



August 28, 2023

Eric Adams
Mayor of New York City
City Hall Park
New York, NY 10007

Molly Wasow Park
Commissioner
NYC Human Resources Administration Department of Social Services
150 Greenwich Street
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mayor Adams and Commissioner Park,

I'm writing to express serious concern with the recently released RFX issued by the Human Resources Administration in relation to legal services for tenants facing potential eviction. This solicitation fails to account for the realities that face providers and prospective respondents to the solicitation, and should be paused, re-evaluated, and re-released.

As currently written, these solicitations will put extreme stress on already burdened legal service providers, and put the Universal Access Law, also known as Right to Counsel, in grave risk. The financial terms contemplated by HRA in the RFX fail to ensure that there is sufficient funding to cover the costs of the program and fail to account for the case standard that the Office of Court Administration had committed to release. Under these terms, providers will struggle to sustain the level of services required to ethically represent tenants.

Therefore, I am requesting that you pause the RFX, convene a meeting with the stakeholders to better understand what must be accomplished during this solicitation and go back to the drawing board so that this RFX process will properly empower legal service organizations to support tenants facing eviction.

It is imperative that the City does everything in its power to support tenants' ability to stay in their homes. In July, New York City's median rent was \$3,800, and in Manhattan, the average rent was \$5,588. As tenants recover from the economic devastation of the pandemic, face rising inflation, and limited, expensive housing stock, it would be immoral to undercut the Right to Counsel program. Gutting Right to Counsel is the antithesis of solving New York's affordable housing crisis.

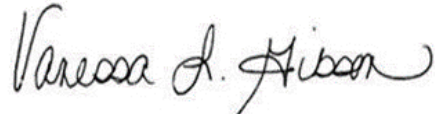
When it receives the support it deserves from the City, Right to Counsel is extremely effective. It keeps the vast majority of tenants facing eviction in their homes, off the streets, and out of our already-overflowing shelters. Having access to a housing attorney can be all that it takes to save tenants from homelessness.

I urge you to pause the RFX and meet with legal service organizations immediately so that the City can set up Right to Counsel for success.

Sincerely,



Mark Levine
Manhattan Borough President



Vanessa L. Gibson
Bronx Borough President

cc Adrienne Adams, NYC Council Speaker