



# CHICAGO COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS



# ANNUAL REPORT



**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, ex-offenders, 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

3,297

HOMELESS  
PEOPLE  
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.

YOUTH  
ATTORNEYS  
REACHED

2,377

YOUTHS  
THIS YEAR



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 housing campaign. From outreach, CCH staff develops 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

In October, we launched a new groundbreaking campaign called “Bring Chicago Home,” 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 a referendum to raise the public funds needed for Chicago to address homelessness in a city where over 80,000 people are homeless each year.

The proposal would increase Chicago’s Real Estate Transfer Tax (RETT) by 1.2 percentage points on properties sold for \$1 million or more – a threshold that would not affect more than 96% of all property owners. The concept garnered support from 66% of respondents in an April 2018 poll of likely city voters.

Chicago’s existing \$15.5 million allocation to homelessness-relief represents a small fraction of what other major cities commit to the same effort. That figure appears even more insufficient when compared to the number of Chicagoans experiencing homelessness. Chicago spends \$732.55 per person experiencing homelessness, a ratio that nine other cities – many of them less than half of Chicago’s size – exceed by exponential margins.

The proposal would help an estimated 36,000 people escape the hardships of homelessness over its first decade, fueled by \$150 million in new annual revenue. Funding would be used for rental subsidies, capital to preserve and construct affordable housing, as well as support services that ensure housing stability. This funding would be legally dedicated to these programs, precluding any future designs on diverting the resources for other uses.

Raising the transfer tax requires three steps: City Council must vote to include a question on the ballot of an upcoming election asking voters for permission to raise the RETT. Then, a simple majority of Chicago voters must approve the referendum question. Finally, the City Council must adopt a corresponding ordinance to institute the proposal into law.

Bring Chicago Home is looking to secure a city referendum for the March 2020 ballot. Efforts to slate it in February 2019 were thwarted by a few aldermanic opponents, despite sponsorship from more than 30 aldermen.



WITH THIS  
FUNDING  
**9,848**  
PEOPLE COULD  
ESCAPE  
HOMELESSNESS  
IN ONE YEAR



THE LAW  
PROJECT  
SERVED  
**449**  
CLIENTS  
THIS YEAR

**78%**  
OF LAW PROJECT  
CLIENTS WERE  
STUDENTS OR  
YOUTH

LEGAL  
STAFF TRAINED  
**2,337**  
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.

Six CCH attorneys closed 739 cases in FY18, a 34% increase in caseload from the prior year. Seventy-eight percent of the Law Project’s cases involved students or youth. Ninety-seven percent of cases were based in Chicago, with 19 cases in 12 suburbs, and two out-of-state cases.

Of our 317 youth clients, 65% were “unaccompanied” – homeless without support of family or legal guardian. Clients were 62% black, 15% Hispanic, 12% white and 11% other ethnicities. Seventeen percent of youth clients were LGBT. Twenty-five percent had a diagnosed disability.

Our attorneys advocated, testified, and wrote in opposition to Chicago Public Schools’ plans to shutter all four Englewood high schools, where homeless enrollment averaged 19%. Working with other advocates, we helped slow the process, so that only one school closed this fall.

In April, Youth Futures released an updated edition of the 17-chapter *Homeless Youth Handbook*, first issued in 2015. Available at [www.homelessyouth.org](http://www.homelessyouth.org), it covers issues impacting homeless youth.

The Law Project distributed 28,507 pieces of CCH-written informational brochures and materials covering 14 different topics, including Spanish versions. The legal staff trained 2,337 educators, attorneys, and youth-serving professionals.

# 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 2,377 youths and directly consulted with 914 in FY18. Averaging 20 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 Teen Living Programs.

Working with the Young Invincibles, our Youth Futures attorneys co-launched Streetlight Chicago, a mobile app for homeless youth in November 2016. With more than 2,300 downloads to date, we regularly update the content and expanded the app's Book-a-Bed feature this summer. Youth who work or attend school at night can now skip at-the-door lotteries to reserve a bed at any of three overnight youth shelters – The Crib, Ujima Village, and La Casa Norte.

ATTORNEYS  
CONDUCTED  
**234**  
OUTREACH  
SESSIONS  
LAST YEAR





The Law Project was able to secure a significant settlement this February on behalf of Robert Henderson, in the first substantive case filed under the Illinois Bill of Rights for the Homeless Act. The bill was advocated for by CCH and enacted in 2013.

Robert Henderson was living under a West Side viaduct in 2015 when city workers threw everything he owned into a garbage truck, including crucial medications, obituaries of loved ones, and a Bible given to him by a minister to his family. A city worker told Robert, a man in his 60s, to go find somewhere else to live.

Filed in March 2016 with pro bono support from Hughes Socol Piers Resnick & Dym, Ltd.,

the case was settled a few weeks before it was set for trial.

Robert was awarded \$27,615 in damages through the settlement.

Robert now lives in senior housing, volunteers at a soup kitchen, and serves as a member of the CCH Speakers Bureau.



## BILL OF RIGHTS SETTLEMENT

# STATE BUDGET

CCH brought 220 leaders and students to Springfield during 10 lobby days this past session. We also sought public pressure through protests and regular media coverage.

The budget bill, Senate Bill 108, funds homeless and housing services during FY19, which began July 1. Despite \$44 million in cuts to other human services line items, the homeless youth programs received a \$500,000 increase, to \$6 million, while funds for emergency and transitional housing gained \$1 million, to \$10.3 million. Funding for homelessness prevention grants and supportive housing line items remained the same from last year's budget package.

CCH also advocated with Heartland Alliance and the Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law for an increase to the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) cash grant. The cash grant provides families living in extreme poverty assistance in meeting their basic needs.

The Illinois TANF program has increased monthly benefits only twice in 22 years, with the last increase a decade ago. TANF is federally funded through the states. The Illinois grant has lost over 25% of its spending power because it has not kept up with inflation.

Through our advocacy, the first-year increase included in the Creating Opportunities for Illinoisans in Need Act (COIN Act, or SB3115) was included in the budgetary implementation for FY19.

The TANF increase, which took effect October 1, raised the benefit level from 21% to 25% of the federal poverty line to 30% FPL. For a family of three, the monthly TANF grant increased from \$432/month to \$520/month.





# COLLEGE HUNGER BILL

Also working with Heartland and Shriver, CCH passed the College Hunger Bill (SB351), securing bi-partisan support for a bill signed by Gov. Rauner in July. CCH leaders, including high school students, advocated for SB351 in Springfield.

The bill ensures that low-income, vocational-track community college students can apply for SNAP, guaranteeing access to food assistance for an estimated 40,000 Illinois students.

We passed a similar measure last year, but Gov. Rauner made an amendatory veto. After that, the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) allowed SNAP access through a rule change, effective last spring. We pursued legislation this year so that SNAP assistance could not be easily rescinded by another rule change.

Endorsed by IDHS, this new bill incorporates Rauner's prior objection by no longer requiring the Student Assistance Commission to help implement it. CCH policy and legal staff worked six years for this win, including efforts to negotiate an IDHS rule change from the Quinn administration.



**40,000**  
ILLINOIS  
STUDENTS  
NOW HAVE ACCESS  
TO FOOD  
ASSISTANCE



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 drafted and advocated for a bill, passed by the General Assembly in May, to bar courts from refusing to seal a person's record based on unpaid fines, though the debt is not erased. It builds on RROCI's successful 2017 legislation to allow broader record-sealing, a job-access issue.

CCH took six trips to Springfield with 45 reentry leaders from St. Leonard's Ministries and Haymarket Center to advocate. Gov. Rauner signed the bill in August. CCH and RROCI also mobilized the community to send Action Alerts to Rauner, urging him to sign it, as he did RROCI's five earlier job and record-sealing bills enacted in the prior two years.

# RECORD-SEALING BILL

# FIT PROGRAM

Our HomeWorks campaign persuaded the city of Chicago to pilot a housing program called Housing Support for Chicago Public Schools Families in Transition (FIT). This program marked the first time doubled-up families living in others' homes were recognized as eligible for Chicago-funded housing, a position CCH has long advocated.

Launched in fall 2017, FIT awarded housing subsidies and support services to 100 homeless families, including 399 children and 147 adults. After vulnerability assessments of more than half of the 265 families identified as homeless at six high-need elementary schools, 56% of families awarded housing were doubled-up and 44% lived in shelters.

As proposed by CCH, Chicago's Low-Income Housing Trust Fund covers rent subsidies for these families using funds CCH helped free from escrow, and part of the city's 4% Airbnb tax that CCH helped enact in 2016 funds supportive services. CCH organizers assisted with implementation, informing families on how to apply and organizing a core team of parents to advocate on implementation.

**446**  
**PARENTS AND**  
**CHILDREN**  
RECEIVED HOUSING  
THROUGH THE FIT  
PROGRAM





In 2016, the Law Project hired a former reentry leader to handle outreach to people living on the street. Street outreach more than doubled, with 256 contacts in FY18.

Our outreach worker assists our legal team with two lawsuits on behalf of people living on the street. CCH initiated a cross-department committee that meets regularly to address issues affecting people living on the street and in encampments.

Recently, this included securing print, TV, and radio coverage to challenge the city's June evictions on Lower Wacker.

Joining with the national "Housing Not Handcuffs" campaign, CCH and the ACLU notified 15 Illinois cities in August that their panhandling ordinances are unconstitutional. Six cities to date have repealed these rules, including the city of Chicago.



# STREET-LEVEL ORGANIZING



# SPEAKERS BUREAU AND MEDIA

We build community support with our Speakers Bureau and media outreach. In FY18, the Speakers Bureau's 15 homeless leaders reached an audience of 3,968 people at 82 venues, primarily schools, universities, and religious communities. Through outreach, the Speakers Bureau also mobilizes students to work with CCH. In the 2017-18 school year, 146 elementary through 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, CBS Chicago, and WBEZ Public Radio. Our website, [www.chicagohomeless.org](http://www.chicagohomeless.org), averages about 14,700 visits a month. CCH utilizes social media to keep supporters updated on our work, promote events, and share action alerts. We have more than 10,500 followers on Facebook, more than 6,200 on Twitter, and more than 1,000 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 2018, 18 scholarship recipients graduated with bachelor's degrees, a 43% graduation rate. This compares well to a 2013 national study that showed just 9% of students from the lowest income bracket (\$34,160 or less) had earned a bachelor's by age 24 (University of Pennsylvania and the Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education, February 2015).

During the 2018-19 school year, 17 scholarship recipients are attending colleges and universities in Illinois, Wisconsin, Georgia, Mississippi, and Washington, D.C.

**CCH HAS  
AWARDED  
\$365,000  
IN SCHOLARSHIPS  
SINCE 2004**



# LEADERSHIP & FINANCE

CCH is guided by Executive Director Doug Schenkelberg and a 25-member Board of Directors led by Angela Barnes. Serving since January 2016, Doug had extensive experience directing advocacy efforts at several Chicago non-profits, including Heartland Alliance, Lawyers' Committee for Better Housing, Greater Chicago Food Depository, and Forefront.



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 FY18, almost 5,000 individual donors provided 52% of CCH's revenue. Earning the highest rating on Charity Navigator, our charity relies on support from foundations, business sponsors, donors, and special events.



# 2019 EVENTS

## ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARTY

March 17, 2019  
River Roast



## JUSTICE CIRCLE RECEPTION

April 9, 2019  
Revolution Brewing



## HORIZONS POETRY SHOWCASE

May 2019



## LEADERSHIP CIRCLE RECEPTION

Spring 2019



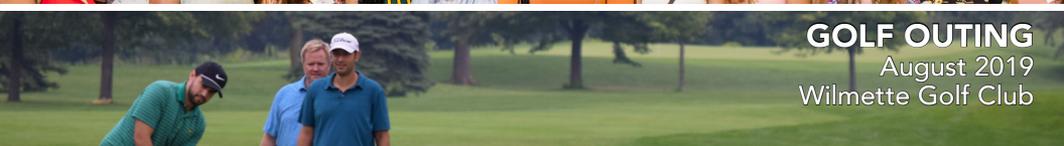
## SCHOLARSHIP AWARD CEREMONY

June 2019  
Loyola Law School



## GOLF OUTING

August 2019  
Wilmette Golf Club



## RIOT FEST

September 13-15, 2019  
Douglas Park



## CHICAGO MARATHON

October 13, 2019  
Grant Park



## VICTORY CELEBRATION

November 2019



## HOMELESS MEMORIAL SERVICE

December 2019  
Old St. Patrick's Church





Designed by CCH staff

[WWW.CHICAGOHOMELESS.ORG](http://WWW.CHICAGOHOMELESS.ORG)