



PRO BONO REPORT 2021

Dear Friends,

Inner City Law Center is deeply grateful to our pro bono partners and volunteers who stepped up during an incredibly challenging year.

In 2020, law firms, in-house partners, volunteers, and interns fought fiercely for our clients, taking on cases big and small, and provided our Skid Row neighbors with critical resources ranging from hygiene kits to school supplies. More than 575 of you did whatever needed to be done to ensure that fellow Angelenos had safe and affordable housing, and a fighting chance at surviving this pandemic.

Thank you for all you did and continue to do for Inner City Law Center. Your passion is vital, your support is indispensable, and your advocacy is life-saving.

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vidhya R." with a stylized flourish.

Vidhya Ragunathan
*Director of Pro Bono
Inner City Law Center*



In **2020**

575+

Volunteers Provided More Than

15,000

Hours of Support Valued at

>\$7 MILLION

Tracking Constantly Changing Eviction Protections to Keep Tenants Safe

Every week, for close to a year, a steadfast team of pro bono partners from **Blank Rome, Hunton Andrews Kurth, Crowell & Moring, Hughes Hubbard and Reed, and Kirkland & Ellis** dug through the confusing and constantly changing patchwork of eviction rules and regulations to uncover and track tenant protections covering more than 80 cities in Los Angeles County.

"The eviction protection tracker has been invaluable to advocates not only at our organization, but across Los Angeles County. Eviction defense attorneys have consistently used our tracker to understand the local laws that apply to their case."

- Jake Crammer

Legal Fellow, Inner City Law Center

This work armed Inner City Law Center with the legal arguments we needed to protect tenants from losing their homes and also supported our successful efforts to convince the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors to expand their eviction protections.

Untangling the Paycheck Protection Program to Help Nonprofits Survive

As many nonprofits struggled financially to continue serving those hardest hit by the pandemic, a team of pro bono partners helped eligible organizations apply for the federal Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). Through live webinar presentations and legal clinics, our pro bono partners from **O'Melveny & Myers, Winston & Strawn, Morrison & Foerster, and Troutman Pepper Hamilton Sanders** assisted more than 180 nonprofit partners across California with their PPP loans.



Our pro bono attorneys became experts in PPP rules and regulations, providing substantive and meaningful guidance to organizations applying for PPP loans. For many, PPP funding became vital and allowed organizations to pay rent and salaries, keep the lights on, and provide aid to the most vulnerable individuals in their communities.

"We owe our profession to society's faith in the law, and I'm honored to work with Inner City Law Center to help build our collective capacity to change it for the better."

- Jonathan Yang

Associate, O'Melveny & Myers LLP

Kendall Brill & Kelly Steps Up to Defend Tenants Against Slumlords



Phil Kelley, Shauna Woods, Meaghan Lert, Alejandra Perez, Patricia Perello, and Carla Rossi from **Kendall Brill & Kelley (KBK)** answered our call for help representing tenants living in deplorable housing conditions, including rodent and termite infestations, broken windows, and severe utility failures. Instead of making the needed repairs, the building's slumlord owners harassed the tenants in an effort to bully and force them out of their homes.

“Despite the serial challenges and obstacles presented by the landlord and their counsel, the KBK team never wavered from their aim to protect the tenants and improve their housing and their lives.”

- Kim Miller

*Directing Attorney, Slum Housing Litigation
Inner City Law Center*

With unyielding passion and dedication, the KBK team listened carefully to our clients and aggressively litigated the case. They filed motions to compel discovery, conducted multiple building inspections, hired the best construction experts in the city, and developed close relationships with the clients. After years of litigation, the KBK team secured a life-changing settlement and our clients now have a safe and healthy place to call home.

Homeful.LA Provides Life-Sustaining Pandemic Resources

Homeful.LA, Inner City Law Center's volunteer and advocacy arm, continued mobilizing volunteers to tackle our housing and homelessness crisis during the pandemic. In 2020, volunteers assembled and distributed 500 hygiene kits to our unhoused neighbors, more than 150 book bags with school supplies, and holiday gifts to students and families in need. Volunteers also coordinated food deliveries to community refrigerators in neighborhoods hard-hit by COVID.

Weekend to End Homelessness: A Call to Action

During Inner City Law Center's Annual Weekend to End Homelessness, Homeful.LA hosted a virtual forum on race and homelessness, and organized a social media campaign to uplift public policies aimed at preventing homelessness in Los Angeles County.

“Housing Justice is Racial Justice. For far too long, the poorest and most vulnerable residents of Los Angeles have been deliberately kept out of safe, affordable, and reliable housing.”

- Deon Turner

*Public Policy Advocate
Inner City Law Center*

Alston & Bird Litigator Secures Vital Relocation Assistance for Family Fighting Eviction

The family Inner City Law Center represented lived in a dilapidated garage illegally converted into an apartment. Roaches crept from every corner and toxic mold covered the walls. It was a terrible and unsafe home in which to raise two young children. Despite severe health and safety risks, the landlord refused to make repairs or provide the legally required relocation payment. Instead, the landlord filed an eviction notice.

Inner City Law Center successfully fought the eviction attempt, but the landlord appealed the ruling. Luckily, Gregory Berlin, a pro bono attorney from **Alston & Bird**, joined

the case to handle the appeal. During many late nights, he unraveled the case and became an expert on its complex issues. The arguments by the landlord's attorneys were no match for Greg's impassioned advocacy. In court, the appellate judge stopped the eviction attempt and ordered the landlord to pay the family's relocation expenses. The landlord, still refusing to back down, filed a request for rehearing. Greg persisted and his skilled written advocacy resulted in the appellate court rejecting every argument made by the landlord and certifying the decision for publication, establishing great precedent for future cases.

"Even when the law was not on their side, it was clear that the landlord's attorneys were attempting to exhaust every legal avenue to evict this family. This seemingly never-ending legal process was exhausting for our clients, who expressed a strong sense of relief and gratitude when we finally won the case."

- **Greg Berlin**

Senior Associate, Alston & Bird

BakerHostetler Goes Above and Beyond for Our Veterans

When Mark A. Kadzielski from **BakerHostetler (Baker)** committed his pro bono practice to serving veterans, the strong bond between his team of colleagues and their clients became the firm's greatest reward.

Baker attorneys successfully represented a Marine Corps veteran sexually assaulted while in service, an injured widower who had served in the Army National Guard and Air Force, and a former member of the Army suffering from post-traumatic stress as a result of racist attacks during boot camp. The Baker team pored over medical and military records, and prepared briefs defending our clients' rights to VA benefits. They worked closely with the clients' support network and family members to put together compelling statements about the physical and mental trauma the clients had suffered.

The hard work and dedication of the entire Baker team, including C. Dennis Loomis, Stephanie A. Lucas, Jenna N. Scott, Niloufar Massachi, and Zoe M. Steinberg, has resulted in tens of thousands of dollars in back pay, as well as thousands of dollars in monthly benefits that each client will receive for the rest of their lives.



"We can see the Veterans Affairs West Los Angeles campus from our office and every day we are reminded of the brave veterans who live without basic rights like housing and healthcare."

- **Mark A. Kadzielski**

Partner, BakerHostetler LLP

2020 Pro Bono Heroes

Alston & Bird LLP
Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP
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BakerHostetler LLP
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The Judge Law Firm ALC
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Venable LLP
Walt Disney Company
Winston & Strawn LLP

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ICLC Pro Bono Team

Vidhya Rangunathan
Director of Pro Bono

Jazmine Smalley
Pro Bono Coordinator

Erin Thompson
Special Projects Manager

GET INVOLVED & TAKE ACTION

Pro bono partners are the lifeblood of Inner City Law Center
and a lifeline to our clients.

Learn more about our [pro bono](#) and [volunteer](#) opportunities, and
[click here](#) to sign up now to take on a pro bono matter.

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