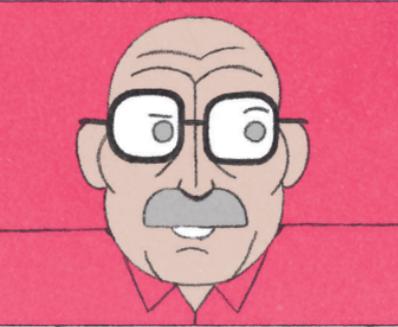


# WHICH ONE ARE YOU?

Follow along with the character that represents your situation!



My landlord tried to raise my rent too much...

My landlord tried to not renew my lease...

But we fought back!

A STATE LAW CALLED GOOD CAUSE EVICTION (GCE) MIGHT PROTECT YOU.

This guide explains GCE, how to find out if you're covered in NYC, and if you are, how you can defend yourself.

# GOOD CAUSE NYC

MAKING POLICY PUBLIC

# WHAT IS GOOD CAUSE EVICTION (GCE)?

GCE protects some tenants living in **UNREGULATED APARTMENTS** from big rent increases and eviction.

## REGULATED APARTMENTS INCLUDE...

- Section 8
- Rent Control
- Rent Stabilization
- NYCHA
- And others!

## UNREGULATED APARTMENTS...

are market-rate apartments. Before GCE, renters living in them weren't protected. About half of NYC apartments are unregulated. Since 2024, GCE covers some unregulated apartments (see next page).

## REGULATED APARTMENTS...

already have different, stronger protections around rent increases and lease renewals than what GCE offers. To see if you live in a regulated apartment, check your lease or text "RENT HISTORY" to (855) 610-2450.

# IN NYC, YOU'RE NOT COVERED BY GCE IF YOU LIVE IN...

- A condo/co-op building
- A building built or renovated after 2009
- Temporary Housing (sublet, hospital, hotel, etc.)
- And some others!
- Or if your landlord owns 10 or fewer units in New York State

Your landlord is required to say in your lease if you're covered by GCE with an official notice called the GCE notice. **WHATEVER THEY SAY, FIND OUT FOR YOURSELF!**

## AM I COVERED?

Scan the QR code to find out if you're...

[goodcausenyc.org](http://goodcausenyc.org)



**LIKELY  
COVERED**

Yes!!!  
Turn the  
page!

**MAYBE  
COVERED**

Follow the  
next steps on  
the website.

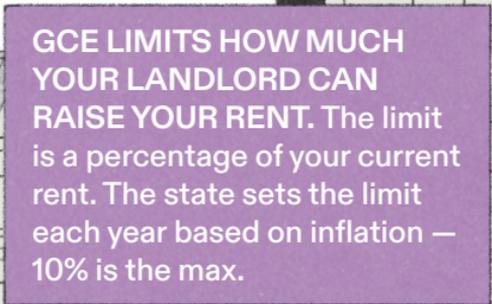
**LIKELY  
NOT**

Organize  
for stronger  
protections!  
See back  
cover.

# HOW DOES GCE PROTECT ME FROM BIG RENT INCREASES?



They raised my rent too much!



**GCE LIMITS HOW MUCH YOUR LANDLORD CAN RAISE YOUR RENT.** The limit is a percentage of your current rent. The state sets the limit each year based on inflation — 10% is the max.



**YOUR RENT IS BEING RAISED**

Use the rent increase calculator on [goodcausenyc.org](http://goodcausenyc.org) to find out if your landlord raised your rent too much.

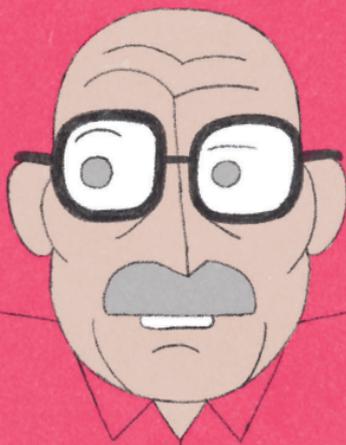
If you're covered by GCE, **IT'S ILLEGAL** for your landlord to raise your rent by more than the legal limit, *unless* they have a valid reason, like they invested a lot of money in "significant" repairs.

# HOW DOES GCE PROTECT ME FROM EVICTION?



YOUR  
LEASE ISN'T  
BEING  
RENEWED

If you're covered by GCE, your landlord has to renew your lease, *unless* they have a valid, "good cause" reason. GCE can still protect you if you don't have a written lease.



I don't think they can kick me out like that.

## A "GOOD CAUSE" COULD BE IF A TENANT...

- Violated the lease
- Owes back rent
- Unreasonably refused to give their landlord access
- Used the apartment illegally
- Caused a nuisance
- Refused reasonable lease changes

## OR IF THE LANDLORD WANTS...

- The apartment for themselves or close family (unless the tenant is disabled or 65+)
- To demolish the building
- To remove the unit from the housing market

# IF YOUR LANDLORD VIOLATED YOUR RIGHTS, FIGHT BACK!

## 1. TALK WITH YOUR NEIGHBORS

Are they dealing with something similar? You have more power in negotiations by uniting together!

## 2. WRITE A LETTER

Go to [goodcauseny.org/letter](http://goodcauseny.org/letter) to send a certified letter to your landlord. The letter will let them know you're covered by GCE, remind them of your GCE rights, and demand a lower rent increase or a new lease.

## 3. FIGHT BACK IN HOUSING COURT

If you can't resolve the issue, force your landlord to start a case against you in Housing Court (see next page). This is the only way to take your landlord to Housing Court for GCE violations. **YOU GOT THIS!**

### IF YOU CAN, SPEAK WITH A TENANT LAWYER

GCE is a complicated issue that's best handled with legal support. The rest of this resource is for folks who can't access a lawyer.

Call **HOUSING COURT ANSWERS (HCA)** for more info: (212) 962-4795



# YOUR PATH TO HOUSING COURT

will be slightly different depending on whether your landlord...



**RAISED  
THE RENT  
TOO MUCH**

**DIDN'T RENEW  
YOUR LEASE**



**TO FIGHT BACK, YOU MAY CHOOSE TO...**

continue paying the same rent.

stay in your apartment after your lease ends.

**IN RESPONSE, YOUR LANDLORD MAY SEND YOU A...**

Rent Demand letter telling you to pay rent owed...

Notice of Termination telling you to leave the apartment...

**BY A CERTAIN DATE. THEY'RE REQUIRED TO INCLUDE THE GCE NOTICE, AND IT MUST SAY IF YOU'RE COVERED AND WHY THEY'RE TRYING TO...**

raise your rent higher than the GCE limit.

take the apartment back.

**IF THE DATE IN THE LETTER/NOTICE PASSES AND YOU HAVEN'T...**

paid, your landlord will start a **NONPAYMENT CASE...**

moved out, your landlord will start a **HOLDOVER CASE...**

**AGAINST YOU IN HOUSING COURT BY SENDING YOU A PETITION AND NOTICE OF PETITION IN THE MAIL. GO TO THE COURTHOUSE...**

within 10 days of receiving the papers.

on the date given in the Notice of Petition.

*Turn over to learn how to defend yourself in Housing Court!*

# PREPARE TO TELL YOUR STORY IN COURT!

I think I'm covered by Good Cause...

READ THE GCE NOTICE TO FIND OUT WHERE YOU AND YOUR LANDLORD DISAGREE.



Dig around and see what information you can find. It might turn into evidence later on in court!

...but my landlord thinks I'm not.

## EVIDENCE YOU HAVE ACCESS TO

If you live in a building with 10 or fewer units, [goodcausenyc.org](http://goodcausenyc.org) will explain how to find out if your landlord owns 11 or more units in New York State. If your landlord is an LLC, look for all the units owned by the LLC, plus all the units owned by the people who own the LLC. Check out [tinyurl.com/ACRIS-NYC](http://tinyurl.com/ACRIS-NYC)

## EVIDENCE ONLY YOUR LANDLORD HAS ACCESS TO

Ask for a list of all the properties the landlord owns.

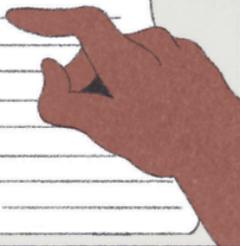
**WHAT REASON DID THEY GIVE FOR RAISING YOUR RENT? LOOK FOR EVIDENCE THAT SHOWS WHY THAT'S NOT TRUE.**



We agree I'm covered by GCE, but they raised my rent by more than the legal limit.

### ANSWER

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_



## EVIDENCE YOU HAVE ACCESS TO

If your landlord said they made “significant” repairs, ask yourself if the repairs were really significant. These repairs usually require permits from the Department of Buildings, so look for them on [tinyurl.com/DOB-NOW](https://www.tinyurl.com/DOB-NOW) and [tinyurl.com/DOB-BIS](https://www.tinyurl.com/DOB-BIS)

## EVIDENCE ONLY YOUR LANDLORD HAS ACCESS TO

Ask for receipts for the “significant” repairs.

## AT YOUR FIRST COURTHOUSE VISIT FOR A NONPAYMENT CASE...

A clerk will ask you to fill out a form. This form is your “Answer” to your landlord’s claim against you. Put a checkmark next to all the defenses you want to raise. If you don’t check off a defense, you might not be able to bring it up later. For help filling out the form, go to the HCA table.

## WHAT REASON DID THEY GIVE FOR NOT RENEWING YOUR LEASE? LOOK FOR EVIDENCE THAT SHOWS WHY THAT'S NOT TRUE.

We agree I'm covered by GCE, but they're not renewing my lease.



### EVIDENCE YOU HAVE ACCESS TO

This depends on the reason your landlord gave. Are they accusing you of something? Check your own records to show that's not true.

### EVIDENCE ONLY YOUR LANDLORD HAS ACCESS TO

This also depends on the reason they gave. If your landlord is accusing you of something, ask them to prove it. If they want to take the apartment back for themselves or close family, ask them to show proof of steps they've already taken, and a list of other homes they own.

### AT YOUR FIRST COURTHOUSE VISIT FOR EITHER CASE...

Tell court staff you want a lawyer. They'll explain next steps to see if you qualify for a free lawyer. Even if you qualify, you may not get one because there aren't enough lawyers for everyone who needs one.

# SHOULD I SETTLE?

THE COURT EXPECTS YOU AND YOUR LANDLORD TO TRY TO NEGOTIATE AND RESOLVE YOUR CASE WITHOUT GOING TO TRIAL. MOST CASES SETTLE.

The negotiation process can start as early as your first courthouse visit. It often happens in the hallways outside court rooms and can feel chaotic. You don't have to settle. **STAY STRONG!**

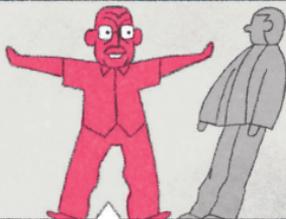
## KNOW WHO YOU'RE TALKING TO

Do you work for the court or for my landlord?

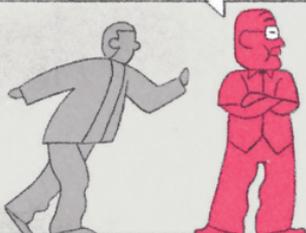


## SET BOUNDARIES

I'm not comfortable having a conversation with you until I've talked with a tenant lawyer.



I'm going to ask a court attorney to join this conversation.



I'm not gonna let you pressure me into accepting an agreement I don't understand.



## ASK YOUR LANDLORD'S LAWYER FOR EVIDENCE



Can you show me the receipts for the "significant" repairs?

## AT ANY TIME, YOU CAN ASK A COURT OFFICER TO SPEAK WITH COURT STAFF

Court officers wear a uniform. Court staff could be a judge or court attorney (judge's assistant).



Can I talk to the judge?

## TELL THE JUDGE YOUR SIDE OF THE STORY. IF YOU HAVE EVIDENCE, SHOW IT!

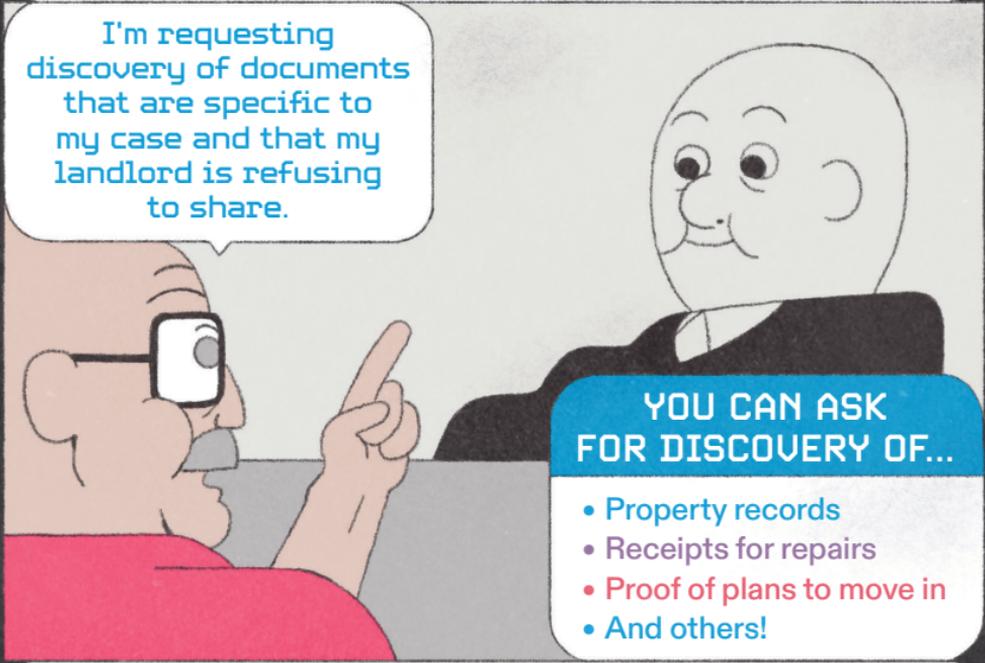
I think I'm covered by Good Cause because I found these property records showing my landlord owns 11 or more units in New York State.



## ASK THE JUDGE TO ORDER YOUR LANDLORD TO PROVIDE EVIDENCE

This is called “ASKING FOR DISCOVERY.”

If the judge accepts your request, your landlord has to hand over the documents you asked for.



I'm requesting discovery of documents that are specific to my case and that my landlord is refusing to share.

### YOU CAN ASK FOR DISCOVERY OF...

- Property records
- Receipts for repairs
- Proof of plans to move in
- And others!

If you and the landlord end up settling, the written agreement, signed by both sides, is called a

## STIPULATION OF SETTLEMENT.

If you sign a stipulation of settlement, your landlord doesn't have to prove their case against you in court anymore.

If you sign, make sure you understand the conditions of the settlement and what your next steps are.

If you don't sign, the judge will give you another court date to go to TRIAL, where you'll have to prove your case.

# JOIN A TENANT UNION OR ORGANIZING GROUP IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Join the Housing Justice for All Coalition: [housingjusticeforall.org](https://housingjusticeforall.org)

Join the Right to Counsel Coalition: [righttocounselnyc.org](https://righttocounselnyc.org)

Good Cause exists because tenants fought for it!



We can keep fighting to make it stronger!



Call **HOUSING COURT ANSWERS (HCA)** for support: (212) 962-4795

## COLLABORATORS:

CUP: Agustín Cepeda, Utsa Ramaswami  
Housing Court Answers: Sarah Lazur, Jessica Hurd  
TakeRoot Justice: Michael Grinthal  
Center for Justice Innovation: Amanda Lipman  
Design & Illustration: Sarah Wang, Ryan Davis

The Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP) is a nonprofit that uses the power of art and design to increase meaningful civic engagement in partnership with marginalized communities. Making Policy Public is CUP's series of collaborations with advocates and visual designers to create resources that explain policies affecting social justice—like this one. [welcometocup.org](https://welcometocup.org)

Housing Court Answers (HCA) has been advocating for people without lawyers in NYC's Housing Courts since 1981. [housingcourtanswers.org](https://housingcourtanswers.org)

TakeRoot Justice (TRJ) provides legal, participatory research and policy support to strengthen the work of grassroots and community-based groups in NYC to dismantle racial, economic, and social oppression. [takerootjustice.org](https://takerootjustice.org)

The Center for Justice Innovation (CJI) is a community justice organization that centers safety and racial justice in partnership with communities, courts, and the people most impacted. [innovatingjustice.org](https://innovatingjustice.org)

SWRD is an art collective made up of designer Sarah Wang and illustrator Ryan Davis. Sarah Wang (they/she) is a designer and printmaker currently based in Brooklyn, NYC. Ryan Davis (he/him) is an illustrator, designer, and sometimes writer currently based in Chicago, IL.



**BIG THANKS TO:** Fidele Albert, Sage Beausejour, Adriyana Beckford, Esther Bedolla González, Sonia Boyea, Anisha Charles, Jess Dunn, Ashley Durant, Jenna Gogan, ShaunaKay Griffiths, Cassie Hackel, Ruth Hippolyte, Nipa Hossain, Paulette James, Lorain Levy, Angela Luis, Mimi Mitchell, Monica Navarro, Matt Pavoni, Liz Simon, Basia Stefanowicz, Nancy Torres, Jasmin Torres Piñón, and the teams at JustFix and Housing Justice for All.

Support for this project was provided by the National Endowment for the Arts and public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.

General support for CUP's programs is provided in part by the Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund, Lily Auchincloss Foundation, the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor, and the New York State Legislature.



Laurie M Tisch  
ILLUMINATION FUND

NATIONAL  
ENDOWMENT for the ARTS  
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STATE OF  
OPPORTUNITY  
Council on  
the Arts

NYC Cultural Affairs