



Legal Services of Greater Miami, Inc. Tenants' Rights Project

WHAT

The Tenants' Rights Project provides free legal assistance to tenants who are at risk of losing their housing, as well as to those at risk of losing their housing assistance from the federal government. The Project also seeks to ensure that participants in, as well as applicants to, subsidized housing programs are not denied their civil rights.

WHY

Miami-Dade County has an extremely high cost of living, and affordable housing is a scarce resource for low income renters. People who live in subsidized housing, especially those who are elderly or disabled, cannot afford to pay market rent for housing. It is therefore critical to preserve their subsidized housing assistance.

HOW

The Tenants' Rights Project:

- Defends individuals and families who are being wrongfully evicted from subsidized housing.
- Appeals denials and terminations of subsidized housing assistance.
- Files bankruptcy actions to prevent evictions or termination of utility services.
- Brings affirmative litigation to challenge Fair Housing violations and to enforce Constitutional Due Process guarantees in subsidized housing programs.
- Takes action against landlords for prohibited practices and deplorable conditions.

WHO

LSGMI provides free civil legal services to the neediest individuals within our community. Our clients are primarily women, children, seniors, and the working poor. In many cases, we are the safety net preventing these individuals from becoming homeless or dependent on welfare. On a daily basis, our team of attorneys, who are organized into legal specialty units and projects, provides high quality representation to clients with problems relating to housing, health care, education, disability benefits, family issues, and employment.

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Tenants' Rights Project Typical Cases

Santana lost her job and as a result almost lost her housing as well. While Santana was waiting for a local housing assistance program to pay her landlord the back rent that she owed, her landlord filed an eviction and a writ of possession was issued. Santana's LSGMI attorney got the writ cancelled so that she and her three small children did not become homeless. Santana is now working again, and her family is stable.

Wendy was being evicted for non-payment of rent, even though she had actually paid her rent. Wendy came to LSGMI for help after a final judgment had been entered against her in court and a writ of possession was posted on her door. LSGMI filed an emergency motion and got the eviction case dismissed after proving that Wendy's money orders were in fact delivered to the landlord's post office box. Without LSGMI's help, Wendy's belongings would have been thrown out on the street and she would have been homeless.

Jimmy's pediatrician diagnosed him with a parasitic infection attributed to roaches, rats and other pests which made his family's home practically uninhabitable. LSGMI helped Jimmy's family request that the landlord rid the home of pests and make other necessary repairs. Instead, the landlord released the family from their lease and paid them \$1,000 in damages which made it possible for the family to relocate to safe and clean housing.