



March 15, 2020

Contact:

Alejandra Lopez
The Legal Aid Society
917-294-9348
AILopez@legal-aid.org

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

Legal Aid Statement On OCA Housing and Civil Court Closures Amid COVID-19 Crisis

(NEW YORK, NY) – Janet Sabel, CEO and Attorney-in-Chief of The Legal Aid Society, released the following statement in response to the New York State Office of Court Administration (OCA) closure of housing and civil courthouses:

“We have been fervently advocating for the closure of civil and housing courts in New York and are very relieved to hear that OCA has finally heeded the advice of housing advocates across the state. Thousands of New Yorkers enter housing court and other civil courts on a daily basis, and today’s decision to stop proceedings except in emergency cases will help thwart the spread of COVID-19, especially to those who are in high-risk groups such as the elderly or immunocompromised.

We are also relieved that eviction proceedings and evictions statewide are stayed since evicting a single family and forcing them onto the street or into the shelter system — which is already overburdened and a potential hotbed of contagion — during this unprecedented public health emergency would be inhumane and cruel.”

###

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>