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

***FOIL Disclosure Reveals That Tens Of Thousands Of
NYCHA Residents Suffered Heat, Hot Water, Or A Complete
Water Outage During First Three Months Of 2019 – 2020
Heat Season***

***Legal Aid Calls On Albany To Allocate Funding In FY2021
Budget To Address Continued Utility Issues Plaguing Public
Housing Residents***

(NEW YORK, NY) – **The Legal Aid Society** condemned NYCHA’s failure to provide basic services to its tenants, a deficiency demonstrated by information that NYCHA itself provided in answer to a Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) request. NYCHA’s response revealed that tens of thousands of residents have already suffered heat, hot water or complete water outages during the first three months of the 2019 – 2020 heat season (October 1, 2019 – December 31, 2019).

Outages / October 1, 2019 – December 31, 2019

	Number of Outages	Number of Impacted Apartments	Number of Impacted Residents
Heat	331	61,637	134,330
Hot Water	642	84,484	186,154
Water	273	32,146	71,177
Total	1,246	178,267	391,661

Developments with the most outages / October 1, 2019 – December 31, 2019

	Development	Number of Outages	Number of Impacted Apartments	Number of Impacted Residents
Heat	Williamsburg	24	966	1,693
Hot Water	Astoria	35	1,104	2,980
Water	Justice Sonia Sotomayor Houses	21	1,017	2,149
Total			3,087	6,822

“NYCHA is clearly still unable to ensure that utility systems seamlessly provide for residents, and these numbers confirm what we hear from our clients on a regular basis,” said **Lucy Newman, Staff Attorney with the Civil Law Reform Unit at The Legal Aid Society**. “These outages could be meaningfully addressed with the right resources. As Albany continues to negotiate the Fiscal Year 2021 budget, we demand that lawmakers allocate \$2 billion to NYCHA to help the Housing Authority address these and other outstanding issues that still plague tenants.”

Background

In 2018, The Legal Aid Society filed a [lawsuit](#) demanding rent abatements for tenants who suffered through severe heat and/or hot water outages. The New York State’s Appellate Division, First Department recently [rejected](#) the City’s motion to dismiss, certified the class, and remanded the case to the trial court so that it could continue.

Last heat season, which lasted from October 1, 2018 to May 31, 2019, NYCHA developments suffered more than [3,500 heat and hot water outages](#), affecting more than 150,000 individual

apartments and roughly 339,00 public housing residents. You can access that FOIL disclosure [here](#).

This year, the [Housing Justice For All](#) campaign is seeking \$1 billion from the City for NYCHA, \$2 billion from Albany, and the full \$32 billion that is owed to the Authority from the Federal Government.

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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. <https://www.legalaidnyc.org>