

# John Okonji Informs Landlords About Their Rights in 2023 Post-COVID Pandemic

*John Okonji, the Founder and Managing Attorney from The Okonji Law Office informs landlords that they will have the control to evict tenants if they see fit.*

KATY, TEXAS, UNITED STATES, May 11, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The COVID-19 pandemic may be all but gone, and the world is returning to normal, or as normal as it can. Citizens are returning to regular work habits, and people can travel openly again. This also means that many rental assistance programs are drying up, and landlords will be given the control to evict tenants for not paying rent once again. John Okonji, from The Okonji Law Office, sheds some light on landlord-tenant rights and what landlords may need to know in the event of an eviction.

## Rent Relief Update as of March 2023

Programs such as the Texas Rent Relief Program (TRR) have had to deny, in bulk, applications for assistance in paying rent, and this cannot be appealed. On March 14th of 2023, over 150,000 applications were submitted upon re-opening the application process. However, all funding had been exhausted, and TRR had to deny applicants. TRR is providing additional sources to turn to for tenants who still need financial assistance paying for rent, including:

-Help for Texans - A list of emergency rental, utility, and homeless services



The Okonji Law Office

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John Okonji is a highly respected real estate attorney in the Katy, TX area.

-2-1-1 Texans - Organizations that provide assistance with rent and utilities

-Texas Utility Help - Assistance with utility, water, and wastewater payment  
-TRR's announcement page - A list of assistance programs still offering financing assistance

While these assistance programs affect the state of Texas, assistance programs are starting to expire in other states, if they have not expired already. Some states, such as California, may still have renter's forgiveness in effect. However, more and more states are terminating their assistance programs.

### What Landlords Need to Know

Landlords still need to be highly vigilant of their duties and the laws, especially if they feel they need to evict someone. If these laws are not followed to the letter by the landlord, it can be difficult for the landlord to win their case if and when the case goes to court. It is the landlord's duty to follow each law carefully and give tenants proper notice of their responsibilities and notice in the event of an eviction. Landlords may want to seek legal counsel about their rights as well as their tenants' rights to ensure they stay well within the law.

### [Landlord-Tenant Law](#) in the State of Texas

According to the Texas Landlord Tenant Laws and Rights for 2023, a rental agreement must be drafted listing the responsibilities of both the landlord and the tenant. This legal document can serve as a tool to help resolve any issues that might occur during the tenant's lease term. Therefore, the terms must be clear on precisely what is expected from each party.

Texas state law only requires a lease agreement for tenants living on the premises for more than twelve months. However, it is strongly recommended that landlords draw up a lease agreement regardless of the time frame. If there are any issues, the contract can be referred to and used in court if necessary. It is also state law in Texas that landlords must provide a copy of the entire lease agreement.

### Texas Criteria for Tenants and Landlords

Each state has criteria landlords and tenants must adhere to. Each state will vary, so it is important that each party be aware of what is expected of them and what each party should do in the event of an issue.



As for landlords in Texas, they reserve the right to use the following information to determine whether a potential tenant is approved to live on the property:

- Income
- Criminal history
- Rental history
- Credit history

Each state may allow landlords to consider additional criteria as needed for their property, however the criteria may vary. When a tenant is approved, typically the landlord has the right to collect rent and charge for repair costs due to damages to the property, beyond normal wear and tear, made by tenants.

In addition, landlords in many states may not be required to provide any specific amount of utilities such as water and electricity. For example, in Texas it is not required, but some places still offer it. Landlords typically only need to provide utilities in good condition and maintenance services due to normal wear and tear.

If a tenant sends a written notice to their landlord about damages that need repair, the landlord typically needs to make said repairs within a certain number of days after receiving the notice. In Texas, landlords have approximately seven days to make the repairs. If a landlord fails to do so, the tenant reserves the right to seek legal counsel.

Landlords must be aware of tenants' rights and responsibilities. For instance, in Texas, tenants are responsible for the following:

- Rent must be paid on time
- Property must remain in good condition
- Tenants must make repairs that are not normal wear and tear
- All tenants must respect their neighbors' right to peace and quiet.
- Any miscellaneous terms set by the landlord

If any or all responsibilities are neglected, the landlord has the right to evict the tenant.

### Eviction and Lease Termination

In most states, breaking or terminating a lease occurs when one party does not fulfill their part of the written agreement. However, there may be a few exceptions that states may recognize that allows a tenant to break their lease. These exceptions may include but are not limited to the following:

- Early termination clause

- Landlord harassment
- Sexual assault
- Uninhabitable conditions

In Texas, if a tenant decides to stay and finish the current contract and not renew it, the tenant may need to give the landlord written notice 30 days prior to the end of the lease. However, the 30 days can be modified at the landlord's discretion. Landlords need to check what their state requires and ensure their tenants are aware of the time frame by clearly stating it in their lease.

If a landlord needs to evict a tenant, they can typically do so under the following terms:

- Failing to fulfill lease terms
- Criminal activity
- Refusal to pay rent

In the event of an eviction in Texas, landlords must provide a three-day eviction notice to the tenant. This is where landlords must be sure to fulfill every single requirement and follow the law to the letter. Therefore, landlords should seek out what their obligations are in accordance to their home state.

#### What the End of Rent Forgiveness Means Nationwide

Because landlords are now able to collect full rent and late fees from tenants, there will probably be instances when a landlord may have to issue an eviction. It is a difficult decision and must not be made lightly. However, in the event of an eviction, it is important to seek legal counsel. With the proper guidance, landlords can ensure they stay well within the law while still respecting their tenants' rights.

John Okonji has over fifteen years of legal experience. He is the Founder and Managing Attorney at The Okonji Law Office and continues to serve the greater Houston area with due diligence. Mr. Okonji specializes in landlord-tenant law, contracts, and [real estate transactions](#). He takes great pride in ensuring his clients are represented fairly and ensures their rights are protected and recognized to the fullest extent of the law. For more information about representation from John Okonji, please call (832) 844-3689 or email him today at: [john@okonjilaw.com](mailto:john@okonjilaw.com).

This press release does not contain official legal advice, as every state has its own laws and regulations about real estate, [landlord-tenants](#), and contracts. The author or owner bears no legal responsibility for any errors or omissions in the information provided above. Anyone needing counsel in these areas should seek the proper attorneys in their state.

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