



April 6, 2021

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

***Statement from Legal Aid on Rent Relief Package in
New York State's Fiscal Year 2022 Budget***

(NEW YORK, NY) –The Legal Aid Society issued the following statement today in response to the rent relief package in the New York State's Fiscal Year 2022 budget:

“Today the New York State Legislature takes a big step forward in designing a rent relief program that, if implemented correctly, will be lifesaving for hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers across the state.

We are very pleased to see that undocumented New Yorkers will have explicit access to the benefits afforded by the Rent Relief Program, and that tenants who receive the benefits will gain a year of tenant protections. This has been an extremely hard year for our clients who have experienced both a health crisis and a financial crisis.

While we laud many aspects of this program, we must ensure that the application process is straightforward, and doesn't deter New Yorkers who actually need and qualify for assistance from applying. The Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance must take seriously those tenants left behind across the digital divide who will not be able to access an on-line portal. Further, OTDA must implement the

program to ensure that our clients who work in the grey economy and who do not have the traditional forms of documentation have access to the program.

Now, the State and the City must also undertake a massive publicity campaign in multiple languages and using multiple mediums to ensure that all New Yorkers are aware of this critical relief.

Lastly, while tenants wait for rent relief money to start flowing, which could take several weeks, Albany must extend the eviction moratorium to protect New Yorkers.”

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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 145 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