FILED
SUPREME COURT
STATE OF WASHINGTON
SEPTEMBER 9, 2020
BY SUSAN L. CARLSON
CLERK

# THE SUPREME COURT OF WASHINGTON

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| IN THE MATTER OF STATEWIDE RESPONSE BY WASHINGTON STATE COURTS TO THE COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY | ) | ORDER AUTHORIZING EVICTION RESOLUTION PROGRAM IN SUPERIOR COURTS<br>No. 25700-B-639 |

WHEREAS, on February 29, 2020, Governor Inslee proclaimed a state of emergency due to the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak in Washington; and on March 13, 2020, President Trump declared a national emergency due to the COVID-19 outbreak across the United States; and

WHEREAS, throughout the state of emergency, governments at the national, state and local level have imposed moratoria on eviction actions, with Washington's statewide moratorium currently in place until October 15, 2020 and a federal moratorium in place until December 31, 2020, in order to protect and promote public health and safety; and

WHEREAS, in order to timely and fairly address the anticipated influx of eviction actions in Washington's superior courts once these moratoria end, an eviction resolution program was developed by a workgroup including tenant and landlord advocates, superior court judges and nonprofit dispute resolution providers, to facilitate early resolution of matters involving unpaid rent; and a pilot project was designed to implement this program in 7 counties prior to expiration

of the moratoria using federal CARES Act funding, and to allow for its expansion in other counties; and

WHEREAS, effective implementation of an eviction resolution program requires that superior courts have the authority to direct participation in the program prior to the filing of an unlawful detainer action to facilitate housing stability in their communities and to better manage dockets that are experiencing significant backlogs and resource shortages as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

NOW, THEREFORE, pursuant to the Supreme Court's authority to administer justice and to ensure the safety of court personnel, litigants, and the public,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED:

This Court recognizes the authority of superior courts in Washington to implement an eviction resolution program for litigants to participate in prior to the filing of an unlawful detainer action in court, and to take all necessary steps to support such a program, including but not limited to, entering local orders and contracting with service providers.

DATED at Olympia, Washington this 9th day of September, 2020.

For the Court

Stephens, C.J.

CHIEF JUSTICE