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Contact:

Redmond Haskins
The Legal Aid Society
929-441-2384
rhaskins@legal-aid.org

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

Legal Aid Calls on Governor Cuomo, Legislature to Amend Rent Relief Programs to Benefit More New Yorkers

Only \$40 Million out of \$100 Million Has Been Allocated to Tenants in Need; NYS Must Follow the Example of Other States and Distribute Available Funds Immediately

(NEW YORK, NY) – The Legal Aid Society today called on New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature to [amend statewide rent relief programs](#) to benefit New York tenants who are suffering financial hardships due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

An analysis by Legal Aid found that other states, including [Connecticut](#), [Delaware](#), [Maine](#), [Massachusetts](#), and [Washington State](#), amended their respective rent relief programs earlier this year to maximize the number of needy families eligible for relief. New York State has distributed only \$40 million out of \$100 million rent relief funds to New Yorkers — only 15,020 out of 94,000 people who sought relief were approved, according to [Curbed](#). New York State now runs the risk of [losing the remaining available funds](#) to the federal government if it does not distribute them by December 30, 2020 - a potential loss of crucial funds for tenants in desperate need of financial relief.

"This program was poorly crafted, plain and simply, and a botched opportunity to ensure that residents in need of rent relief had easy access to crucial funds," said **Ellen Davidson, Staff Attorney with the Civil Law Reform Unit at The Legal Aid Society**. "Other states recognized eligibility issues and quickly recalibrated their respective programs to benefit more families on the brink of eviction and homelessness, and we are demanding the same action from Governor

Cuomo and the Legislature before New York must return these remaining unspent funds to Washington, as legally required by the CARES Act.”

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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. www.legalaidnyc.org