

Thousands of low-income New Yorkers live in apartments that are in a state of shocking disrepair: without functioning appliances, exposed to wind and water, insufficiently heated, or infested with mold and vermin. Often, disrepair is part of a pattern of harassment by landlords seeking to illegally push tenants out of rent regulated apartments. Landlords who refuse to fix these conditions, or who harass tenants, are in violation of the New York City Housing Maintenance Code. Yet virtually no tenants who attempt to enforce that code can afford an attorney. These cases provide experience arguing in court, negotiating with opposing counsel, drafting papers, and working with clients. Matters usually take no more than 25 hours.

Scope of work for pro bono volunteers includes:

- a. Interview clients, usually at their apartments.
- b. Draft, file, and serve petitions, client affidavits, and forms.
- c. Arrange for apartment inspections with NYC.
- d. Represent the client at in initial court date and subsequent dates as necessary.
- e. Negotiate with opposing counsel and counsel for the relevant NYC agency.
- f. Often pursue enforcement proceedings, including contempt and civil penalties.
- g. Hearings sometimes occur at the enforcement stage, or when bringing claims of landlord harassment. They are possible at other stages, but are unlikely.

Law firms, corporations, law firm lawyers, and in-house counsel who are interested in partnering with LSNYC are encouraged to reach out to learn more. Please contact Adam J. Heintz, Director of Pro Bono Services, at 646-442-3582 or aheintz@legalservicesnyc.org.

[Volunteer Application](#)