

IT CAN BE HARD TO  
KNOW WHAT YOU  
DO NOT KNOW...

A BRIEF INTRODUCTORY EXERCISE





Welcome!

- Today we'll be talking about:
  - Fair Housing
  - Evictions
  - General Sessions  
Project Form Reform

# The Role of the Fair Housing Act in the Eviction Crisis

- *42 U.S.C. §§ 3601-19*
- Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 (Fair Housing Act), as amended, prohibits discrimination in the sale, rental, and financing of dwellings, and in other housing-related transactions, because of race, color, religion, sex, familial status, national origin, and disability.
- It also requires that all federal programs relating to housing and urban development be administered in a manner that affirmatively furthers fair housing.



# Relevant Laws and Applicability

- Federal Fair Housing Act and Tennessee Human Rights Act
  - Applies to ALL residential housing – subsidized *and* open market housing
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act
  - Applies only to persons with disabilities in subsidized housing
- ADA
  - Applies to the public areas of residential housing
- VAWA
  - Applies to survivors of domestic violence in subsidized housing
  - Affords no private right of action
  - Fair Housing Act works in tandem to afford the private right of action

# Why Do These Laws Matter?

The Fair Housing Act/Tennessee Human Rights Act may not be familiar to Judges

Most individuals facing eviction do not have attorneys

They present their case in layman's terms

They may argue FHA/THRA violations that go unrecognized – may sound like excuses

This is true for non-payment cases as well as behavior cases

The failure to recognize a valid legal defense made by an unsophisticated defendant is the failure to safeguard the defendant's equal access to justice.



Not Everything  
That Is Unfair Is  
Illegal

- Discrimination is not simply “unfair treatment”
- Discrimination means:
  - To treat someone differently **because of** their race, color, religion, national origin, familial status, sex, or disability
  - or
  - To deny a reasonable accommodation or reasonable modification to an eligible person with a disability

# OK, But What Does It Really Mean?

- Mrs. E. L. Derly's lease has been terminated by Mr. B. U. Ly because she yelled at a manager and wrote on her door.
- These are lease violations.
- When Mrs. Derly presents her case, she admits that she did those things, but explains that she had run out of money and had skipped her medication for several weeks.
- She explains that she is sorry and that her caseworker has helped her find resources to pay for her medication so she can keep taking it.
- Mr. B.U. Ly complains that he can't have tenants who yell at managers and damage his property.

Should She Stay or Should She Go?

# What Is The Result?

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- Those are the facts presented, but what should be *heard*?
- Mr. B.U. Ly is correct that tenants can't be allowed to damage property.
- However, Mrs. Derly articulated that she is a person with a disability, her actions were a result of a manifestation of her disability, and she has taken steps to rectify the situation.
- In other words, she has requested a reasonable accommodation that a landlord **MUST** grant if she can prove a nexus to the disability, the request is reasonable, and is not an undue financial and administrative burden.
- The Fact Finder can (and should) ask a few clarifying questions, if necessary, before denying Mr. B.U. Ly's request.
- Any other result allows Mr. B.U. Ly to violate the Fair Housing Act.



## Why Does This Matter?

- Mr. N. Tolerance has terminated Pamela's lease for criminal activity and for disturbing the neighbors when the police were called to her apartment on three occasions.
- Pamela explained to the Judge that she got into a fight with her ex-husband the last time he came to her apartment to get the kids.
- He picked an argument then began to hit her. She feared for her life and fought back. This was in the police report.
- N. Tolerance told the Judge he has a 3-strike policy and this last one was her third.
- N. Tolerance told the Judge that the apartment is open market so he doesn't have to abide by VAWA and Pamela hasn't fulfilled the requirements under the state law.

Should Pamela Stay or Should She Go?

# Why Does This Matter?

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- N. Tolerance does have a legitimate reason to curb crime and ensure the residents' peaceful enjoyment of their apartments.
- But this was domestic violence, and the Fair Housing Act protects women from eviction, if the eviction uses the domestic violence as the reason.
- Pamela articulated her defense under the Fair Housing Act but if the Judge is unfamiliar with the Act, Pamela could be victimized twice.
- Even if N. Tolerance argues that Pamela does not have income so she can't pay the rent, he must give her the opportunity to find a job or otherwise continue to pay the rent.

# The Big Picture

- These are two generalized examples that are based on concrete principles in the Fair Housing Act/Tennessee Human Rights Act.
- Most of the people facing eviction are low to moderate income and less sophisticated than their landlord.
- More times than not, the landlord is represented by an attorney and the attorney will play let's make a deal with the client before they are in front of the Judge.
  - This is not necessarily a bad thing if the deal is reasonable and protects ALL of the tenant's rights.
  - This is also good due to crowded dockets that will get even more crowded in the coming months.
- A lack of knowledge on the Judge's part might lead to another homeless family.

# Is There A Solution?

Civil Court Judges are expected to hear cases based on endless different laws and the FHA/THRA is one more to add to this.

A “cheat sheet” with issue spotting hints would help point the Judge in the right direction.

Education on the basic facts of the law would expand the Judge’s knowledge base thereby allowing them to rule equitably.

What if the actual Detainer Warrant form, had tips for pro se defendants and a link or QR code to a video that explains what will happen in court?



# Other Fallout and Possible Solution

- Even if the Judge in Pamela's and Ms. Derly's cases denies the eviction action because of the Fair Housing violation, the attempted evictions will act as a barrier to their ability to relocate.
- When possible, landlords check records at the courthouse to see what actions have been filed against applicants for housing.
- Landlords tend to deny housing if a detainer action was filed, regardless of the outcome.
- What if a detainer action that was dismissed with prejudice or non-suited was automatically removed from the record?
- Based on Tennessee Law, the tenant was NOT evicted.
- When Landlords use this record as a housing check, they are taking a short cut and do not get the full picture.

# Other Fallout

- Thomas lost his job due to COVID and is \$10,000 behind in rent through no fault of his own.
- When the CARES Act money became available, Thomas immediately went to his landlord and explained the process to him.
- The landlord just wants Thomas out, so he files a detainer action and refuses to participate in the CARES Act money. He understands that he is turning down \$10,000 plus 3 month's future rent. His detainer action is successful, and Thomas must move.
- NOW, not only does Thomas have an eviction on his record, but also has a \$10,000 judgment against him.
- These issues will keep him from finding new housing, potentially leading to homelessness. Add a wife and 2 children into the mix and an entire family is homeless.

## Is There A Solution?

- Assume that the only lease violation was the non-payment of rent and prior to COVID, Thomas had never been late on the rent.
- The landlord's reason for refusing to participate is the he is still angry that he could not evict Thomas sooner.
- By refusing the CARES Act money, the landlord has refused payment of rent with good tender.
- Should he be allowed to turn around and hold Thomas accountable for the \$10,000?
- What if Judges were to grant possession but no rent damages in these situations?
- Thomas would have the eviction on his record but no insurmountable judgment against him.
- This would be a more equitable result and fit with Tennessee's Equal Access To Justice program.



WHY DO WE  
NEED  
SOLUTIONS LIKE  
THESE?

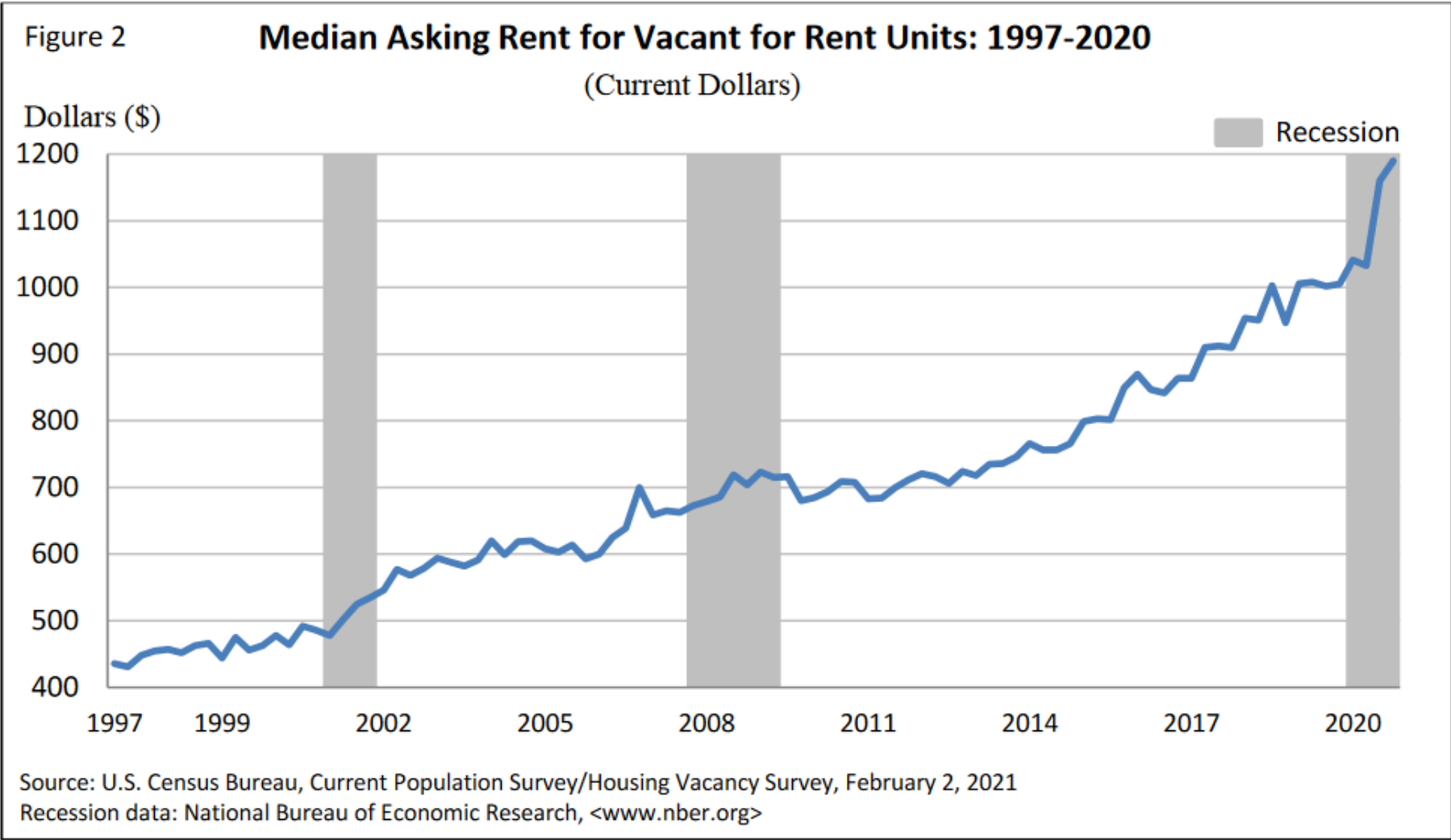
- We are in an eviction crisis, and it began long before the pandemic
- Housing affordability gap has widened
  - From 1960 to 2016, and adjusting for inflation: the median home value increased 112 per-cent, but the median owner income rose only 50 percent
  - **And if you think that's bad:** the median rent payment rose 61 percent while the median renter income grew only 5 percent

JOINT CENTER FOR HOUSING STUDIES  
OF HARVARD UNIVERSITY, THE STATE  
OF THE NATION'S HOUSING 2018. 5.  
[https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/Harvard\\_JCHS\\_State\\_of\\_the\\_Nations\\_Housing\\_2018.pdf](https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/Harvard_JCHS_State_of_the_Nations_Housing_2018.pdf)





In the fourth quarter 2020, the median asking rent for vacant for rent units was \$1,190.



# HOUSING HAS BEEN IN CRISIS FOR YEARS

- Housing affordability gap has widened
  - From 1960 to 2016, and adjusting for inflation: the median home value increased 112 per-cent, but the median owner income rose only 50 percent
  - **And if you think that's bad:** the median rent payment rose 61 percent while the median renter income grew only 5 percent

JOINT CENTER FOR HOUSING STUDIES OF HARVARD UNIVERSITY, THE STATE OF THE NATION'S HOUSING 2018. 5.

[https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/Harvard\\_JCHS\\_State\\_of\\_the\\_Nations\\_Housing\\_2018.pdf](https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/Harvard_JCHS_State_of_the_Nations_Housing_2018.pdf)

# RENTAL ECONOMICS 101

- Since 1970:
  - Change in share of aggregate income of middle 1/3 of Americans: - 19% \*
  - Change in share of aggregate income of lower 1/3 of Americans: - 1% \*
- Increase in % of renters in US since 2000: Over 6%. Now most since 1965. \*
- Roughly all homeownership fell since 2004, but in 2019\*\*:
  - % of all Americans who are homeowners: 64.6
  - % of White Non-Hispanic: 73.3
  - % of Asian or Pacific Islander: 57.7
  - % Hispanic and Latino: 47.5
  - % Black: 42.1

\* <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2020/01/09/trends-in-income-and-wealth-inequality/>

\*\*<https://usafacts.org/articles/homeownership-rates-by-race/>

# RENTAL ECONOMICS 101

- Today:
  - Nearly half of Americans are cost burdened, paying over 30% of total household income for rent \*
  - Nearly a quarter are severely cost-burdened, paying over 50% \*
  - Average net monthly profit margin for hi-income properties: \$50 \*\*
  - Average profit margin for low-income properties: \$100 \*\*

\* <https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/blog/more-than-a-third-of-american-households-were-cost-burdened-last-year>

\*\* <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-03-21/housing-exploitation-is-rife-in-poor-neighborhoods>, citing Princeton Eviction Lab's studies

# Why are low-income rentals more profitable?

Average rental market rates not very different from high to low

But, actual property values are, and properties in poorer areas typically get less input for upkeep.

Basically, less costs for similar rental charges.

Why does  
this  
disparity  
exist?

- Huge amount of factors:
  - Racial redlining and remaining effects of Jim-Crow segregation laws
  - Restrictive zoning regulations inhibit building new housing stock
  - Transportation infrastructure limits where poor can live without cars
  - Continuing illegal racial discrimination
  - More on this: “Eviction,” by Matthew Desmond; Princeton Eviction lab; *The Scarlett E*, On the Media, WNYC Studios.



# COSTS OF HOMELESSNESS

- 2009 Vanderbilt Study
  - Total costs from 11 homelessness service providers: \$16,784,020
  - \$7,537 per average homeless person
  - Hospital services: \$3,477,431
  - Medical clinics: \$866,703
  - Mobile emergency medical clinics: \$216,514
  - Veterans Affairs: \$561,939
  - Social Service: \$1,679,158
- Source: Voorhees, Brown & Perkins (2009) The Hidden Costs of Homelessness in Nashville: Report to the Nashville Metro Homelessness Commission. Vanderbilt University, Center for Community Studies.



## COSTS OF HOMELESSNESS CONT'D

- Homeless Shelter: \$4,888,851
  - Police costs: \$823,494
  - Jail costs: \$881,892
  - Court Costs: \$813,691
  - Drug and Alcohol Treatment: \$2,301,548
  - Homeless Advocacy: \$272,800
- 
- Source: Voorhees, Brown & Perkins (2009) The Hidden Costs of Homelessness in Nashville: Report to the Nashville Metro Homelessness Commission. Vanderbilt University, Center for Community Studies.



# COSTS OF HOMELESSNESS CONT'D

**Conclusion:** In contrast to current costs related to average and chronic homelessness, the annual cost to provide permanent housing (including a reduction in existing services) is estimated at \$5,907-7,618 per person, or a net per-person savings of between \$1,630-3,007. The annual cost of housing plus wrap-around services is \$11,500, which would be largely, but not entirely, subsidized by the reduction in existing service costs.

Source: Voorhees, Brown & Perkins (2009) The Hidden Costs of Homelessness in Nashville: Report to the Nashville Metro Homelessness Commission. Vanderbilt University, Center for Community Studies.

# COSTS OF HOMELESSNESS CONT'D



And that's just for  
Nashville!



More importantly, you  
cannot quantify the  
human costs.



Poses many ethical  
questions

# PANDEMIC EFFECTS

- Housing prices already high in 2019
  - Affordable housing was an existing issue
- Disastrous convergence of:
  - Increasing demand for safe housing
  - Increased housing scarcity
  - Increased housing costs
  - Loss of wages and jobs
- Poor hardest hit... as usual
- Leading to increase in eviction for non-payment of rent

# WHAT TENANT ADVOCATES HAVE SEEN

- Widespread difficulty paying rent
  - Job loss
  - Child care demands
  - Loss of 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> income
  - Increased demand on safety net/assistance programs, especially in 2020
  - Frequent employment complications (new schedules, infrequent schedules, unemployment)
  - Increasingly frustrated landlords
  - Attempts at self-help evictions (utility shut-offs, lock outs)
- Sometime we forget: a lot of these people actually got COVID, were hospitalized, or worse.

# WHAT LANDLORD ADVOCATES HAVE SEEN

- Large revenue streams disappearing
- Frequently changing legal landscape
- Inability to use normal means to seek relief, even when done “by the book”
- Tenants putting rent payment on lower priority
- Difficulty navigating court system pro-se
- Extra costs hiring lawyers for eviction cases
- Inability to recover damages, especially in early times of pandemic

# WHERE WE ARE in 2021

- Vaccination roll out fixed everything! Ok, but seriously...
- CDC issues nationwide moratorium in late 2020
- Emergency Rental Assistance Programs (ERAP) began
- CDC Moratorium struck down, first in West Tennessee, then Sixth Circuit, then Supreme Court.
- ERAP roll out was so smooth that it fixed everything! Ok, I'll stop...

# ERAP

- Money comes from the U.S. Treasury
- Initially allocated for renters somehow affected by COVID
- State housing agencies (like Tennessee Housing Development Agency, THDA) administer the funds on case by case basis
  - Except for municipalities that elect to create their own programs, such as in Knoxville (Knox Housing Assistance)
- Requires renters to provide proof of need and eligibility, and is accessible online
- Requires cooperation by landlord and often agreement to halt eviction process or allow continued tenancy
- Program often pays for all back rent and may even pay some future rent
- Designed to provide stability and decrease overcrowding, homelessness, and loss of landlord's revenue

# LEGAL ISSUES AT PLAY

- Moratorium – good while it lasted?
- Notice – complicated by Court closings and Moratoria
- Non-payment or non-renewal? Landlords look for loophole
- Non-payment or “other” violation? Landlords become more stringent
- Detainer warrants – providing notice or confusion?
- Paying back rent - What about repayment using ERAP funds?
- What about when landlords refuse ERAP funds?



# APPEAL ISSUES

- What if a tenant or landlord believes the Sessions court got it wrong?
- If original trial in Sessions Court, appellant can file appeal
- Appeal generally then heard in Circuit Court in a brand new trial
  - Trial is *de novo*, basically, a complete do-over.
- A person who cannot afford the filing fee can file a Pauper's Oath, or Affidavit of Indigency, upon a sworn statement that they cannot afford the filing fee.
- However, there is the issue of the appeal bond in housing cases...

# APPEAL STATUTE

- **29-18-130. Immediate execution of writ of possession — Bond pending appeal.**
- (1) If the **defendant** pray an appeal, then, in that case, the **plaintiff** shall execute bond, with good and sufficient security, in double the value of one (1) year's rent of the premises, conditioned to pay all costs and damages accruing from the wrongful enforcement of such writ, and to abide by and perform whatever judgment may be rendered by the appellate court in the final hearing of the cause.
- (2) **In cases where the action has been brought by a landlord to recover possession of leased premises from a tenant on the grounds that the tenant has breached the contract by failing to pay the rent**, and a judgment has been entered against the tenant, subdivision (b)(1) shall not apply. In that case, if the defendant prays an appeal, the defendant shall execute bond, or post either a cash deposit or irrevocable letter of credit from a regulated financial institution, or provide two (2) good personal sureties with good and sufficient security in the amount of one (1) year's rent of the premises, conditioned to pay all costs and damages accruing from the failure of the appeal, including rent and interest on the judgment as provided for herein, and to abide by and perform whatever judgment may be rendered by the appellate court in the final hearing of the cause...

# APPEAL ISSUES CONT'D

- Not that intuitive...
- If for anything other than non-payment of rent, and tenant (defendant) appeals, then it's actually the landlord (plaintiff) who posts two-years' worth of bond to be able to execute the writ.
- If tenant appeals an eviction for non-payment, then the tenant posts one-year's worth of rent for bond to prevent execution of the writ.
- Does this pose any problems to access to justice?
  - Who is most likely to be able to finance an appeal in order to correct and injustice?

# OTHER FREQUENT ISSUES WITH EVICTIONS

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Month-to-month termination notice adequacy – At least 30 days before rental period

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Failure to personally serve regarding issues of monetary damages (posting won't do...)

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UTILITY SHUT-OFFS AND LOCKOUTS ARE UNLAWFUL! Sessions Court Judges have power to issue injunction, concurrent with Circuit Courts. Proper procedure is through courts.

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No Landlord/Tenant contractual relationship – no detainer action. *See West v. West*, Tn. Ct. App. 2021.

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Non-Payment Notice Waivers in leases must be printed properly

# Tennessee Justice Center General Sessions Court Forms Reform Project

- The Tennessee Justice Center's was founded by bar leaders in 1996 to complement the work of Legal Aid and pro bono programs by providing free representation for low-income Tennesseans.
- Historically, we have focused on advocacy directed at improving the accountability and performance of government programs, like TennCare and SNAP, that serve low-income families.
- I have been the Supervising Attorney and Pro Bono Coordinator for the TJC since November 2019. In my role, I oversee the individual casework team with an eye toward identifying systemic issues.

# Tennessee Justice Center General Sessions GPS Project

- With the support and investment of the Tennessee Bar Foundation's Tennessee Legal Initiatives Fund (TLIF), the Tennessee Justice Center (TJC) is working with General Sessions Court stakeholders in Davidson and Cheatham counties. We hope lessons learned there will benefit courts in all counties.
- General Sessions GPS was created in 2019 as a response to the increased national focus on the barriers and challenges facing self-represented litigants (SRLs), traditionally referred to as *pro se* litigants.
- Our focus is on General Sessions Court because so many of the litigants there are unrepresented.
- We call it General Sessions GPS, because, like GPS in our cars, we hope to help SRLs better navigate the court process, for their benefit and the benefit of all concerned.

# Tennessee Justice Center General Sessions GPS Project

- **Short-term goals:**

- Gathering stakeholder input to identify the issues facing SRLs. These include:
  - Logistical challenges, such as parking, entering the courthouse, figuring out where to go
  - Procedural challenges, such as not understanding the order of cases, where to stand or sit, how long to be there
  - Substantive challenges, such as the role of the opposing party, why the SRL is there in the first place, what legal terms mean, how to answer the judge, *and many others!*
- Form Revision
  - Focusing on improving the readability of the Civil Warrant and Detainer Warrant.

# Tennessee Justice Center General Sessions GPS Project

- Gathering stakeholder input
  - Somewhat stymied due to Covid-19, but feedback is that the lack of understanding of the process on the part of unrepresented litigants complicates proceedings for everyone, putting clerks and judges in a difficult position.
  - The experience for SRL's is stressful and confusing and often ends poorly.
- Forms
  - We have been building partnerships and relationships with court clerks, judges, legal aid and other attorneys, as well as Access to Justice advocates.
  - A special shout-out to Clerks Julie Hibbs in Cheatham County and Ricky Rooker in Davidson County for their invaluable assistance, and to the leadership of the Clerks Association.



# Tennessee Justice Center General Sessions GPS Project

- On January 1, 2021, TJC's article, [\*\*Stuck in a Time Warp: Tennessee's Archaic Court Forms\*\*](#) was published by the Tennessee Bar Journal.



The screenshot shows the Tennessee Bar Association website. The header includes the logo on the left and navigation links: 'About', 'CLE', 'Groups', 'Programs & Advocacy', 'Communications', 'Calendar', and a search icon. On the right side of the header, there are links for 'FOR THE PUBLIC' and 'MEMBER CENTER'. The main content area features the article title 'Stuck in a Time Warp: Tennessee's Archaic Court Forms' in a large, bold, orange font. Below the title, it says 'Posted by: Suzanne Craig Robertson on Jan 1, 2021'. Further down, it lists 'Journal Issue Date: Jan-Feb 2021' and 'Journal Name: Vol. 57 No. 1'. The author information is 'By Laura Revolinski and Gordon Bonnyman'. The article text begins with a paragraph: 'Take a moment to imagine a time before you entered the legal profession, when everything you knew about the law you had learned from "Law and Order." Imagine that version of you getting up to answer a knock at the door. A sheriff's deputy confirms your identity, then hands you a legal document and leaves. You examine the form and see the name of your landlord written in one of the blank spaces. You recall that you have had conflict with him over his refusal to fix an overflowing toilet, and that he has threatened to evict you if you keep being so demanding. Is this related to the toilet? Could it even be an eviction notice? On the other hand, the top of the form reads "detainer warrant," which gives you a sinking feeling. Are you going to be arrested? Whether it's the threat of arrest or the risk of your family losing your home, you know the paper involves the law, that you are in some sort of trouble, and that you can't afford a lawyer. You will have to go to the courthouse prepared to defend yourself alone. You have no clue how to do that.'

# Tennessee Justice Center General Sessions Court Forms Reform Project

**STATE OF TENNESSEE, COUNTY OF DAVIDSON**

To Any Lawful Officer to Execute and Return:

Summon \_\_\_\_\_

to appear before the Metropolitan General Sessions Court of Davidson County, Tennessee, to be held in Courtroom 1A, Justice A. A. Birch Building, 408 Second Avenue North, Nashville, Tennessee,

on \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_ at 8:45 a.m., then and there to answer in a civil action brought by the Plaintiff(s) for:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ under \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Dollars

---


Judgment for \_\_\_\_\_

against \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Dollars and cost of suit for \_\_\_\_\_

which execution may issue. Entered: \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_

**JUDGMENT**

 To request an ADA accommodation, please contact Dart Gore at (615) 880-3309. Judge, Division \_\_\_\_\_, Metropolitan General Sessions Court

**COURTROOM 1A**

No. \_\_\_\_\_  Alias  
 Amended  
 Counter-Claim

Plaintiff(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_



Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ vs. \_\_\_\_\_

Defendant \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Defendant \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

 **CIVIL WARRANT**   
 Metropolitan General Sessions Court

Issued \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_

**RICHARD R. ROOKER, Clerk**

By: \_\_\_\_\_ Deputy Clerk

Day of week \_\_\_\_\_

Set for 8:45 A.M. on \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_ Courtroom 1A.

Justice A. A. Birch Building  
408 Second Avenue North  
P.O. Box 196304  
Nashville, Tennessee 37219-6304

Reset for: \_\_\_\_\_

Come to hand same day issued and executed as commanded on: \_\_\_\_\_

Served: \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Sheriff/Process Server  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Attorney for Plaintiff  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Attorney for Defendant

State of Tennessee	Court (required)	County (required)
<b>Notice of Lawsuit</b> (Civil Summons)		<b>TO BE COMPLETED AT COURT:</b> File No. _____ Division _____
<p><b>Plaintiff:</b> _____          (Creditor) (Name: First, Middle, Last of person or company filing lawsuit)</p> <p>_____          (Attorney, if represented) _____ (Phone number or attorney's phone number)</p> <p>_____          (Mailing address or attorney's mailing address: Street, city, state, zip)</p> <p><b>Original Creditor:</b> _____          (If different from party filing lawsuit)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">vs.</p> <p><b>Defendant(s):</b> _____          (Debtor) (Name: First, Middle, Last of person or company being sued)</p> <p>_____          (Mailing address: Street, city, state, zip)</p> <p>_____          (Name: First, Middle, Last of second person or company being sued, if more than one Defendant)</p> <p>_____          (Mailing address: Street, city, state, zip)</p> <p>_____          (Name: First, Middle, Last of third person or company being sued, if more than two Defendants)</p> <p>_____          (Mailing address: Street, city, state, zip)</p>		

**Plaintiff** has filed a lawsuit against **Defendant** for the amount of: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Plaintiff** is suing **Defendant** based on these claims:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Defendant is hereby summoned to appear for trial:**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_  AM or  PM

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Room/Floor: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



# Tennessee Justice Center General Sessions GPS

- **Next Steps:**
  - Convene interested stakeholders, including community groups, bar associations, and others.
  - Share the draft revised forms and ask for feedback.
  - Once feedback is provided, review and incorporate.
  - Submit the new forms with supplemental material to the Supreme Court under Rule 52.
  - We hope the new forms will be a useful resource for you and the public.
  - We hope to build on current work in several counties to make resources available to SRLs to better equip them with basic information so that they can better understand the process and be better able to present their cases to the court.
- **WE WELCOME YOUR INSIGHTS AND SUGGESTIONS!**

The image features a solid orange background. A large white circle is centered on the page. A dashed yellow line follows the upper-left portion of the white circle's circumference. A small, solid blue circle is positioned at the bottom-right edge of the white circle. In the center of the white circle, the text "Q & A" is written in a black, sans-serif font.

Q & A



Thank You!

- Kathy Trawick, Executive Director, TN Fair Housing Council
    - [Kathy@tennfairhousing.org](mailto:Kathy@tennfairhousing.org)
  - Michael Davis, Staff Attorney, Legal Aid of East Tennessee
    - [mdavis@laet.org](mailto:mdavis@laet.org)
  - Cady Kaiman, Supervising Attorney & Pro Bono Coordinator, TN Justice Center
    - [ckaiman@tnjustice.org](mailto:ckaiman@tnjustice.org)
- 