



# PHILADELPHIA EVICTION PREVENTION PROJECT

## Impact Summary

### Help stop the 75% cut to the Philadelphia Eviction Prevention Program (PEPP) in the Mayor's budget!

This year, a consortium of six legal services providers and non-profits receives \$2.1 million for this critical eviction prevention work, but the Mayor's budget proposes only \$500,000 – gutting representation of and support for tenants facing eviction in the midst of a pandemic.

PEPP was created by City Council in 2017, recognizing that not only does poverty cause evictions, *but evictions also cause prolonged poverty.*

Additionally, the Mayor's Eviction Task Force found that **evictions are a serious racial justice issue as Philadelphia households headed by black women with children** are most likely to face forced moves, exacerbating racial disparity.

In order to prevent homelessness, displacement, and health harms, PEPP provides legal representation in eviction cases, an in-court help center, a tenant helpline, a [website](#) and community outreach.

### PEPP is highly effective

A recent [report by the Reinvestment Fund](#) found that tenants who have lawyers have better outcomes in many different ways, including **reaching more favorable agreements, owing less money and having more time in their homes**. PEPP's success has shown this to be true.

- Data over the past 2 ½ years shows **that 95% of the tenants helped by PEPP have successful outcomes** for their families. Tenants helped by PEPP are **more likely to win their cases, avoid default judgments, and enter into an agreement that avoids disruptive displacement** compared to all other tenants.
- PEPP tenants are twice as likely to **obtain agreements that stipulate that their landlord make repairs**, keeping families safe and improving housing conditions throughout the city.
- PEPP tenants are **10 times as likely to get judgments cleared from their record** when satisfied.
- PEPP attorneys help clients negotiate agreements with their landlords which will allow them to remain in their homes. With a lawyer's assistance, a client may be able to work out an affordable payment agreement or reduce the amount of rent owed, which increases the value of rental assistance when available.

### Stable Housing Saves Lives! PEPP is even more critical in the COVID-19 Crisis

Philadelphians can only “stay safe, stay home” if they have a home. Because of the city's investment in PEPP, **PEPP advocates were able to respond immediately to the COVID-19 crisis** by advocating for the courts to close and for a moratorium on eviction lockouts, ensuring that tenants were not made homeless during the shelter-in-place order.

During the COVID-19 crisis, PEPP is assisting hundreds of renters who are facing illegal lockout evictions, ensuring their homes are safe, and helping Philadelphians who have lost their income negotiate with their landlords so they will not face eviction when the courts reopen.

### PEPP will be crucial in the coming year as the city faces a tidal wave of evictions

There is already a backlog of 1,700 eviction court hearings that will need to be rescheduled when the court reopens in addition to the ongoing monthly average of 1,500 eviction hearings. There were hundreds of judgments entered in the 60 days before the court closed and lockouts will proceed once the court opens back up.

Rental assistance will be available to help some tenants, but most tenants who are facing overwhelming economic hardship will need PEPP's services to avoid eviction and disruptive displacement.

Now, more than ever, PEPP is essential to represent tenants, provide critical information, and advocate with the courts to stabilize Philadelphia's renters.

If renters cannot access legal representation, the city will experience mass evictions, the threat of mass reinfection as people cannot find shelter, a second wave of this virus, and the need to shut down our economy again here in Philadelphia.

**Continued PEPP funding will keep the city safer and save money and resources at a time when the economy is taking a hit.**

*PEPP is a collaboration of: Community Legal Services, Clarifi, Legal Clinic for the Disabled, SeniorLAW Center, TURN, and Philadelphia VIP.*