

November 7, 2023

Contact:

Alejandra Lopez
ALopez@legal-aid.org
917-294-9348

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

Legal Aid Urges NYCHA Residents at Nostrand Houses to Participate in Historic Vote to Decide the Future of their Homes

Residents Will Decide Whether to Join the Preservation Trust, PACT, or Remain in Section 9 Public Housing

(NEW YORK, NY) - **The Legal Aid Society** today urged New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) public housing residents in Nostrand Houses in Brooklyn to participate in a historic vote about the future of their homes.

Beginning tomorrow, Wednesday, November 8, 2023, through Thursday, December 7, 2023, eligible residents can submit their vote on whether Nostrand Houses becomes part of the NYCHA Public Housing Preservation Trust; undergoes a PACT conversion, where funding is converted to Section 8; or remains in the Section 9 public housing program. The voting period is open for 30 days and residents can vote online, by mail or in-person.

“We hope that residents at Nostrand feel empowered to make an informed choice about how their development will be funded and managed going forward,” said **Lucy Newman, staff attorney with the Civil Law Reform Unit at The Legal Aid Society**. “We urge all residents to vote, and regardless of the outcome of the vote, all tenants at Nostrand have the right to live in homes that are healthy, safe and habitable.”

Additional voting details:

- Voting Period Begins Wednesday, November 8, 2023, and ends Thursday, December 7, 2023.
- By Mail: Ballot must be postmarked no later than December 7, 2023.
- On-line voting: Starts 10 AM on November 8, 2023 and closes at 9 PM on December 7, 2023.
- In-person Voting: Only available during the last ten days of voting period.
 - Voting Office address: 2344 Bragg Street, Apt. 1C
 - 11/28: 10 AM - 9 PM
 - 11/29 - 12/6: 12 PM - 8 PM
 - 12/7: 10 AM - 9 PM
 - If you've misplaced the ballot, you can get a provisional ballot with ID.
- If you require a ballot or any other materials in another language, you can email vote@nycha.nyc.gov *no later than 10 AM on 11/8*.
- If you require a reasonable accommodation, you *must request by 11/28*.

BACKGROUND:

In June, 2022, Governor Hochul signed into law the New York City Public Housing Preservation Trust. The legislation establishes the Trust, a New York State public entity that has the authority to issue bonds. Additionally, the legislation authorizes NYCHA to transfer up to 25,000 units of its public housing apartments to the Trust. The legislation requires that prior to any transfer to the Trust, residents at a particular development must vote on whether or not they want their homes to be transferred to the Trust. Nostrand Houses is the first of NYCHA's public housing developments to be chosen for this vote.

A transfer by NYCHA to the Trust enables NYCHA to convert funding for the development from Section 9 public housing to the Section 8 program. This change in funding source enables NYCHA to leverage funds to address much needed outstanding capital repairs at Nostrand Houses. Key features of the Preservation Trust legislation include: the Trust is a public entity; residents vote on whether to convert to the Trust; a property continues to be managed and maintained by a NYCHA, unionized workforce.

Since 2017, NYCHA has used another program, known as Permanent Affordability Commitment Together (PACT) to address repair needs at its public housing developments. Under PACT, NYCHA also converts funding to Section 8. Typically, conversions under the PACT program involve NYCHA entering into long-term ground leases with a private development partner and private property management team. Residents of developments slated to convert under PACT are currently not given a choice to vote on the conversion.

Under both the Trust and PACT, residents maintain many critical rights and protections under the public housing program. These include: Rents capped at 30% of income; the right to a renewal lease; the right to return to an apartment in the event of temporary relocation; the right to apply for a Section 8 mobility choice transfer voucher; and grievance rights and administrative termination of tenancy protections.

Both the PACT program and the Trust legislation are ways in which NYCHA is trying to raise additional funds to address the repair needs of its public housing portfolio. For decades, Congress has not funded NYCHA public housing to levels it needs to keep pace with its repair and preservation needs.

###

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