

For Immediate Release

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TenantHelpNY.org: A New Online Resource for New York Tenants Facing Eviction During the COVID-19 Pandemic and Pro Bono Attorneys Providing Eviction Defense

New York, NY (May 17, 2021) – Pro Bono Net, with funding from the New York Office of Attorney General, is pleased to announce the official launch of [TenantHelpNY.org](https://www.tenanthelpny.org), a new online resource created to help tenants in New York understand their housing rights during the COVID-19 public health crisis. In September 2020, Attorney General Letitia James [announced the COVID-19 Tenant Blue Assistance Initiative](#), an effort to respond to the legal needs

faced by tenants at risk of eviction because of the

coronavirus pandemic. As of November 2020, the estimated range of current renter households at

risk of eviction in New York State were between 640,000 and 1,180,000, and according to the

Association for Neighborhood & Housing Development, a total of 222,135 New York State tenants already have active cases in court and face eviction in May when the moratorium ends.



This new initiative will help address the variety of legal challenges many New York tenants will face over the coming year, and includes the development and management of an online resource center with information related to tenant law and contact information for service providers outside of New York City. The online resource center will also contain an “Advocate Gateway” with specialized resources to support pro bono attorneys providing eviction defense.

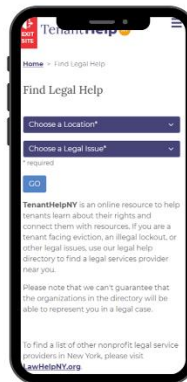
The development of the resource center, or TenantHelpNY.org, was created in partnership with the six (6) grantees under this initiative: Erie County Bar Association Volunteer Lawyers Project, Legal Aid Society of Mid-New York, Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York, Legal Assistance of Western New York, Nassau Suffolk Law Services, and Legal Services of the Hudson Valley.

Through TenantHelpNY.org, a mobile-friendly website, tenants will have access to:

- Plain language guides for tenants and the general public, developed in collaboration with grantees under the OAG initiative;
- Know your rights housing information on the COVID-19 crisis, discrimination, disability inclusion, and eviction process;
- A legal help directory to assist tenants in connecting with volunteer attorney programs in their region, and
- A list of Frequently Asked Questions about available COVID-19 housing protections.

In addition, TenantHelpNY.org’s Advocate Gateway will give pro bono attorneys and other advocates providing civil legal services to tenants access to the following resources:

- A password-protected online community to provide pro bono attorneys with access to specialized training and a membership roster to build their network and support effective tenant advocacy;
- A library with curated advocacy materials created by volunteer attorney programs;
- Focused listservs to ask questions and discuss issues around COVID-19 and housing law in New York State, and;
- Pro bono opportunity information that will allow volunteer attorneys to connect directly with legal service provider staff.



“Pro Bono Net is proud to work with our partners to build a platform that will serve New Yorkers at a time when they are most vulnerable. We are grateful to Attorney General Leticia James for concretely demonstrating her support for solutions to aid impacted communities by funding TenantHelpNY.org,” said **Veronica N. Dunlap**, Director of New York Programs at **Pro Bono Net**.

Learn more about the organizations behind this initiative:

- [Legal Aid Society of Mid New York, Inc.](#)
- [Erie County Bar Association Volunteer Lawyers Project, Inc.](#)
- [Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York](#)
- [Legal Assistance of Western New York, Inc.](#)
- [Nassau Suffolk Law Services](#)
- [Legal Services of the Hudson Valley](#)
- [Pro Bono Net](#)

For more information, comments, or questions about this initiative, please contact Veronica Dunlap, New York Program Director at Pro Bono Net, at vdunlap@probono.net.

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1. Stout Risius Ross, LLC, Estimation of Households Experiencing Rental Shortfall and Potentially Facing Eviction (New York Figures) <https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoiNzRhYjg2NzAtMGE1MC00NmNjLTllOTMrYjM2NjFmOTA4ZjMyIiwidCI6Ijc5MGJmNjk2LWTE3NDYtNGE4OS1hZjI0LTc4ZGE5Y2RhZGE2MSIsImMiOiN9> (2020).
 2. Association for Neighborhood & Housing Development, 220,000 Tenants on the Brink and Counting, https://anhd.org/blog/220000-tenants-brink-and-counting#_ftn1 (2021).