



**CHICAGO COALITION
FOR THE HOMELESS**

2023

YEAR IN REVIEW
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CHICAGO COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS

year in review / calendar year 2023

Chicago Coalition for the Homeless (CCH) organizes and advocates to prevent and end homelessness because housing is a human right in a just society.

Since 1980, CCH has built power and made change through community education, strategic campaigns, and policy initiatives that target root causes of homelessness across Chicago and Illinois.

Our work is led alongside grassroots leaders with lived experience of homelessness and in collaboration with a network of direct-service, advocacy, and other community partners. Together, we champion a world where everyone has a safe, welcoming, and permanent place to call home.



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ORGANIZING, OUTREACH, & COMMUNITY EDUCATION

CCH organizers and legal staff provide community outreach to students, youth, families, and adults experiencing and at risk of homelessness. Through outreach, CCH educates people on their rights and options, connects them to resources and legal aid, and engages those interested in advocacy.

Organizers develop and train people with lived experience of homelessness to become grassroots leaders. They guide strategy, speak to the media, provide testimony to elected officials, and serve on leadership committees overseeing CCH's many initiatives.

ORGANIZING BY THE NUMBERS

Organizers reached **2,000+** people impacted by homelessness across Chicago and 14 suburban and downstate communities.

Legal aid attorneys connected with **2,284** students and unaccompanied youth.

Our **Speakers Bureau** reached an audience of **3,087** during **68** events.

12 people participated in the **Horizons** creative writing program.

The **Edrika Fulford Mutual Aid Fund** distributed **\$103,000** in cash grants to **206** Illinoisans impacted by homelessness.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

EDRIKA FULFORD MUTUAL AID FUND



In March 2023, CCH and the Inclusive Economy Lab completed a 6-month qualitative research project on the **Edrika Fulford Mutual Aid Fund**. The goal was to better understand the impact of low-barrier cash transfer programs while also informing continuous quality improvement of the fund.

The full report of findings and policy recommendations is available online at chicagohomeless.org/MAF-ImpactReport.

"PARTICIPATING IN HORIZONS DEFINITELY *GIVES ME AN OUTLET FOR MY WORDS*, BECAUSE I HAVE A LOT IN MY HEART...WRITING POETRY, THIS IS BIGGER THAN ME.

WHEN I WRITE, IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT ME EXPRESSING MYSELF. *WHO AM I GOING TO TOUCH WITH THESE WORDS?*"



BROOKLYN SILAS
HORIZONS PARTICIPANT

“CCH IS LIKE MY SECOND FAMILY. I JUST LOVE BEING HERE AND ADVOCATING. BY SHARING MY STORY, I HOPE IT HELPS THE NEXT FAMILY AND PREVENTS THEM FROM GOING THROUGH WHAT I DID.”



PAT FRANKLIN
GRASSROOTS LEADER



POLICY ADVOCACY

CCH policy specialists, organizers, and grassroots leaders advocate in Springfield and City Hall for legislation and funding to remove barriers and increase resources for people experiencing homelessness.



STATEWIDE VICTORIES

CCH staff, leaders, and partners passed the following bills into law during the 2023 legislative session:

HOMELESS EDUCATION

HB 3116: Learning to Support Students Experiencing

Homelessness will ensure all school staff are trained to identify and support unstably housed students through in-service trainings implemented by Illinois school boards. Trainings will be developed by CCH legal and policy staff.

SB 1367: Public Housing Access Bill (PHAB) improves access to public housing for people with criminal records by creating standards in the background screening process. Originally passed in 2021, SB 1367 amends the law to require data collection, shorten look-back periods, allow applicants to present mitigating circumstances, and expand the term “public housing” to include any program that receives federal funding. *(With Restoring Rights and Opportunities Coalition of Illinois)*

PHAB

TANF

CCH led the effort to end a harmful 26-year-old policy of the state intercepting child support paid to Illinois families receiving TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families). This policy change was included as a provision within a supplemental budget implementation bill, which was passed during the state’s 2023 lame-duck session. Once implemented, families enrolled in TANF will receive the full amount of child support paid by the noncustodial parent.

Shared advocacy helped secure \$85 million in new money to support housing and homeless services in the FY24 state budget. These increases are part of Gov. Pritzker’s Home Illinois initiative, which creates a framework for ending homelessness in the state. CCH also won a small increase (5%) to the cash grants received by families enrolled in TANF.

(With the Responsible Budget Coalition)

BUDGET WINS

BRING CHICAGO HOME

Since 2018, CCH has been a lead partner of **Bring Chicago Home (BCH)**, which unites a broad coalition of policy advocates, elected officials, and community groups. Together, we organize to establish a dedicated revenue stream to fund housing solutions for Chicagoans experiencing homelessness.

As a result of our coalition's shared advocacy, City Council passed a resolution in November 2023 to put the Bring Chicago Home referendum question on the ballot. Efforts to bring the BCH proposal to voters spanned five years and three mayoral administrations.

Last fall's successful council vote was the result of years of organizing and coalition building by partners and grassroots volunteers across Chicago.

During the March 2024 Primary Election, Chicago voters were asked to give authority to the city to restructure the real estate transfer tax, with new revenue dedicated to affordable housing and wraparound services. While the measure ultimately failed to pass, we are incredibly proud of the BCH coalition's work to build community power, shift the public narrative on homelessness, and shape long-term solutions.



BRING CHICAGO HOME

In the months leading up to Election Day, CCH staff and leaders worked tirelessly to educate the public on how the BCH proposal would address homelessness in our city while countering a large-scale misinformation campaign from the opposition. We mobilized over 200 volunteers to share their testimony, canvass, and phonebank, with grassroots leaders presenting at 60 community events between January and March.

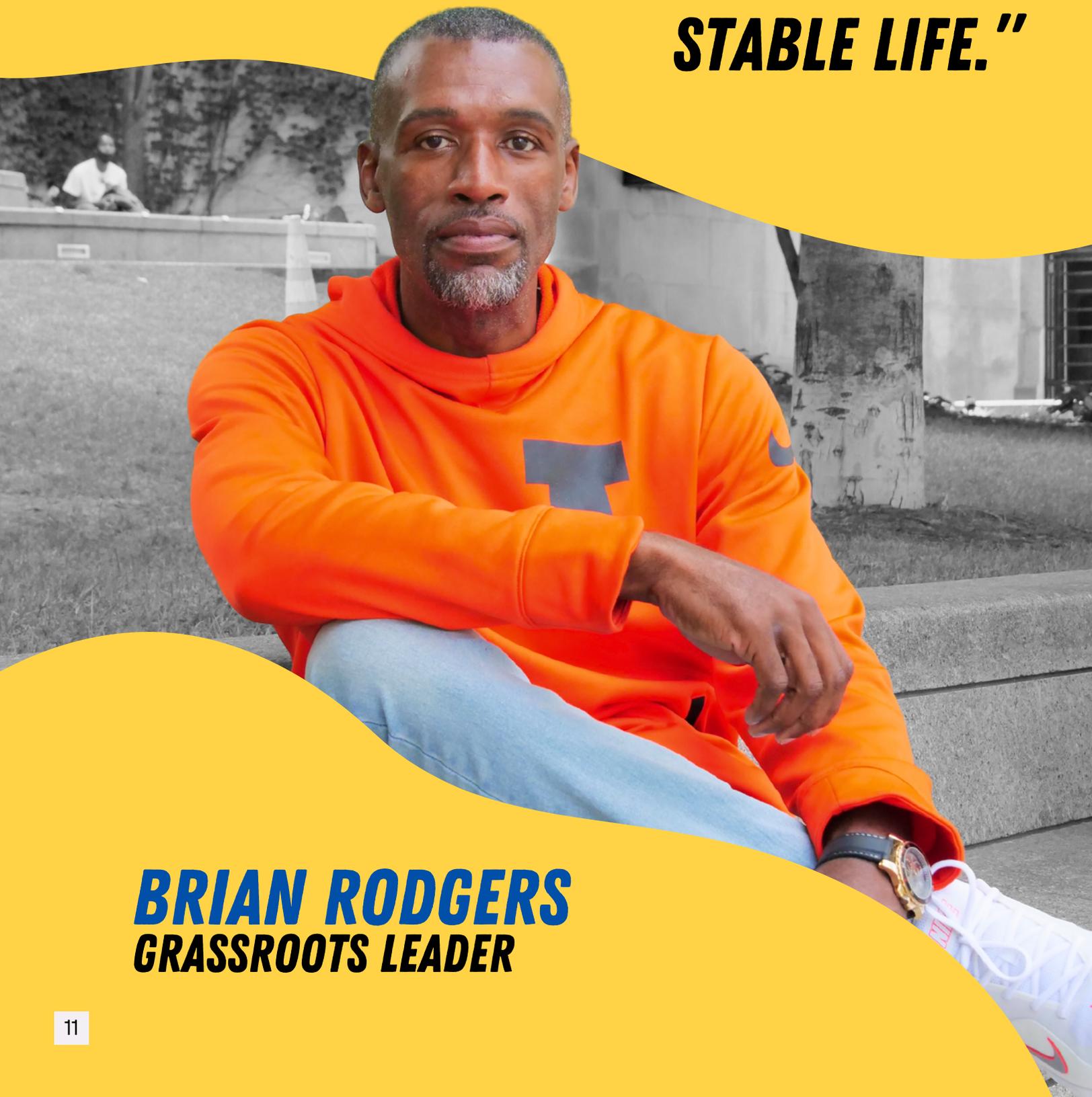
CCH co-led outreach on the West Side of Chicago, hosting six community canvasses, knocking thousands of doors, and covering priority precincts on

Election Day. We held a series of "March to the Polls" events at shelter sites, mobilizing people with lived experience to vote yes on BCH. These efforts not only engaged tens of thousands of Chicagoans in conversations about ending homelessness, but also developed the skills of volunteers that will continue to be part of our organizing efforts in the months and years to come.

The fight for housing justice continues. We invite all who believe that housing is a human right to join us for our next chapter.



***“A STABLE HOME CREATES A STABLE
MIND. A STABLE MIND CREATES A
STABLE LIFE.”***



BRIAN RODGERS
GRASSROOTS LEADER



THE LAW PROJECT

Our Law Project is the only legal aid program in Illinois dedicated to working with people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. The Law Project runs Youth Futures, a mobile legal aid clinic serving students and unaccompanied youth through age 24.

Legal staff represent clients with pressing legal needs, including access to public schools and supportive services, access to housing or emergency shelter, and access to medical care, public benefits, or the birth and ID records that allow them to apply for jobs and housing. The Law Project also assists clients with

sealing/expungement and family law issues.

IN 2023...

- Closed **442** legal cases for **344** clients
- **57%** of clients were students or youth aged 24 or younger
- Distributed **14,608** pieces of educational outreach materials
- Trained **1,488** service providers, educators, and attorneys at **23** sessions
- Awarded **\$96,000** in college scholarships to **24** students impacted by homelessness

IMPACT LITIGATION WIN

The **Law Project** partnered with the law firm of Porter Wright Morris & Arthur LLP and the ACLU of Illinois on a federal civil rights case filed in May 2022. The lawsuit alleged that plaintiff Julie Campos – then 19 and working toward securing housing stability for herself and her young son – was physically assaulted, falsely arrested, and detained by the Chicago Police Department (CPD) while cleaning up property damage at her place of

employment in the wake of George Floyd's murder.

Shortly after the lawsuit was filed, the officer primarily responsible for violating the client's constitutional rights was separated from the CPD. Ms. Campos later obtained substantial, undisclosed monetary damages as part of the settlement finalized in February 2023.



"I AM GLAD THIS LAWSUIT IS OVER AND THAT IT WAS SO SUCCESSFUL. THE OFFICER WHO ABUSED ME IS NO LONGER ON THE STREETS. HE - AND I HOPE OTHERS - KNOW THERE ARE CONSEQUENCES FOR THEIR ACTIONS."



JULIE CAMPOS
LAW PROJECT CLIENT



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are grateful for the strong coalition of people with lived experience, community members, direct-service and advocacy organizations, institutional partners, donors, and volunteers who are working every single day to prevent and end homelessness.

CCH is proud of what we have accomplished together and recognizes that much work remains. Knowing we stand stronger together, **thank you for being a partner in our shared mission of making housing a human right.**

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