



MID-AUGUST, 2021

“NEWS & UPDATE”

Emergency Rental Assistance Program(ERAP)

In our last two (2) mailings we’ve described how MVUT is one of eleven (11) agencies within Westchester County processing ERAP applications. ERAP funds are federal dollars that are being administered by the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (NYS- OTDA). While tenants can call the MVUT office AT (914) 699-1114 X304 **for an appointment** to do applications, they can also do their own application by going to the ERAP website **nysrenthelp.otda.ny.gov**, or by calling (1) 844-691-7368. They can also call **211** for assistance. On Saturday, July 31, MVUT co-sponsored a three (3)-hour outreach event on ERAP at the Mt. Vernon Public Library with the United Way of Westchester and the Mt. Vernon Department of Planning. As a result of this event there has been an increased response in tenants’ reaching out to various agencies to seek help!

By the time you receive this, MVUT will have already submitted over one hundred (100+) applications and helped dozens of others upload various documents in processing their own applications, and referred well over a hundred others to the ERAP website. We enclosed a “fact sheet” in our last mailing describing the necessary documents to be included in applications and we’ll provide more to people if they need them - just call the office to request them. MVUT Board Member, Vivian Spady has temporarily given up her Board seat and will come on as staff to help process ERAP applications.

Right to Counsel

MVUT has been a key player in the Westchester County Right to Counsel Coalition (R2C). Westchester County has allocated funds to do a study on the cost of Westchester’s providing a **Right to Counsel** for income-eligible tenants in eviction proceedings in local courts. There’s an ugly imbalance of power in most landlord/tenant court cases with very, very few tenants being represented by an attorney, while virtually all of the landlords are. This often results in tenants being evicted when they very well might have been able to remain in their homes. We’re enclosing a packet from the R2C Coalition describing the value of a Right to Counsel Program and asking you to call, write, and/or email the County Executive, George

Latimer, asking him to carry out this feasibility study. We're having a "Week of Action" from Monday, August 16 to Friday August 20. Please take action during that week! We're also asking you to contact the County legislators as well. For Mt. Vernon tenants, your legislator is Tyrae Woodson-Samuels (914) 995-2837. If you live elsewhere, call the Board of Legislators office at (914) 995-2800 to find out your legislator. There are models of letters and calls as part of the packet. Please call and write!!! Ask your friends and neighbors to do likewise.

Building Organizing

MVUT is beginning to work with some building tenants associations:

- 47 Oak Street – processing a State building-wide Rent Reduction Complaint Re: No "Live-in" super
- 29 South Second Avenue – organizing the tenants who have not had gas for months
- 20 Water Grant Street, Yonkers – assisted the tenants in this new un-regulated building in forming a Tenant Association. They've elected officers and already met with their City Council Representative!

\$ for MVUT

Were enclosing a new fund-raising flyer we've just prepared. Look at all of the great things MVUT has been involved in and the successes we've helped produce for tenants! We'd ask that you, our members and friends, either copy and distribute this to the tenants in your building, or call MVUT and we'll provide you with bulk copies. Please help!

Support Tenants' Rights!

Support Affordable Housing!!

Support MVUT!!!