



Greater Hartford Legal Aid

For Immediate Release  
March 7, 2014

**CITY OF HARTFORD TO RESUME RELOCATION ASSISTANCE TO TENANTS IN CONDEMNED  
APARTMENTS**

The City of Hartford has signed a legal agreement to provide relocation assistance to tenants displaced by its code enforcement activity. The agreement is the result of a contempt action filed by Greater Hartford Legal Aid, Inc. (GHLA), which charged that the City was not fulfilling its responsibilities under state law and a previous class action settlement reached 30 years ago.

Under the agreement, tenants who are ordered by the City to leave their apartments due to unfit conditions will receive a notice from the City of their right to apply for relocation assistance under the Connecticut Uniform Relocation Assistance Act. The assistance may include help finding replacement housing, reasonable moving expenses, temporary housing, and some rental assistance to secure a comparable new apartment. The City has agreed to accept retroactive applications from tenants who have been displaced by City code enforcement activities since April 10, 2012. Tenants who have been ordered to leave their apartments as a result of City of Hartford code enforcement activities should contact the City of Hartford Department of Health and Human Services, at (860) 757-4700.

GHLA attorneys Tamar Esperance, David A. Pels, and Cecil J. Thomas represent the class of affected tenants. Tenants' attorney Cecil J. Thomas said, "We are pleased that tenants who are ordered by the City to leave their apartments will now get the help they need during a stressful and disruptive time in their lives."

Several hundred Hartford families are displaced by the City's code enforcement activities every year. Landlords are responsible for reimbursing the City for relocation expenditures paid to tenants ordered to leave the landlords' unfit building. Under the terms of the agreement, GHLA and the City of  
Greater Hartford Legal Aid, Inc.

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Hartford will continue to work together to develop policies and procedures that will ensure the provision of relocation assistance to displaced tenants in accordance with state law.

The parties will return to court on April 7, 2014 so that a judge can decide two remaining issues in the case: whether the City must pay tenants who were not offered relocation assistance the value of their lost and damaged property; and what reports are required to ensure compliance with the Relocation Assistance Act. The case is called *Serrano v. Gaitor*.

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