



ANNUAL REPORT

April 2023-March 2024



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resolve: Restorative Practices LLC

WHO WE ARE



EBONY DIXON
MEDIATOR



SHANNON FLOYD
PRINCIPAL MEDIATOR



COURTNEY SHAREEF
EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATOR



SHERMAN SPARROW
MEDIATOR



TRACEY WASHINGTON
MEDIATOR

resolve: Restorative Practices LLC is a mediation firm that provides cost-effective, legally binding, and mutually beneficial alternatives to litigation.

Our mission is to provide services that empower disputing parties to resolve conflict by identifying problems, forming mutually beneficial solutions, establishing goals, and determining outcomes through mediation.

We envision a society where complex issues are addressed and navigated through the art of restoration, as opposed to ineffective, punitive practices.

Our team, known as **theTribe**, brings over 40 years of combined professional experience, with backgrounds in social work, psychology, human resources, journalism, and library and information science.

Together, we strategically use our diverse skill sets to resolve conflict through mediation.

EVICITION PREVENTION MEDIATION



In April 2023, resolve: Restorative Practices LLC launched the Eviction Prevention Mediation Program in partnership with the Office of Housing & Community Development. This partnership gives landlords seeking to reconcile nonpayment from tenants an alternative to filing an eviction.

The primary purpose of the Eviction Prevention Mediation Program is to:

- Prevent the documentation of an “eviction” on tenant screening reports
- Maintain housing stability for tenants
- Recover “back-rent” for landlords
- Strengthen healthy communication between landlords and tenants

After submitting a request for a mediation, eligible landlords and tenants are contacted by a Mediator

within 1-2 business days, depending on accurate contact information, to discuss the mediation process, required forms, application for rental assistance through the Office of Housing & Community Development, and to schedule a mediation.

During the mediation process, the Mediator assists the landlord and tenant in drafting mutually beneficial solutions that are documented in a legally binding Mediation Settlement Agreement. After receipt of an application for rental assistance and a referral notice from the Eviction Prevention Mediation Program, the Office of Housing & Community Development determines eligibility for rental assistance and disburses payment within 30 business days.

PRESS & PROMOTION

Throughout the inaugural year of this partnership, resolve: Restorative Practices LLC has embraced opportunities to promote the Eviction Prevention Mediation Program in the press and to stakeholders, including in the Courier Journal, Louisville Public Media, WDRB, KET, and more.

LOCAL

Facing an eviction? How Louisville landlords and renters can avoid it altogether

**Bailey Loosemore**

Louisville Courier Journal

Published 5:03 a.m. ET May 22, 2023 | Updated 1:46 p.m. ET May 24, 2023

Every week, hundreds of eviction cases make their way through Jefferson District Court, where struggling renters are often ordered to move out while some landlords never receive the money they're owed.

But it doesn't have to be that way.

A new program from Louisville Metro Government is aiming to resolve rental issues before they ever make it to a docket – allowing property owners to save money on court costs while keeping evictions off tenants' records.

The eviction mediation program, which quietly launched at the beginning of April, is being funded with \$2 million from the city's American Rescue Plan allocation and is similar to programs already showing success in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia. It's expected to run as a pilot through at least June 2024, said Marilyn Harris, director of Develop Louisville.

A mediation program also recently started in Lexington, where city officials committed \$1.9 million in federal funding to services provided by Legal Aid of the Bluegrass and the Kentucky Equal Justice Center.

More: How Louisville's housing authority went from hundreds of evictions to zero

"It's been well documented that every eviction on your record reduces your quality of housing," even if a judge dismisses it, said Harris, who initially proposed starting an eviction mediation program in early 2020, just before the pandemic. "What we want to do is encourage landlords to come through mediation, not have to pay to file an eviction, not have to pay to hire an attorney. ... And hopefully (both parties) get made whole through the mediation."

Louisville is contracting with local company resolve: Restorative Practices to implement its program, which is free to both landlords and tenants. For the pilot, mediation services will be offered only in cases involving past due payments, and rental assistance will be available to tenants who have not already reached their 18-month limit through the federal Emergency Rental Assistance Program, Harris said.

Here's how the program works:

Landlords can request mediation through the resource page at [StopMyEviction.org](https://stopmyeviction.org).

Landlords and tenants will both be asked to fill out an online assessment ahead of their appointment.

The parties will meet with a mediator in person, typically within two weeks of requesting a session.

If a resolution is reached, both parties will sign an agreement to hold up their end of the bargain.

If a resolution is not reached, landlords will receive priority on the next Friday's eviction court docket.

Related: Evictions are rising. And Louisville isn't doing enough to prevent them, nonprofits say

Megan McGinn, a project manager involved in distributing rent assistance through Louisville's Office of Housing, said eviction cases currently take more than four weeks to reach the district court docket. And going through mediation should be quicker and more cost-effective, especially for small landlords.

Shannon Floyd, principal mediator for resolve: Restorative Practices, said she knows it will take some convincing to get property managers and owners on board. But as she's already asked some, "What do you have to lose?"

"When you have an eviction on your housing record, it's almost like having a felony," said Floyd, a licensed social worker who's been a mediator since 2020. "It's going to forever impact you. Where you live, how you live. ... We also see it from the perspective of you've come into a contract with this landlord and signed off on it and you are bound to it. Just like you, the landlord has bills to pay too.

"When we come at that table, we see both aspects. Both sides are humanized. That's the whole goal."

Floyd said she's hired three mediators to handle eviction cases for the city's pilot program. And while interest from landlords has been slow to start, she's confident the program will help reduce the number of evictions filed in Louisville.

"I have high expectations for us," she said.

Reach reporter Bailey Loosemore at bloosemore@courier-journal.com, 502-582-4646 or on Twitter @bloosemore.

Stream:

News

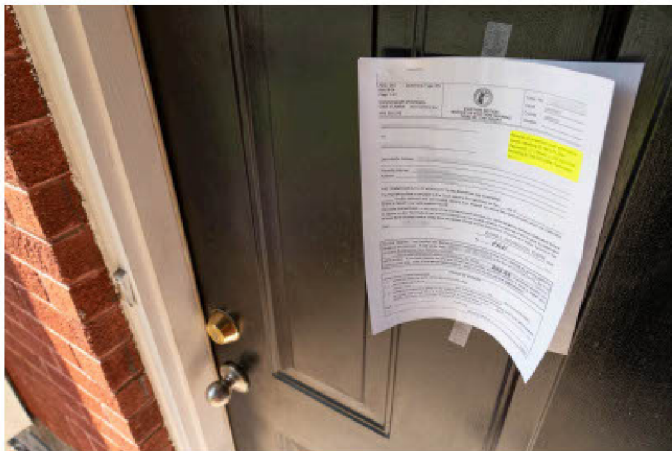
Music

Classical

The mechanics of Louisville's eviction mediation pilot program

Louisville Public Media | By [Divya Karthikeyan](#)

Published July 14, 2023 at 4:51 PM EDT



Tyler J. Franklin / LPM

Stock photo of an eviction notice.

With rising rental prices and eviction cases mounting, Louisville has now joined cities across the U.S. in launching an eviction mediation program. The pilot program, which is unlike its peers in other cities because it puts the onus on landlords to apply, is expected to run through June 2024.

When an eviction case gets on a docket, it comes at a major cost to both tenants and landlords.

LPM News
BBC World News

Louisville Metro Government's new pilot initiative aims to mitigate that with an eviction mediation program, which the city allocated \$2 million for from federal American Rescue Plan Fund dollars.

Laura Grabowski, interim director for the Office of Resiliency and Community Services said the initiative would help save time and money for both tenants and landlords and reduce tenants' chances of getting an eviction record.

"We were trying to look at the continuum of services needed, and more eviction prevention was needed. It helps to have a third party mediator to help tenants and landlords work out issues with payments," she said.

But there are limits to the program. Landlords are the only party that can sign up for the mediation. Additionally, applications are restricted to cases of past due payments.

Here's how to apply:

- Landlords can request mediation through the resource page at [StopMyEviction.org](https://www.stopmyeviction.org).
- Landlords and tenants will then have to fill out an online assessment ahead of their appointment. Cases unrelated to past due payments will not be accepted.
- The parties will then meet with a mediator in person.
- If a resolution is reached, both parties will sign a legally binding agreement pledging to honor their end of the agreement.
- If a resolution is not reached, landlords will receive priority on the next Friday's eviction court docket.

The city has contracted with resolve:Restorative Practices LLC, where Shannon Floyd is the principal mediator.

According to Metro Government, the city has received 120 requests for mediation since June 1, and Floyd said some are producing success.

"When I say successes, I mean a mediation settlement agreement where a landlord and the tenant, they both agree on how to resolve the problem in a way that they both benefit from," she said.

This agreement between the landlord and the tenant is legally binding, and emerges

LPM News

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landlord and the session's mediator explain the situation and come to an agreement on the best course of action.

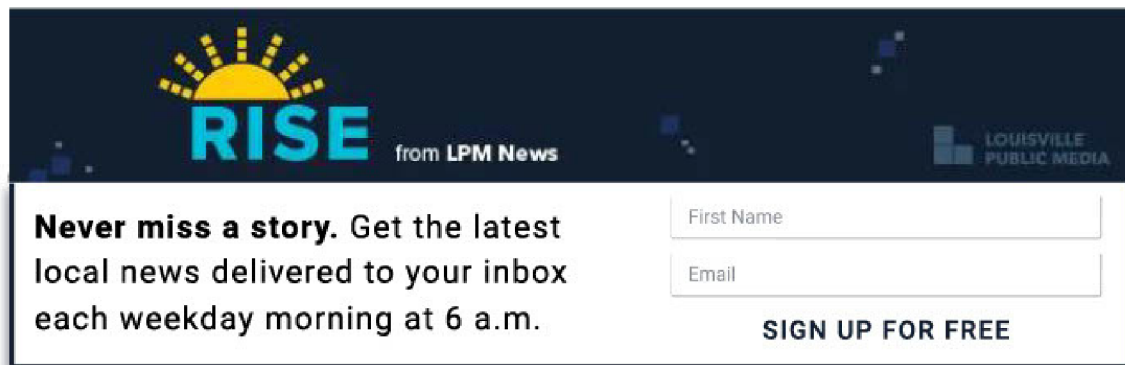
The process, Floyd said, starts with setting rules of engagement that both parties must agree to ahead of the mediation. "Those rules include speaking respectfully to one another, not talking over each other. And the mediator can terminate the process if either party violates the rule," she said.

Floyd would then draw up a document that would ensure the mediation process is confidential, that what would be discussed will not be subpoenaed in court, and that any notes from the mediation would be destroyed once an agreement is reached.

Tenants in mediation who have not already reached their 18-month limit through the federal [Emergency Rental Assistance Program](#) would be eligible to receive funds to pay back rent.

Grabowski said the city has documented 17 cases that have received or will receive rental assistance funds as part of the pilot program.

Concerns from advocates



RISE from LPM News

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Since the pandemic began, cities across the U.S. have invested in eviction diversion programs like mediation between landlords and tenants.

In Louisville's program, the onus is on the landlords to voluntarily sign up and on tenants and their attorneys to convince them. And that can present a challenge in an uneven power dynamic.

LPM News
BBC World News

Floyd explains one of the common reasons a mediation fails before it begins is when a tenant and or a landlord fails to complete a pre-mediation assessment form five days prior to the scheduled mediation.

“On that form, the landlord signs off on agreeing to not to file an eviction against the tenant during the process. So sometimes it falls through because of that right there,” she said.

Eviction Lab researcher Emily Benfer said she hasn't seen any other programs across the U.S. do it that way.

“That's a major deficit. That could create a major gap in the program in terms of the ability to increase access to justice, create housing, stability, and make sure that all parties are served,” she said.

Grabowski, interim director for the Office of Resiliency and Community Services, said it was the city's stipulation that only landlords could apply.

“We know that landlords are the ones who file the evictions, so we're trying to market this towards the landlords before they file the eviction and make sure they're willing to participate.

What can Louisville learn?

Lexington's new eviction mediation pilot program operates a little differently than Louisville's. In May, [Lexington expanded its housing stabilization program to improve tenant access to legal counsel and mediation services](#). It developed from a pilot project run in coordination with Fayette District Court Judge Denotra Gunther.

Louisville Metro Council enacted a [Right to Counsel ordinance in April 2021](#), a program that provides free legal representation to low-income renters.

And Metro Council [expanded eligibility requirements](#) for the program in February.

Benfer said connecting more tenants to legal assistance should go hand-in-hand with the pilot mediation program in Louisville.



3/5/24, 9:12 PM

The mechanics of Louisville's eviction mediation pilot program

advocate for yourself if you have legal representation," she said.

Grabowski said the city was initially considering connecting mediators with judges similar to Lexington, and chose to reach landlords. She said the city could be open to reaching tenants.

"The hope is that we could expand this to not just being a pilot and we're looking at how to target tenants and how to help tenants to get their landlords to participate," she said. It's expected to run as a pilot through at least June 2024.

So what does it take for a mediation program to succeed? Earning and retaining trust, especially from renters, Benfer said.

"One of the reasons why two cities, Philadelphia and Boston were so successful is that they hired organizers to go and talk to people in the community, and really build trust in the program. Lack of trust in a program happens because of how harmed people have been leading up to this point," she said.

Tags

News

Race & Equity



Divya Karthikeyan

Divya is LPM's Race & Equity Reporter. Email Divya at dkarthikeyan@lpm.org.

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<https://www.lpm.org/news/2023-07-14/the-mechanics-of-louisvilles-eviction-mediation-pilot-program>

5/9

https://www.wdrb.com/news/new-eviction-mediation-program-in-louisville-offers-solutions-for-tenants-landlords/article_c947721e-0a19-11ee-9eb4-9b647685a91e.html

TOP STORY

New eviction mediation program in Louisville offers solutions for tenants, landlords

Dakota Sherek
Jun 13, 2023



A pilot program new to Louisville is trying to prevent evictions by bringing tenants and landlords together for mutual agreements.

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (WDRB) -- A pilot program new to Louisville is trying to prevent evictions by bringing tenants and landlords together for mutual agreements.

https://www.wdrb.com/news/new-eviction-mediation-program-in-louisville-offers-solutions-for-tenants-landlords/article_c947721e-0a19-11ee-9eb4-9b6... 1/4

3/5/24, 9:14 PM

New eviction mediation program in Louisville offers solutions for tenants, landlords | News from WDRB | wdrb.com

Robin Bray owns several single family homes around the Louisville area. One of Bray's tenants, who has children, had fallen several months behind on rent as she dealt with cancer. Bray didn't want to displace a family, but also couldn't afford to cover their rent for a long period of time.

"I thought 'how are we going to solve her problem,'" Bray said. "I had enough money to hold onto a little bit longer. I don't know what a little bit longer would have been, but I was just hoping something would come along where she could catch up."

Bray learned about the eviction mediation program at a Kentucky Real Estate Investment Association meeting. The program provided a solution for the landlord and tenant.

"I told her that I think we found something that can help us," Bray said. "We both cried on the phone."

The program has been years in the making. Marilyn Harris, director of Develop Louisville, said the idea of eviction mediation started prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Develop Louisville entered into a contract with Resolve Restorative Practices LLC, a group that mediates with landlords and tenants. The City of Louisville set aside \$2 million to help tenants who go through the mediation process.

Shannon Floyd, principal mediator for Resolve Restorative Practices, said the mediation process is about humanizing both sides.

"Mediation is really about understanding how conflict is really rooted in misunderstandings and emotion. If you address emotion, you address the conflict," Floyd said. "Until we address the emotional element of conflict, it's not really resolved. So many people and things fall in between the cracks."

The group has completed two mediations so far and launched a third in April. Floyd said they've received hundreds of inquiries from tenants and landlords for a program that's new to the state of Kentucky.

"The only places I know of with eviction prevention mediation that actually takes place is Pittsburgh and Philadelphia," Floyd said. "Anytime anything is new it takes time for people to try it. It is unfamiliar, it's unheard of."

The program is desperately needed in Louisville. Harris said Louisville is lacking about 31,000 units of affordable housing and the city has seen a 130% increase in homelessness and unhoused population.

"Keeping people housed is better for the health of our overall community," Harris said. "It's much better for children to be housed. Housing is the basic building block for good education, for good health, for good physical and mental health."

The process that brings two parties to a table starts with a landlord's request for an eviction prevention mediation. After the request is made, Resolve Restorative Practices responds within two business days. A mediator is assigned as the tenant and landlord complete a pre-mediation assessment form. Tenants are able to apply for rental assistance and see how much they qualify for.

"Before we even arrive at the table to discuss, the mediator knows both sides and both perspectives of what's going on," Floyd said. "It's an opportunity to address a systemic issue from a different perspective, as opposed to going directly to eviction court."

Floyd, who has a background in social work, sees success in the mediation program. She hopes that the eviction prevention mediation program can become a standard across the country.

"Every landlord is not a slumlord, and every tenant is not a horrible tenant," Floyd said. "There are so many layers to both sides. And when we come to the table, we peel back some of those layers so we can see the humanity in each other."

Bray hopes the program can continue long-term because of it can prevent families from being uprooted.

"It's been a lifeline for her," Bray said.

Landlords can request mediation by [clicking here](#).

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The screenshot shows a PBS video player interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the PBS logo, a 'Sign In' button, and links for Home, Shows, Explore, TV Schedules, Shop, Donate, and LIVE TV. The video player itself features a large play button in the center. To the right of the video, the title 'A New Way To Avoid Eviction' is displayed under the 'KENTUCKY EDITION' header. Below the title, it indicates the clip is from Season 2 Episode 98, is 4m 42s long, and has a Creative Commons license. There are buttons for '+ My List' and 'Watch Full Length'. A description of the program is provided: 'Resolve: Restorative Practices LLC offers a new pilot program that attempts to avoid eviction by resolving landlord and tenant disputes through mediation.' The video was aired on 10/16/23 and has a rating of NR. At the bottom of the player, there are settings for 'Continuous Play Settings', a 'Share' button with social media icons, and a link to 'Report a Problem' for video issues.

NUMBERS & STATISTICS

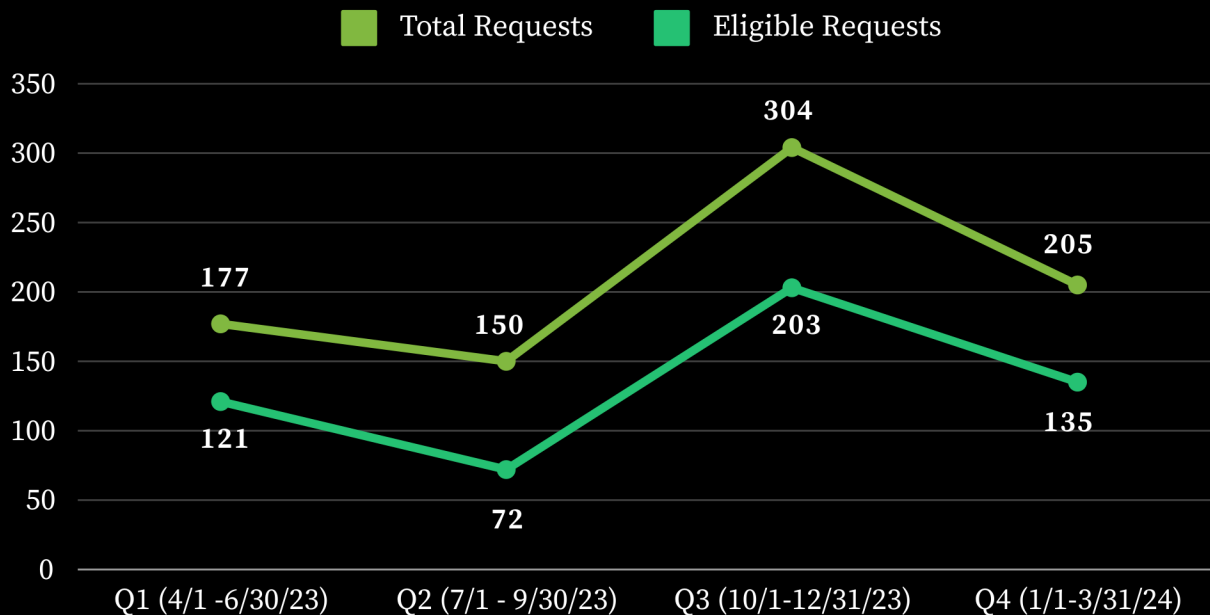
resolve: Restorative Practices LLC originally anticipated conducting 60-90 mediations in its first 18 months. It surpassed the goal within its first quarter. Landlord, property management, and tenant interest in Eviction Prevention Mediation has been astounding.

836

requests for Eviction Prevention Mediation

531

scheduled Eviction Prevention Mediations



Requests for an Eviction Prevention Mediation exceeded the number of eligible cases. Currently, only requests submitted by landlords or property managers for non-payment are considered eligible for mediation. Oftentimes, tenants unwittingly sought to mediate with their landlord to prevent eviction and obtain rental assistance.

When this occurred, tenants were encouraged to forward information about the Eviction Prevention Mediation Program to their landlords. At least 14 successful mediations were the result of ineligible tenants who encouraged their landlords and/or property managers to seek mediation as an alternative to eviction on their behalf.

NUMBERS & STATISTICS:

ADDITIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

306

SIGNED MSA's

307 mediations out of **531 eligible requests** resulted in landlords and tenants signing a Mediation Settlement Agreement (MSA).

This is 58% of all eligible requests for Eviction Prevention Mediation.

\$1.1M

**IN RENTAL
ASSISTANCE
AWARDED***

The Office of Housing and Community Development reports having awarded **\$1,117,445.78** in rental assistance to **198 tenants** who have successfully completing a mediation.

**As of March 26, 2024*

92%

AGREE

Over 600 landlord and tenant survey respondents agreed the mediation was worth the time and effort regardless of if the issues were resolved.

92%

RECOMMEND

Similarly, 615 landlord and tenant survey respondents recommend mediation as an appropriate way to resolve workplace disputes, grievances, and complaints.

87%

SUCCESS

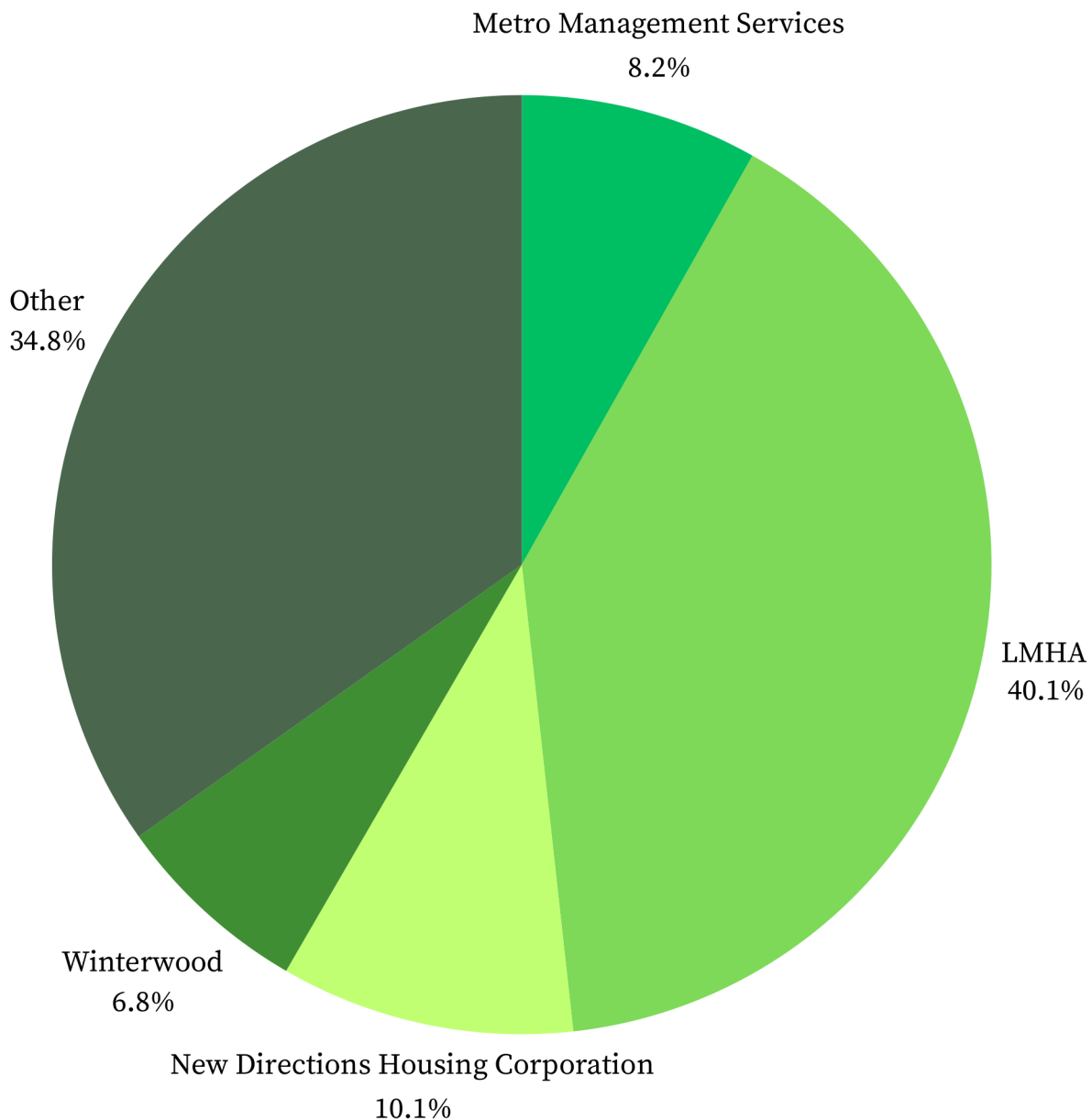
Over 580 landlord and tenant survey respondents believed mediation resolved most of their issues and concerns.

NUMBERS & STATISTICS:

LANDLORDS/PROPERTY MANAGERS

In this inaugural year, Louisville Metro Housing Authority (LMHA) submitted **over 200** requests for Eviction Prevention Mediation -- **40% of all eligible requests**.

New Directions Housing Corporation, Metro Management Services and Winterwood Inc. represent the next largest property management companies. Their respective **52, 42, and 35** eligible requests represent one fourth of all requests. The remaining **34%** of requests were submitted by other private landlords and property managers.



NUMBERS & STATISTICS:

SNAPSHOT OF LMHA MEDIATION OUTCOMES

According to its website, Louisville Metro Housing Authority (LMHA) manages more than 3,700 units. It houses over 4,100 residents (2,405 families) in four family housing communities and five accessible and senior citizens housing communities, along with additional scattered site housing.

The most recent data on LMHA residents is from February 2022.

Available data reports the average annual income of LMHA residents is \$9,915. Approximately two out of five heads of households residing in LMHA communities receive federal assistance, such as Aid to Families with Dependent Children and Supplemental Security Income. The average rent is \$190 per month and the average length of occupancy in LMHA managed units is 6 years.

SIGNED MSAS



101 of the 206 eligible requests submitted by LMHA resulted in a signed Mediation Settlement Agreement (MSA). This outcome represents:

- 50% of LMHA's eligible requests for Eviction Prevention Mediation.
- 19% of all eligible requests for Eviction Prevention Mediation.

CANCELLATIONS & TERMINATIONS



At least 242 mediations were scheduled with LMHA tenants. 116 were cancelled or terminated, often because the tenant failed to complete the required Pre-Mediation Assessment Form. Mediators worked with LMHA and tenants to reschedule cancelled sessions, which could then result in a signed Mediation Settlement Agreement. But as demands for mediation increased, it became necessary for **resolve: Restorative Practices LLC** to institute a policy that terminated services after one cancelled mediation.

These outcomes represents:

- 56% of LMHA's eligible requests for Eviction Prevention Mediation
- 48% of LMHA's scheduled mediations
- 22% of all eligible requests for Eviction Prevention Mediation



\$312,029.79 IN RENTAL ASSISTANCE AWARDED*

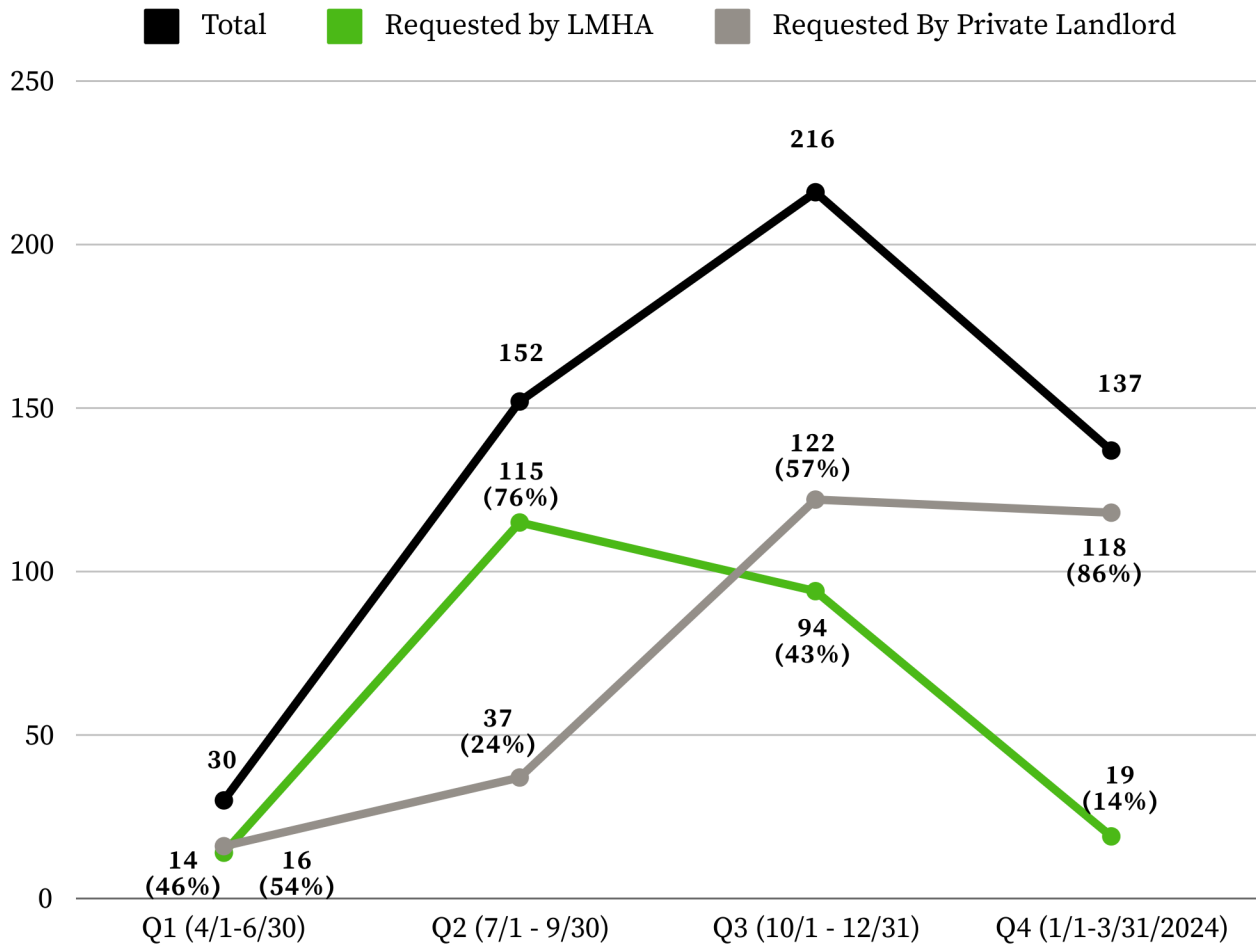
The Office of Housing & Community Development reports 48 LMHA residents have received more than \$312,000 in rental assistance after successfully participating in the Eviction Prevention Mediation Program.

**As of March 26, 2024*

Graphs

SCHEDULED MEDIATIONS:

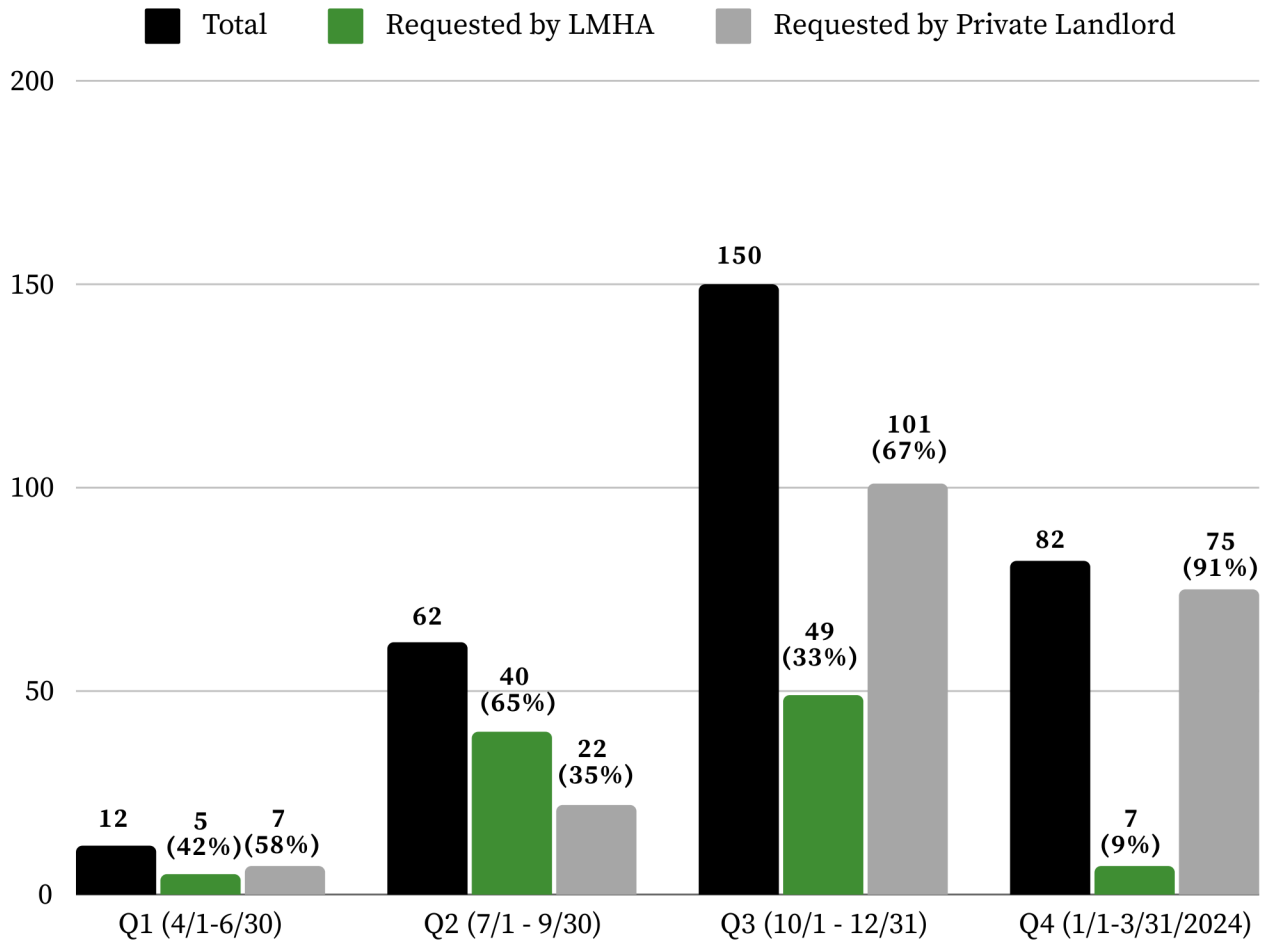
TOTAL PER QUARTER



The above LMHA and Private Landlord percentages correspond with quarter totals.

Graphs

SCHEDULED MEDIATIONS: SIGNED MEDIATION SETTLEMENT AGREEMENTS

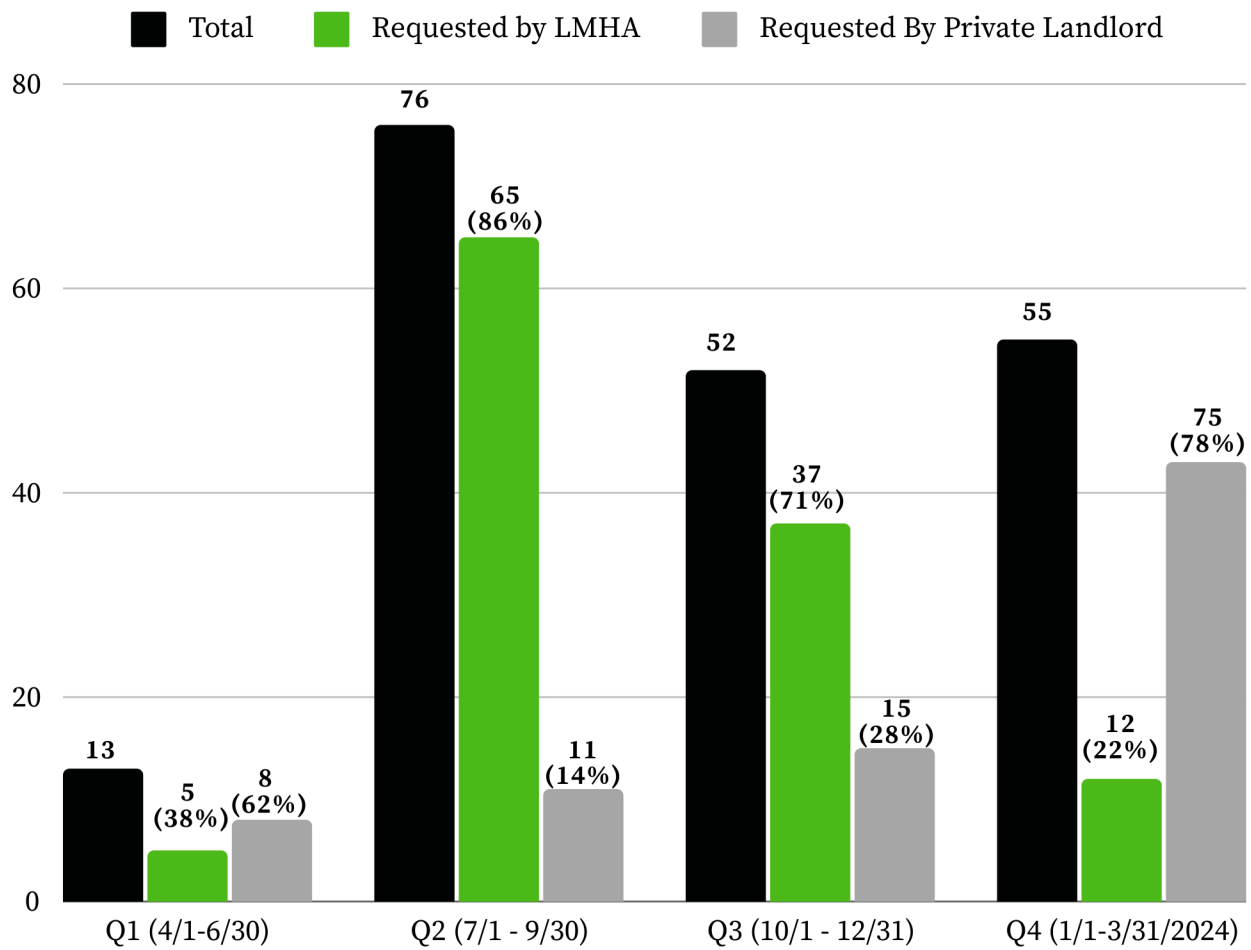


The above LMHA and Private Landlord percentages correspond with quarter totals.

Graphs

SCHEDULED MEDIATIONS:

CANCELLED SESSIONS AND/OR TERMINATED SERVICES



The above LMHA and Private Landlord percentages correspond with quarter totals.