

Mayor Kenney Announces Philadelphia Eviction Prevention Project

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PHILADELPHIA – Mayor Jim Kenney today announced the launch of the Philadelphia Eviction Prevention Project, a new set of services for tenants facing eviction. This effort will reduce the number of evictions and provide more resources to tenants in danger of losing their home, helping to prevent homelessness in Philadelphia.

“Evictions hurt families and communities,” said Mayor Kenney. “Eviction increases rates of unemployment, makes it harder for children to succeed in school, destabilizes neighborhoods and increases shelter costs. This new project is an important step in strengthening the safety net for tenants. It is a great example of the change we can make when we as a city come together to address tough problems.”

The Managing Director's Office issued a Request for Proposals in late summer. A team lead by Community Legal Services (CLS), was selected as the provider. City Council led the effort to allocate \$400,000 for the Project and the Department of Planning and Development allocated an additional \$100,000.

“Housing is a human right, and I'm so proud of the progress we are making as a city and advocacy community to make sure all of our neighbors have a safe and stable place to call home,” said Councilwoman Helen Gym.

Services will include a tenant helpline and website, information and connections to legal services inside the courtroom, direct legal representation of tenants, outreach to at risk tenants, and financial counseling. The project will also test solutions to systemic challenges, such as streamlining intake and referral to different legal services and further engaging housing counselors in supporting tenants.

The organizations that will implement the Philadelphia Eviction Prevention Project with CLS are Clarifi, Legal Clinic for the Disabled, Philadelphia VIP, Regional Housing Legal Services, SeniorLAW Center, and Tenant Union Representative Network.

“We are deeply thankful to Mayor Kenney and members of City Council for recognizing the importance of preventing eviction and thus alleviating poverty in our great City,” said Community Legal Services Executive Director Debby Freedman. “We are also grateful for partnership from the Philadelphia Bar Association and Philadelphia’s Municipal Court. This new collaborative project will significantly increase multiple services for tenants that will allow them to stay in their homes and will help the City by preventing homelessness.”

According to Deputy Managing Director Eva Gladstein, “This project helps ensure that tenants’ rights are protected, and that they can access information when they need it. It brings together key partners to create positive solutions. We are especially appreciative of the ongoing support of Municipal Court President Judge Marsha Neifield and her staff in helping bring this project to fruition”.

Tenants who are seeking information about their legal rights are encouraged to call the Tenant Legal Aid Referral Line at 267-443-2500 or visit www.phillytenant.org.

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