

## Removing Financial Obstacles to Housing

Financial stability is essential for housing stability. Over the last few years, attorneys with expertise in tax law have become an integral part of our pro bono program and allow Inner City Law Center to provide our clients more holistic services. These volunteers use their expertise to help evaluate the tax liabilities of chronically homeless Angelenos and negotiate with the IRS to decrease or waive the debts altogether.

Among others, *Svetlana Brontveyn from Alana Tax Group; Kami LaBerge, Stephen Turanchik, Amy Lawrence, and Felicia L. Holley from Paul Hastings LLP; Steve Boulanger from the Walt Disney Company; Michael Desmond and George Liang from Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP; and James Molen from Greenberg Glusker Fields Claman & Machtinger LLP* helped Inner City Law Center clients obtain or retain stable housing and healthcare without the burden of a heavy tax debt hanging over their heads.

## Fighting for Safe and Affordable Housing

In 2019, Inner City Law Center retained six long-term tenants who resided in a multi-story, rent-stabilized building in South Central Los Angeles that was plagued by a multitude of issues, including roach, bedbug, and rodent infestations, clogged plumbing, leaking showers and sinks, defective smoke detectors, broken windows and floors, and repeated harassment from newer tenants. The Housing Department had already issued several violations for the building.

Without hesitation, *Jon Dean from McDermott Will & Emory LLP* stepped up to litigate the case with our office. His team, including *Irene Le, Brett Meyerhoff, Cecilia Choy, Regina Hunter, and Leia Espericueta*, dove in, established trust with the clients, and began fighting to get better living conditions for the tenants.

After two years of tirelessly drafting pleadings, filing and opposing motions, and engaging with experts, the McDermott and Inner City Law Center teams achieved an amazing settlement that included both a monetary recovery for the clients as well as requiring the landlord to repair the units. Thanks to the dedication shown by McDermott, the clients now have a safe and healthy place to call home.



## Successfully Litigating Cases of New Impression to Protect Families

Last year, Inner City Law Center began representing a client who had fallen behind financially due to COVID-19. The landlord refused to accept rent from a rental assistance program and instead repeatedly harassed our client and her children. He filed an eviction case against her and also obtained a small claims court judgment against her.

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*"Our team won an appeal of first impression preventing landlords from suing tenants in the small claims courts during the COVID eviction moratorium. We were elated to win that fight for our client, and for others affected by this decision."*

**- Henry Leung, Donna Garlow, Uri Niv, and Nathaniel Wood**  
*Crowell & Moring LLP*

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Recognizing that this client and her children were at extreme risk of falling into homelessness, *Henry Leung, Donna Garlow, Uri Niv, and Nathaniel Wood from Crowell & Moring LLP* came on board. They swiftly drafted a compelling legal brief highlighting critical errors in the commissioner's interpretation of the law in order to overturn the small claims court ruling. The appellate court agreed and issued a writ ordering the small claims court to cancel its judgment against our client and established important precedent for others facing a similar risk of losing their homes. Thanks to Crowell's tireless enthusiasm to pursue justice in this case, our client and her children remain housed and can breathe a sigh of relief.