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*****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*****

***ON FIRST DAY OF HEAT SEASON, LEGAL AID CALLS ON ALBANY
AND CITY HALL TO FAST-TRACK CAPITAL FUNDING TO ADDRESS
OVER \$3 BILLION IN NYCHA UTILITY NEEDS***

(NEW YORK, NY) – On the first day of the 2019 – 2020 heat season, The Legal Aid Society called on New York State and New York City lawmakers to fast-track capital funding to address over \$3 billion needed – [per NYCHA’s 2018 Physical Needs Assessment report](#) – for upgrades to heat and hot water systems at New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) developments throughout the city.

Legal Aid recently obtained data through a Freedom of Information Law disclosure which revealed that [nearly 90 percent of NYCHA apartments lost heat and hot water during last year’s heat season](#), which lasted from October 1, 2018 to May 31, 2019. Moreover, this past August, several thousand residents were plagued by [sudden water outages](#) in 35 buildings across 11 developments.

“Last heat season was a disaster for our clients in public housing with heat and hot water outages plaguing nearly 90 percent of NYCHA residents,” said **Judith Goldiner, Attorney-In-Charge of the Civil Law Reform Unit at The Legal Aid Society**. “The problem is the lack substantial funding needed to meet the scope of the problem, and our lawmakers at City Hall and in Albany must finally recognize this.”

Per New York City and State law, NYCHA must maintain certain housing standards. In particular, under the City’s Housing Maintenance Code (HMC), heat must be provided between October 1 and May 31 when thermometer falls below a certain temperature. Moreover, the New York State Multiple Dwelling Law requires owners to provide both hot and cold water 24 hours a day.

The Legal Aid Society, [elected officials](#), and others have argued that NYCHA should issue rent abatements to tenants during outages, per the Housing Authority’s legal obligation as the landlord.

Justice in Every Borough.

Legal Aid and Willkie Farr & Gallagher LLP recently filed an appeal on this issue in *Diamond v. New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA)*, a class action brought in April 2018 demanding that the agency issue rent abatements to residents who went without heat and hot water during the 2017 to 2018 “heat season” and, in particular, during the winter cold spell that lasted from December 27, 2017 – January 16, 2018.

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The Legal Aid Society exists for one simple yet powerful reason: to ensure that New Yorkers are not denied their right to equal justice because of poverty. For over 140 years, we have protected, defended, and advocated for those who have struggled in silence for far too long. Every day, in every borough, The Legal Aid Society changes the lives of our clients and helps improve our communities.

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