

Statements from Many of the Organizations and Law Firms Participating in the Housing Right to Counsel Project

“At Bread for the City, we believe that housing is the basis of stability and security for an individual or a family,” **said George A. Jones, CEO of Bread for the City.** “Housing is at the heart of our social, psychological, emotional and oftentimes economic lives; a home should be a sanctuary – a place to live in peace, security and dignity. Unfortunately, too many of our DC community members experience chronic housing insecurity and the risk of eviction from their homes. As one of the founding partners of the Housing Right to Counsel Project, Bread for the City is excited about the relaunch and continuing to support pro bono attorneys through the project to preserve housing for DC residents who are threatened with eviction or loss of a critical housing subsidy.”

“Older adults are the fastest growing segment of the homeless population,” **said Rhonda Cunningham Holmes, Executive Director of Legal Counsel for the Elderly.** “They are on fixed incomes that do not keep up with the rising costs of housing. They are being displaced at an alarming rate and once they become unhoused, the increasing lack of affordable housing makes it extremely difficult to find a new home. It is crucial that elders have an ally to stand with them during an eviction case – very often that person is their attorney. They need to know they are not alone, and that they have legal representation. An attorney helps them navigate the Court, the law, assures that their rights are protected and that they remain safely housed.”

“The Right to Counsel project is crucial to our ability as a legal services provider to combat the erosion of affordable housing for low-income residents in the District of Columbia,” **said Karen Newton Cole, Executive Director of Neighborhood Legal Services Program.** “The need keeps growing and our ability to stem the tide rests with the legal community. By leveraging our resources and tapping into firms and pro bono attorneys in a strategic way, we can provide much needed relief to our low-income communities and keep DC residents with subsidies in their homes.”

“Eviction is a traumatic experience, particularly for subsidized tenants who often lack the resources to properly defend themselves,” **said Chijioke Akamigbo, Executive Director of Rising for Justice.** “At Rising for Justice, staff and law students see the profound impact that legal representation can have on such tenants. With an attorney by their side, they can assert their rights, improve their living conditions, and keep their homes. While added eviction safeguards are available to subsidized tenants, many find it difficult to navigate the system alone and most face eviction without representation. The Housing Right to Counsel Project aims to upend this all-too-common scenario by training students and

mentoring pro bono lawyers to advocate for tenants in court, working towards a future where no one faces eviction without effective counsel.”

“Every tenant, regardless of their ability to pay, deserves legal representation when a basic human need, like shelter, is at risk,” **said Kelli Neptune, Executive Director of the DC Bar Pro Bono Center.** “Through the Housing Right to Counsel Project, represented tenants can navigate the complex maze of the legal system, making housing security in the District of Columbia a reality. With the support of dedicated pro bono attorneys, the Housing Right to Counsel Project will not only prevent homelessness for many Washingtonians, but also preserve dignity and restore faith in the judicial system.”

“Cleary Gottlieb proudly continues its participation in the Housing Right to Counsel Project to ensure that every tenant has access to justice,” **said Jeremy J. Calsyn, Partner and Co-chair of the Cleary DC Pro Bono Committee.** “We stand shoulder to shoulder with our community partners to prevent homelessness for those in need in the District of Columbia.”

“Steptoe is proud to continue our longstanding partnership with Legal Aid DC as a member of its Housing Right to Counsel Project coalition,” **said Steptoe Chair Gwen Renigar.** “This project will continue to make a difference across our city by providing pro bono legal services for low-income residents with housing subsidies facing eviction so they can maintain safe, affordable housing.”