

## **MESSAGING TIP SHEET**

### **BACKGROUND**

- 246,864 New Yorkers were served with eviction papers in 2013 and nearly 99% of these tenants were forced to fight the case without the benefit of an attorney.
- New York tenants have many rights, but without knowing these rights or how to protect them in Court, many tenants are unnecessarily evicted. Every day in NYC Housing Courts tenants give up rights, their homes and their communities.
- Research shows that in almost all of these cases an attorney could have changed the outcome for the better for the tenant and in many cases preserve the tenancy. Most tenants can't afford to hire an attorney and the available free legal services for those who need it do not come close to matching the need.

### **FOUR PRINCIPLES OF OUR COALITION**

- Providing real access to justice for tens of thousands of New Yorkers a year facing the loss of their home through an eviction by providing them with a well-trained competent attorney.
- Reducing homelessness and saving millions of dollars spent on shelters by preventing unnecessary evictions.
- Saving families, and our communities, from the serious financial, educational, social and medical consequences of eviction and homelessness.
- Preserving neighborhoods and affordable housing by keeping rent stabilized tenants, including seniors, in their homes and communities and keeping their apartments from going to market rate.

### **BIG PICTURE**

- The majority of evictees live in rent regulated apartments. Keeping them in their homes prevents bleeding additional units from the net 200,000 that the de Blasio administration has pledged to create or preserve.
- This move would make New York a leader in the national right to counsel movement.
- Due to limited resources, the current demand for tenant legal services far exceeds supply. Increased funding would expand the capacity of legal aid organizations to deliver justice.

### **KEY STATS**

- In 2013 there were nearly 30,000 eviction rulings in New York City. This figure is steadily rising, up more than 20 percent in the past decade. Two-thirds of evictees have annual incomes of \$25,000 or less. Two-thirds live with children under 18 years of age.
- Each bed in our homeless shelters costs \$30,000 per year. Developing a single unit of affordable housing costs over \$250,000. Yet the price of legal representation in housing court is a comparative pittance, estimated at \$1,600 to \$3,200 per case.
- New York City reported a net loss of 2,539 rent-regulated units in 2012. During this period, 9,499 apartments left the system, 71 percent because of vacancies.