

Substitute Resolution No. RS2026-1799

A resolution supporting the Davidson County General Sessions Court in creating a Winter Storm Housing Support Docket to keep as many people in their homes as possible, urging the Davidson County General Sessions Court to pause or limit eviction proceedings to the broadest extent possible for sixty days.

WHEREAS, on January 24 and 25, 2026, a winter storm struck Nashville and Davidson County and caused widespread property damage, and power outages; and

WHEREAS, both Mayor Freddie O'Connell and Governor Bill Lee have declared states of Emergency in Davidson County because of the dangerous conditions brought on by the storm; and

WHEREAS, more than 230,000 customers of Nashville Electric Service were without power at some point after the storm, representing nearly half of the utility's customers. Power was not restored to all Nashville and Davidson County residents for at least two weeks after the storm began; and

WHEREAS, because of the widespread power outages and the extreme cold temperatures, many residents had to decide between paying for alternative housing for warmth or staying at home in the cold to be able to afford regular expenses; and

WHEREAS, due to the outages, many wage workers could not report to work as businesses remained closed and events were cancelled. Many citizens went without their regular or expected paychecks; and

WHEREAS, the emergency did not end for the most vulnerable of Nashville and Davidson County, even after electricity was restored. With rent payments proceeding as normal, even without expected pay and with additional expenses just to survive, many Nashvillians face the threat of eviction; and

WHEREAS, beyond the immediate destabilization that evictions cause, having an eviction on one's records can make finding future housing even more difficult; and

WHEREAS, this crisis is being addressed in part in a variety of ways, including the allocation of \$1,000,000 to the Emergency Winter Housing Assistance Program by public and private sources. Existing resources, such as the Eviction Right to Counsel program, will also help stem the tide of evictions, whether through advocacy in court, mediation, or finding other creative solutions; and

WHEREAS, while these efforts will assist some Nashvillians, more is needed to address the crisis as widely as possible; and

WHEREAS, state law prevents local government actions to pause evictions. The Davidson County General Sessions Court has jurisdiction over eviction matters and has routinely exercised its discretion to limit the harm that evictions can cause; and

WHEREAS, the Davidson County General Sessions Court has worked with many community and grassroots organizations to come up with a solution to keep people housed within the bounds of their authority; and

WHEREAS, the Davidson County General Sessions Court has created a Winter Storm Housing Docket. The goal of this docket will be to support litigants in completing community-based rental assistance applications and keep as many people in their homes as possible; and

WHEREAS, this special docket is open to litigants facing eviction based on a monetary reason related to the winter storm. At this docket, litigants will receive assistance to help renters complete applications and develop a plan to pay back and future rent. This special docket may also give litigants additional time to resolve their cases. This docket will remain open between March 3 and April 30, 2026, with the ability to be extended if necessary; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting and proper for the Metropolitan Council to support the Davidson County General Sessions Court in its efforts to limit the harm to residents caused by the storm and keep as many Nashvillians as possible in their homes.

~~WHEREAS, the Court should redouble its efforts as Nashville and Davidson County recovers from the winter storm, using its judgment to encourage alternative solutions, limit evictions because of the inclement weather, and pause evictions to the broadest extent possible during the next sixty days; and~~

~~WHEREAS, it is fitting and proper for the Metropolitan Council to call for a pause of evictions in Nashville and Davidson County and to call on local judges and public officials to do all they can to address this crisis, limit the harm to residents caused by the storm, and keep as many Nashvillians as possible in their homes.~~

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY:

Section 1. That the Metropolitan County Council hereby goes on record to support the Davidson County General Sessions Court's efforts to support renters facing eviction through the creation of a special Winter Storm Housing Support Docket.

~~Section 1. That the Metropolitan County Council hereby urges the Davidson County General Sessions Court to use its discretion to pause or limit evictions to the broadest extent possible for the sixty days following the adoption of this resolution.~~

Section 2. This Resolution shall take effect from and after its adoption, the welfare of The Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County requiring it.

INTRODUCED BY:

Zulfat Suara
Member of Council