

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

ABOUT JIGGETTS

A GUIDE

FOR RESIDENTS OF THE BRONX



THE LEGAL AID SOCIETY

New York, New York

WHAT IS JIGGETTS?

The Jiggetts case is a lawsuit that was brought by The Legal Aid Society against the New York State Department of Social Services ("DSS") on behalf of a family threatened with eviction for non-payment of rent. The lawsuit was brought because DSS has set the shelter allowance so low that families who receive public assistance cannot pay for housing in New York City.

There was a lengthy trial, and The Legal Aid Society is now waiting for the judge in The New York County Supreme Court to make her decision. The Court has ordered preliminary relief in the form of rent arrears payments and payments of the tenant's entire ongoing rent to ensure that families challenging the level of the shelter allowance are not evicted because of its inadequacy before the Court has a chance to make a decision in the case. These payments are known as "Jiggetts relief."

Jiggetts relief is temporary. It is in effect only while the case is being litigated and it is not a substitute for other types of assistance that may be available to you. Also, because Jiggetts relief increases a tenant's total income, receiving this relief reduces a tenant's food stamps.

WHO CAN APPLY FOR JIGGETTS?

You may be eligible for Jiggetts relief if you have received a dispossession notice for non-payment of rent and you have a case in Civil Court (Housing Court). You must also meet **all five** of the following criteria for Jiggetts eligibility:

1. You receive ADC benefits from your local Income Support Center (Welfare Center).
2. Your rent is higher than the shelter allowance on your budget. (For example, your family of three receives a shelter allowance of \$286.00 per month, but your rent is \$350.00 per month).
3. Your rent is relatively inexpensive. (The person screening your application will tell you what this means for your family size, but if your rent is slightly more than double the amount of your shelter allowance, or less, you should be eligible).
4. You owe a specific amount of rent which, at least in part, consists of "excess rent" (the difference between your actual rent and your shelter allowance).
5. You have no chance of obtaining money to pay your rent arrears from your Welfare Center or any other source.

**IF YOU ARE IN DOUBT,
SEEK MORE INFORMATION.**

HOW CAN JIGGETTS RELIEF HELP ME?

If your screening interview shows that you may qualify for Jiggetts relief, you may have to wait for a month or more for your application to be officially approved. If it is necessary to ask the Housing Court Judge for more time, you can ask for an Order to Show Cause from the Court to temporarily stop the eviction proceedings.

After your application is approved, your Welfare Center will be notified and you will receive financial assistance to pay your rent arrears from that Center. You will also receive assistance to pay your current and future excess rent. Excess rent payments will be made either by two-party checks which you must endorse and give to your landlord or by checks sent directly to your landlord by your Welfare Center.

WHERE CAN I APPLY?

Under the Supreme Court's order, legal offices, such as The Legal Aid Society and Legal Services of New York City may prepare and submit applications for Jiggetts relief. First, contact the Legal Aid or Legal Services office that helps people in your area. In addition, staff in certain non-legal organizations have been trained at the Legal Aid Society and are also authorized to submit applications. These organizations are listed on the following page.

The Citizens Advice Bureau completes Jiggetts applications at the following locations:

- Main Office
2050 Grand Concourse
Bx, NY 10457
Contact: Myrna Perez
(718) 731-0720
- New Settlement Apartment Office
1512 Townsend Avenue
Bx, NY 10453
Contact: Karyn Davis
(718) 716-8383
- Highbridge Office
1455 Jesup Avenue
Bx, NY 10452
Contact: Elisabeth Rodriquez
(718) 590-0764
- Willis/Bergen IS Centers
Contact: Nicholas Cruz
(718) 579-9862
- Concourse IS Center
Contact: Haim Deutch
(718) 716-2948
- Melrose IS Center
Contact: Ivan Velez
(718) 960-6751

Services are available at all sites in English and Spanish. In addition, services are provided in French and Haitian Creole at the Willis/Bergen site. Applicants should go to the nearest office for an appointment. Anyone with a 72 hour notice of eviction will generally be seen immediately.

This brochure was developed by
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