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

## ***Legal Aid Replies to City's Response in Litigation Seeking the Full Implementation of CityFHEPS Reform and Expansion Laws***

(NEW YORK, NY) - The Legal Aid Society submitted a [reply](#) to the City's response in [Marie Vincent et. al. v. Mayor Eric Adams et. al.](#), [class action litigation](#) brought by Legal Aid to compel the Adams Administration to fully implement the recently enacted reforms to the City Fighting Homelessness and Eviction Prevention Supplement (CityFHEPS) program.

Last month, the City [opposed](#) Legal Aid's lawsuit claiming that the CityFHEPS reform and expansion laws conflict with New York State's Social Services Law (SSL) and are therefore invalid. However, the City failed to cite any specific provision of the SSL where a conflict would arise, and instead relies on the sweeping and unsupported notion that the City Council cannot legislate at all in the broad area of social services, and that this responsibility and authority rests solely with the State.

To the contrary, the City Council has long legislated in the field of social services, as expressly permitted by the New York City Charter.

### **Examples of the City Council Legislating on Social Services Issues**

- In 1999, the City Council amended the New York City Charter and Administrative Code to create the Department of Homeless Services.
- In 2002, the City Council passed and the mayor signed legislation to require the City to provide emergency shelter and/or related services to victims of domestic violence.
- In 2017, the City Council passed and the mayor signed legislation creating New York's Right to Counsel program for low-income tenants who are facing eviction in New York City Housing Court.
- In 2021, the City Council amended the Administrative Code to increase the maximum rental allowances to match those available under the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program. The mayor promulgated regulations to effect these changes.

This mere snapshot supports the City Council's long history of properly exercising its authority as prescribed by the City Charter.

"The City's argument that the City Council is precluded from shaping social services-related policy is a legal hail mary unsupported by established law and contrary to the reality that the body has done so numerous times for decades," said **Robert Desir, Staff Attorney with the Civil Law Reform Unit at The Legal Aid Society**. "No administration can single out which laws to enforce and which to ignore, and we're committed to ensuring that this package finally lives up to its full intended promise to benefit our clients, their families and their communities."

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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 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)*