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Contact:

Alejandra Lopez  
The Legal Aid Society  
917-294-9348  
[ailopez@legal-aid.org](mailto:ailopez@legal-aid.org)

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

***As the Biden Administration Prepares to Release Additional Funding for State Rent Relief Aid, Wells Fargo Provides Grant Funding to Legal Aid to Promote Outreach and Access to Emergency Rental Assistance (ERAP) for New York Tenants***

(NEW YORK, NY) – **The Legal Aid Society** recently announced a new multi pronged outreach initiative that aims to raise awareness among NYC communities and tenants about the availability of rent assistance through the New York State Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP). Managed by the NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA), ERAP aims to assist eligible tenants in New York State that are unable to pay rent and utilities due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In New York State, which received \$2 billion of the federal funds, the program includes one year of protections against rent hikes and certain evictions as a condition for landlords taking the money. A qualifying tenant or landlord is eligible to apply to the program to cover a year of past rent stretching back to March 13, 2020.

Since the program's rollout there has been [concern](#) about OTDA's methods and success in their outreach to affected communities and the lack of education and resources for tenants navigating the application process. To supplement other community-based outreach efforts and ensure tenants across New York are aware of the available relief and have the opportunity to connect with the city's network of enrollment centers, The Legal Aid Society recently announced funding from **Wells Fargo & Company** to develop outreach materials and education resources and the facilitation of internal and external training workshops. The funding will also ensure The Legal Aid Society Housing team is adequately staffed to respond to the increase workstream of assisting thousands of clients with applying for arrears assistance, and will support advocacy and reform efforts that may be needed as we observe and assess New York's implementation of ERAP across the city.

Presently, New York State has distributed or otherwise designated for future distribution nearly all of the \$2 billion it received from the federal government, leaving many tenants who have not yet applied without any chance of receiving vitally needed assistance.

In response, The Legal Aid Society, with the support of the investment and partnership of Wells Fargo & Company, continues to circulate outreach and ERAP education materials as well advocate at the state and local level for additional funding to be redistributed to New York State and distributed to tenants in need.

The Legal Aid Society is encouraging all tenants who may be eligible to watch our online instructional videos:

[Applying for ERAP](#)

[Cómo Presentar Una Solicitud Del ERAP](#)

[What if I have concerns about ERAP and my immigration status?](#)

[¿Qué hago si tengo dudas sobre ERAP y mi statusmigratorio?](#)

The Legal Aid Society is most appreciative of Wells Fargo's commitment to the communities of New York City and joining us in this effort to help tenants access the information and resources they need, and the security and stability they deserve.

“Rental relief is desperately needed, especially with the eviction moratorium in limbo, and many need assistance from organizations like ours to secure protection from eviction as well as the promise of monetary relief...With Wells Fargo's commitment, we've been able to extend outreach and guide our clients through processes that keep them safe and in their homes,” said **Edward Josephson, Supervising Attorney with The Legal Aid Society's Civil Law Reform Unit.**

“Studies show that tenants with legal representation are more likely to avoid an eviction judgment and remain in their home and we are proud to support The Legal Aid Society's efforts to keep New Yorkers housed,” said **Connie Wright, senior vice president, social impact housing stability lead with Wells Fargo.** “As we continue to look for ways to help people stay in their homes, Wells Fargo believes legal assistance is a key resource to help avoid eviction and homelessness and support housing stability overall.”

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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](http://www.legalaidnyc.org)*

