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# Philly's program for preventing evictions is a national model. Lawmakers want to make it permanent.

Without City Council action, Philadelphia's successful Eviction Diversion Program is set to end Dec. 31.

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Philadelphia officials say the diversion program has helped reduce the number of eviction filings by 75% compared to pre-pandemic levels.

/ MCT

by Michaëlle Bond  
Published Dec 8, 2021

Philadelphia's successful and nationally recognized Eviction Diversion Program, which compels landlords and tenants to ask for mediation and rental assistance before heading off to court, is set to expire at the end of the year, when a Pennsylvania Supreme Court emergency authorization ends. City Council members, housing advocates, renters, and landlords say the program should continue.

As the city aims to move toward a long-term solution for struggling tenants and landlords, [members of Council are considering legislation](#) that would authorize the city and courts to operate the Eviction Diversion Program for another year — until Dec. 31, 2022, with the caveat that rental assistance is

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far more requests than it can handle with current funding. The city recently received an additional \$35 million for rental assistance, which officials estimate will get the program through the end of the month and maybe into early January.

Philadelphia is waiting to hear from the U.S. Treasury when and how much additional funding will arrive. The city has [asked for an additional \\$485 million](#).

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Councilmember Helen Gym, who

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approved the legislation and passed it on to the full Council.

Almost half of Philadelphia's residents are renters. The [city launched the diversion program](#) in September 2020 to help tenants and landlords who had lost income because of the pandemic. Landlords must apply for rental assistance and participate in mediation with tenants at least 45 days before filing in court to evict tenants for nonpayment of rent. Officials said the program is a key

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**» READ MORE: Philly Municipal Court halts evictions for some who have applied for rental assistance**

Councilmember Maria Quiñones-Sánchez said the pandemic spurred the city to work with partners and engage the courts in a way it hadn't before.

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» ***READ MORE: Philadelphia's eviction diversion program became a national model. What's next as COVID-19 relief funds run out? | Editorial***

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» **READ MORE: [Philly's Eviction Diversion Program shows some early success \(From December 2020\)](#)**

The Council legislation would require periodic evaluation of how the program is working for everyone involved.

The program is one of several protections in place for renters struggling during the

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