

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Beginning Monday, May 4, 2020, the Congress of Neutrals is offering free telephone or video mediation to Bay Area landlords and tenants who are (or anticipate) experiencing rent collection or payment difficulties due to COVID-19 related income loss.

The Congress of Neutrals, a non-profit organization, has been providing free mediation for eviction cases in the Contra Costa County Superior Courts since 2001. The Congress of Neutrals has a panel of trained and experienced mediators who successfully mediate these and other civil matters between parties.

Since the courts are currently closed, landlords have no recourse when rents are not paid. Even when the courts reopen (possibly May 28, 2020 or later), Governor Newsom has in place a moratorium on filing evictions until May 31st, 2020, which date could also be extended. There will likely be substantial delays in processing a glut of evictions once the courts have reopened.

On the tenants' side, tenants who fall behind in rent payment face the likelihood of eviction once the courts reopen. This uncertainty adds to the pressures already building in this trying time.

Landlords and tenants alike will benefit from mediating a plan to take the financial uncertainty of rent payment away from their other pressures. An agreement between the parties now will save time and money by avoiding litigation once the crisis is over.

A landlord or tenant who has an action pending now in court may also take advantage of this service to reach a resolution without waiting for the courts to reopen.

Mediations can be conducted with the parties on separate lines or jointly with both parties in conference. During the mediation, the parties mutually work out a settlement agreement, such as a payment schedule spread over a several month period.

Please note that a settlement agreement is not an order of the court, but rather a civil contract between parties. A settlement agreement allows the parties to work out a solution that will minimize the need for future legal action.

Either party may start the process by downloading and submitting a form from the website www.congressofneutrals.com, or by calling **(925) 937-3008**. Once the form is received, each side will be contacted to schedule a telephonic mediation session. If only a landlord or a tenant starts the process, Congress of Neutrals will contact the other party to offer the service.

The Congress of Neutrals

1390 Willow Pass Rd, Suite 190, Concord, CA 94520

(925) 937-3008 www.congressofneutrals.org

Media or association representatives desiring additional information may contact Palvir Shoker at (925) 937-3008 or email pshoker@shokerlaw.com.

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