

# HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION PRO BONO PROJECT

October 17, 2023  
12:00 pm



# **We Are LA**

# **Introduction**

**Los Angeles**  
**Mayor Karen Bass**



# Agenda

## 1. We Are LA Pro Bono Project



**Paris Cohen,**  
Legal Aid  
Foundation of  
Los Angeles

## 2. Eviction Crisis



**Nicholas  
Lampros,**  
Bet Tzedek

## 3. Eviction Law Overview



**Henry Mantel,**  
Neighborhood  
Legal Services

## 4. How to Get Involved



**Jazmine  
Smalley,**  
Inner City Law  
Center

# Learning Objectives



**Learn about  
the need for  
the We Are LA  
Pro Bono  
Project**

**Recognize the  
challenges for  
unrepresented  
tenants**

**Identify the  
basic stages of  
the eviction  
process**

**Identify how  
volunteers can  
help tenants  
through Pro  
Bono service**

# We Are LA Pro Bono Project



# We Are LA Pro Bono Partners





# What Does SHLA do?

Tenants can get help:

1. [www.StayHousedLA.org](http://www.StayHousedLA.org)
2. (888) 694-0040
3. We Are LA referrals



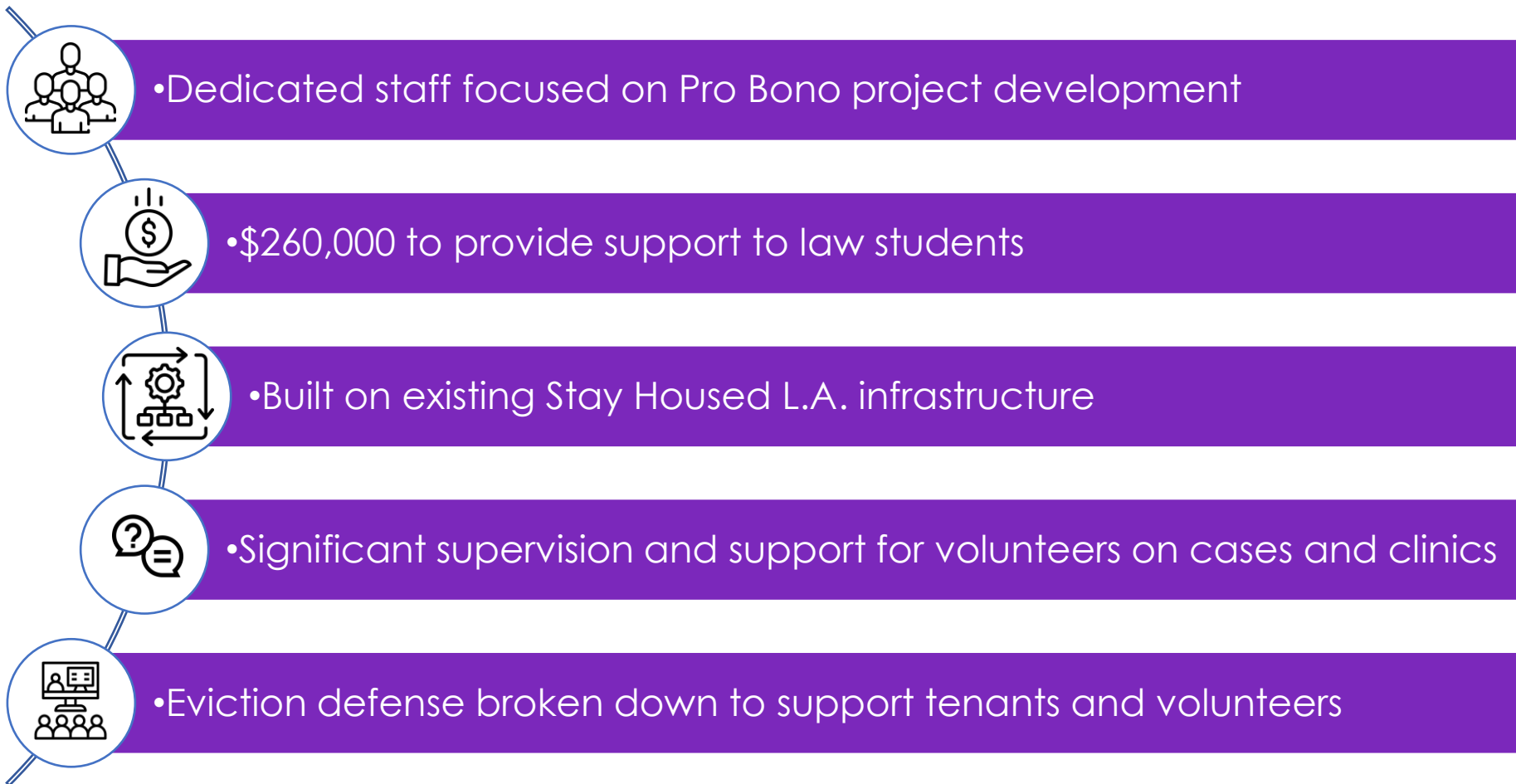
## Partners:

Community-  
Based  
Organizations

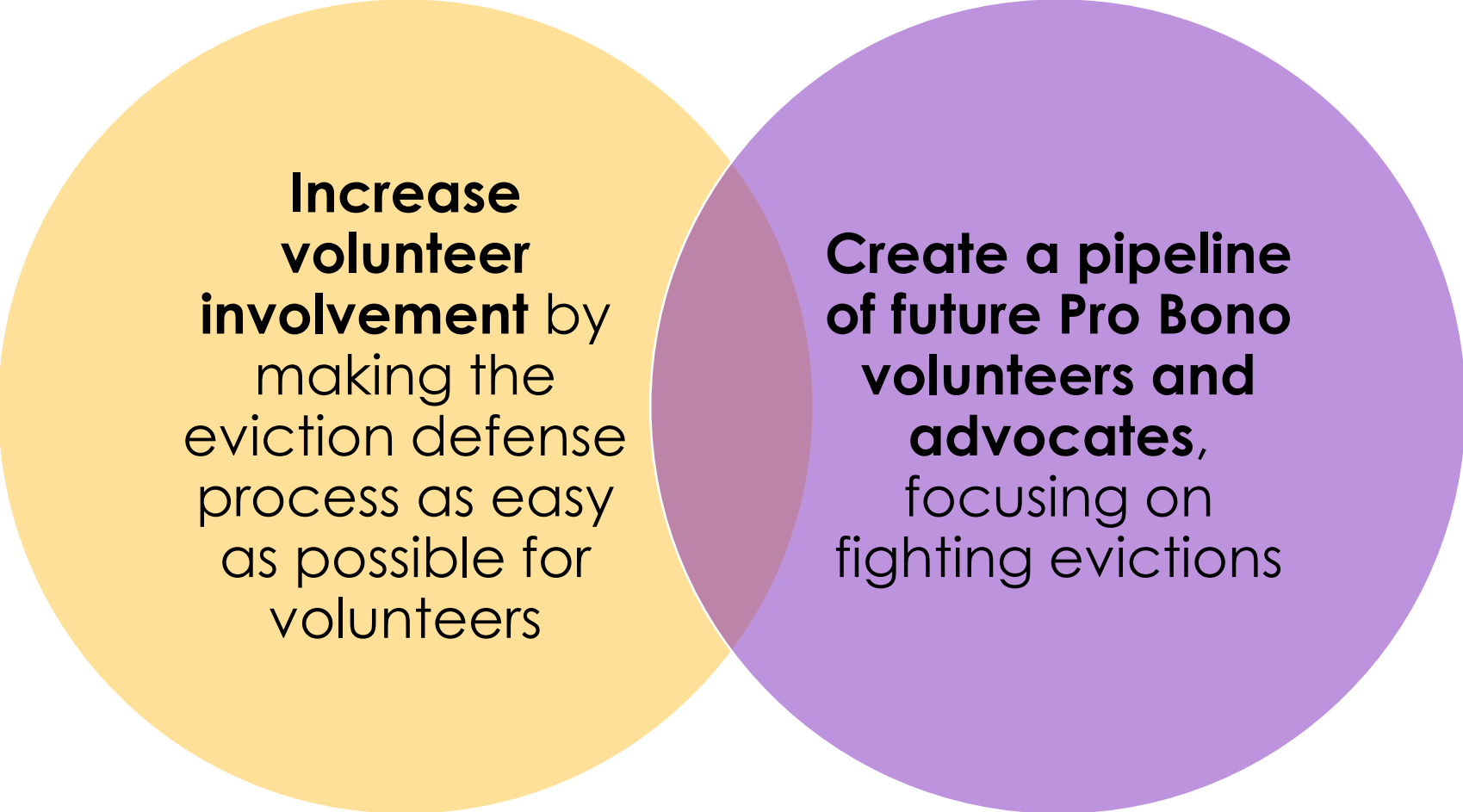
Legal Service  
Providers



# We Are LA Pro Bono Project



# Project Goals



**Increase  
volunteer  
involvement** by  
making the  
eviction defense  
process as easy  
as possible for  
volunteers

**Create a pipeline  
of future Pro Bono  
volunteers and  
advocates,**  
focusing on  
fighting evictions

# Eviction Crisis

## Evictions harm communities and cause trauma

- ▷ Including in areas of employment, health, family stability, children's education, and more

## Eviction is a racial justice issue

- ▷ Disproportionate impact on communities of color, especially for Black and Latinx women

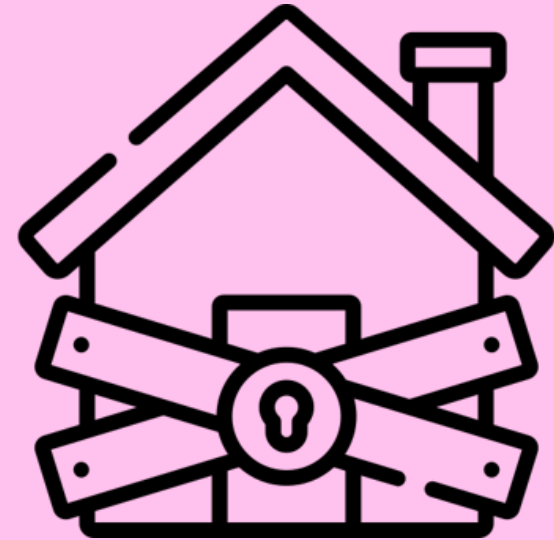
## Eviction defense is critical to prevent homelessness

- ▷ We Are LA project focuses on keeping low-income tenant families housed

## Cost benefit of preventing homelessness

- ▷ City of Los Angeles saves \$120.3 million

# Eviction Facts



# Eviction Service Gap Problem



Study: Eviction defense prevents homelessness

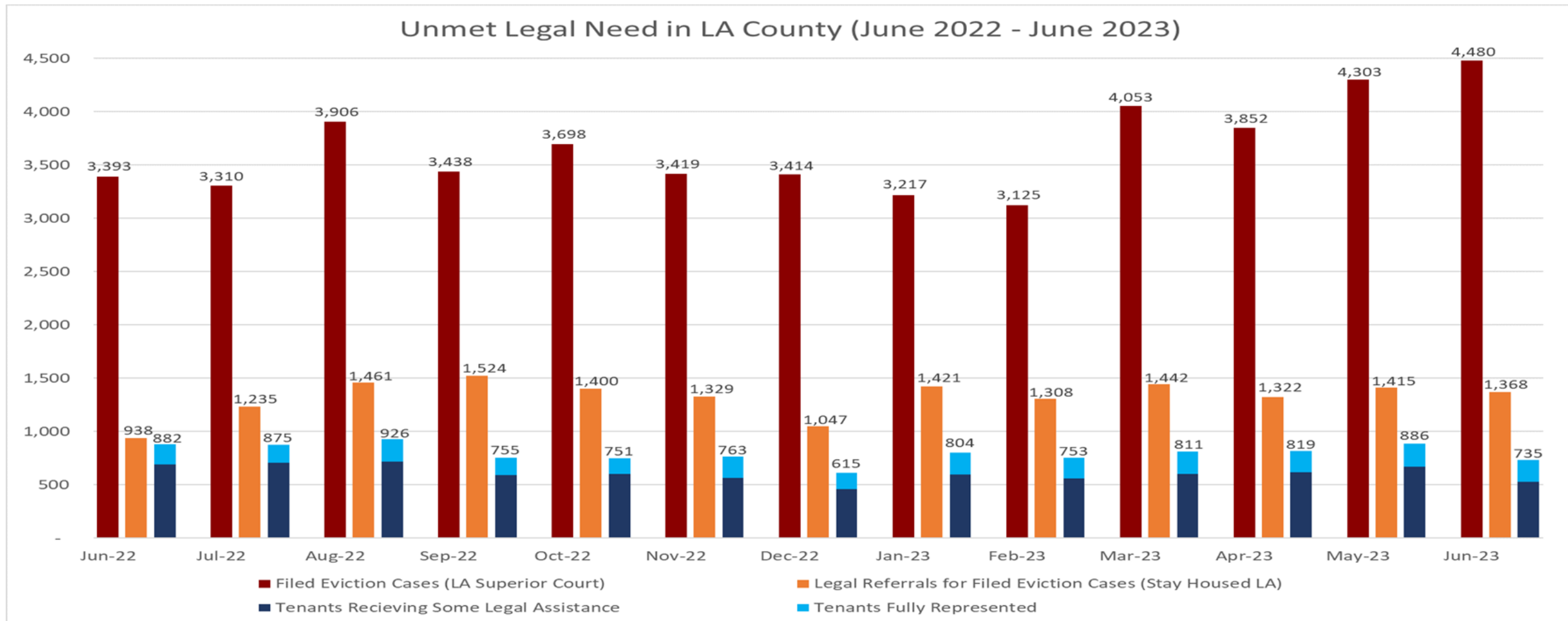
- ▷ 150 unrepresented eviction cases analyzed

Not enough trained attorneys to help

- ▷ Insufficient number of legal aid attorneys to meet low-income tenant needs

Need to educate future advocates

- ▷ Expose and train law students and pro bono attorneys on landlord-tenant law



### City of Los Angeles Eviction Filings:

- August, 2023- 2,747 (increase of 300+ from June & July)
- SHLA/city- 120 represented cases a month

### Future:

- February, 2024- # of tenants with COVID rent due double August, 2023 (UPenn study)

# Audience Poll



**In evictions, how often  
do tenants default?**

- a) 15%
- b) 30%
- c) 50%
- d) 70%

*Please respond to the Zoom poll in  
the pop-up window.*

# Eviction Law Overview

# Eviction Laws and Protections

## State Housing Laws

- Tenant Protection Act of 2019 (TPA)
- Implied Warranty of Habitability

## Local Laws

- Los Angeles Rent Stabilization Ordinance (LARSO)
- Tenant Anti-Harassment Ordinance (TAHO)

## Rent Control

- TPA
- LARSO

## Subsidized Housing

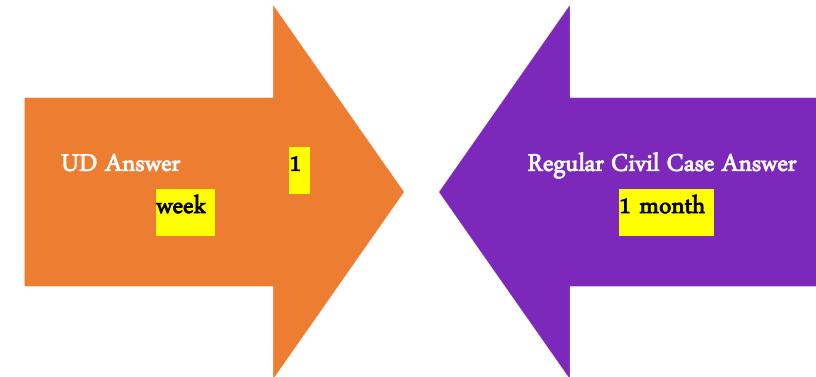
- Section 8
- Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC)

## Covid Protections

- Covid-19 Tenant Relief Act
- LA City Eviction Moratorium

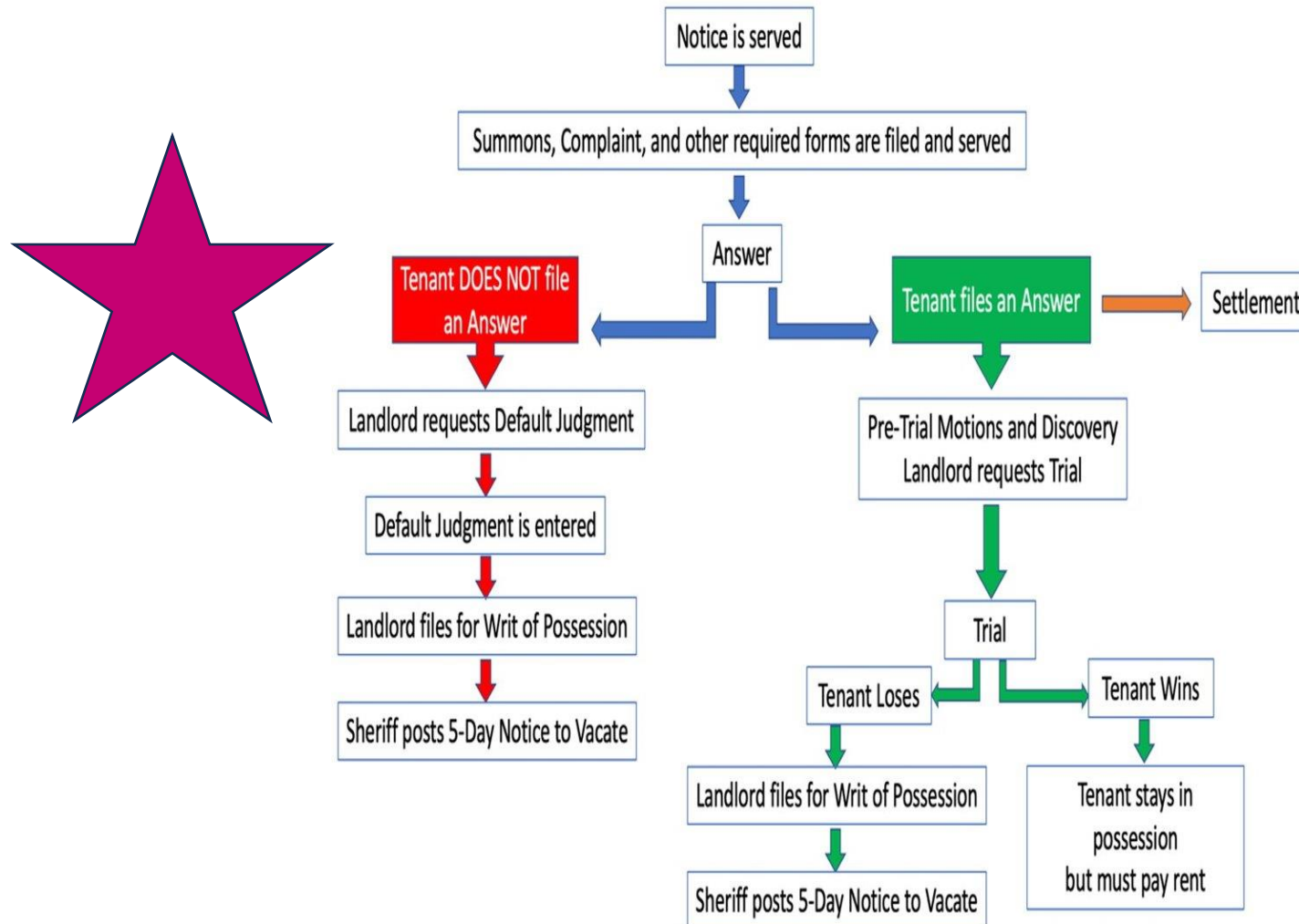
# What is an Unlawful Detainer (UD)?

- ❑ In CA, landlords must file a UD to evict tenants
- ❑ Summary procedure creates an accelerated timeline

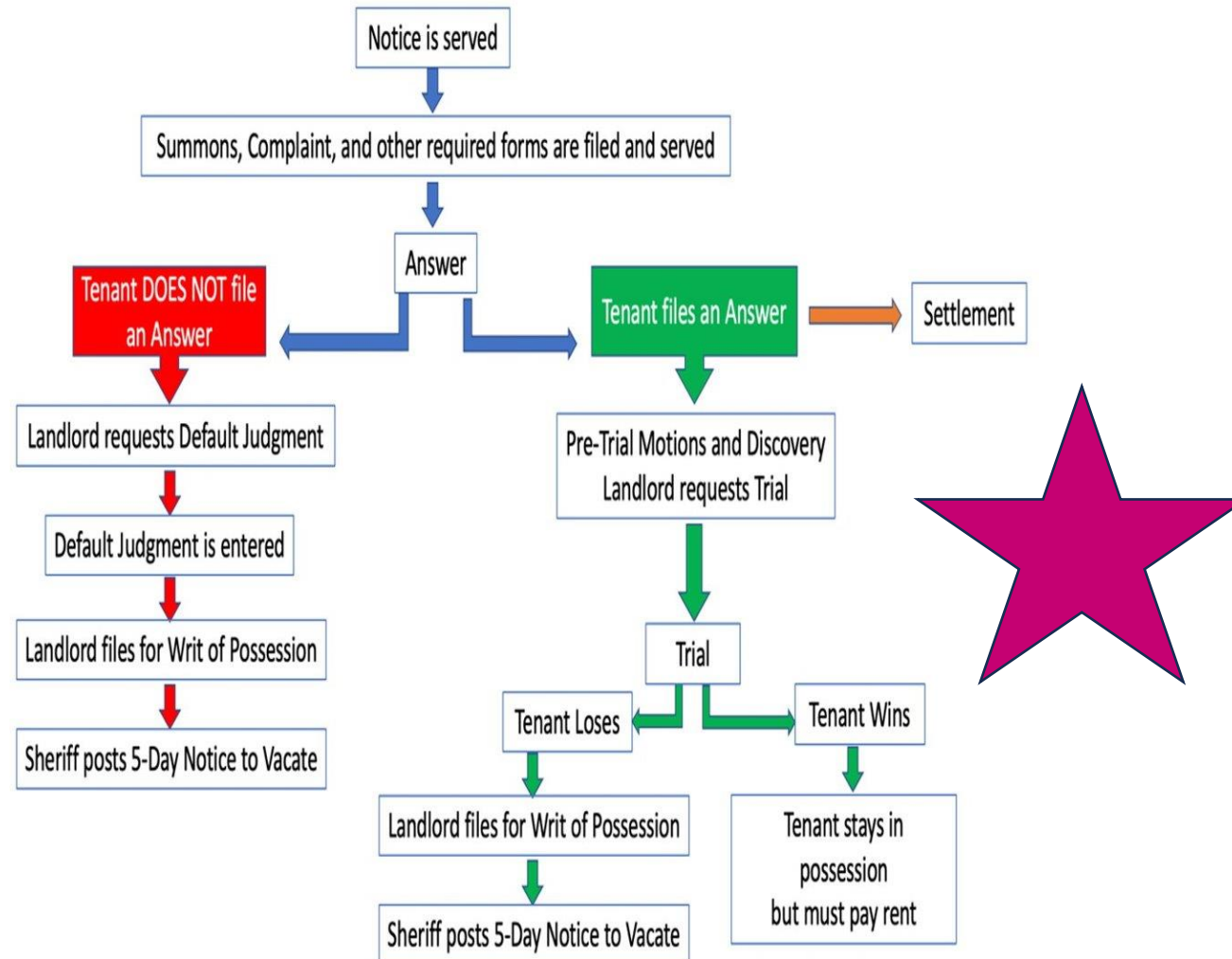


- ❑ Access to justice problem
  - 90% of landlords are represented
  - 10% of tenants are represented

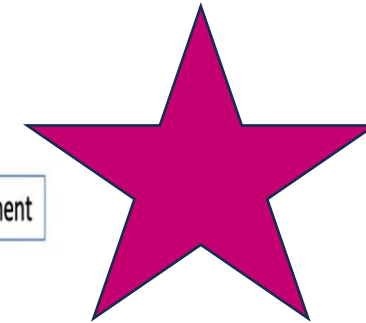
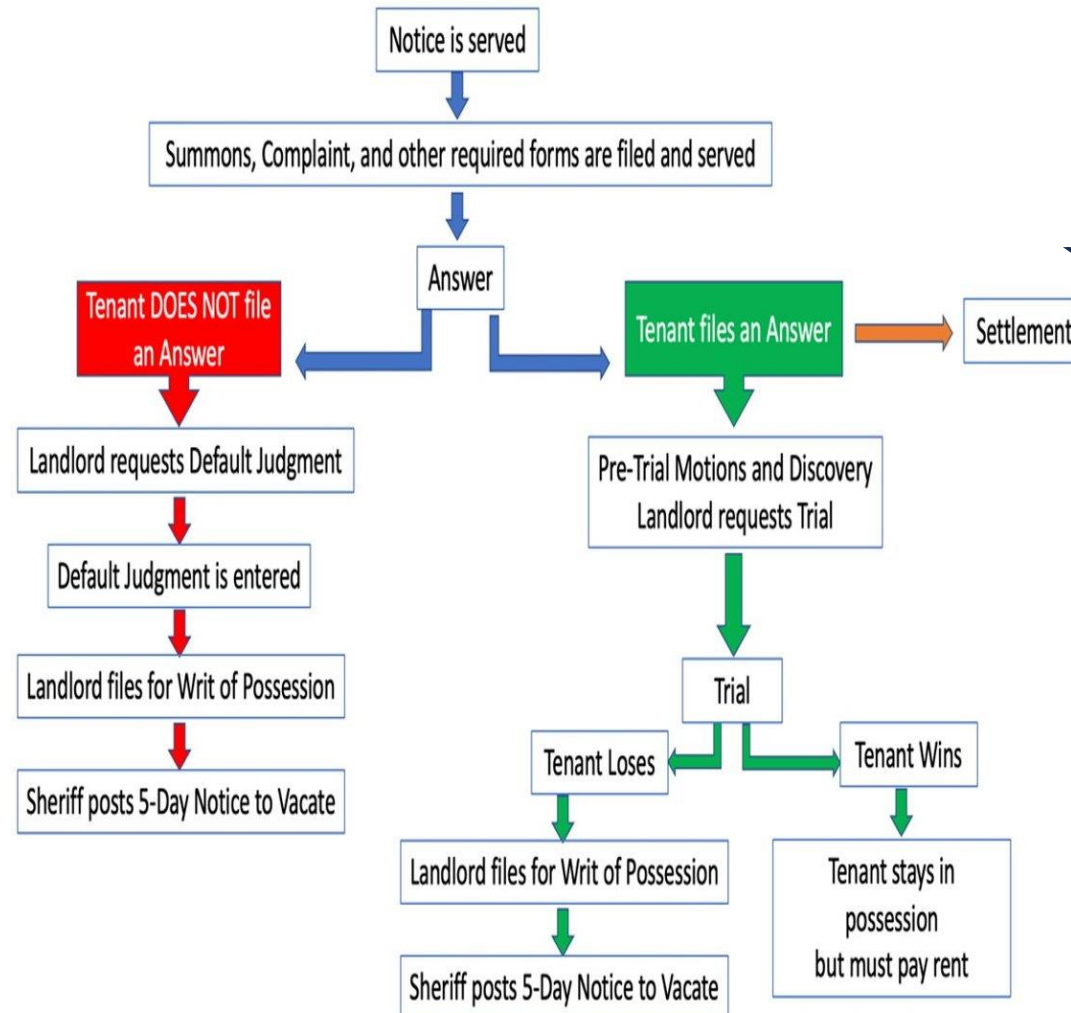
# How Does a UD Work?



# How Does a UD Work?



# How Does a UD Work?



Most tenants are unrepresented in eviction cases while most landlords are represented.

**When a tenant is representing themselves against a represented landlord, what challenges do they face?**

*Please respond by putting your feedback in the Zoom chat, directing your message to "Everyone."*

# Brainstorm Exercise



# Pro Per Tenant Eviction Challenges

- Not enough legal aid attorneys to meet low-income tenant needs

- Rising eviction filings since end of Covid tenant protections

- In addition to legal representation, we provide other eviction assistance

- Education (e.g., workshops)
- Pro per assistance (e.g., clinics)

- To address pro per tenant challenges in 4 critical eviction stages:

- Eviction notice
- Pleadings
- Pre-Trial
- Trial

# Eviction Notice

## Eviction Requirement

Notice must be served to file an eviction case

## Tenant Challenge

- Confusing legalese
- Landlords mislead

## Our Response

Tenant Rights and Anti-Harassment Clinics

# Pleadings

Eviction  
Requirement

Tenant must  
respond in 5  
days to avoid  
default

Tenant  
Challenge

- Quick turnaround
- Litigation unfamiliarity

Our  
Response

Answer Clinic

# Pre-Trial

## Eviction Requirement

Tenant must comply with all pre-trial requirements, including discovery

## Tenant Challenge

- Complex nature of discovery
- Unfamiliar with UD negotiation

## Our Response

Discovery and Settlement Negotiation Clinics

# Trial

## Eviction Requirement

Tenant must be ready for trial, including exhibits and jury trial docs

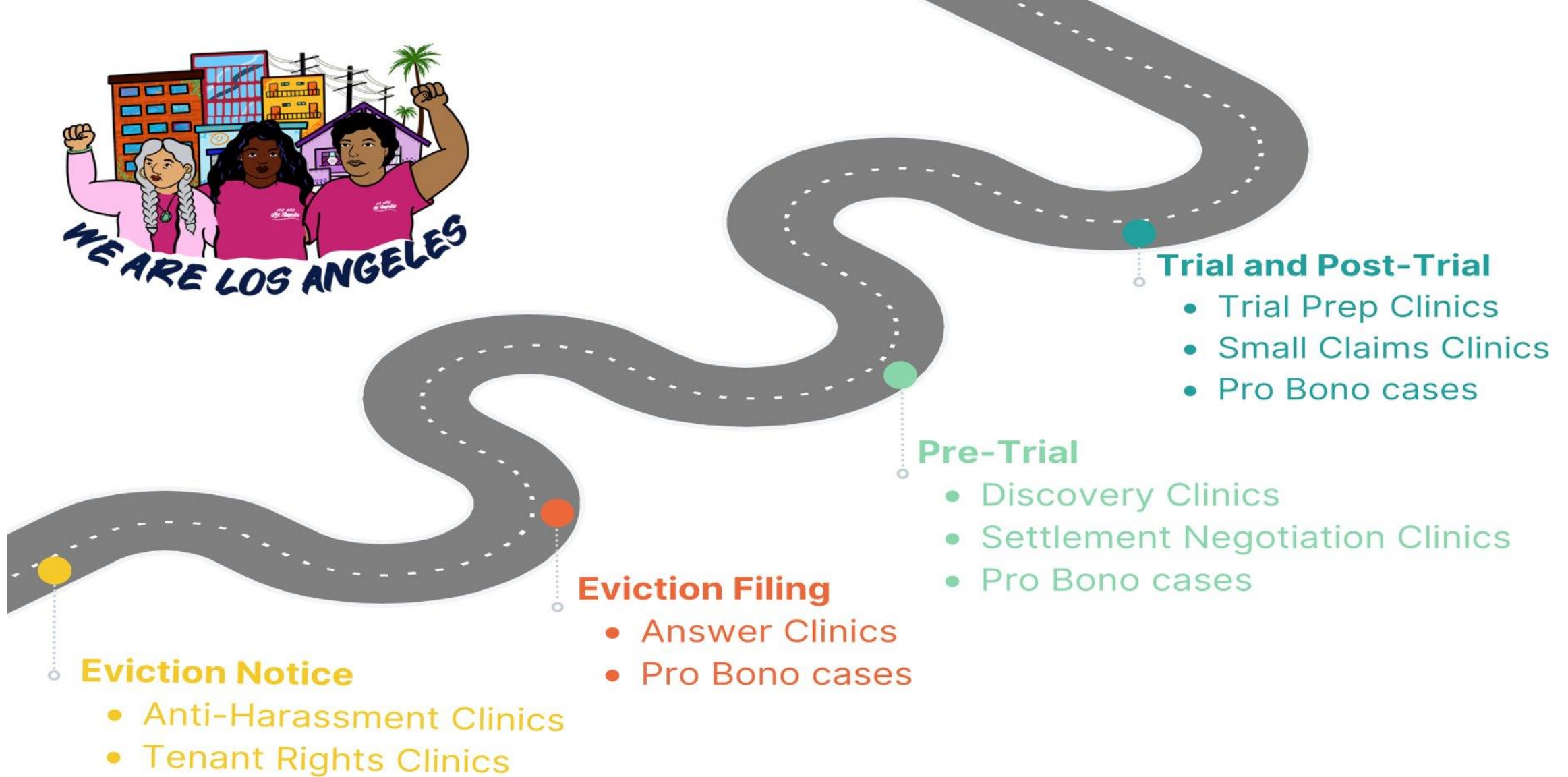
## Tenant Challenge

- No courtroom/trial experience
- Landlords are overwhelmingly represented

## Our Response

Trial Prep and Small Claims Clinics

# **We Are LA Pro Bono Volunteer Opportunities**



**Volunteer to Help Tenants  
Avoid Eviction and Homelessness**

# **We Are LA Pro Bono Homelessness Prevention Projects**

**WIDE VARIETY OF  
VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**



**SHORT-TERM CLINICS TO ASSIST TENANTS FACING  
HOMELESSNESS**

**FULL-SCOPE REPRESENTATION IN EVICTION CASES,  
INCLUDING APPEALS**

**FLEXIBILITY AND SUPPORT  
AVAILABLE**

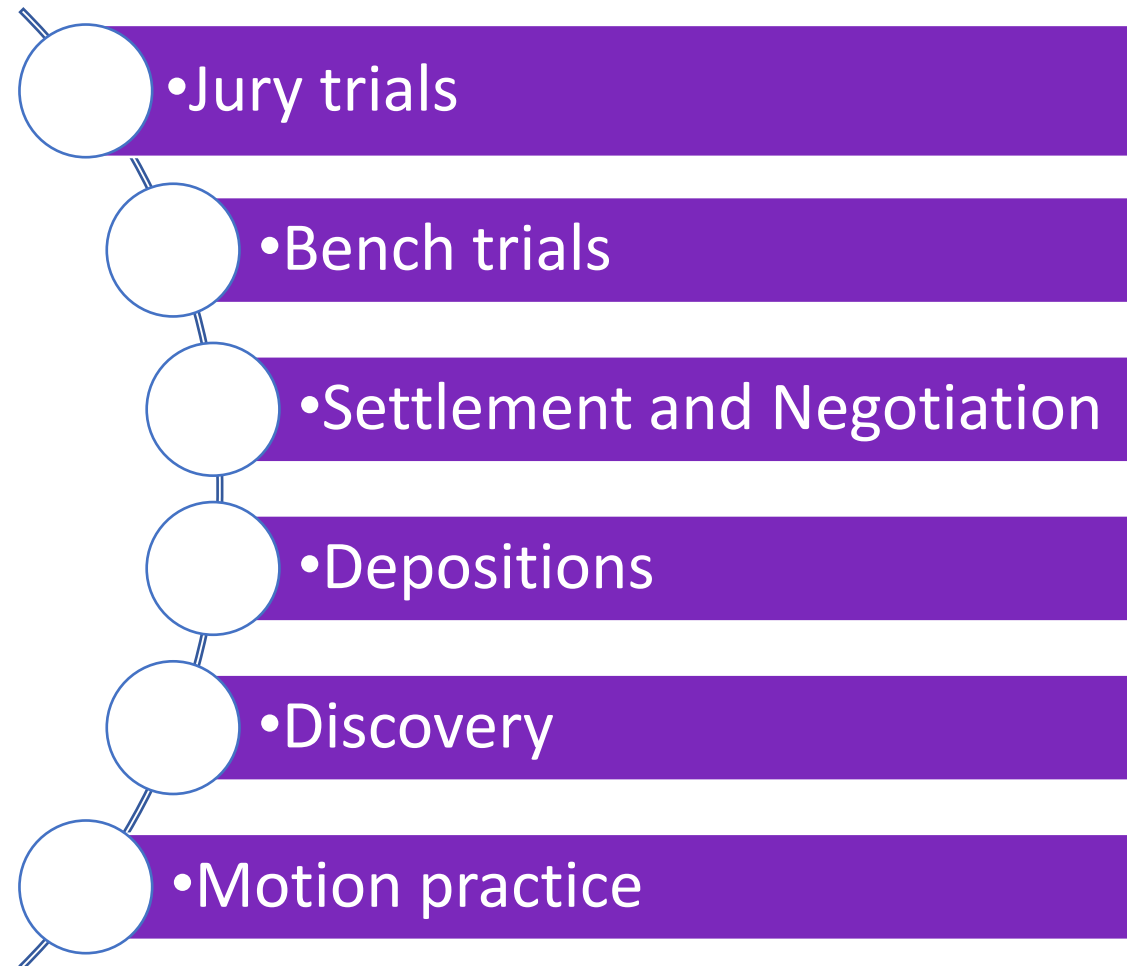


**OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED THROUGHOUT THE WEEK**

**REMOTE AND IN-PERSON OPTIONS**

**DEDICATED PRO BONO STAFF AVAILABLE TO  
SUPPORT/SUPERVISE**

# Full Scope Eviction Defense Cases



# **We Are LA SHLA Pro Bono Partnerships**

**All cases are  
screened**

**Office hours  
available for  
volunteers**

**Covered by legal  
service partner's  
malpractice  
insurance**

**Mentoring always  
provided**

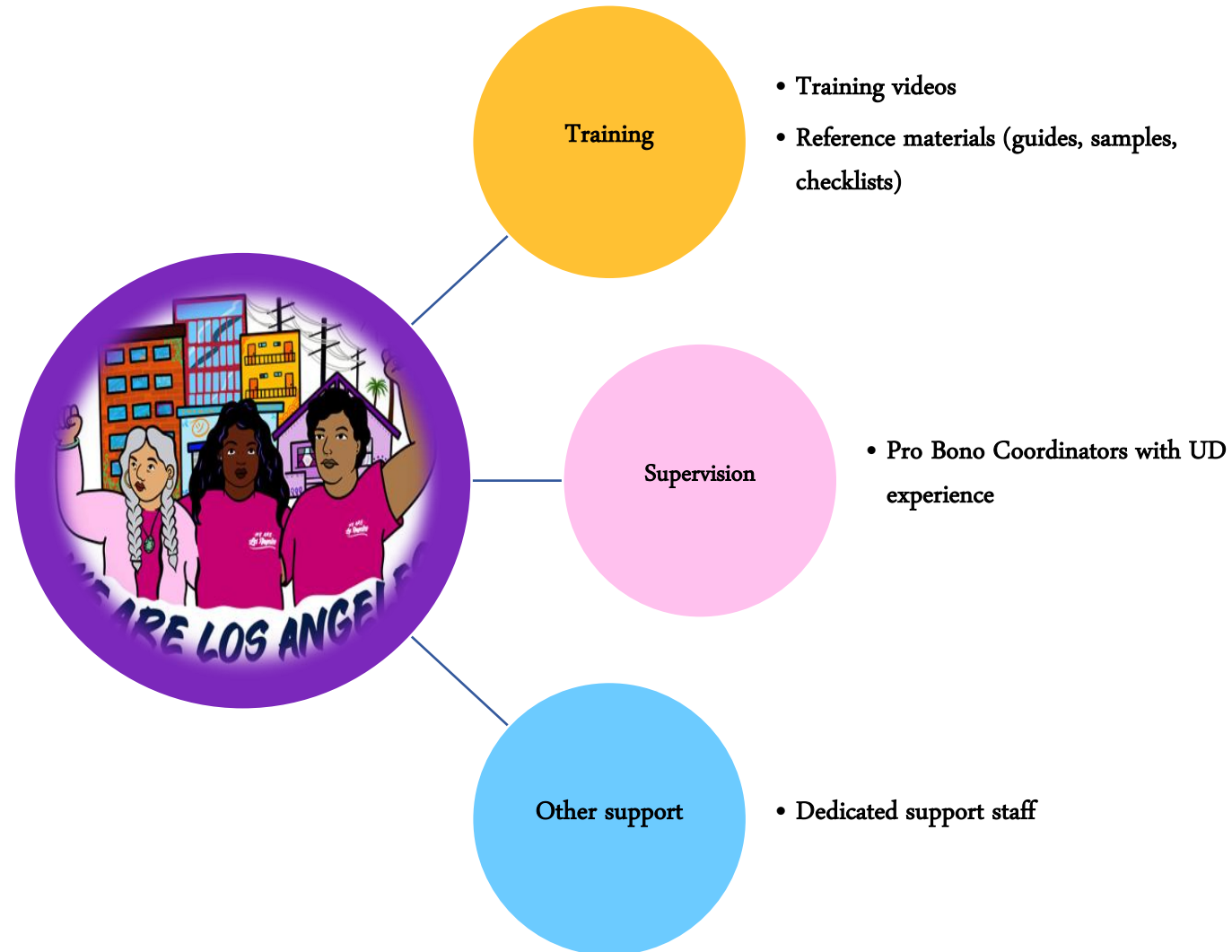
**Learn eviction  
defense law**

**Gain litigation  
experience**

**Network/collaborate  
with advocates**

**Be part of the social  
justice movement**

# How We Support Volunteers



# Trainings

## Pro Bono Training Institute

- ▷ Free online, on-demand legal training
- ▷ Receive MCLE credit
- ▷ [www.PBtraining.org](http://www.PBtraining.org)

## Legal Services Program Trainings

- ▷ Free trainings and presentations available
- ▷ Receive MCLE credit

Please Scan QR Code  
to Request MCLE Credit





Q&A

## ❑ Bet Tzedek

- **Contact:** Sara Levine, [slevine@bettzedek.org](mailto:slevine@bettzedek.org)
- **Full-scope pro bono cases**
- **Clinics:** Tenant Know-Your-Rights Clinics

## ❑ ICLC

- **Contact:** Vidhya Ragunathan, [vragunathan@innercitylaw.org](mailto:vragunathan@innercitylaw.org)
- **Full-scope pro bono cases**
- **Clinics:** Eviction Answer Tenant Power Toolkit Clinics

## ❑ LAFLA

- **Contact:** Phong Wong, [pwong@lafla.org](mailto:pwong@lafla.org)
- **Full-scope pro bono cases**
- **Clinics:** Pre-Trial/Settlement, Anti-Harassment, and Small Claims Clinics

## ❑ NLS LA

- **Contact:** Skip Koenig, [skipkoenig@nls-la.org](mailto:skipkoenig@nls-la.org)
- **Full-scope pro bono cases**
- **Clinics:** Tenant Know-Your-Rights and Discovery Clinics

# Volunteer Opportunities

## — Contact Info

