



**AIDS Law Project Quality Assurance Review  
Public/Private Housing and Utilities  
July-September, 2011**

**W**e are always concerned with the quality of our services, and proactively created a quality assurance team to internally monitor our performance. Given the attorney's duty of confidentiality to clients, and the sensitive nature of the attorney-client privilege, all quality reviews are done in-house.

To assess the quality of our work, every year we review the public and private housing cases we completed and closed in the 3rd quarter of the year (July 1-September 30). "Housing" cases include those involving: private landlord/tenant issues; public housing landlord/tenant issues; utilities; and financial real estate. **In 2011, we closed 48 files of people who contacted the AIDS Law Project requesting legal assistance with public or private housing issues. We successfully provided direct representation, legal advice and/or referrals to 90% (43) of them.**

Each individual who calls with a legal concern receives a thorough intake review with a trained paralegal or certified legal intern who handles calls immediately and provides triage for persons in crisis. Each case is then reviewed by the Intake Team, who determine an appropriate course of action. Sometimes staff will represent the client in court. Other times, staff will help informally by negotiating an agreement with another party, such as a landlord or a mortgage company. Clients who need assistance in a practice area outside our scope of expertise (e.g., medical malpractice, personal injury, criminal defense) are referred to a volunteer attorney. Callers who simply want information on their legal rights receive follow-up phone calls, meetings, or written information.

This survey was performed by paralegal Michael Gluk, who reviewed the public benefits cases we closed in the third quarter of 2011. Michael pulled the files for the cases and reviewed each one individually. Using the outcome section of our closing form as a guide along with the file notes, Michael determined the outcome of each of these cases, compiled the data, and completed the report.

**From July to September 2011, the AIDS Law Project of Pennsylvania closed 48 intakes requesting housing and/or utilities assistance.**

**In 23 cases, clients received representation or advocacy. In 22 of these cases, we reached a favorable outcome and the client either was allowed to remain in their housing**

arrangement or was granted a reasonable amount of time in which to move. In 1 of the 23 cases, we were unable to prevent eviction.

In 20 cases, we provided legal information to clients.

In 4 cases, the client was not reachable after the initial intake.

In 1 case, we could provide no service due to a conflict.

## **Public and Private Landlord Tenant Issues**

### **Evictions – 15 intakes**

The AIDS Law Project gave assistance, representation, advocacy, legal information, and/or a referral to 15 people facing eviction issues. Of these, one person became unreachable after their initial intake.

#### Representation and/or Advocacy

We represented or advocated for thirteen people, either by appearing with them in court or contacting landlords or other third parties on their behalf. In eleven of these cases, the clients were on their way to safe and affordable housing.

#### Legal Advice

Four clients received legal advice and/or information.

#### Judgment By Agreement (JBA)

Parties in a landlord/tenant dispute may enter into a Judgment By Agreement for a payment plan for rent due, more time to vacate a property, or to resolve other outstanding issues. The AIDS Law Project helped 7 clients enter into JBAs.

### **Repairs—2 intakes**

Two clients sought assistance because their landlords neglected to make necessary repairs to the clients' rental units. Both clients received representation or advocacy. In one case, the client's landlord made the requested repairs. In the second case, we helped the client terminate the existing lease and move into new housing.

### **Other Landlord/Tenant Disputes—5 Intakes**

5 clients sought assistance with other landlord/tenant matters. Of these 5, we advised 3 on how to regain property they believed was being wrongfully held by their landlords. We advised 1 client on whether his landlord could legally raise the rent. We could not provide a service to 1 caller due to a conflict of interest.

## **Utilities**

### **5 Intakes – at least 3 resulting in utilities restored**

The AIDS Law Project advocated and/or provided advice on the behalf of 5 clients facing utilities issues. Of these 5 clients, 3 wanted help with clearing up their utility arrears and two clients wanted help with their imminent utility shut-offs. We provided representation for 3 clients

and successfully restored or maintained utilities for each of them. We successfully advised 2 others.

## **Financial Real Estate**

### **8 Intakes – at least one resulting in safe and affordable housing**

These cases involved loan modification, probate issues, mortgage refinancing, and other issues involving real estate. We represented or advocated for three of the clients and successfully helped the clients create affordable plans of action to stay in their homes. We advised four clients regarding creditor issues and/or foreclosure proceedings. 1 client was unreachable after the initial intake.

## **Other Public and Private Housing Issues**

### **Other Public—7 Intakes**

Seven clients came to the AIDS Law Project for assistance with public housing issues not encompassed by any of the preceding categories. We successfully represented 3 clients who were seeking public support for a housing transfer. We successfully represented 1 client in a case to obtain public housing despite a criminal record. We advised 2 clients on procedures for obtaining Sector 8 benefits and we advised 1 client on how to retain her housing benefits during an inter-county move. 1 client became unreachable after the initial intake.

### **Other Private—6 Intakes**

Six clients came to the AIDS Law Project for assistance with private housing issues not encompassed by any of the preceding categories. We successfully represented one client in a case to obtain a property tax rebate. We advised 2 clients on how the value of property they had inherited would affect their benefits. We advised 1 client on how to obtain documents from a prior housing dispute. 2 clients became unreachable after the initial intake.

**Founded in 1988, the AIDS Law Project of Pennsylvania is the nation's only independent public interest law firm dedicated to AIDS and HIV. It has risen to the defense of more than 38, 000 people free of charge. It works at local, state and national levels to achieve fair laws and policies.**

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