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LEGAL SERVICES OF NEW JERSEY NEWSLETTER FOCUSES ON RIGHTS OF TENANTS FACING EVICTION, OBLIGATORY SETTLEMENT CONFERENCES

EDISON — The latest newsletter of Legal Services of New Jersey (LSNJ) centers on rights of tenants facing eviction and in settlement conferences with landlords.

The bilingual publication, “Looking Out For Your Legal Rights,” may be viewed online at www.lsnjlaw.org.

The key article in the newsletter notes that the hearing process already has begun, with hearings primarily being held remotely over the internet, though accommodations can be made for those without remote access. Many new aspects of the process are detailed, with examples cited. Settlements are voluntary. If no agreement is reached, the case will go to trial before a judge. Tenants are advised they should consider the trial route if they have ample reason to believe the landlord lacks “good cause” to evict.

Meanwhile, it also is recommended that tenants check with an attorney before and even at the settlement hearing for what’s most likely to be needed legal advice. Such free legal assistance for financially-eligible tenants is available from LSNJ by contacting the LSNJLAWSM Hotline at 1-888-LSNJ-LAW (1-888-576-5529) or online at <https://lsnjlawhotline.org>. Help also is available at Legal Services regional offices throughout the state.

There is a related article in the publication that provides details about the state's new eviction law, including continuing a moratorium until Dec. 31 for most low to moderate income residents with incomes below 80 percent of the medium income in their county.

Additionally, there are articles on several other topical issues, including how to apply for rental assistance; the availability of emergency housing vouchers for the homeless and victims of crimes; and the continuation until Dec. 31 of Covid-related protections against utility shutoffs.

Another article specifies how a new LSNJ-supported state law stipulates that grandparents, uncles, aunts and other "kin" or a family friend be given first preference by the state in deciding who should care for a child of parents who have lost their parent rights.

Legal Services of New Jersey (LSNJ), located in Edison, heads the state's Legal Services system, a network of six independent nonprofit corporations and has been providing free essential legal aid in civil matters to low-income people through offices in all 21 counties for more than 50 years. Since its inception, LSNJ has provided representation in more than 2.6 million cases.

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