

## Wayne County Landlords Eligible for Legal Assistance

**Lyons, NY – October 28, 2021** – Over the last two years, especially during the height of the pandemic, the rental housing industry has been a topic of great concern, not only for tenants and landlords, but for local government as well. Wayne County Economic Development and Planning is taking the lead in the county to highlight the need for creation and preservation of affordable housing options, especially when offered by small to mid-size local landlords. This type of locally-owned housing is referred to as “naturally occurring.” Housing is considered affordable if the tenants are paying 30% or less of gross income toward rent and utilities.

As part of a grant awarded to the County, a short term legal assistance program offers free, limited legal assistance to small and mid-size landlords who currently offer rental housing in Wayne County or who are planning to develop rental units in the near future. This assistance allows for property owners to engage with legal counsel in one-on-one consultation about issues that are specific to their business. Any real estate topic can be discussed, from fair housing, lease review or landlord-tenant relations to company formation or 1031 exchanges. Legal counsel will provide guidance and recommendations aimed at preserving existing housing and educating landlords on best practices.

To qualify for legal assistance, a landlord must offer rental housing in Wayne County and own less than 30 units. Legal counseling sessions can last up to one hour but does not constitute legal representation. This program is only available until the end of November. **For more information or to request one-on-one legal counsel for rental property owners, contact the program advisor Angie at 503-929-9591 or email [angie@mmdevelopmentadvisors.com](mailto:angie@mmdevelopmentadvisors.com).**

The County recently offered free online educational workshops for local landlords in September and followed up with a Rental Housing Panel discussion in October with local and regional landlords, property developers and managers, as well as non-profit housing providers, housing assistance program administrators, rental industry professionals, and local officials. “We were pleased to have over 40 people in attendance at the panel event,” stated Brian Pincelli, County Director of Economic Development and Planning. “Affordable housing is a topic of concern in our communities. Our goal is to educate and assist local landlords currently offering

naturally occurring affordable units so that we can identify issues and work to bring resources to the table to assure Wayne County residents and families have access to quality housing options.”

These programs were made possible through the New York State Preservation Opportunity Program (NYS-POP), authorized by Attorney General Letitia James and managed through Enterprise Community Partners. Overall, this is a \$12 million program created to support local housing agencies and authorities outside of New York City to develop strategic approaches to preserving existing affordable housing portfolios. Through NYS-POP, Wayne County recently completed an Affordable Housing Needs Assessment which identified a need for more affordable rental units. According to the U.S. Census, Wayne County has approximately 1,500 affordable rental units, which is based on a median gross rent of \$742 per month and median annual gross income for renters of \$27,094.

For more information on housing in Wayne County, contact the Wayne County Economic Development and Planning Dept. at 315-946-5919 or visit [web.co.wayne.ny.us/428/Housing](http://web.co.wayne.ny.us/428/Housing).