



MID-JUNE, 2021

“NEWS & UPDATE”

Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP)

We are enclosing a copy of the May 26, 2021 The Journal News Article “State Set to Release \$2.7 Billion in Assistance for Renters” which explains that that huge amount of federal dollars are going to be available to tenants in New York State who have fallen behind in their rent and utility payments due to Covid. This money will be distributed by the State office of OTDA (Office of Temporary & Disability Assistance). MVUT has been participating in statewide webinars on ERAP and we have already begun assisting tenants in making application for funds. Tenants can apply on their own by going to the ERAP website nysrenthelp.otda.ny.gov or by calling the toll-free number 1-844-691-7368. If tenants do not have the ability to do so on their own, they should call the MVUT office (914) 699-1114 to schedule an appointment. With the expected huge demand, we are encouraging people to attempt to process applications on their own as we expect (and are already experiencing) major stresses on our capacity to service clients.

Right to Counsel (RTC)

It doesn't look like the State RTC bill A07570/506678 will pass before the end of the state legislative session. (Actually over by the time you receive this.) We'll be pushing for it in a possible Special Fall Legislative Session, and if not, definitely in next spring's session. On the County level we are still encouraging the County Legislature and County Executive to fund the Cost/Benefit Study re: RTC. We should have an update in the next mailing.

Westchester Rent Guidelines Bureau (WRGB)

At the first WRGB Public Hearing on June 7 it was virtually all landlords who provided testimony. We must have tenants speak at the second and last WRGB Public Hearing on Monday, June 21. This will be done virtually and all tenants need to send an email to the WRGB (see on reverse side of Tenants' Rights Workshop flyer). It's fairly straightforward – only half of the tenants in Westchester benefitted from last year's (10/1/20 – 9/30/21) proper Guidelines of 0% for one (1) year lease renewal and 0% for two (2) year renewals. Let's give the other half the same benefits! Furthermore the pandemic has devastated so many low-to-moderate income residents (virtually all rent-regulated tenants fall into this category), and to subject them to unnecessary rental increases at this time would be both cruel and unusual punishment. **NO WAY!!** We demand another year at 0% for one (1) year lease renewal and 0% for two (2) year renewals.

Tenants' Rights Workshop (6/24/21)

MVUT is organizing a Tenants' Rights Workshop on Thursday June 24 with the City of Mt. Vernon's Department of Planning and Community Development (MV-PCD) and Legal Services of the Hudson Valley (LSHV) We're enclosing a flyer for the workshop and encouraging everyone to tune in and participate.

Rental Unaffordability

As if you didn't know it already, things keep getting harder for tenants. The pandemic has only made it worse. We're enclosing two (2) additional pieces:

- 1.) A February 7, 2021 article from the New York Times "As Jobs Dry Up, Tenants Pack In and Fall Behind" which focuses on various areas throughout the country and some of the many issues tenants face in trying to keep their apartments. We can assure our readers that at MVUT we've seen all of these issues locally!
- 2.) Non-Profit Westchester's "Affordable Housing and Westchester's Non-Profit Workforce." This rings true at MVUT. We're trying to help all of MVUT's and Westchester's tenants but we struggle to pay our own staff "Livable" Salaries. It's overwhelming.

PLEASE HELP US!

DONATE TODAY!!

SUPPORT MVUT!!

We rely on your support to keep up our work – especially now.

_____ \$25 _____ \$50 _____ \$75 _____ \$100 _____ \$200 _____ \$500

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