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

Legal Aid's Civil Practice Statement in Response to Governor Cuomo's Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Address

(NEW YORK, NY) – Adriene Holder, Attorney-in-Charge of the Civil Practice at The Legal Aid Society, released the following statement in response to Governor Andrew Cuomo's Fiscal Year 2022 budget address:

“While we welcome Governor Cuomo’s announcement that he plans to prioritize funding for a variety of housing initiatives in his Fiscal Year 2022 budget, these figures still fall short of the allotments needed to combat New York’s embroiled affordable housing crisis, which plagued New Yorkers statewide well before the pandemic.

This budget includes \$800 million in rent relief allocated by the Federal government, and we urge Governor Cuomo and the Legislature to heed the mistakes learned from New York’s botched rent relief rollout from last year by minimizing red tape, removing arbitrary requirements, and ensuring that funds get to the neediest families immediately in a way to prevent eviction and homelessness.

Lastly, New York must continue to bolster protections for tenants and combat homelessness, either in the budget or through standalone legislation, by enacting urgent reforms including ‘good cause’ eviction legislation to codify renters’ rights to tenants in smaller, market-rate buildings; the housing access voucher program, which would create a statewide Section 8 program and a path to permanent housing; and Home Stability Support (HSS), a statewide rent supplement for low-income families and individuals who are facing eviction, homelessness, or loss of housing due to domestic violence or hazardous conditions.

Our clients’ needs are more dire than ever, and New Yorkers need a strong progressive budget to combat the magnitude of crises currently facing our state.”

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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