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Development

February 4, 2020

The Honorable Assemblywoman Helene E. Weinstein
188 State Street
Legislative Office Bldg. Room 923
Albany, NY 12247

Re: The restoration of funding for the Displacement Alert Project

Dear Assemblywoman Weinstein,
This letter comes as a prelude to our upcoming conversations on ANHD's Displacement Alert Project (DAP), which uses data and visualizations to help combat displacement and preserve affordable housing in New York City. We look forward to showing you updates to the DAP Portal tool in person and presenting to members of the Housing Committee on February 10th in Albany. **At this time, we respectfully request your support in the restoration of $100,000 in grant funding for the Displacement Alert Project in the FY 2021 State Budget.**

Brief History of ANHD: Eight grassroot, local housing groups established ANHD in 1974 to support the development and preservation of affordable housing in New York City. Today, 45 years later, ANHD stands as one of the City's lead policy, advocacy, and technical assistance and capacity-building organizations. We maintain a membership of 80+ neighborhood-based and city-wide not-for-profit organizations that have affordable housing and/or equitable economic development as a central component of their mission, and who serve approximately 450,000 low- and middle-income New Yorkers annually. We are an essential citywide voice, bridging the power and impact of our member groups to build community power, and ensure the right to housing and thriving, equitable neighborhoods for all New Yorkers. We value justice, equity and opportunity, and we believe in the importance of movement building that centers marginalized communities in our work.

The Displacement Alert Project: ANHD established our Displacement Alert Project (www.displacementalert.org) in 2016 recognizing that ending tenant displacement is one of the most urgent current affordable housing issues, but that too often, residents, legislators, and community groups only recognize landlord-driven tenant displacement after many residents have been pushed out of their homes. Data on rent stabilized apartments, building sales, complaints, violations, and construction permits can often indicate or precede speculation, gentrification and displacement; however, this information is fragmented, can be challenging to navigate, and takes time to analyze.

The Displacement Alert Project is a unique set of data tools that equips State and City officials, their staff, local non-profits, and other stakeholders interested in ending displacement with essential and timely information about displacement risk in their communities and city-wide. **Local non-profits we know to most actively use the DAP tools include: Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition, CAAAV, Los Sures, Housing Conservation Coordinators, CASA, Goddard Riverside, Asian Americans for Equality, Met Council on Housing, and St. Nicks Alliance.** They use these tools to proactively identify

and outreach to buildings at risk of tenant displacement. We know that legislative offices have also found the tools helpful for responding to constituent requests and information on their building or units. The project encompasses three tools that compiles information from various fragmented public records and databases, and makes it accessible, intuitive, and useful by displaying it in one place with color-coded risk metrics and creative data visualization.

https://map.displacementalert.org/

The **Displacement Alert Map** is a citywide view of displacement pressures, color-coding individual buildings across the five boroughs to show the displacement risk level as based on key indicators. The map is zoom-able and searchable, and users can rely on it to see neighborhood-wide patterns as well as explore the details of any property by clicking on an individual building. Specific displacement pressures that users can search and view include (1) which buildings are rapidly losing rent-regulated units; (2) where recent sales may raise concerns about speculation; (3) which buildings show a high number of construction permits, which are often associated with displacement; and (4) where court-ordered evictions by a marshal have taken place. Each property also includes direct links to the most useful online information for that building. We update the map bi-annually.

- **This past year the DAP Map had 2,900+ visitors who visited 4,600+ times. In addition to standard data updates, we also worked to ensure individual properties on DAP Map link directly to our newest DAP tool, the DAP Portal, allowing them to browse detailed historical records.**

https://reports.displacementalert.org

The **Displacement Alert District Reports** provide monthly updated data accounts on harassment and displacement risk in New York City's stock of rent-stabilized buildings. They take public data on building sales, complaints, violations, and construction permits, and convert it into reports arranged by address, color-coded, and sorted by each community district to reveal which buildings have the highest risk of tenant harassment and displacement. The report format takes data from many different public sources and simplifies it for organizers, advocates, and community members so they can do research more quickly and prioritize outreach efforts. Users can easily access the reports on a mobile device or print them out in a clear format to take offline and into the field. Users are also connected with additional resources key for analyzing displacement risk, including connection to a property page on ACRIS, HPD, DOB, DOF tax bills, OASIS map, Google Maps, and Who Owns What.

- **This past year DAP District Reports had 2,800+ visitors, who visited 4,200+ times, and we anticipate the user base to remain consistent in the year ahead. While the new rent laws should make it much harder for landlords to profit off displacement, loopholes such as preferential rent vacancy increases and lack of registration enforcement remain, leaving space for tenant harassment and the need for this tool.**

https://portal.displacementalert.org/

In May 2019, ANHD launched our newest tool—the **Displacement Alert Portal**, with support from the New York State Assembly and Senate, and the New York City Council. This tool expands the set of data metrics that serve as key indicators for displacement in different neighborhoods (recognizing different metrics are key in different places). For

example, we pulled in data related to foreclosure filings and risks to provide an opportunity for early detection and intervention for distressed homes/homeowners. This data allows users to better match public resources and programs with property owners at risk of displacement. It expands the searchable geographic boarders to allow users the option to search by community board districts, council districts, assembly and senate districts. It allows users to see the percentage and number of various types of housing stock in their geographical area. The Portal also allows users the ability to view and analyze the information in multiple formats, including map or list form, and either as a snapshot of monthly information or by another specific period of time. The Portal is updated in real-time with currently available data.

- **Since launching in May, we have had 4,500+ visitors visit the site 9,600+ times. We have also seen a steady increase in return users,** with 480 return users who accesses the site 2,261 times during Q3, and 544 return users who visited the site 2,641 times during Q4. The average time spent on the site by return users is around 7 minutes, and 6 minutes for all users. Similarly, the number of overall users increased from 703 in May and June to 1,938 from July through September, and 2,066 since October.

We are excited to continue collecting feedback on the tool from State and City officials, their staff, local non-profits, and other stakeholders interested in ending displacement, and to launch the DAP Portal in full next year.

Our Request: **The Displacement Alert Project is making an impact in our ability to disrupt the standard cycle of displacement that contributes to New York's affordable housing crisis.** Local tenant leaders, community organizations, and legislators and their staff are seeing the benefit of accessing this information in one place, and with intuitive color-coded metrics to help inform where and how they should be deploying resources. **For example, Senate and Assembly staff are using DAP Portal to examine various patterns and ownership trends in affordable housing buildings in their district, especially when constituents call about challenges that they face in their homes.** We know that DAP is allowing local community groups to better outreach to buildings, and local legislators and their staff are using the tools to understand the picture of housing in their district.

With restored funding of $100,000 from New York State for FY 2021, ANHD will be able to harness this momentum, and continue expanding and enhancing the tool to ensure we address displacement and the affordable housing crisis. Specifically, we will:

- Work with Assembly and Senate members and their staff to continue exploring and expanding the data and functionality included in the DAP portal to ensure information is most relevant to the Senate and Assembly district needs.
- Provide trainings on the tools to users, including Assembly and Senate members and their staff, constituents and local community groups. For example, this past year ANHD has provided multiple trainings to City Council Staff, local tenant associations, and member organizations throughout the city to help ensure they are comfortable with using the tool, and to incorporate feedback so that the tool is as functional as possible for the users.
- Ensure ongoing usability of and data information in our other DAP tools.
- Continue to advocate for public data related to affordable housing displacement, which will strengthen the use and integrity of the tool.

We see your renewed investment in this project as a critical step post-rent regulation wins and with the larger affordable housing discussions coming to Albany in 2020 and beyond. This tool is critical for
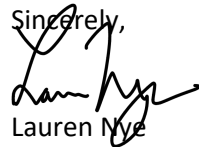
tenant empower and for responding to displacement pressures across the entire housing market, including small homes and market-rate housing more explicitly. It is important to build out the lenses needed to describe displacement across different systems, housing types and neighborhoods.

The restoration of $100,000 will be used to support the work of our Research and Policy Associate, Lucy Block. Lucy is responsible for overseeing and spearheading the Displacement Alert Project, including directing the data architecture and visual design and pushing forward the feedback loop that incorporates user input into the design and functionality of the tools. This grant will also support the time of a consultant who will support pieces of the data and visual design project elements. Additionally, it will support a small portion of our Executive Director's time to oversee and support this comprehensive project, as well as the associated web hosting and data fees for the project.

The Displacement Alert Project is a functional tool for the State and City elected officials, tenants, and local community groups to use in understanding how to use resources most efficiently when combating displacement. The continuous feedback loop we have created and continue to expand and enhance with users ensures the functionality of the tool for fighting displacement, which ultimately means the preservation of more affordable housing units.

Thank you for your continued support and for your kind consideration of this request for FY 2021. Should you have any questions or require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me either at: lauren.n@anhd.org or 212-747-1117.

Sincerely,

Lauren Nye
Director of Development

Quick Facts about the Displacement Alert Project

ANHD's Displacement Alert Project ("DAP") is helping State and City officials, their staff, local non-profits*, and other stakeholders interested in ending housing displacement with three unique data visualization tools. Users describe DAP as a "one-stop-shop", as the tools compile information on housing and displacement risks from various fragmented public records and databases, and make it accessible, intuitive, and useful.

https://map.displacementalert.org
Allows users to visually see displacement threats by panning over the city or zooming to a building or specific geography (Council District, Community Board, Zip Code), and to explore different risk layers (deregulation construction, sale, evictions) associated with that area.

- **2,900+ people visited the site 4,600+ times** last year.
- New and updated data semi-annually, most recently updated in October 2019.
- In addition to standard data updates, this year we also worked to ensure individual properties on DAP Map link directly to our newest tool, the DAP Portal, allowing users to browse detailed historical records.

https://reports.displacementalert.org
Monthly reports on community districts that provide users with up-to-date information on where rent-stabilized tenants are at greatest risk of displacement. Buildings are highlighted in yellow, orange, or red depending on their risk level.

- **2,800+ people visited the site 4,200+ times** last year.
- While the new rent laws should make it much harder for landlords to profit off displacement, loopholes such as preferential rent vacancy increases and lack of registration enforcement remain, leaving space for tenant harassment and the need for this tool.

https://portal.displacementalert.org/
An evolution of the reports, providing users with more flexibility to explore and pull advanced, customized data queries on displacement risk in their local community board, and city council, assembly and senate districts.

- **4,500+ people visited the site 9,600+ times** between May and December 2019.
- **We have also seen a steady increase in return users.** In Q3 we had 480 return users access the site 2,261 times, and in Q4 we had 544 return users visit 2,641 times.
- **On average, return users spent about 7 minutes on the site.**
- We are excited to continue collecting feedback on the tool from our member groups and to launch it in full next year.

* Local non-profits we know to most actively use the DAP tools include: Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition, CAAAV, Los Sures, Housing Conservation Coordinators, CASA, Goddard Riverside, Asian Americans for Equality, Met Council on Housing, and St. Nicks Alliance.