



**MARYLAND  
LEGAL AID**

*Advancing*  
**Human Rights and  
Justice for All**

**BALTIMORE CITY OFFICE**

July 13, 2021

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Economic and Community Development Committee  
Baltimore City Council  
City Hall, Room 408  
100 North Holiday Street  
Baltimore, MD 21202

RE: 21-0036R: Informational Hearing - Avoiding an Eviction Crisis

Madame Chair and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in the informational hearing, “Avoiding an Eviction Crisis.” Maryland Legal Aid (MLA) is a non-profit law firm that provides free legal services to the State’s low-income and vulnerable residents. With 12 office locations, including Baltimore City, MLA handles civil legal cases involving a wide range of issues, including family law, housing, public benefits, consumer law (e.g., bankruptcy and debt collection), and criminal record expungements.

This letter serves as notice that Douglas E. Nivens II, Esq. will be testifying on behalf of MLA at Councilmember’s Ramos’s request. MLA is concerned about the steady rise in residential evictions and the need for greater coordination between State and local social services, the Department of Housing & Community Development, the District Court, and the Sheriff’s Office.

We are facing a critical moment in the residential rental market. We have 2 eviction moratoriums set to expire within the next 4 weeks; increases in eviction filings in District Court; and a growing demand for new housing from a limited pool of safe, affordable options. Tenants who need to move are having a harder time finding a place to live. Even though we have rental assistance programs to keep people financially afloat, State and local social services are facing greater demands on their programs, resulting in delays in getting applications approved. As a result, we have tenants facing eviction for failing to pay rent while waiting for the City or State to issue a check to their landlord.

We need greater coordination among stakeholders so that tenants and landlords have ample time to receive rental assistance payments. We also need greater public messaging about the assistance available. Often, we see tenants in dire need of help but do not know where to go.

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