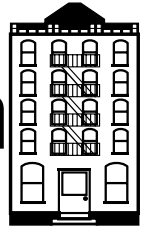


THE LATEST FROM

Housing Conservation Coordinators



Winter 2011

Free Tax Services

HCC's clinic is scheduled to remain open every Wednesday from February 9th through April 13th (excepting March 16th). Clients will be seen by appointment only.

It is time to report to Uncle Sam once more and HCC is here to help you. Thanks to Community Tax Aid, members of our neighborhood can benefit from free tax preparation.

To qualify, an individual's income may not exceed \$25,000 annually. The household income of married individuals and those with one or more people whom they support must be equal to, or less than, \$50,000.

Over the last several years, Housing Conservation Coordinators and Community Tax Aid served hundreds of people on the West Side. We now affirm our commitment to providing these free services for the 2011 tax season.

In this economic downturn, we recognize that many of our families have been strongly affected and we are eager to help however we can.

Due to the high volume of clients, our office will not begin scheduling

appointments until the first week of February.

For families to utilize the services, each family member must schedule an individual appointment.

All registered clients must bring with them copies of their previous year's tax returns and a current W2 form if they have worked, as well as any 1099 forms they have received. Those who have not previously used our service should also bring identification, including a social security card.

Because of the number of individuals interested in benefitting from the program, any client that does not attend his/her scheduled appointment will no longer be eligible to participate.



The tax clinic (which is not a legal assistance service) will remain open from 6:00pm to 8:00pm at 777 Tenth Avenue, New York, 10019.

Please visit www.hcc-nyc.org for further information. ■

Keep warm in cold weather



By law, your landlord is required to keep the temperature inside their building at least 55 degrees between 10:00 pm and 6:00 am when temperatures outside fall below 40.

If there's a problem with the heat inside your building, try notifying your landlord first. If that doesn't work, you can file a complaint with the City by calling 311. For more info, visit www.nyc.gov/hpd. ■



New Energy Savers calendar

To learn more on how to save energy at home, request a copy of your 2011 Energy

Savers calendar, sponsored by HCC's Weatherization Assistance Program. Call us at 212-541-5996, ext 30. ■

Effective Ways to Save Energy and Money

HCC's Weatherization Assistance Program Educates our Community on Energy Efficiency

While a traditional light bulb is a cheap way to light a room, in the long run it can be quite costly. Unfortunately, many consumers fail to realize that an incandescent bulb will result in higher electric bills. Even those aware of the problems associated with inexpensive bulbs hesitate to take the extra time and effort to change their ways and save money.

That is where HCC's Weatherization Assistance Program steps in. Here at HCC we take great care in helping tenants understand how they can transform their homes into energy efficient environments. The presentations we continue to make to tenants and building owners affirms our 2011 goal of teaching our local community members the various ways in which they can save money.

As explained by the U.S. Department of Energy, replacing



Ivette Nuñez, who on December 13, 2010 celebrated 10 years of working at HCC, shows us how to save energy.

just ten 60-watt incandescent bulbs with 13-watt Energy Star compact fluorescent bulbs (CFLs), an apartment will save an average of \$420 dollars annually. Aside from the financial savings, switching to CFL bulbs is an easy way to help prevent greenhouse gas emissions in our community.

Recycling Your CFLs

Local tenants are encouraged to take advantage of HCC's recycling program for their CFLs. Individuals may drop off used CFL bulbs at our agency located at 777 Tenth Avenue. Last year over two hundred bulbs were disposed of as local tenants played a role in aiding our planet.

If your tenant or homeowner's association would like HCC to stage a presentation on how to save energy, please contact us at 212-541-5996 ext 30. ■

Supplemental Rent Increases Suspended for Some Tenants

For leases going into effect between October 2008 and September 2010, the Rent Guidelines Board imposed supplemental rent increases for tenants with rents below \$1,000 who have lived in their apartments for at least six years.

For leases going into effect between September 2008 and October 2009, the increases for these tenants were set at \$45 for one-year leases and \$85 for two-year leases. For leases going into effect between October 2009 and September 2010 these tenants faced increases of \$30 (one-year lease) or \$60 (two-year leases.)

In January the Supreme Court found that the minimum increases imposed on long terms tenants with low rents were invalid. This decision was upheld by the intermediate appellate courts and is currently pending before the Court of Appeals, which is expected to issue a decision in early 2011.

In light of the courts' invalidation of the supplemental rent increases, the Rent Guidelines Board has suspended these increases.

If you have been paying, or are being charged, these increases pursuant to leases issued between October 2008 and September 2010, you may have grounds to request a corrected lease from your landlord as well as a refund for overpayments. If you have questions about your lease, please visit HCC for further information during intake hours on Mondays from 4:00pm to 6:30pm and Thursdays from 10:00 AM to 12:30 PM. To be eligible for our services you must live between 34th and 72nd Street, from Eighth to Twelve Avenues and meet our income guidelines (See page 4). If you're not eligible for intake, HCC offers a free legal clinic every Monday night (except on holidays) from at 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm. Visitors must call the front desk to reserve a spot. ■

Know
Your
Rights!

HCC Assists our Community in Consolidating Credit

While the average credit card debt in the U.S. household remains 15,700 dollars and the 60-day delinquency rate continues to increase and hurt local families, Housing Conservation Coordinators has committed itself to assist. Our goal is not only to educate our community in their consumer rights, but also to aid in the consolidation of their debt.

Every debtor's case will receive an all-inclusive a thorough evaluation, as well as assistance in obtaining a free credit report. Depending on the individual case, HCC Consumer Debt Specialist Monica Morante will negotiate with the collection agencies on behalf of the qualifying client. Ms. Morante is also available to help debtors develop the skills necessary to develop better financial planning. "We are not only focused on the short term in solving their problems... [We] also put more emphasis on helping our clients understand how to create a realistic monthly spending plan so they can build a strong and secure future", says Morante.

Last year, our Consumer

No More Debt!

Below are tips to manage your personal spending under control. These tips will no doubt strengthen your 2011 New Year's Resolution!

- Create a monthly budget.
- Write down your daily spending and identify unnecessary spending at the end of the month to avoid further overspending.
- Don't spend money you don't currently have.
- Try to pay your credit card bill in full, or as much as possible, to avoid monthly interest (APR).
- Take advantage of coupons, and sales at retail stores.
- Limit the amount of credit.



■ Monica Morante, Consumer Debt Counselor.

Debt Department helped eligible clients obtain legal representation. Other individuals were referred to appropriate service agencies to gain their required assistance. Thanks to Consumer Debt Funding, HCC is able to help our community handle their financial needs. We are available for

those living between 34th and 72nd Streets, from Eighth to Twelfth Avenues. To qualify, individual income may not exceed \$38,000 annually. A household income of a family of two must be equal to, or less than, \$41,500; the upper income limit for a family of four is \$47,500. Call us at 212-541-5996. ■

Succession Rights for Remaining Family Members in Rent-Regulated Apartments

For family or family-equivalent members to "inherit" the right to live in their apartment after the tenant of record has vacated, they must demonstrate that they lived with the tenant for at least two years (or one year if the remaining occupant is a senior citizen or disabled).

If you are a husband, wife, child, stepchild, parent, stepparent, sister, brother, step sister, step brother, grandparent, grandchild, father in law, mother in law, son in law, or daughter in law and can demonstrate that you lived with the tenant of record for the required time period, you can succeed to the tenancy and get a lease in your name (or become the registered tenant if the apartment is rent-controlled).

If you are a "non-traditional" family member, you must demonstrate that you were emotionally and financially interdependent with the vacating tenant.

If the tenant or leaseholder of your apartment has re-

cently died or vacated the apartment and you believe that you have succession rights, you should seek advice on whether to notify the landlord that the tenant has vacated.

If a tenant vacates the apartment and continues to sign leases or submit rent payments in his or her name, it may damage a potential succession claim and disallow a family member from remaining in the apartment.

If the tenant of your apartment has vacated or passed away and you wish to be recognized as the new legal tenant, please seek legal advice as soon as possible. You can visit HCC for further information during intake hours. Our intake hours are Mondays from 4:00pm to 6:30pm and Thursdays from 10:00 AM to 12:30 PM. To be eligible for our services you must live between 34th and 72nd Street, from Eighth to Twelve Avenues and meet our income guidelines. If you're not eligible for intake, call us at 212-541-5996 and reserve a spot for our free legal clinic, which are open every Monday night from at 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm. ■

**Know
Your
Rights!**

HCC's Announcements

Every Monday

January

10
24
31

Free legal assistance for tenants

From 4:00pm - 6:30pm

If you have housing problems, visit us during our intake hours. To qualify you must live between 34th and 72nd Streets, from 8th to 12th Avenues and meet our income guidelines (See chart below). Please bring all relevant documents (Leases, rent bills and proof of income).

February

7
14
28

Free legal clinic

From 7:00pm - 9:00pm

Any New York City resident can visit HCC's legal clinic, regardless of income. Visitors must call the front desk (212) 541-5996 to reserve a spot in the clinic in advance. Only the first eight callers will be able to reserve an appointment.

March

7
14
21
28

Tuesdays

January

11
25

Free legal immigration services

From 5:00pm - 7:40pm

We provide free legal information and possible representation. Appointments are required. You must live on the west side of Manhattan between Canal Street and 110th Street and be income eligible for our services.

February

8
22

Spanish translation is provided. Please bring all relevant documents.

March

8
22

Every Thursday

January

6
13
20
27

Free legal assistance for tenants

From 10:00am - 12:30pm

To qualify you must live between 34th and 72nd Streets, from 8th to 12th Avenues and meet our income guidelines.

February

3
10
17
24

Household Size	Total Household Income Limit
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» 1	\$38,000
» 2	\$41,500
» 3	\$44,000
» 4	\$47,500
» 5	\$51,000

March

3
10
17

For more information, please visit us at 777 Tenth Avenue, at 52nd Street.

**Fight for our affordable housing...
.. before it is too late**

Next WSNA's meeting: January 27th - 6:30pm

Join us

www.westsidenyc.org - 212-757-1832



■ Event



HCC Retreat

On November 18th, HCC staff members took time from their busy schedules to attend a day long retreat at the Nathan Cummings Foundation. The event successfully promoted discussion on how we might reinforce our mission of better service to our neighborhood. ■

