



2019

ANNUAL

REPORT



**CHICAGO COALITION
FOR THE HOMELESS**

Chicago Coalition for the Homeless (CCH) is staffed by public policy specialists, legal aid attorneys, and community organizers who advocate for and with people impacted by homelessness – families, unaccompanied youth, returning citizens, and low-wage workers. Together, we work to preserve a shelter safety net, develop affordable rental housing, and protect access to schools, fair wage jobs, and basic human services.



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

COMMUNITY
ORGANIZERS
REACHED

3,368

HOMELESS
PEOPLE
THIS YEAR



LEGAL AID
ATTORNEYS
REACHED

2,378

YOUTHS
THIS YEAR



Extensive outreach is offered to the homeless community. We work to empower people discouraged by poverty and homelessness, inform them of their options, and engage those who are interested in advocacy. Community organizers and attorneys offer 50 outreach sessions per month at shelters, schools, drop-ins and community events across the Chicago area, reaching more than 10,500 parents, students, youths, and single adults each year. Youth attorneys connect with youths at shelters, drop-in centers, street venues, and Chicago public high schools. Our Statewide Network mobilizes 14 communities, with focus on Aurora, Rockford, Waukegan, and Will County.

CCH pairs its advocacy with community organizing. Community leaders who are homeless or recently homeless collaborate with the staff in developing and presenting our advocacy. Leadership committees are active with our Speakers Bureau, Reentry Project, and Bring Chicago Home campaign. From outreach, CCH staff develop a leadership base of more than 500 homeless people of all ages. Homeless leaders are core to CCH advocacy – they testify at legislative hearings, attend rallies, talk to the media, and meet with aldermen, legislators, and government agency leaders.

BRING CHICAGO HOME

Launched October 2018, our groundbreaking campaign Bring Chicago Home offers an affordable, responsible, and popular solution to homelessness in Chicago.

Gathering a broad coalition of policy advocates, elected officials, and community groups, the campaign seeks significant dedicated funding for housing and homeless services to serve the more than 86,000 people experiencing homelessness in Chicago.

New funding of up to \$100 million a year to address homelessness would be generated through a progressive real estate transfer tax (RETT), raising the rate of this one-time tax on high-end property sales.

Mayor Lori Lightfoot proclaimed her support for an increased RETT to fund housing and homeless services throughout her campaign last spring, and Bring Chicago Home introduced an ordinance for the tax change into City Council last July with 27 aldermanic co-sponsors.

But in August, the mayor told the media that she would commit all funds to the city's general budget to fill a projected deficit. Bring Chicago Home spoke out, pressing the mayor to keep her campaign promise.

Originally planned as a city-wide referendum approved by voters, the mayor turned her sights to Springfield for approval to change the tax, but fell short during the November veto session. Our campaign secured support from more than 25 state legislators who vowed to support the measure only if the mayor agreed to a compromised rate structure that would provide funding for homeless services and housing without sacrificing revenues for deficit reduction. The roughly 70% of property transactions in the city sold for less than \$800,000 would receive a tax cut under this structure.

Bring Chicago Home has built tremendous support and momentum in the past year, and will continue to press for the creation of a significant dedicated funding stream to provide the housing and services needed to dramatically reduce homelessness in the city of Chicago, either through the state legislature or city council.

"We're really clear on our commitment to addressing homelessness, to providing more resources for affordable housing. But it's really early for us to figure out exactly how..."
- The Lightest Admittance





THE LAW
PROJECT
SERVED
566
CLIENTS
THIS YEAR

71%
OF LAW PROJECT
CLIENTS WERE
STUDENTS OR
YOUTH

LEGAL
STAFF TRAINED
2,977
EDUCATORS,
ATTORNEYS &
YOUTH-SERVING
PROFESSIONALS

Our Law Project is the only legal aid program in Illinois dedicated to legal assistance and advocacy to homeless or at-risk individuals, youth, and families.

Clients are low- to no-income. They include homeless people who are “doubled-up” – taken in by friends or relatives, often in overcrowded and unstable conditions that require moving after short stays.

CCH attorneys represent clients with pressing needs: access to public schools and school services, access to housing or emergency shelter, and access to medical care, public benefits, or the birth and ID records that allow people to apply for jobs and housing. The Law Project is also developing expertise in assisting youth and adults facing record-sealing and expungement issues.

Six CCH attorneys closed 848 cases in FY19, a 15% increase in caseload from the prior year. Seventy-one percent of the Law Project’s cases involved students or youth. Ninety-three percent of cases were based in Chicago, with 62 cases in 25 suburbs.

Of our 315 youth clients, 71% were “unaccompanied” – homeless without support of family or legal guardian. Clients were 71% black, 13% Hispanic, 9% white and 7% other ethnicities. Twenty percent of youth clients were LGBT. Thirty percent had a diagnosed disability.

The Law Project distributed 42,806 pieces of CCH-written informational brochures and materials covering 19 different topics, including Spanish versions. The legal staff trained 2,977 educators, attorneys, and youth-serving professionals.

Law Project attorneys are representing three women with disabilities who sued their supportive housing program for formerly homeless people. The program failed to pay rent without due process and reasonable accommodations of their disabilities, putting the women at risk of eviction and homelessness yet again.

Director and Associate Director of the Law Project Patricia Nix-Hodes and Beth Malik co-edited *Educating Students Experiencing Homelessness*, an American Bar Association book for educators, advocates and policymakers published this year.



YOUTH FUTURES

As part of the Law Project, four attorneys – one of them a formerly homeless youth – staff a mobile legal aid clinic called Youth Futures. Through outreach, youth attorneys connected with 2,378 youths and directly consulted with 757 in FY19. Averaging 24 legal clinic sessions a month, outreach sites include The Crib and Ujima Village overnight youth shelters, Broadway Youth Center, Center on Halsted, CPS high schools, and drop-in centers run by La Casa Norte and Ignite.

Working with Young Invincibles, our Youth Futures attorneys maintain and improve StreetLight Chicago, a mobile app and website for homeless youth, first launched in 2016. With more than 3,600 downloads by the end of 2019, StreetLight contains up-to-date information and maps to resources including shelters, drop-ins, health centers, and meals. The app's Book-a-Bed feature allows youth who work or attend school at night to skip at-the-door lotteries to reserve a bed at four overnight youth shelters. A new 24/7 crisis text line was also added in March.

**ATTORNEYS
CONDUCTED
292
OUTREACH
SESSIONS
LAST YEAR**





The CCH Law Project reached a favorable settlement in the lawsuit *Smith v. City of Chicago* on behalf of two clients who lived on Lower Wacker Drive while experiencing homelessness. The law firm Hughes, Socol, Piers, Resnick & Dym, Ltd. co-counseled the case with the Law Project.

Our clients, Shawn Moore and Amie Smith, experienced a pattern of harassment by Chicago Police officers over the course of a year and a half. The officers repeatedly threw away Shawn and Amie's tent and other property, belittled them because of their homelessness, and forced them to move repeatedly. They also threatened to arrest the homeless couple for arbitrary reasons. On one occasion, an officer threatened "to lock [Shawn] up for trespassing or whatever," seeming to express that he would find a charge on which to arrest Shawn just because he was outside in a place the city didn't want him to be.

Since 2015, this is the third settlement CCH has reached with the city of Chicago over its mistreatment of homeless people who live on the street, violating the Illinois Homeless Bill of Rights. All three cases were co-counseled by CCH and Hughes Socol.

BILL OF RIGHTS SETTLEMENT

STATE ADVOCACY

During this successful state legislative session, CCH's policy and organizing departments, along with our leaders, worked on various initiatives to remove barriers for people experiencing homelessness. CCH brought 170 leaders and students to Springfield for 16 lobby days this past session.

Our advocacy team ushered six bills through the General Assembly that will bolster financial supports and food security for people experiencing severe poverty, find ways to better support youth leaving the foster care system, strengthen the Homeless Prevention Program, and remove barriers to housing for people who have come in contact with the criminal justice system. All bills were signed by Gov. Pritzker.

One of these bills, the Prepared Meals for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients (House Bill 3343), would allow people who are elderly, experiencing homelessness, or have a disability to purchase prepared meals with their SNAP benefits. This bill will permit these populations, many of whom do not have access to a kitchen or are unable to use their kitchen safely, to go to restaurants and grocery stores with hot bars to purchase prepared meals. Gov. Pritzker signed the bill, but when the state applied for a federal waiver to enact the law it was denied by the Trump administration. Applications for similar waivers were accepted by previous administrations.

CCH also worked with partners to advocate for the increase to the minimum wage, and testified in support of the Fair Tax Constitutional Amendment (SJCA1) resolution. This resolution will permit the inclusion of a question on the November 2020 ballot on whether Illinois should shift from a flat income tax to a graduated income tax.





STATE BUDGET

Advocacy by a group of homeless service providers assembled by CCH led to increased funding in the state budget bill for the Homelessness Prevention Program by an additional \$5 million, bringing the total to \$9 million annually. The Homelessness Prevention Program saves the state thousands of dollars per household in homeless service spending by ensuring families remain housed. Funding for the program has been decimated over the last decade.



Funding to homeless youth programs also received a \$1 million increase. In addition, CCH advocated alongside our housing partners for the inclusion of funds in the state's first capital bill in 10 years. The \$200 million in funding for affordable housing has the potential to create 2,000 additional housing units across the state. This is also an increase from \$145 million included in the 2009 capital bill.





The CCH Reentry Project partners in the Restoring Rights and Opportunities Coalition of Illinois (RROCI), working with Cabrini Green Legal Aid, Community Renewal Society, and Heartland Alliance.

RROCI successfully advocated for the passage of Senate Bill 1780, which makes it a civil rights violation to discriminate during a real estate transaction based on an individual's arrest record that did not lead to a conviction, a juvenile record, or a record that has been ordered sealed or expunged. Grassroots leaders from RROCI advocated weekly in Springfield to push this bill through the legislature.

"The human rights bill is so important, because it creates access to fair and safe housing and stops discrimination against people with records," said Elgina Mallett, a CCH reentry leader. "Everyone deserves a safe place to call home."

The bill passed both houses of the General Assembly in May, and was signed by the Gov. J.B. Pritzker in August. With this bill, we hope to ensure that individuals and their families can find safe and affordable housing in their communities.

REENTRY LEGISLATION

CENSUS 2020

In preparation for the 2020 Census, CCH is helping ensure that homeless children, youth, and adults across Illinois are counted. As one of 42 partner organizations with Forefront's IL Count Me In 2020 program, CCH is providing outreach and education to support a fair and accurate count among hard-to-count communities.

As part of this initiative, CCH organizers and attorneys have already begun providing census education at shelters, schools, drop-in centers, and events across Chicago, in preparation for Census Day on April 1, 2020. This includes targeted outreach to homeless families, students, unaccompanied youth, and single adults; promoting the census to shelter providers; and distributing outreach materials. Leading up to March 2020, we anticipate educating about 750 homeless people and 850 service providers as well as distributing more than 7,000 census-related handouts.





Twelve Illinois municipalities, including Chicago, have repealed unconstitutional panhandling ordinances in response to a warning letter sent by attorneys from the CCH Law Project, ACLU of Illinois, and the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty. More than 75 municipalities across the U.S. have repealed ordinances after being advised by advocates working with the national Housing Not Handcuffs campaign.

The CCH Law Project, ACLU of Illinois, and the law firm of Schiff Hardin filed a lawsuit on behalf of two men after state and local officials ticketed and prosecuted them repeatedly for panhandling in suburban Downers Grove. Clients Michael Dumiak and Christopher Simmons did not cause any safety or traffic problems when they stood on a raised median strip in the suburb, seeking donations from people in stopped vehicles. Others use the median in the same manner to raise money for charitable organizations, but they are not ticketed or prosecuted. The suit, filed in August, alleges a violation of the men's First Amendment rights.

PANHANDLING ORDINANCES



SPEAKERS BUREAU AND MEDIA

We build community support with our Speakers Bureau and media outreach. In FY19, the Speakers Bureau's 13 homeless leaders reached an audience of 2,702 people at 80 venues, mostly schools, universities, and religious communities. Through outreach, the Speakers Bureau also mobilizes students to work with CCH. In the 2018-19 school year, 234 high school and college students participated in service learning projects through their school.

Staff and leaders are often featured in mainstream media, including the Chicago Sun-Times, Chicago Tribune, USA Today, Block Club Chicago, and WBEZ Public Radio. Our website, www.chicagohomeless.org, averages about 9,500 visits a month.

CCH utilizes social media to keep supporters updated on our work, promote events, and share action alerts.

We have more than 12,300 followers on Facebook, more than 7,100 on Twitter, and more than 1,600 on Instagram.



SCHOLARSHIP

Each June, the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless awards \$2,500 renewable college scholarships to graduating high school seniors who succeeded in school despite coping personally with homelessness.

By June 2019, 20 scholarship recipients graduated with bachelor's degrees, a 43% graduation rate. This compares well to a 2016 national study that showed just 11% of students from the lowest income bracket (\$34,160 or lower) had earned a bachelor's by age 24 (University of Pennsylvania and the Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education, 2016).

During the 2019-20 school year, 21 scholarship recipients are attending colleges and universities in Illinois, Wisconsin, Missouri, Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, and Washington, D.C.

**CCH HAS
AWARDED
\$425,000
IN SCHOLARSHIPS
SINCE 2004**



LEADERSHIP & FINANCE

CCH is guided by Executive Director Doug Schenkelberg, serving since 2016. Our 28-member Board of Directors was led by Angela E.L. Barnes who is succeeded by Caronina Grimble, appointed in November.



Our organization does not accept government funding. Instead, when we advocate for public support, it is for programs that shelter, house, and assist homeless people. In FY19, more than 5,600 individual donors provided 55% of CCH's revenue. Chicago Coalition for the Homeless received a Perfect 100/100 score from Charity Navigator. Less than 1% of the thousands of charities nationwide earn perfect scores. This score reflects our commitment to executing our mission in a fiscally responsible way while adhering to good governance and other best practices.



2020 EVENTS

NO PLACE LIKE HOME: Celebrating 40 Years of Advocacy

May 1, 2020

Zhou B Art Center

HORIZONS POETRY SHOWCASE

May 12, 2020

American Writer's Museum

LEADERSHIP CIRCLE RECEPTION

Spring 2020

SCHOLARSHIP AWARD CEREMONY

June 2020

Loyola Law School

GOLF OUTING

August 2020

Wilmette Golf Club

RIOT FEST

September 11-13, 2020

Douglas Park

CHICAGO MARATHON

October 11, 2020

Grant Park

VICTORY CELEBRATION

November 2020

HOMELESS MEMORIAL SERVICE

December 2020

Old St. Patrick's Church



Designed by CCH staff

WWW.CHICAGOHOMELESS.ORG