

Regional Housing Legal Services (RHLS) is the first and only nonprofit legal services organization in Pennsylvania focused primarily on affordable and sustainable housing.

We believe that skilled lawyers serving on a pro bono basis can be key to creating sustainable communities — a conviction confirmed by our role in facilitating thousands of units of housing and over a billion dollars in community development and economic activity in Pennsylvania.

Our attorneys are foremost experts in the field of affordable housing with unparalleled depth and breadth of experience in the practice of real estate, finance, nonprofit and contract law. RHLS draws on that expertise chiefly to advise nonprofit organizations seeking to revitalize their neighborhoods, and to provide counsel on development of public policies that affect lower-income residents. Over the years, we have further broadened our scope of service.

Today, RHLS is one of few legal services organizations in the nation that promotes affordable and sustainable housing through practice areas addressing all of its major, related components.



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Learn more about RHLS by visiting our website or by viewing our capabilities brochure at http://rhls.org/pdf/RHLS_Brochure_09.pdf

Regional Housing Legal Services

is a nonprofit law firm with unmatched expertise in affordable, sustainable housing and its related components — community and economic development, utility matters and preservation of homeownership. RHLS provides innovative project and policy solutions that help create sustainable communities offering decent, safe and affordable housing for lower-income Pennsylvanians.



GROWING PENNSYLVANIA: Affordable Housing and Community Development

Each year, RHLS works with more than 60 nonprofit developers and community-based organizations — clients with the vision and passion to bring affordable housing and economic opportunity to their communities, but without some of the required capacity to plan, finance and build those developments. They may be stymied by the cost and difficulty of acquiring and developing property. They may lack the technical skills to execute the project or the operating support to bring it to life. They may be frustrated by the layers of complex financing arrangements with government entities. RHLS provides expertise in all of these areas, free of charge and over the long term. As a result, we help clients build capacity to handle increasingly large and sophisticated projects on their own.

- RHLS facilitated construction of The Brandywine Center, a mixed-use facility combining housing for low-income seniors with clinics providing medical, behavioral and dental care in the heart of Coatesville, Pennsylvania.
- RHLS enabled North Side Coalition for Fair Housing, a Section 8 Resident Council, to purchase majority ownership and coordinate services for residents of an at-risk 325-unit, scattered-site housing development in Western Pennsylvania.
- RHLS represented the People’s Emergency Center in negotiating millions of dollars in contracts to upgrade and attract new businesses to an historic commercial corridor in West Philadelphia.

ACHIEVING SYSTEMIC CHANGE: Policy Analysis

RHLS analyzes public policies and systemic elements with the purpose of overcoming policy-based barriers to progress in affordable housing. We address these complex legislative issues in collaboration with a broad network of strategic partners — policymakers, government officials, legal colleagues, funders and other experts essential to improving the system that governs affordable housing and community development.

- RHLS helped revise the Neighborhood Assistance Program (NAP), which provides state tax credit incentives for corporate investment in community renewal. In the year after the change, more than 160 NAP applications were submitted to the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, totaling \$25 million in tax credits with an additional \$45 million in investments.
- RHLS led a successful effort to alleviate an unfair tax burden on Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) properties.

EMPOWERING LOWER-INCOME CONSUMERS: Pennsylvania Utility Law Project

The Pennsylvania Utility Law Project (PULP) is a specialized component of RHLS devoted exclusively to matters affecting lower-income energy consumers. It is the only statewide project meeting this need and —because maintaining utility service is critical to helping people stay in their homes — PULP’s work is at the heart of promoting sustainable communities.

SUPPORTING COLLEAGUES: Pennsylvania Housing Law Project

The Pennsylvania Housing Law Project (HLP) serves as a support center for legal aid colleagues and advocacy groups addressing affordable housing matters. By sharing the latest information and decades of expertise, HLP acts as a force multiplier, speeding the pace of progress toward sustainable communities.

HLP disseminates housing-related information directly to attorneys, advocates and interested organizations, as well as through the Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network.

PRESERVING HOMEOWNERSHIP: The HEMAP Help Center

RHLS works to stabilize neighborhoods through the HEMAP Help Center, which provides online assistance to families applying to the PHFA’s Homeowners’ Emergency Mortgage Assistance Program (HEMAP). Each year, hundreds of homeowners facing foreclosure visit hemap.org to learn more about the program and to receive feedback from RHLS attorneys before finalizing their applications.

- hemap.org provides an effective tool for housing counselors helping families realistically describe their financial circumstances — a factor that is crucial to qualifying for approval.
- those receiving assistance from hemap.org have a substantially higher approval rate than those applying without this assistance.