

## (SAMPLE LETTER TO YOUR LEGISLATORS)

**YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS**

**DATE:.....**

**LEGISLATOR NAME AND ADDRESS**

**DEAR (SENATOR OR ASSEMBLYMAN/WOMAN:**

Mt. Vernon United Tenants, Inc. (MVUT) is a not for profit community based agency based in Mount Vernon. For over 30 years MVUT has provided principled advocacy and services on affordable housing, eviction prevention, rehousing and low to moderate income tenant advocacy in Mount Vernon and throughout our neighboring Westchester communities.

In order to continue their much-needed work to revitalize our community and boost the local economy, the Neighborhood Preservation Program in the NYS HCR Budget is essential to Mt. Vernon United Tenants. The 2011 appropriation to this program was a continued cut from 2010 and had a detrimental effect on many Mount Vernon residents and businesses. MVUT was forced to eliminate one staff tenant caseworker position and reduce another caseworker to part-time status. This had a dramatic impact in impairing their ability to provide their essential homelessness prevention and other services to those low-income households in jeopardy of losing their homes or subject to deplorable housing conditions.

In fact, MVUT was able to leverage well over \$ 200,000 as a result of the NP Program as well as match the NP Program with an additional \$ 55,000. Despite the reduced funding in 2010 MVUT was still able to prevent more than 125 unnecessary evictions, saving local taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars in emergency shelter costs and helped organize more than thirteen buildings to improve living conditions by dramatically increasing the existing caseworkers' workload.

Many community residents walk into their office for housing services and are helped on a daily basis. Whether they are tenants, landlords or homeowners - we all deserve the best MVUT can provide. MVUT cannot provide the quality services to as many individuals as needed if they have to further reduce staff because of budget cuts or delayed state contracts. Their very organizational existence will be jeopardized if the NYS HCR Budget is not restored without further reductions.

One such example of MVUT's effectiveness is their client Tasha ..., a twenty-two (22) year old mother with a two (2) year old son, who was recently locked out of a federally-assisted project-based building. Through MVUT's intensive case management services, she and her son are back in their apartment and the local courts have recognized the tenant's rights!

It is imperative that the Neighborhood Preservation Program be fully funded to \$22 million and sufficient funding be allocated to the Housing & Capital budget. I am aware of the enormous fiscal crisis that the State is facing, but the NP Program is a cost-effective economic program with a well-established return on investment. Help MVUT preserve and maintain affordable housing and a thriving community.

Sincerely,

**YOUR SIGNATURE**