

Appendix 6: Rent Escrow Pilot Project

Goal

Provide access to representation at all rent escrow hearings by expanding existing pilot projects to each of Vermont's 14 counties. In Vermont, there are over 1,000 unrepresented defendants in eviction cases each year. By expanding rent escrow projects to all Vermont counties the project hopes to offer representation to each low-income litigant at the most critical stage of their eviction, the rent escrow hearing.

Project Activities

Design, establish and coordinate rent escrow clinics in counties without an existing clinic by using a combination of *pro bono* and low bono attorneys, student and paralegal volunteers, and staff attorneys from VLA and LSV. Each clinic operation would be customized based on the location of the clinic, relative volume of anticipated hearings, county court calendar, and available attorney resources. Project staff would screen all litigants for low-income eligibility and conduct follow-up activities with litigants served.

Project Budget

The partnership is seeking an annual appropriation of \$300,000. This funding would allow LSV to hire a staff attorney to coordinate the clinics and handle cases; as well as to contract with both the VBA Low-Bono Project and VLA to handle clinics in some counties.

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