



April 25, 2023

Contact:

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

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

***In Response to New Study on NYC’s Dire Affordability Crisis,  
Legal Aid Demands Immediate Passage of “Good Cause,”  
Housing Access Voucher Program***

(NEW YORK, NY) – The Legal Aid Society, in response to a new [report](#) from the Fund for the City of New York and the United Way of New York City on the local affordability crisis, called on Albany lawmakers to immediately pass “[Good Cause](#)” eviction legislation and the [Housing Access Voucher Program](#) (HAVP), two critical measures to combat New York’s affordable housing emergency.

The report revealed that New York City is mired in the worst affordability crisis of the last two decades, with half of the city’s households struggling to pay rent, access sufficient food and basic health care, and afford transportation.

Furthermore, the [study](#) found that communities of color have shouldered the brunt of the affordability crisis, and residents of the central Bronx had the highest rates of economic instability. Moreover, households with children are at greater risk of not meeting their basic needs and households led by single mothers experience the highest rates of income inadequacy, with 86 percent unable to cover the cost of basic needs when young children were present.

“This report further underscores the urgent need for Albany to immediately enact both ‘Good Cause’ eviction legislation and the Housing Access Voucher Program,” said **Ellen Davidson**, **staff attorney with the Civil Law Reform Unit at The Legal Aid Society**. “Lawmakers’

continued refusal to meaningfully act will only exacerbate the suffering plaguing low-income communities in desperate need of basic tenant protections and measures to defend against homelessness. Albany must codify these critical and needed bills immediately.”

### **"Good Cause" Eviction Legislation Background:**

“Good Cause” would require landlords to demonstrate a justification for evicting tenants in unregulated units, and would protect tenants from exorbitant rent hikes, restricting rent increases to either three percent or 1.5 times the inflation rate, whichever is higher.

The budget-neutral legislation would prevent landlords from denying lease renewals to tenants who have consistently abided by the terms of their leases, allowing tenants to advocate for repairs without the fear of retaliation.

The legislation has robust support across the state, with nearly [70 percent of New Yorkers, including policy and political science experts](#) from all levels of government, in favor of passing “Good Cause.” [Small landlords, leaders of New York’s largest labor unions](#) and [New York State Attorney General Letitia James](#) also support “Good Cause.”

This past January, Legal Aid released an [analysis](#) of City data that revealed that since the statewide eviction moratorium lapsed last year, [executed evictions](#) in New York City have increased almost every month.

While it is unclear which of these evictions are related to non-payment or a holdover, which is an eviction proceeding unrelated to non-payment, it is safe to conclude that many of these tenants would have benefited if “Good Cause” were enacted statewide, given the depth and breadth of the legislation.

Legal Aid Housing Court attorneys currently represent [New Yorkers in hundreds of no-cause holdovers](#) across the five boroughs, often involving the most vulnerable tenants, whose eviction would be avoided should “Good Cause” pass into law.

### **Housing Access Voucher Program Background:**

The Housing Access Voucher Program (HAVP) would [create](#) a state-level initiative similar to Section 8 (a federal housing assistance voucher program for assisting very low-income families, the elderly, and the disabled secure decent, safe, and sanitary housing in the private market), with a priority given to homeless New Yorkers who need a path to permanent housing, but also to families on the verge of homelessness, allowing them to stay in their current homes.

Additionally, HAVP is one of the only housing vouchers accessible to undocumented individuals and mixed-status families, households whose members include people with different citizenship or immigration statuses.

HAVP has the potential to generate savings for the state and localities by decreasing the demand for other public benefits. [Massachusetts](#) and [Connecticut](#) have had similar programs for years.

###

*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 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)*