

NATIONAL LAW CENTER ON HOMELESSNESS & POVERTY

The National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty: Lawyers Working to End Homelessness

Each year, more than 3 million people experience homelessness, including 1.3 million children. Beginning in the early 1980s the number of homeless Americans grew dramatically. The face of homelessness became diverse. It began to include mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, and racial and ethnic minorities. *One-third of the homeless population is made up of families.*

The mission of the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty is to serve as the legal arm of the nationwide movement to prevent and end homelessness. The Law Center is the only national legal advocacy organization dedicated to preventing and ending homelessness. Our attorneys go into courtrooms and the halls of our legislatures to protect the needs of society's most vulnerable members.

Through impact litigation, policy advocacy, and public education, we address the root causes of homelessness at the local, state, and national levels.

Changing Laws & Changing Lives

The Law Center makes a crucial difference in the lives of millions of homeless men, women, and children across the country. Our programs:

- Ensure that homeless children are able to go to school
- Prevent domestic violence survivors from becoming homeless
- Help impoverished families when they are made homeless by natural disasters
- Hold the U.S. government accountable until the human right to housing is a reality for all
- Protect homeless people from discrimination based on their status
- Create homes and communities for homeless people from unused government property

Key Accomplishments

Major accomplishments include:

- **Increasing federal resources to combat and end homelessness.** The Law Center was instrumental in the May 2009 passage of the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act, which increased federal resources to prevent homelessness and to house those already homeless, and required that the federal government develop a plan to end homelessness. The Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness was released to the public on June 22, 2010.
- **Protecting the right of children to a good, stable education.** In a suburb of Pittsburgh, the Law Center fought successfully to enroll homeless children wrongfully declared ineligible because they were sheltered outside the district. As part of the settlement, the state Board of Education issued new guidelines to prevent this from happening to the more than 43,000 other homeless students living in the state each year.
- **Protecting homeless people from hate crimes.** The Law Center successfully advocated for laws in Maryland, D.C., Rhode Island, and Florida that add homeless people as a protected class to their hate crime statutes. Similar legislation is currently pending in several other states.
- **Protecting tenants from wrongful eviction.** The Law Center was instrumental in the passage of 2009's Protecting Tenants at Foreclosure Act, which provided tenants of foreclosure properties with unprecedented federal protections, including the right to 90-days notice prior to eviction or, in many cases, the right to stay in their home until the end of their lease.
- **Hosting a UN Rapporteur's tour of impoverished American cities.** The Law Center helped to plan a nationwide fact-finding mission for the UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing, Raquel Rolnik, who met with poor and homeless persons and government officials in New Orleans, Los Angeles, and

Washington, D.C. and other cities to assess the status of American homelessness. She concluded her trip by sharing her preliminary findings at the Law Center's 2009 National Forum on Housing as a Human Right.

- **Protecting homeless persons' civil rights.** The Law Center successfully advocated against anti-camping laws in Puyallup, WA, where homeless persons were harassed and arrested for sleeping in public. As a result of the Law Center's efforts, the Puyallup City Council declared a Homeless Awareness Day and is considering legislation to establish tent cities on Church property.
- **Leveraging over \$1,955,325 in pro bono support from law firms in 2008.** The Law Center partners with law firms directly and indirectly to enforce the rights and improve the lives of homeless and low-income Americans.

Major Funders

The Law Center has formed a variety of partnerships to accomplish our mission of ending and preventing homelessness. Listed below are some of the Law Center's major institutional and corporate funders in 2009:

Butler Family Fund; Cafritz Foundation; Community Foundation for the National Capital Region; Freddie Mac Foundation; Gates Foundation; Herb Block Foundation; Oakwood Foundation; Open Society Institute; Presbyterian Hunger Fund; Public Welfare Foundation; Shaffer Foundation; U.S. Human Rights Fund; and W.K. Kellogg Foundation

LEAP (Lawyers' Executive Advisory Partners to Prevent & End Homelessness)

LEAP is a national legal community philanthropic effort to help homeless and poor Americans achieve self-sufficiency. LEAP members provide financial support and pro bono legal services to help the Law Center prevent and end homelessness. LEAP members include the nation's top law firms. The following firms and individuals are LEAP members:

Sidley Austin LLP; Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld LLP; Blank Rome, LLP; Bruce Rosenblum; Covington & Burling LLP; Dechert LLP; DLA Piper; Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson LLP; Goodwin Procter LLP; Greenberg Traurig LLP; Hogan & Hartson LLP; Jenner & Block LLP; Jones Day; Katten Muchin Rosenman LLP; Latham & Watkins LLP; Morrison & Foerster Foundation; O'Melveny & Myers LLP; Schulte Roth & Zabel LLP; Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP; Sullivan & Cromwell LLP; and WilmerHale.

National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty Board of Directors

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