



# CHICAGO COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS

2017 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  
REACH MORE THAN

**6,000**

HOMELESS  
ADULTS  
EACH YEAR



YOUTH  
ATTORNEYS  
REACH MORE THAN

**2,500**

YOUTH  
EACH 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 offer monthly outreach at 35 shelters across Chicago, including bilingual outreach in four shelters for Spanish-speaking residents, and creative writing outreach in four family shelters. Youth attorneys connect with youths at shelters, drop-in centers, street venues, and Chicago public high schools. Our State 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, including an Education Committee of homeless students and parents. 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.

# HOMEWORKS

Our signature campaign, HomeWorks, brings together parent leaders and family housing providers to create affordable housing opportunities for homeless families and improve school services for homeless students.

This year, the HomeWorks campaign persuaded the city of Chicago to pilot a new school-based housing initiative, called Housing Support for CPS Families in Transition (FIT). Announced in April, the program will offer permanent housing and support services to 100 homeless families attending six Chicago Public Schools (CPS) located in high-crime communities.

FIT is the **first city-funded housing program to include homeless families who live doubled-up** in the homes of others, often in overcrowded and unstable conditions.

CCH is currently collaborating on FIT's implementation, working with our HomeWorks partner CSH and Chicago's Department of Family and Support Services. FIT is assessing the most vulnerable among almost 300 homeless families with children attending six CPS grade schools on the South and West sides of Chicago. As of November, 75 families had already been identified as qualifying for permanent housing through the program.

Our Education Committee is meeting with families to inform them of the process, ensuring doubled-up families participate, and involving parents in giving feedback.



**100**  
FAMILIES WILL  
BE HOUSED  
THROUGH THE  
FIT PROGRAM









THE LAW  
PROJECT  
SERVED  
**457**  
CLIENTS  
THIS YEAR

**91%**  
OF LAW PROJECT  
CLIENTS WERE  
STUDENTS OR  
YOUTH

LEGAL  
STAFF TRAINED  
**2,221**  
EDUCATORS,  
ATTORNEYS &  
YOUTH-SERVING  
PROFESSIONALS



# THE LAW PROJECT

Celebrating its 20th year, our Law Project is the only legal aid program in Illinois dedicated solely to the civil needs of homeless people.

Clients are low- to no-income. They include homeless people taken in by friends or a relative, often in overcrowded 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. For people of meager financial means, these can be critical to their success.

Five CCH attorneys closed 551 cases for 457 clients in FY17, a 13.6% increase in caseload from the prior year. Ninety-one percent of the Law Project's clients were students or youth, and the remaining 9% of cases were on behalf of clients living on the street.

Ninety-six percent of cases were based in Chicago, with 24 cases in 18 suburbs.

Of our 349 youth clients, 66% were "unaccompanied" – most of them throwaway teens, former state wards, and very young adults who were homeless without support of family or legal guardian. Clients were 74% black, 13% Latino, 12% white and 2% other ethnicities. Twelve percent of youth clients were LGBT. Fifteen percent had a diagnosed disability.

A bilingual case coordinator, fluent in Spanish, handles client intake, including calls to our toll-free helpline. The Law Project distributed 34,970 pieces of CCH-written informational brochures and materials, available in both English and Spanish, covering 15 common legal issues. The legal staff trained 2,221 educators, attorneys and youth-serving professionals.





# YOUTH FUTURES

As part of the Law Project, three attorneys – one of them a formerly homeless youth – staff a mobile legal aid clinic called Youth Futures. Through outreach, youth attorneys connected with 2,502 youths and directly consulted with 527 in FY17. Averaging 21 clinic sessions a month, outreach sites include The Crib and Ujima 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.

ATTORNEYS  
CONDUCTED

250

OUTREACH  
SESSIONS  
LAST YEAR

During 2017, Youth Futures is piloting the representation of youth who face minor criminal charges related to homelessness, such as trespassing. Three cases have been handled to date, all successfully.







# STREETLIGHT

Youth Futures legal aid clinic developed a free mobile phone app containing resources for homeless Chicago youth. Working with technical staff from the Young Invincibles, StreetLight Chicago was launched in November 2016. A year later, the app had been downloaded 1,214 times, and a website version is now available.

Homeless youth in Chicago have a variety of resources available to them. But too often, they are required to rely on word-of-mouth or referrals and youth are left scrambling, unaware that a bed may be available at a nearby shelter. The StreetLight app and website provide youth with timely information while offering phone numbers for key resources and referrals, including youth shelters, health clinics, and drop-in centers. The “Book a Bed” feature, launched in February, allows youth who work or go to school at night to reserve a bed at a North Side shelter.

A part-time app content manager and our legal staff trained 1,295 service providers and youth on how to use and submit content for StreetLight. CCH designed outreach materials, distributing more than 5,000 palm cards and 300 posters.

# STATE BUDGET

CCH brought 550 leaders to Springfield during 12 lobby days this past session. We also sought public pressure through protests and regular media coverage.

In May, we organized 89 leaders to march on Gov. Rauner's Winnetka mansion. At that point, Illinois had not enacted a state budget for 23 months, jeopardizing vital social services, public universities and schools across the state. Ninety percent of homeless service providers had been forced to cut clients, services, and staff, and more than one million people lost access to critical social services.

Youth and shelter residents presented hundreds of signed postcards urging Gov. Rauner to stop holding up the budget process. The protest was covered on several TV stations' evening news.

In July, the Illinois House and Senate finally came together to enact a budget and revenue package, and override the Governor's veto. The budget bill, SB6, funded homeless and housing services for the remainder of FY17 and FY18. Based on FY15 numbers, the enacted budget bills reasonably funded homeless programs: They cut the homeless youth line item by 5% for FY18, while supportive housing took a 1.8% cut. Emergency and transitional housing funding remained the same, and homeless prevention grants to households increased 24% (\$975,000) to almost \$5 million.

Despite this, Gov. Bruce Rauner, with authority to effect FY18 cutbacks, proposed mid-year cuts to vital human services this fall, including homeless and housing service funding. If enacted this would include an additional 4% cutback to the homeless youth line item, a 2% cutback to supportive and transitional housing, and a 1% cut to homeless prevention grants.

Imploring Rauner to reconsider mid-year cuts, service organizations partnering with our State Network testified at a House Human Services Appropriations Committee hearing in November.







# RECORD-SEALING BILL

Bringing 110 reentry leaders to Springfield last legislative session, the Reentry Project helped the Restoring Rights and Opportunities Coalition of Illinois (RROCI) pass a state bill to expand record-sealing for most felonies, three years after completion of sentence. Before, only nine felonies were eligible for sealing.

The bill received bipartisan support when it was passed in May, and Gov. Rauner signed the bill in August. Effective immediately, HB2373 offers relief to people in reentry who face years of discrimination because of an old record.







## EX-OFFENDER HOUSING

The Reentry Project persuaded the Chicago and Cook County housing authorities to adopt pilot programs we designed to allow select ex-offenders to access housing. Under local rules, ex-offenders previously waited at least five years before being allowed to rejoin family in public housing or their own units.

In Cook County, a policy change advocated by the Reentry Project allows applicants to explain a past record if their name is called from the waitlist. Cook County has placed 63 ex-offenders in housing since 2016.

Because the Chicago Housing Authority has placed only 15 people due to long waitlists, we secured a promise from the CEO this fall to award 35 vouchers to reentry clients.



# HOMELESS YOUTH LEGISLATION

The CCH Law Project, public policy department and its statewide Youth Committee worked with other advocates to pass a three-bill package called “Three Steps Home.” CCH organizers brought Youth Committee members and hundreds of youth leaders to Springfield to help advocate.

This fall, Gov. Rauner signed two of the three bills to take effect on January 1. House Bill 3212 will let unaccompanied 16- and 17-year-olds access transitional housing. HB3709, drafted by CCH’s youth health attorney, allows youth ages 12 through 17 increased access to counseling sessions without parent/guardian approval.

Gov. Rauner made an amendatory veto of the third bill, HB3211, a measure to allow an estimated 40,000 vocational track community college students gain eligibility for food assistance through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Working with our partners at Heartland Alliance and the Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law, the College Hunger bill was reintroduced during the fall veto session. It passed the Senate 54-1, but did not make it to the House floor. It will be reintroduced in 2018.

# FREE BIRTH CERTIFICATES

CCH proposed legislation to offer free birth records for homeless people, via bills introduced in Cook County and Springfield. Cook County Clerk David Orr championed both measures. State Rep. Will Guzzardi sponsored the state bill that takes effect January 1. The Cook County Board enacted its ordinance in April, with HB3060 sailing through the legislature by May.

A year earlier, our youth attorneys persuaded Mr. Orr's staff to allow lawyers representing unaccompanied minors to apply for birth records for their clients, instead of requiring a parent/guardian's signature, which had not been legally mandated. Prior to this, CCH covered the cost of providing birth certificates for clients, spending \$4,188 in fees for 203 clients in 2016.

**CCH  
ATTORNEYS  
HELPED  
245  
CLIENTS OBTAIN  
BIRTH RECORDS  
THIS YEAR**







# **SPEAKERS BUREAU AND MEDIA**

We build community support with our Speakers Bureau and media outreach. In FY17, the Speakers Bureau's 15 homeless leaders reached an audience of 3,963 people at 73 venues, hosted primarily by schools, universities, and religious communities. Through outreach, the Speakers Bureau also mobilizes students to work with CCH. In the 2016-17 school year, 209 students were active. Another 184 students participated in service learning programs through a junior high, seven high schools, and three colleges/universities.

Staff and leaders are often featured in mainstream media, including the Chicago Sun-Times, Chicago Tribune, CBS Chicago, and WBEZ Public Radio. Our website averages more than 12,000 visits a month, with a staff blog. CCH has more than 9,700 Facebook followers and almost 5,500 on Twitter, with a new presence on Instagram. Social media posts can also be accessed on the home page of our website, [www.chicagohomeless.org](http://www.chicagohomeless.org)



# 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 2017, 14 scholarship recipients graduated with bachelor's degrees, 39% of the 36 students eligible to do so. 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 2017-18 school year, 18 scholarship recipients are attending colleges and universities in Illinois, Georgia, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Washington, D.C.

CCH HAS  
AWARDED  
**\$274,900**  
IN SCHOLARSHIPS  
SINCE 2004.



# LEADERSHIP & FINANCE

CCH is guided by a 29-member Board of Directors and Executive Director Doug Schenkelberg. 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. Attorney Angela Barnes succeeded Bernie Dyme as Board president 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 FY17, 5,400 individual donors provided 46% of CCH's revenue. CCH's FY17 audit shows revenues of \$3.3 million, with seven months' expenses in reserves. Ranked four stars by Charity Navigator, CCH relies on support from foundations, business sponsors, donors, and special events.

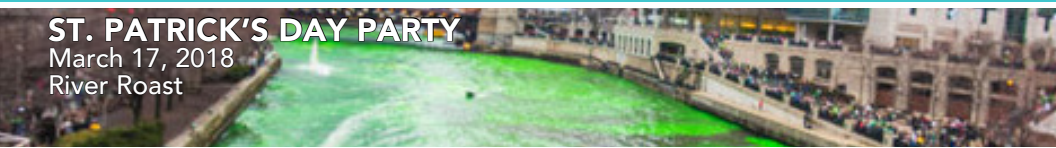




# 2018 EVENTS

## ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARTY

March 17, 2018  
River Roast



## JUSTICE CIRCLE RECEPTION

April 17, 2018  
Revolution Brewing



## HORIZONS POETRY SHOWCASE

May 22, 2018  
American Writers Museum



## LEADERSHIP CIRCLE RECEPTION

Spring 2018



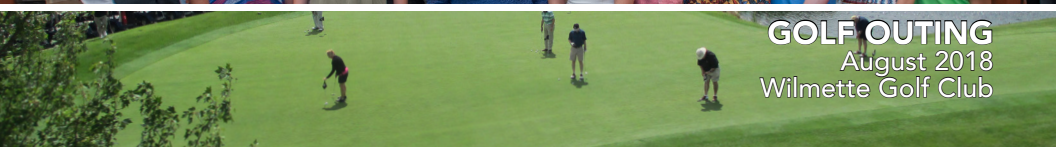
## SCHOLARSHIP AWARD CEREMONY

June 21, 2018  
Loyola Law School



## GOLF OUTING

August 2018  
Wilmette Golf Club



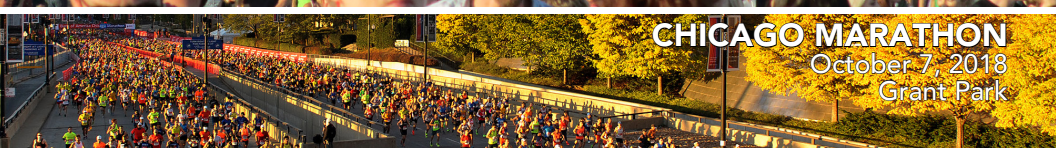
## RIOT FEST

September 14-16, 2018  
Douglas Park



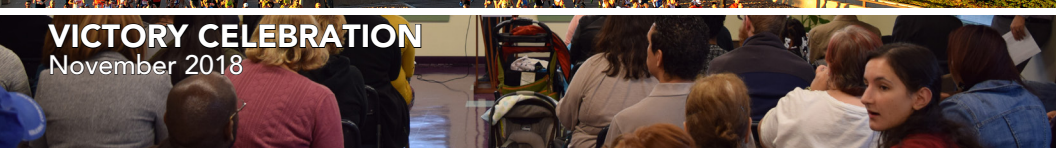
## CHICAGO MARATHON

October 7, 2018  
Grant Park



## VICTORY CELEBRATION

November 2018



## HOMELESS MEMORIAL SERVICE

December 2018  
Old St. Patrick's Church







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