

## **2021 TENANT LEGAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM SCOPE OF WORK AND SERVICES**

The Tenant Legal Assistance Program is designed to respond to the housing crisis created by the COVID-19 Pandemic. For many property owners and tenants, the COVID-19 Pandemic has impacted the tenants' ability to keep up with their rental payments and landlords have been left without necessary income to sustain their investments.

Legal Aid Society of Palm Beach County will perform the following services:

- Provide a dedicated phone intake extension and hotline for residents of Lake Worth Beach who have landlord tenant matters and are facing eviction.
- Provide advice and counsel to tenants who have questions regarding their rights as a tenant.
- Provide pro se assistance to tenants who need assistance preparing an Answer, Motion to Dismiss and/or Motion to Determine Rent.
- Provide legal representation to tenants who have been served with a Summons and Eviction Complaint. Legal representation will include drafting of an Answer, Motion to Dismiss, Motion to Determine Rent and related pleadings to defend the Eviction lawsuit. Staff will provide representation at all hearings, case management conferences and mediations.
- Assist tenants with access to rental assistance programs.

The Goals of our services will be to:

- Prevent nonpayment of rent issues directly related to the COVID-19 Pandemic from going to Eviction Court.
- Reduce damage to tenant's rental history and credit by intervening before a lawsuit is initiated.
- Create a cooperative relationship between landlord and tenant.
- Give landlords and tenants structured communication channels to discuss non-payment of rent issues with the goal of achieving an amicable settlement between the parties.

Legal Aid Society of Palm Beach County will assist clients who meet the following criteria with legal assistance to prevent homelessness:

- Reside within the city limits of Lake Worth Beach (zip codes 33460 and 33461);
- Meet gross annual incomes at or below eighty percent (80%) AMI limits prior to COVID-19;
- Provide documentation to evidence eligibility for unemployment, have experienced a reduction of household income, incurred significant costs, or experienced financial hardship due to COVID-19 that contributed to the missed rental payments;
- Or in the alternative, provide documentation that the tenant has been indirectly financially impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Number Served: Up to 75 Unduplicated Clients**