Eviction Helpline

This free resource provides tenants facing eviction or lease termination with legal information as well as referrals to other providers/services. The VPLC also has a Virginia Rent Relief Program. Learn more about how to volunteer [here](#).

Finally, I’ll add that the Supreme Court of Virginia recently issued [an order](#) that empowers law professors and foreign attorneys to engage in limited representation of individuals on a pro bono basis.

If you have questions about how best to serve the communities impacted by the eviction crisis, I urge you to be in touch with [Professor Tara Casey](#), director of the Carrico Center for Pro Bono and Public Service.

Sincerely,

Dean Perdue

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