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Legal Aid Applauds Landmark New Court Policy to Fast-Track Vacate Order Cases and End Prolonged Displacement of Tenants in Temporary Housing

(NEW YORK, NY) — The Legal Aid Society issued the following statement regarding a new policy implemented by the Office of Court Administration at the request of the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) to expedite housing court proceedings seeking repairs in residential buildings subject to vacate orders and other emergency conditions:

“No New Yorker should be forced to languish in a shelter, hotel room, or other temporary housing, unable to return home, simply because of court delays beyond their control. For tenants displaced by a vacate order, every additional day away from home can mean disruption to their employment, their children’s education, their health care, and their sense of stability and community. This new policy is a significant and long-overdue reform that will provide much-needed relief to families who have already endured the trauma and uncertainty of being forced from their homes.

“For years, we have raised concerns about the lengthy court delays that prevent tenants from obtaining the prompt correction of conditions underlying vacate orders, as well as interruptions in essential services such as heat, gas, and electricity. These delays have left our clients and countless tenants across the city stranded in temporary housing for months or years at a time, separated from their homes, neighbors, belongings, and support networks. The consequences are particularly severe for seniors, people with disabilities, families with young children, and others who rely on the stability of their housing to meet their daily needs.

“We are proud to have worked with HPD to develop this landmark policy, which recognizes the urgent need to resolve these cases more efficiently and get tenants back home as quickly and safely as possible. By reducing unnecessary delays, this new process will help preserve housing stability, prevent prolonged displacement, and ensure that tenants are not unfairly burdened by procedural bottlenecks out of their control.

“We commend HPD and the Office of Court Administration for implementing this important reform and look forward to continuing our work to protect tenants’ rights and strengthen pathways back to permanent housing.”

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The Legal Aid Society is a nonprofit law firm that exists for one simple yet powerful reason: to ensure that New Yorkers are not denied their right to equal justice because of poverty. For 150 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 the people we serve and helps improve our communities.
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