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## About the Law Project of the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless

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 1997, CCH's Law Project has provided comprehensive legal aid services to students, unaccompanied youth, families, and single adults living doubled-up, in shelters, or on the street. Law Project staff represent clients with varied legal needs including educational rights, public benefits, housing, family law, criminal records relief, and accessing identification documents.

## Who We Serve

The Law Project serves individuals and families experiencing or at risk of homelessness. All are no- to low-income. About a third of CCH clients present multiple legal needs. In FY23, Law Project clients were 68% Black, 14% white, 13% Latinx, 4% multi-racial or another race, and 1% Asian/Pacific Islander; 64% were female, 34% male, 2% gender nonconforming or other gender. Nineteen percent had a disability, 21% were LGBTQ, and 45% of youth clients were unaccompanied, without a parent or guardian.

Some Law Project clients are denied healthcare or removed from lifesaving benefits due to clerical errors. Others are students wrongfully barred for enrolling in their local schools or denied financial aid after becoming homeless. CCH legal staff help people who struggle, often for months or years, to access the care and support they need now.

## **Our Impact**

Last year the Law Project:

- Closed 441 cases for 347 clients, 60% on behalf of children or youth
- With pro bono support, co-counseled three cases in federal court covering consumer rights (closed favorably), false arrest (closed favorably), and disability rights (ongoing)
- Reached 2,774 youth at 208 outreach sessions at youth shelters/drop-ins and high school legal clinics
- Reached 2,161 community members at 36 events
- Distributed 25,143 pieces of informational outreach materials
- Trained 606 attorneys, service providers, and educators

Recent CCH-advocated legislation passed with the support of Law Project attorneys includes:

- Creating a dedicated liaison at Illinois colleges and universities to provide support to students experiencing housing instability (2021)
- Requiring charter schools to waive fees and fines for low-income and homeless families (2022)
- Ensuring that expectant or parenting youth in the care of the Department of Children and Family Services have access to childcare (2022)
- Requiring Illinois school boards to conduct in-service trainings for all school personnel on how to support students experiencing housing instability (2023)