

COMMUNITY JUSTICE PROJECT

CJP HIGHLIGHTS

February 2019

The Community Justice Project has offices in Harrisburg, Hazleton, Pittsburgh, Reading, and Scranton. Below are some recent highlights from across our program:

Pittsburgh Office Settles Subsidized Housing Class Action

The Court of Common Pleas of Allegheny County has granted preliminary approval of a class action settlement in a lawsuit brought by CJP on behalf of Low Income Public Housing (LIPH) residents of Oak Hill Apartments in Pittsburgh. On behalf of affected residents, the plaintiffs alleged that the private owners and management company of Oak Hill Apartments breached their leases with residents and violated the Pennsylvania Unfair Trade Practices and Consumer Protection Law (“UTPCPL”) by improperly increasing the “flat rents” applicable to LIPH dwellings at the property. If the Court grants final approval of the proposed settlement, then each class member will receive a refund of rent.

Reading Office Represents Charging Party in EEOC Sexual Harassment Class Action

CJP’s Reading office filed a charge with the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (“EEOC”) on behalf of a female farmworker, alleging a pattern of severe, outrageous sexual harassment against female farmworkers at a Berks County mushroom farm. As a result of the charge, the EEOC filed a class action against the mushroom farm on behalf of our client and seven other female farmworkers. We intervened on behalf of our client and continue to represent her. A recent news article about the lawsuit is available at <https://www.readingeagle.com/news/article/sexual-harassment-lawsuit-filed-against-fleetwood-company>.

Scranton Office Sues Lackawanna and Schuylkill Counties for Non-Uniform Taxation

CJP filed lawsuits against Lackawanna and Schuylkill Counties, alleging that these counties’ reliance on the base year property taxation scheme has resulted in non-uniform taxation that disproportionately burdens owners of low value homes, who are likely to be low income homeowners. In the lawsuit against Lackawanna County, the court recently heard Lackawanna County’s preliminary objections. A recent news article about the Lackawanna County lawsuit is available at <https://www.thetimes-tribune.com/news/judges-hear-lackawanna-county-s-objections-to-lawsuit-seeking-tax-reassessment-1.2437368>.

Community Justice Project on Facebook

CJP is updating its social media presence in English and Spanish. See the Community Justice Project’s redo of our official main page on Facebook at facebook.com/cjplaw. That site will be used to inform the public in a timely manner about services at our offices around the state, events, and news articles. For Spanish-speaking communities, Pittsburgh office paralegal Rafael Bullones will coordinate with staff to post statewide outreach events and legal aid information.

SUPPORT OUR WORK

Over the past several years, CJP's regular sources of support, including IOLTA funds, have been at historically low levels. You and/or your firm's contribution will go a long way in providing effective legal assistance to protect the basic needs and rights of Pennsylvania's poor families and low-wage workers and to assist them in their efforts to become self-sufficient.

Please consider making a gift to:

Community Justice Project, 118 Locust Street, Harrisburg, PA 17101

Also consider naming the Community Justice Project for *cy pres* awards/class action residuals.

If you have questions or would like to learn more about CJP, contact Marielle Macher at mmacher@cjplaw.org or 717-236-9486, ext. 214.