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California Law Schools Recognized For Assisting People Facing Eviction

By Diana Bosetti | Jan. 31, 2022

Garland sent a letter last August to law schools throughout the U.S. and its territories, requesting lawyers and law students help residents fill out applications to receive federal emergency rental assistance, represent people in court who are facing eviction, and find suitable housing.

Ten California law schools were recognized by Attorney General Merrick Garland and other White House and Department of Justice officials Friday for providing support to individuals facing housing and eviction issues during the pandemic.

“I felt validated for the work the Loyola Center for Conflict Resolution has been doing, and recognize that Loyola has been at the forefront of the housing and eviction crisis – helping both the landlord and the tenant – since early 2021,” said Sara Campos, director of Loyola Law School’s Center for Conflict Resolution.

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Nearly 100 schools responded, including 10 from California: Golden Gate University School of Law; Loyola Law School, Los Angeles; Southwestern Law School; Stanford Law School; UCLA School of Law; UC Hastings College of the Law; UC Berkeley School of Law; University of San Diego School of Law; University of Southern California Gould School of Law, and University of the Pacific McGeorge School of Law.

Jennifer Mnookin, dean and Ralph and Shirley Shapiro Professor of Law, at UCLA said in a statement, “When the Attorney General issued his call for the legal community last fall, I knew we would see an outpouring of support and action from our UCLA community and I am terrifically proud of what everyone has done and continues to do. We are also very fortunate to have excellent community partners in Los Angeles – the legal services providers who are on the front lines of fighting the housing crisis.

“I am also particularly pleased that this work has focused not only on immediate needs, such as fighting wrongful evictions and helping people access emergency funds to which they are entitled, but also on the root causes of economic hardship and social ills that lead to housing insecurity in the first place. This community is deeply invested in creating a fairer and more just system for all.”

The White House virtual event was also attended by Douglas Emhoff, husband to Vice President Kamala Harris and the former managing partner of Venable LLP in Los Angeles, and Associate U.S. Attorney General Vanita Gupta.

“A lot of landlords and tenants don’t know where to turn,” Campos said. “Tenants, especially, because they may be facing immigration status issues or other issues, and are afraid to reach out. We also think about the landlords, because many who reach out to LCCR are the ‘mom and pop’ landlords who also face losing their property, and may not always have attorney representation or information.”

Four students at Southwestern Law School worked predominantly on eviction cases.

“This is something we had already been thinking about, but the Department of Justice’s call motivated us to create the Eviction Defense Clinic in partnership with the Inner City Law Center in Los Angeles – which was launched in January 2022,” Julie Waterstone, Southwestern’s associate dean of Experiential Learning, said.