

CJP COMMUNITY JUSTICE PROJECT

CJP HIGHLIGHTS

April 2019



CJP's Pittsburgh Office Expands in Immigrant Community

CJP paralegal Rafael Bullones (pictured far left) opened a mobile office in the Beechview neighborhood as part of the Hispanic business incubator in collaboration with the Pittsburgh Hispanic Development Corporation. CJP will provide general information about our services to the public in Spanish and English every Wednesday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Hispanic Development Corporation office.

CJP Awarded Final Approval in Class Action Housing Settlement

On April 15, 2019, the Court of Common Pleas of Allegheny County granted final approval of a class action settlement in the case of *Lewis v. Corcoran Jennison Management et al.* In the case, the plaintiffs alleged that nearly ninety households at Oak Hill Apartments in Pittsburgh were over-charged for rent due to an allegedly unlawful increase to the public housing “flat rents” at the property. Under the settlement, each class member will receive a refund of rent, based on a percentage of the amount of the increased rent that she/he paid from 2013 through 2016.

CJP Argues for Class Certification in Mobile Home Class Action

In 2018, CJP filed a class action lawsuit on behalf of residents of a mobile home park in Fayette County, alleging violations of the Manufactured Home Community Rights Act (“MHCRA”) and other state laws. The lawsuit primarily alleges that the previous and current owners improperly charged rent and fees, and failed to provide necessary documents and disclosures under the MHCRA. Attorneys in the Pittsburgh office presented evidence on class certification at a hearing in December 2018, and briefing ended in April 2019.

CJP Pursues Class Action Lawsuit for Residents of Mobile Home Park in Somerset County

CJP filed a class action on behalf of over 100 residents of the Roof Garden Mobile Home Park against the owner of the park in response to repeated water outages in the last two weeks of March 2019. The plaintiffs seek damages in the form of rent refunds and injunctive relief. The requested injunctive relief includes, but is not necessarily limited to, requiring the park owner to retain a qualified professional to inspect the old and deteriorated water system in the park, to identify what repairs are needed, and to make any necessary repairs.

CJP Files *Amicus* Petition and Brief on behalf of National Housing Organizations in Support of the City of Pittsburgh’s Source-of-Income Ordinance

In 2015, the City of Pittsburgh enacted an Ordinance banning source-of-income discrimination in rental housing, prohibiting housing providers from denying housing to applicants based on the source of the income that would be used to pay the rent. The City had determined this source-of-income discrimination to be prevalent and to be a proxy for discrimination on the basis of race, national origin, and familial status. The Apartment Association of Pittsburgh sued to strike the Ordinance, and the trial court and Commonwealth Court invalidated the Ordinance. CJP, on behalf the Fair Housing Partnership of Greater Pittsburgh, the Poverty Race and Research Action Council, and the National Housing Law Project, filed an *amicus* brief with the Pennsylvania Supreme Court to support the City’s effort to overturn the Commonwealth Court’s opinion. The parties are awaiting the Supreme Court’s decision on whether to accept the case for review.

SUPPORT OUR WORK

A gift to CJP goes a long way in providing effective legal assistance to protect the basic needs of and rights of Pennsylvania’s poor families and low-wage workers.

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.