

**Call for Papers for Sections on Clinical Legal Education,  
Property, and Community Economic Development  
Joint Program at the AALS Annual Meeting**

The Clinical Legal Education, Property, and Community Economic Development Sections are pleased to announce a Call for Papers from which one to three additional presenters will be selected for a joint program to be held during the AALS 2021 Annual Meeting in San Francisco on *A Right to Housing! Law & Activism to Eradicate Homelessness*. **The program description is below.**

**Form and length of submission:**

*Please submit a 300 – 400 word abstract in Word or PDF to Chair of the Property Section, Professor Rashmi Dyal-Chand (r.dyal-chand@northeastern.edu) with “Submission: AALS Housing Program” in the subject line. Submissions must be received by September 30, 2020.* Preference will be given to abstracts for projects that are substantially complete and that offer novel scholarly insights. Untenured scholars in particular are encouraged to submit their work.

The author of the selected paper(s) will be notified by **October 15, 2020**. The Call for Paper presenters will be responsible for paying their registration fee and hotel and travel expenses.

**Submission review:**

Papers will be selected after review by members of the Executive Committees of the three Sections.

**Inquiries or questions:**

Any inquiries about the Call for Papers should be submitted to Professor Etienne C. Toussaint, University of the District of Columbia David A. Clarke School of Law (etienne.toussaint@udc.edu).

**Program Description:**

This program examines the potential for law and activism to eradicate homelessness in the United States. The COVID-19 pandemic is the latest in a series of crises that underscore the importance of housing security as a key determinant of public health. These crises have thrown into sharp relief the scale and scope of homelessness and housing insecurity, forcing local governments to grapple with enforcing social distancing measures for vulnerable populations that lack shelter. Many local governments have taken preemptive measures, enacting eviction bans or restrictions to prevent increased housing insecurity and homelessness resulting from the economic consequences of the pandemic.

While these interventions may be stopgap measures in an unprecedented time, they resonate with activism that was already well underway. For years, advocates have forced local governments to rethink their obligations to unhoused residents. For example, in Oakland a collective of homeless and marginally housed mothers embarked on a “high-profile socially-motivated squatting effort.” Just days after local authorities evicted members of the group from the premises, the City of Oakland intervened, and the title owner of the home agreed to sell the property at its appraised value to the Oakland Community Land Trust to provide affordable housing for the moms and their children. Meanwhile, the U.S. Supreme Court declined to hear *Martin v. City of Boise*, in which the Ninth Circuit ruled in favor of homeless petitioners, holding that a Boise ordinance criminalizing the act of sleeping on the street was unconstitutional because “the Cruel and Unusual Punishments Clause of the Eighth Amendment precluded the enforcement of a statute prohibiting sleeping outside against homeless individuals with no access to alternative shelter.” In the wake of these events, cities with large homeless populations have been left to sort out their role in addressing homelessness amidst a patchwork of rights implicating constitutional, community economic development, poverty, property, real estate, and criminal laws.

This program will explore movement building in the context of law reform, activism, and scholarship that seek to advance access to justice for homeless persons. We will consider core legal tensions concerning regionalism and localism, land speculation, and the right to housing. We will examine a range of theoretical foundations, including political economy and human rights perspectives. We will harness a diverse set of methodologies. Our ultimate aim will be to think pragmatically and productively about the ways that activism and law reform can contribute to long-term solutions to homelessness.

The program includes two components: (1) A panel presentation featuring a range of perspectives on housing rights and activism; and (2) a scholarly program featuring both prominent and new scholars, including some drawn from a call for papers. The panel presentation will consist of organizers, lawyers, and scholars discussing their successful efforts to secure greater housing rights and mapping opportunities for continued advocacy and intervention. The scholarly program that follows will serve as an important opportunity for scholars in various fields connected to homelessness to share their research in dialogue with advocates.