

HOUSING JUSTICE ALLIANCE

Presentation to Cleveland City Council

November 26, 2018



The

Legal Aid Society
of Cleveland

Since 1905

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HOUSING JUSTICE ALLIANCE

Overview

Investing in the community by providing tenants the right to legal counsel.

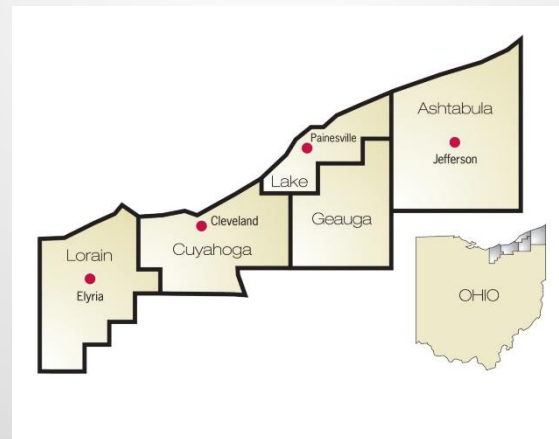
https://www.youtube.com/user/LegalAidCleveland/videos?sort=dd&view=0&shelf_id=0



THE LEGAL AID SOCIETY OF CLEVELAND

Mission

To secure justice and resolve fundamental problems for those who are low income and vulnerable by providing high quality legal services and working for systemic solutions



THE LEGAL AID SOCIETY OF CLEVELAND

- **Goals:**

- Improve Health & Safety
- Promote Education and Economic Stability
- Ensure Government and Justice Systems are Accountable & Accessible
- Create Safe & Stable Housing



EVICTIONS IN CLEVELAND

- An average **9,000 evictions** are filed every year.
 - In 2017, just **1% -2%** of tenants facing eviction were represented by an attorney.
 - Nationally, **90%** of landlords in housing court are represented by an attorney.
 - More than half of all tenants do not show up in court for their eviction hearing.
- When tenants are represented by attorneys, eviction is avoided over **90%** of the time.



CONSEQUENCES OF EVICTION

- **Evictions lead to:**
 - School instability
 - Health impact
 - Unemployment
 - Community destabilization
 - Homelessness
 - Barriers to future housing



NATIONAL RIGHT TO COUNSEL MOVEMENT

- **New York City**

- Passed historic “right to counsel” legislation – summer 2017.
- Guarantees tenants under 200% of poverty guidelines facing eviction the right to have legal representation.
- City is expected to have a net savings of \$320 million annually.
- https://www2.nycbar.org/pdf/report/uploads/SRR_Report_Financial_Cost_and_Benefits_of_Establishing_a_Right_to_Counsel_in_Eviction_Proceedings.pdf

- **San Francisco**

- Second city to pass “right to counsel” legislation – summer 2018.
- Guarantees all tenants facing eviction the right to have legal representation.



NATIONAL RIGHT TO COUNSEL MOVEMENT

- **Philadelphia**
 - June 2017 – Philadelphia City Council allocated \$500,000 to increase representation for low income tenants facing eviction.
 - The city would save \$45.2 million in public costs if it were to provide right to counsel for tenants facing eviction.
 - <http://www.philadelphiabar.org/page/NewsItem?appNum=4&newsItemID=1001829>
- **California**
- **Washington DC**



HOUSING JUSTICE ALLIANCE

- **Preliminary Phase:** (Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland– Innovation Mission Fellowship)
 - Research
 - Site visits to New York and Washington D.C.
 - Eviction sealing advocacy
 - Study with Case Western Reserve University – “Estimating the Downstream Costs of Evictions on Homelessness and Human Services”
 - Fundraising



ADVISORY COMMITTEE

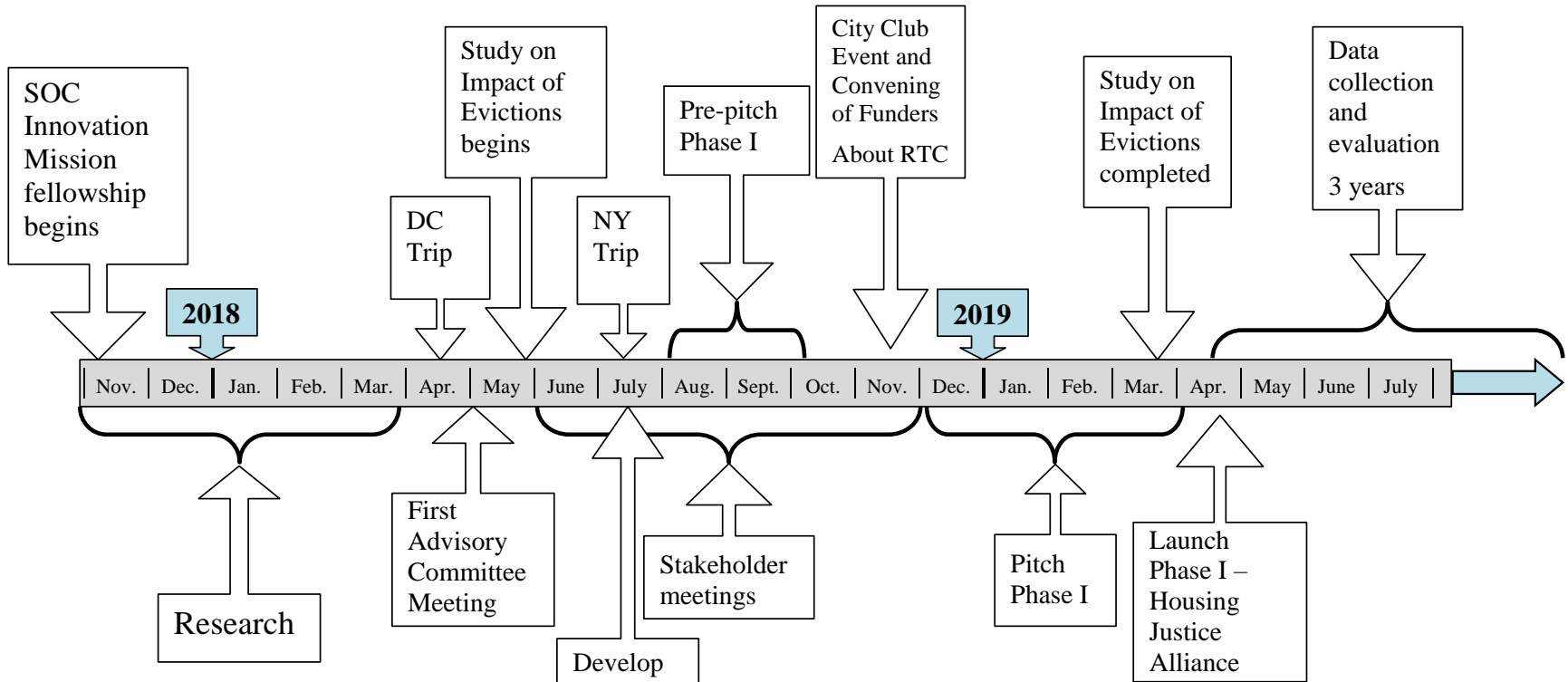


(l-r) **Ian Friedman, Esq.** – Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association | **Councilman Tony Brancatelli** | **Kenneth Surratt** – Cuyahoga County | **Abigail Staudt, Esq.** – Legal Aid | **Steven Rys** – Cleveland City Council | **Council President Kevin Kelley** | **Jennifer Heinert O’Leary, Esq.** – Cleveland City Council | **Hazel Remesch, Esq.** – Legal Aid | **Christian Patno Esq.** – Cleveland Academy of Trial Attorneys (not pictured: **Tom Mlakar, Esq.** – Legal Aid | **Delores Gray** – Community Member | **Gladys Reed** – Community Member)





Housing Justice Alliance Timeline



Key:

Phase I: First phase implementing a housing right to counsel

RTC: Right to Counsel

SOC: Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland

HOUSING JUSTICE ALLIANCE

- **Phase 1 (mid-2019 through 2023)**

Increase legal representation

- 10%
- Implemented by Legal Aid
- No merit screen
- Full representation

Eviction Diversion

- Rent assistance for non payment cases
- Partnership organizations

Community Outreach

- Notice with summons
- Help Desk

Evaluation

- Lab for Economic Opportunity (Notre Dame)

- **Phase 2 (beyond 2023)**



HOUSING JUSTICE ALLIANCE

Learn more at:

www.lasclev.org/HousingJusticeAlliance

Questions?

