



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 4, 2026

Contact:

Nicholle Granger

Communications Director | Maryland Legal Aid

(443) 915-8326 | ngranger@mdlab.org

Senior Renters at Cottages at Berlin Demand Action from Severn Management Over Staffing, Maintenance and Community Center Access

Berlin, MD – Senior residents of Cottages at Berlin are demanding action from Annapolis-based Severn Management after the company failed to respond to a June 8 demand letter signed by residents and sent on their behalf by Maryland Legal Aid. Residents are seeking better communication with the Resident Manager and maintenance staff, more consistent on-site management and maintenance, and a collaborative approach to reasonable solutions that would improve quality of life at the 40-unit affordable housing community, where all residents are seniors.

For several months, resident leaders have been working with Maryland Legal Aid to identify concerns shared among households and to demand changes that will improve living conditions. On June 8, Maryland Legal Aid sent a demand letter to Severn Management on behalf of the resident leaders and 25 additional residents. Severn Management did not respond.

Residents say one of their biggest concerns is the lack of consistent communication and on-site management. They say previous property managers maintained an open-door policy and were readily available to discuss maintenance requests and other issues. Today, residents say that the Resident Manager and maintenance staff appear at the property for a few hours two days per week and that there is no clear system for submitting or tracking work orders, making it difficult to document repair requests and follow up when problems remain unresolved.

Residents say maintenance delays have been especially concerning when it comes to heating and cooling. A number of residents have experienced prolonged periods without

functioning heat or air conditioning, a particular concern in a community where most residents are seniors. Residents say these experiences underscore the need for consistent on-site maintenance staff and a clear process for submitting, documenting and tracking repair requests.

"We're not asking for the moon or the stars," said Frances Hubbartt, a resident leader who has lived at the Cottages at Berlin for nearly four years. **"Most of us just want a safe, well-maintained place to live. We want someone to listen when something needs to be fixed, communicate with us, and help make this a nice place to live again."**

Residents working to establish a tenant association with support from Maryland Legal Aid also say Severn Management changed its community center access policy after residents began organizing with MLA. Residents say the center was previously available daily and occasionally on weekends for meetings and recreational activities. Under the new policy, residents may use the center only when the Resident Manager is on site, which has limited their ability to meet, organize, and use the facility.

The tenants have demanded that Severn Management take steps to improve communication, assign consistent on-site management and maintenance staff, establish a clear maintenance request process, and ensure residents have reasonable access to the community center. Their June 8 letter also invited Severn Management to meet with residents to discuss these concerns.

"When you're older and on a limited income, you deserve more than to be ignored by landlord that benefits from public subsidies. The senior residents at Cottages of Berlin have identified practical, reasonable solutions that would improve communication and quality of life throughout the community," said Zafar Shah, Advocacy Director for Human Right to Housing at Maryland Legal Aid.

Maryland Legal Aid represents the resident leaders as they continue working with their neighbors to improve living conditions and strengthen communication with property management.

For more information or to arrange interviews with Maryland Legal Aid attorneys, please contact Nicholle Granger at ngranger@mdlab.org.

About Maryland Legal Aid

Established in 1911, Maryland Legal Aid is a statewide nonprofit 501(c)(3) law firm that advocates with and for Marylanders experiencing poverty to achieve equity and social justice through free civil legal services, community collaboration, and systemic change. From its 11 offices across the state and through its many community-based clinics, Maryland Legal Aid helps clients preserve and access safe and affordable housing; maintain custody of their children and be safe from domestic violence; and increase their economic security by defending against consumer debt, including foreclosures and tax sales, removing barriers to employment, and accessing critical income supports such as Medicaid, SNAP, unemployment, and other vital public benefits. In its advocacy, Maryland Legal Aid seeks to change systems that perpetuate poverty and inequity.