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Contact:

Redmond Haskins  
Director of Media Relations  
[rhaskins@legal-aid.org](mailto:rhaskins@legal-aid.org)  
929.441.2384

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

***Statement on the Passing of Herman Diaz, the Third New Yorker to Die in City Custody in 2022***

**(NEW YORK, NY) - The Legal Aid Society** issued the following statement on the passing of Herman Diaz, a Legal Aid client and the third New Yorker to die in City custody in 2022:

“We are both heartbroken and outraged to learn of Herman Diaz’s passing, the third New Yorker to die in City custody in 2022.

Mr. Diaz’s family and loved ones deserve immediate answers from the City and the jail medical staff about the circumstances leading to his death. Yet in our experience working with families during this epidemic of deaths on Rikers Island, the City’s treatment of the families and loved ones of people who die in custody is brutal and callous, withholding even the most basic information from grieving families.

We demand that the City immediately appoint an ombudsperson for the Diaz family, conduct a comprehensive investigation, and inform the family and counsel of their findings at each step of the process. This includes giving the family immediate access to all videotapes of Mr. Diaz in the time preceding his death and access to the individuals who were with him when he died.

Legal Aid extends our deepest sympathies to the Diaz family, his friends, and community. We must not allow these tragedies to continue to mount, ensnaring some of our most vulnerable neighbors, who deserve treatment and resources, not confinement in a jail cell.”

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