

Good Afternoon esteemed Legislators,

My name is Julia Long and I am Woman business owner. I am a Black and Brown business owner. I am a Mother and Grandmother 501c3 nonprofit business owner. I have an (MBA) Masters Degree in Business Administration, (MSL) Masters of Science in Law, a Juris Doctor am HUD certified Housing Counselor, Mediator through Mediation Matters, am a Kinship Caregiver, prior landlord and Albany County Homeowner.

I provide legal services to tenants facing eviction in EVERY Court in Albany County. I attend

Albany City Civil Housing Court  
Cohoes City Civil Housing Court  
Colonie City Civil Housing Court  
Guilderland City Civil Housing Court  
Watervliet City Civil Housing Court  
I even attend Troy City Housing Court on occasion.

I am reaching out today because I heard you all are considering funding the work that I have been doing for FREE for years, and I'm here to apply for it, explain to you all the court process as well as to provide this distinguished body with details as to how I will spend the State's funding should I be a recipient and why you should provide funding to my organization The Alternative to Economic and Housing Displacement Inc.

For many years, I have provided legal assistance to over 5,000 Albany County families annually, preventing their homelessness through zealous advocacy, negotiating with landlords. I've located resources and funding streams to get the tenant's rental arrears paid. For several years, Quarterly, I train current and those considering to become landlords through the Affordable Housing Partnership (AHP). My training consists of informing them of their rights and responsibilities as potential property owners with rental units, tenants rights and funding as well legal remedies to resolve tenant disputes. I also train landlords Quarterly (alternating dates with Affordable Housing Partnership) through TRIP (Troy Rehabilitation and Improvement Program) because when we speak of and advocate for tenant rights we must also include landlords rights as well.

Landlords are in most cases saddled with mortgages, are always responsible for school & property taxes, water, sewer, garbage and mandatory repair bills. That is why I have formed relationships with landlords to ensure their concerns are being addressed. In short, I am qualified to receive State funding because I have been doing the work successfully for many years have adapted to the changing court (now 2 judges, the end of moratoriums, and inundation of EVERY Court in Albany County) in a holistic manner.

Due to the sheer volume of landlord/tenant cases, (as reported by the City of Albany's 3rd Quarter 2022 Housing report which details my work), many Tenants fail to contact a legal service provider prior to their court hearing, and as a result intakes, assessments and representation/advocacy are done at court at the time of the tenants initial hearing. When I enter any Court I ask does anyone need legal assistance who is not already being helped by an organization. Judge Kelly and Judge Rice in Albany City Court will testify that whether a tenant is represented by another organization or not 9/10 people in court awaiting a hearing will follow me outside in the hallway.

Almost never does the tenant have the petition that brought them to court. Rarely does that single

mom, veteran, senior, disabled person, down on their luck citizen even know the correct spelling of their landlords name and NEVER do they have a pay stub or proof of income. When i ask them why they have been petitioned to court not one of my neighbors in over the 20,000 families I have provided legal assistance to has used the legal language of nonpayment, holdover or nuisance/lease violation, these legalese terms may as well be in a foreign language as a myriad of those facing eviction struggle with mental, emotional, social and/or educational challenges.

After speaking with my new client, I locate their landlord or landlords attorney either in court or in the hallway and negotiate an agreement that is then submitted in court to the judge for the record. When the tenant exits the court, I will not see them again. If no agreement is reached and the court clerk issues a return court date I may or may not see my neighbor for trial prep which includes mock trial, the copying of proofs, the review of video footage and the examination of documents.

More often than not the initial court appearance is the first and last meeting. Therefore it is not realistic to expect to gauge who receives legal assistance based on 50% ami, 80% ami, 125% ami or any other income based criteria because tenants do not carry proof of income with them to court.

As the City of Albany's 3rd quarter report states, I receive referrals from the Court as well as other organizations but no funding from either.

With this esteemed body's contribution of \$200,000. I will train three (3) part-time Court Advocates and a communications/administrative staff person who will be employees of The Alternative to Economic and Housing Displacement Inc.

These 4 individuals will provide legal assistance in Cohoes, Colonie, Guilderland and Watervliet City Housing Courts inclusive of Seniors, Veterans and Disabled tenants. They will earn \$25. per hour and work 20 hours per week. totaling \$500. per week.

As their employer paying Social Security, Medicare, NY Reemployment and NY State Unemployment Insurance their total wages paid out is approximately \$800. per week for each part-time Court Advocate multiplied by 52 equals \$41,600. per Advocate per year which adds up to \$166,400. for two miracle workers.

To Complete their work, these miracle workers require laptops, desktop computers, webcams, various office equipment totaling \$6800 rounding out the total of 3 Court Advocates and supportive staff will be trained to provide legal assistance to tenants in FOUR Housing Courts in Albany County for a period of 1 year to \$180,000, \$20,000 in administrative costs such as rent, payroll expenses, office supplies and the initiation of a landlord training course in Cohoes, Colonie, Guilderland and Watervliet rounds out \$200,000.

In an effort to inform tenants of the availability of legal services in EVERY Court in Albany County, a part-time employee earning \$25. Per hour for 20 hours per week and me as their employer paying Social Security, Medicare, NY Reemployment and NY State Unemployment Insurance their total wages paid out is approximately \$800 which totals \$41,600. This person would reach tenants in an aggressive social media campaign to capture demographics, and put the word out of the existence of legal services in an effort to have tenants connect to a service provider prior to their hearing.

The remaining \$36,800 would be to cover a portion of my salary to train and oversee the legal assistance previously mentioned.

If as a society we fail to provide legal services To tenants facing eviction in EVERY Housing Court in Albany County tax payers will foot the bill. It costs \$150. Per person per day to house just 1 person in a homeless shelter a family of four is an annual cost to tax payers of over \$200,000.

These figures do not include medical costs that balloon when residents lack a home. Homeless makes our citizens sicker when they cannot prepare hot meals and are consistent with their medication regimens leaving chronic conditions such as Diabetics, Heart Disease and Cancer untreated.

When our citizens are sick, homeless uninsured or underinsured taxpayers become an unintended burden on all of us because social welfare programs increase school taxes property taxes and other costs homeowners pay.

I am respectfully asking to receive state funding to continue the work that I do of preventing homelessness through providing legal assistance to tenants facing eviction, educating landlords of their rights and responsibilities and being a catalyst for funding.

It is my hope that the state stands on its pledge of Diversity and Inclusion especially the funding of Black and Brown Women business owners. I seek a collaboration with Albany County legislators as we serve the residents both tenants and landlords of Albany County together.

Thank you for affording me the opportunity to be heard.

Thank you.  
Sincerely,

Julia Long, JD, MBA, MSL  
Founder & Executive Director  
HUD Certified Housing Counselor  
Mediation Matters certified Mediator

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