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## **Legal Aid Receives Record \$750,000 Donation from Amazon to Expand COVID-19 Response**

*Funding is part of Amazon's \$3 million donation to increase staff and resources at four legal service providers across the Washington, DC metro region to assist with the surge of families facing housing issues as moratoria end*

**Washington, DC—November 16, 2020** — Amazon has donated \$750,000 to immediately help the Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia support the surge of families and individuals facing urgent legal needs amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Funding will help Legal Aid hire new legal staff to provide legal assistance for scores more DC residents facing legal problems related to the pandemic, including eviction, foreclosure, debt, unemployment, and more.

“We are so appreciative of this significant new support from Amazon, especially at a time when our client community is facing a potentially massive flood of evictions due to COVID-19, which came on top of years of worsening inequality in the District,” said Eric Angel, Legal Aid’s Executive Director.

There is currently a [moratorium on evictions in the District through January 1, 2021](#), and a moratorium on new eviction lawsuits through March 1, 2021. There are similar moratoria in place for foreclosure and debt collection lawsuits. Even with these moratoria in place, Legal Aid has seen a nearly 50% increase in requests for legal assistance. Once the moratoria end, experts have estimated that [30,000 to 60,000 DC households](#) may be at risk of eviction due to the pandemic.

Typically, while [about 95% of landlords are represented by counsel](#) in eviction cases, only about 10% of tenants have legal representation. There are similar disparities across Legal Aid’s practice areas, including for legal issues related to unemployment, child support, foreclosure, debt collection, food stamps, and more.

“We’ve seen how, for our client community, one legal problem can lead to another,” said Heather Latino, Legal Aid’s Deputy Legal Director. “Amazon is thoughtfully allowing Legal Aid to deploy this new grant across our practice areas, so that, for example, an improper unemployment benefits denial does not lead to a family losing their home amid the pandemic.”

This donation to Legal Aid is part of Amazon’s \$3 million total donation to four different organizations across the DC metro area. In addition to Legal Aid, Bread for the City, Legal Services of Northern Virginia, and Virginia Poverty Law Center received substantial donations.

“Families are facing innumerable challenges related to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and Amazon continues to work with our HQ2 community to understand the pressing issues facing our neighbors,” said Alice Shobe, Director, Amazon in the Community. “Tenant rights are a particularly complicated

issue right now and this latest \$3 million donation to these four agencies will quickly provide support to individuals and families who immediately need help.”

Founded in 1932, Legal Aid’s mission is to make justice real, in individual and systemic ways, for people in poverty in DC. Since March, Legal Aid has been dedicated to doing all we can to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our client community. Legal Aid provides legal assistance for more than 10,000 individuals annually, and helps tens of thousands more through systemic litigation and policy advocacy.

Along with this donation, [Amazon announced](#) additional community donations throughout Northern Virginia and beyond today as part of its commitment to the region on the 2-year anniversary of selecting Arlington, VA as its HQ2.