



# 2023 IMPACT REPORT



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INNERCITYLAW.ORG



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## OUR MISSION



Inner City Law Center is a nonprofit poverty-law firm serving the poorest and most vulnerable residents of Los Angeles.

With generous support from donors, foundations, and dedicated volunteers, ICLC's diverse and talented staff fights for justice for individuals experiencing homelessness, low-income tenants, working-poor families, immigrants, people living with HIV/AIDS or other disabilities, and homeless veterans.

Inner City Law Center is taking on the worst homeless crisis Los Angeles has ever witnessed by fighting for housing and justice. We ensure that people experiencing homelessness and working-poor families have access to decent, safe, and affordable housing.

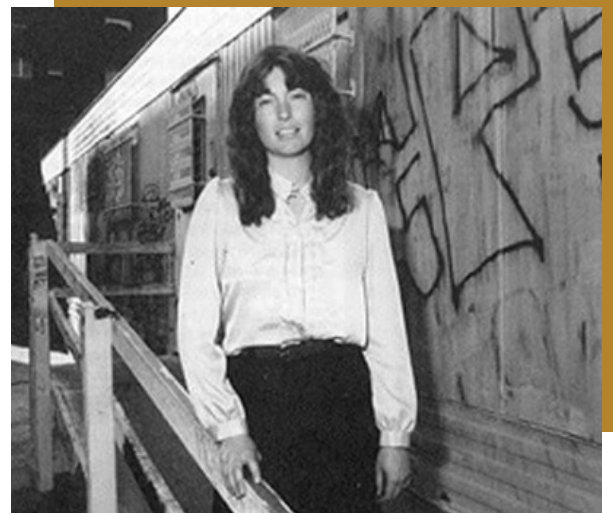
**Inner City Law Center's mission is to ensure decent, safe, and habitable housing for the enormous number of homeless and working poor families and individuals residing in Los Angeles.**

## OUR HISTORY

In 1980, Nancy Mintie graduated from UCLA Law School and moved to the Catholic Worker soup kitchen (aka the Hippy Kitchen) in Skid Row, where she began offering free legal services to people experiencing homelessness and the working poor residents of the neighborhood. This was the beginning of Inner City Law Center.

Born inside a rusty construction trailer behind the Catholic Worker soup kitchen, Inner City Law Center has always been guided by the fundamental principle that every person should always be treated with dignity and respect.

As the only full-time provider of legal services headquartered in Skid Row, Inner City Law Center's staff of over 130 (including more than 70 attorneys) provides high-quality legal representation for people who have nowhere else to go.



A BRIEF HISTORY OF

# INNER CITY LAW CENTER

**1985**

Benefit concert for ICLC featuring Brian Wilson, Christine McVie, Jackson Browne, and two dozen other rock luminaries

**1980**

Nancie Mintie founds ICLC  
Slum Housing Cases



**1994**

Dorothy Wolpert joins ICLC board; she has the longest tenure of any current board member

**1995**

Move to the Produce Hotel at 1309 E. 7th St.



**1997**

Blue Ribbon Citizens Committee on Slum Housing  
10 Staff

**2000**

Rosales slum housing case goes to trial  
Nancy Mintie starts Uncommon Good

**2001**

First Awards Luncheon

**2006**

Bellevue/Hujazi case settles for \$7 million  
Annual budget of \$1 million

Gloria Contreras joins ICLC team; she has the longest tenure of any current staff member

**2007**

16 staff



Adam Murray becomes Executive Director

**2009**

Launch Policy Advocacy Project  
Annual budget of \$2 million

**2008**

1st Strategic Plan: Policy Advocacy, Pro Bono, & Homeless Veterans Project

Launch Homeless Veterans Project

**2011**

2nd Strategic Plan: raising more money  
 & expanding our programs  
 Launch Homeless Prevention Program

**2012**

Launch HIV/AIDS Legal Services Project

**2013**

Valentini class action filed re Westwood VA campus



**2015**

3rd Strategic Plan: solidifying organizational platform,  
 expanding programs, and raising more money

Luncheon raises > \$1 million

Launch Countywide Benefits Advocacy Project

Launch Provider Alliance to End Homelessness

**2016**

Annual budget of \$4 million

**2018**

Launch Preventing and Ending Homelessness Project

Annual budget of \$6 million

**2019**

80 Staff

4th Strategic Plan: strengthen organizational infrastructure,  
 increase financial sustainability, expand services



**2020**

Annual Awards Luncheon streamed live due to Covid-19

ICLC 40th Anniversary

**2023**

Launch of Bringing Families Home Project

131 Staff

Annual budget of \$20 million

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

Dear Friends and Supporters,

I am proud to serve as the CEO of Inner City Law Center as we continue to fight to end homelessness in Los Angeles.

Last year Inner City Law Center provided legal services to over 3,100 Angelenos. These services helped our clients to remain stably housed or to move off the streets and into housing. In 2023 we recovered \$14.7 million for our clients. These are life-changing recoveries, as 38% of our clients live on less than \$10,000 a year.

As the number of unhoused people in Los Angeles continues to rise, the demand for Inner City Law Center's services has never been higher. Thanks to your help, we stepped up last year by adding ten lawyers to our staff and expanding several areas of our work.

In March we launched our new Bringing Families Home program to help unhoused and precariously housed parents obtain and maintain stable housing so they could be reunited with their children in foster care. In June we launched a new, bi-weekly Vital Documents walk-in clinic so Skid Row residents could secure the documents they need to access Section 8 housing or to apply for disability benefits.

We also celebrated key victories in statewide housing policy, including the passage of housing bills SB-4 and SB-423 (both of which Inner City Law Center co-sponsored) into law. SB-4 allows places of worship, religious organizations, and nonprofit colleges in California to streamline building affordable housing on their land, while SB-423 speeds up housing permitting across the state.

Inner City Law Center's commitment to ending homelessness and empowering our clients cannot be entirely captured by numbers. Last year our dedication to a people-first, trauma-informed, and anti-racist approach to housing justice led the State Bar of California to honor Inner City Law Center with their Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Leadership Gold Seal.

As we continue the fight against homelessness across multiple fronts, Inner City Law Center is honored to have you standing shoulder to shoulder with us.

Thank you for all that you do to make the work of Inner City Law Center possible.



Adam Murray



**ADAM MURRAY**  
Inner City Law Center CEO

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD PRESIDENT

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Friends and Supporters,

It was my honor to be elected as President of Inner City Law Center's Board of Directors at the beginning of 2023.

Inner City Law Center has accomplished much over our forty-four years of providing vital legal aid work in Skid Row. Inner City Law Center helps homeless veterans and others living on the streets while struggling with mental health issues to connect with the disability benefits that enable them to access healthcare and afford housing. We force landlords to bring their buildings up to code and to pay damages to the tenants who have endured slum conditions.

The greatest challenge that we are currently facing is the enormous increase in the need for legal counsel for tenants facing eviction. Because we know that receiving an eviction order increases someone's probability of emergency shelter use in the following year by 300%, we are doing everything we can to expand our eviction defense services.



### **KENNETH TRUJILLO- JAMISON**

Inner City Law Center  
Board President

Lawyers make an enormous difference to the outcomes of these cases. Decades ago, UCLA Law Professor Gary Blasi reviewed a random sample of 151 cases in which unrepresented tenants had asserted facts that, if proven, should have defeated the eviction claim. All of these tenants lost and were evicted from their homes.

Contrast that with the first six months of a San Francisco program that provided lawyers to tenants facing eviction—67% of represented tenants remained in their homes. In New York City, which passed a Right to Counsel in 2017, 84% of represented tenants remain in their homes.

At Inner City Law Center we know firsthand the impact that legal representation has for keeping families housed and for helping our clients move from the streets to housing. Now, thanks to years of tireless work by Inner City Law Center and our many partners, the City and County of Los Angeles are on the cusp of establishing a Right to Counsel for low-income renters who are facing eviction from their homes.

As we work to finalize and implement these Right to Counsel laws, we look forward to a day when every low-income Angeleno facing eviction has legal representation. More broadly, all of us at Inner City Law Center look forward to a day when no one is homeless in Los Angeles.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'K. Trujillo-Jamison', written in a cursive style.

Kenneth Trujillo-Jamison

# INNER CITY LAW CENTER

2023 BY THE NUMBERS

# \$14,718,255

DOLLARS RECOVERED FOR OUR CLIENTS

# 484

 ATTORNEYS, STUDENTS,  
LEGAL SUPPORT STAFF,  
AND VOLUNTEERS

# DONATED 14,764 HOURS

SERVING CLIENTS, FIGHTING UNJUST  
EVICTIONS, AND HELPING VULNERABLE  
ANGELENOS RECEIVE MILLIONS IN  
BENEFITS

# 728



PEOPLE KEPT IN THEIR HOMES

# 3,127

  
PEOPLE SERVED


# 1,728

  
CASES CLOSED


# 5,616

  
People impacted by our work

# 38%

  
Of our clients live on less than  
**\$10,000 a year**

# 50%

  
Of our clients live with a disability

## L.A. HOMELESS POPULATION

42.6%	Hispanic / Latino
31.7%	Black / African American
19.4%	White
3.1%	Multiracial or other race
2.2%	Asian American / Pacific Islander
1.0%	American Indian / Alaskan Native

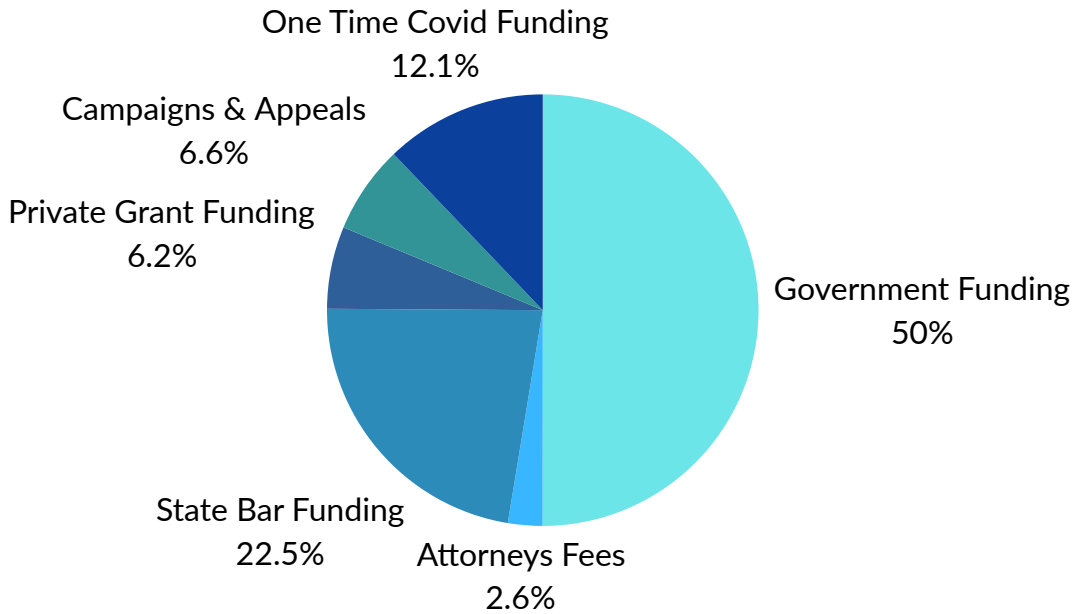
## OUR CLIENTS

42.1%	Hispanic / Latino
31.8%	Black / African American
14.9%	White
6.2%	Multiracial or other race
4.0%	Asian American / Pacific Islander
1.0%	American Indian / Alaskan Native

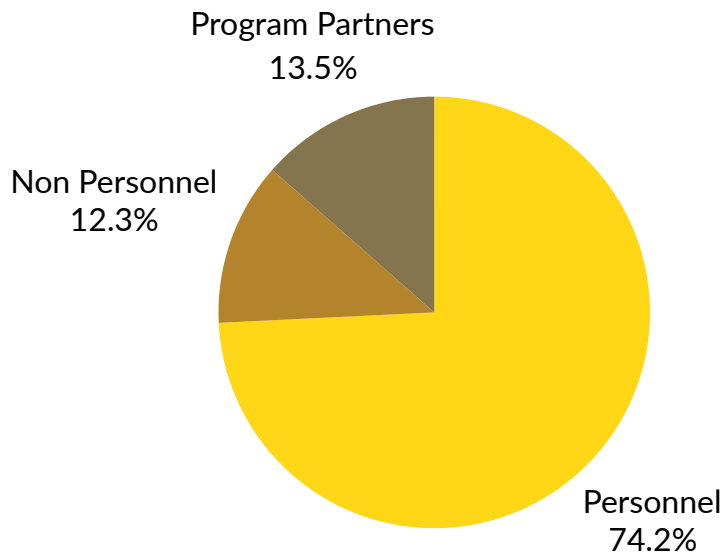


# Our Financials

## Funding



## Expenses



## Funding

Government Funding	\$10,163,680
State Bar Funding	\$4,573,182
Private Grant Funding	\$1,253,182
Campaigns and Appeals	\$1,342,600
One Time COVID Funding	\$2,466,233
Attorneys Fees	\$525,154
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$20,324,031</b>

(excludes in-kind donations)

## Expenses

Personnel	\$13,708,693
Non-Personnel	\$2,263,737
Program Partners	\$2,684,587
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$18,657,017</b>

(excludes in-kind donations)

# Homeless Veterans Project

Attorneys on Inner City Law Center's Homeless Veterans team work to obtain benefits for unhoused veterans who have disabilities as a result of their military service. We represent our veteran clients throughout the entire benefits process, which can often last for years.

When we launched our Homeless Veterans program in 1998, it was one of just a handful of programs in the country to offer free legal services to unhoused veterans.

Over the years our attorneys have represented veterans who have served in Iraq, Afghanistan, Vietnam, Korea, and even World War II. With over 25 years of experience serving veterans, Inner City Law Center has developed special expertise in assisting survivors of military sexual trauma, female veterans, and veterans of color.



In 2023 our Homeless Veterans team recovered **\$5,766,451** for clients and closed **155 cases**.

Our Homeless Veterans Project has a **96%** success rate, while the national average is **38%**.

Lee joined the Navy as a teenager. While in training he began hearing voices and hallucinating. Naval physicians dismissed his mental health symptoms, calling him "difficult". Lee was discharged with no access to VA benefits or healthcare and he became homeless.

After years of continuous follow-ups by Lee's determined lawyers, the VA finally reviewed his case. Almost ten years after we began working with Lee the VA issued a decision:

**Lee received over \$400,000 in retroactive benefits and will receive over \$3,600 a month for the rest of his life.**

Upon hearing the news Lee became very quiet and said to himself, "This is going to change your life."



## Tenant Defense Project

At Inner City Law Center we routinely see long-time tenants – even seniors – who are forced out when a new building owner wants to raise rents to maximize profits. Families lose their homes because of a single late rent payment. Without legal representation most of these tenants end up evicted. Many of them end up on the streets.

Inner City Law Center’s Tenant Defense Project fights to preserve safe and decent housing by standing up for low-income tenants who are in imminent danger of being evicted into homelessness.



Our lawyers achieve success in **over 99%** of eviction defense cases. We defeat the eviction **47%** of the time and **52%** of the time we negotiate a move out agreement that waives back rent, seals records, and provides our clients time for a soft landing.

In 2023 our Tenant Defense team saved over **\$3,388,971** for clients and closed **472 cases**.

Tenants without legal representation win their cases **less than 1%** of the time.

“I had written to other law firms and they turned me down until I got to Kaimi {at Inner City Law Center}, and when I got to him, he took my case. All during that time I was under tremendous stress. Can you imagine? You go to work, and you come home, and a lock is on your door, you can’t get in. You’re not given the opportunity to take the furniture out of your house. Nothing. Just, ‘get out or I’ll arrest you’? He stopped all that.

Without him, I wouldn’t be talking to you. I might be in a ditch somewhere downtown, laying on the curb on the sidewalk, all my dreams and visions gone, because I had no place to stay. He made a place for me to stay.” – **Melvin**, ICLC Client



# Slum Housing Program

It is unfathomable that we allow slum housing in 21st century Los Angeles. But we do. Most often, slum housing tenants are low-income people of color, immigrants, or people with disabilities who routinely face the most blatant forms of housing discrimination.

Everyone deserves a clean, safe and decent place to live. But here in Los Angeles, thousands of children and families live in slum conditions – and have the physical and emotional scars to prove it.



Inner City Law Center combats slum housing conditions by combining education, organizing, and litigation against slumlords who take advantage of tenants with limited housing options.

In 2023, our Slum Housing team represented **376 plaintiffs** in 15 habitability cases.

Guadalupe's family was living in uninhabitable conditions in Boyle Heights. Their building was infested with cockroaches and rodents, and their bathtubs, toilets, and sinks were constantly backed up and flooded.

Thanks to Inner City Law Center, the landlord paid a six-figure settlement and made extensive repairs to the building. Today the building has a new owner, and the Guadalupe's family is able to raise their children in a safe and clean home.

"The truth is that I wouldn't have known where to go with my children. Inner City Law Center, we are very thankful for all the help you gave us." - **Guadalupe**, ICLC Client



In 2023 Inner City Law Center's Slum Housing team secured more than **\$2.5 million** in damages on behalf of **99 clients** living in slum housing and forced slumlords to repair hundreds of housing units.

## Benefits Advocacy

More than 60% of people living on the streets of Los Angeles are living with a disability. Yet, all too often, they don't receive the benefits they are entitled to and need to survive. Complicated eligibility rules make assistance programs difficult to navigate and people without homes often do not have the vital documents they need to complete the process.



Inner City Law Center's Benefits Advocacy Project helps people navigate these complex programs, empowering them to act as their own advocates. For low-income and unhoused people living with disabilities, having access to public benefits can transform their lives and ensure they have a safe, stable home for years to come.

In 2023 we launched our Vital Documents Walk-In Clinic. Twice monthly, Inner City Law Center provides walk-in clients with assistance obtaining legal documents vital to receiving their public benefits—birth certificates, court records, fee waivers for drivers licenses, and so much more.

In 2023 our Benefits Advocacy Project closed **144 cases** and recovered **\$3,237,192** in benefits for clients.

**Over 83%** of our benefits advocacy clients win their cases, receiving the public benefits they so rightfully deserve.

I was sick, I couldn't work, and I was late with my rent. My green card was expired so that was stopping me from getting my disability benefits...**we were about to end up on the streets.** I felt really desperate. I called a lot of places looking for help until finally, I called Inner City Law Center. They saved us."

— **Rosa**, Inner City Law Center Client



# Preventing & Ending Homelessness Project

Inner City Law Center lawyers provide client-centered, trauma informed, holistic legal services to individuals and families who are at risk of homelessness or experiencing homelessness, and people living with HIV.

Inner City Law Center does whatever it takes to help homeless and precariously housed clients overcome barriers to stable housing. We provide legal advocacy for a wide range of issues, including clearing unpaid tickets, expunging criminal records, defending unlawful evictions, appealing the denial of public benefits, adjusting immigration status, obtaining important documents, certifying pets as emotional support animals, and much more.



In 2023 our Lawyers Preventing & Ending Homelessness program recovered over **\$1,755,797** for clients and closed **803 cases**.

Cristina left Honduras because she feared for her life as a transgender woman. During the lengthy asylum process, Cristina was diagnosed as HIV positive. Cristina's fear of deportation stopped her from seeking medical help and her health deteriorated.

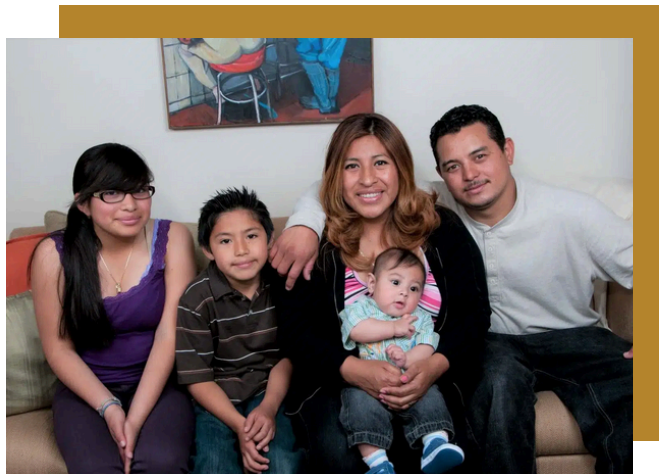
"It's sad when you are illegal in this country, plus HIV positive, and you are alone, and you are really scared to go and ask for help because you think that anybody could call immigration and you'll end up deported and die over there," said Cristina.



Inner City Law Center helped Cristina successfully apply for benefits. Now her days of living in isolation and fear are over. "Inner City Law Center didn't just treat me like another number, they helped me as a human being," said Cristina. "Now, I have my benefits, I have enough money to pay rent, to get food, clothes...I'm okay now."

## Bringing Families Home

Parents and guardians with children in the child welfare system often face a daunting number of challenges to keeping their families together or reuniting with children they've already been separated from: fighting evictions, securing public benefits, working to overcome homelessness, and more. That's why, in 2023 Inner City Law Center launched our Bringing Families Home Program.



Bringing Families Home provides holistic legal services to help parents experiencing or in danger of homelessness to create and preserve stable housing situations for their families. This prevents foster care placement, increases family reunification, and reduces the number of families in the child welfare system that are experiencing homelessness.

In 2023 our Bringing Families Home team recovered **\$244,882** for **37 families**.

**24%** of Inner City Law Center clients have children living in the home.

Between working full time, raising a young son, and facing complicated legal issues with Child and Family Services, Thomas was struggling, but making things work. Then, he received a notice to vacate his home.

Thomas and his son lived in a guest house while his landlord lived in the main house. Thomas had no idea his landlord had defaulted on his mortgage payments until he received a notice to vacate from the bank. Without housing, Thomas knew he would lose custody of his son, who would end up in foster care.

Luckily, Thomas was referred to Inner City Law Center's Bringing Families Home program. Our lawyers reached out to the bank's attorney. After much discussion and debate, the bank agreed to let Thomas and his son to stay in their home!



# Housing & Homelessness Policy

Inner City Law Center's Policy Advocacy Project fights for humane and effective public policies that allow more tenants to remain in their homes, resists efforts to criminalize homelessness, and promotes the creation and preservation of affordable housing on the scale that is necessary to ultimately end homelessness.

ICLC works closely with a broad spectrum of partners to advocate for housing policies that result in more people having access to the most basic of human needs – a home.



## Local Advocacy

In 2023 ICLC won major tenant protections in the City and County of Los Angeles that will ensure families can stay in their homes. These include:

**Universal Just Cause:** Universal Just Cause ensures that landlords will not be able to evict tenants without a justified reason such as failure to pay rent, nuisance, or lease violations. It also requires that in cases where landlords evict tenants without an approved reason, the landlord will be required to pay tenant relocation costs.

**Preventing Small Dollar Evictions:** ICLC successfully advocated for a policy requiring that tenants owe more than one month's rent before a landlord can pursue an eviction. This ensures that tenants have some time to pay back rent and are not evicted in cases of clerical errors.

**Strengthening Rent Control:** ICLC successfully advocated to limit rent increases in the City and County of Los Angeles to 4% this year. Without this advocacy, rents could have risen as high as 10%, forcing many families into homelessness.







# Housing & Homelessness Policy

## State Advocacy

In 2023 ICLC helped pass three major bills to keep families in their homes and expand affordable housing opportunities while successfully killing one bill that would have further criminalized homelessness.

**Senate Bill 567 (ICLC Supported):** Senate Bill 567 strengthens statewide tenant protection by ensuring that landlords only evict tenants if there is just cause to do so. It also creates a right to sue landlords who fraudulently evict tenants.

**Senate Bill 4 (ICLC Co-Sponsored):** Senate Bill 4 created a streamlined process for religious organizations and nonprofit colleges to develop affordable housing on their property, regardless of local zoning restrictions. It creates more opportunities for 100% affordable housing, especially in neighborhoods where affordable housing is not currently an allowable use.

**Senate Bill 423 (ICLC Co-Sponsored):** Senate Bill 423 ended the sunset on SB 35 and continues an extremely successful policy to support cities and counties in meeting their housing needs for families at all income levels. SB 423 makes affordable housing easier to build and incentivizes new mixed-income housing opportunities.

**Senate Bill 31 (ICLC Opposed):** Senate Bill 31 would have criminalized sitting, lying, or sleeping on public right of ways, regardless of whether homeless Californian's were offered housing or shelter. With opposition from ICLC and our partners, this legislation was successfully neutralized.

## 2024 Advocacy

In 2024 ICLC will continue advocating to keep families housed and to expand affordable housing opportunities. We will:

- Advocate for increased and ongoing funding for affordable housing.
- Promote policies to allow mixed-income and affordable housing in single-family zones.
- Ensure every tenant in Los Angeles has access to an attorney when they are facing an eviction by passing and implementing a Right to Counsel.

## Housing Justice Fellowships

Every year, more and more Angelenos are struggling financially, facing unlawful evictions at the hands of unscrupulous landlords, ending up in tent cities, and being forced to live in unsanitary and hazardous conditions.

Inner City Law Center recognizes that we need more attorneys doing eviction defense work in order to meet the ever-increasing number of clients facing homelessness. To that end, in 2020 Inner City Law Center established our Housing Justice Fellowship.



Inner City Law Center's Housing Justice Fellowship is a two-year program aimed at recent law school graduates seeking to focus their legal careers on housing work. The goal is to fast-track motivated public interest students onto the ICLC team, give them guidance and mentorship, and train them to become expert housing justice advocates.

**Since its inception, Inner City Law Center has hired 29 fellows from law schools around the country.** We've developed a targeted orientation for our fellows, providing them with a formal training curriculum on topics ranging from legal ethics and trial skills to eviction defense law and procedure.

Our fellows engage in fast-paced eviction defense litigation and handle all stages of cases from pleadings to discovery, motions, hearings, settlement, and trial. Through their work, our Housing Justice Fellows play an integral role in preserving safe and affordable housing for our community.

Inner City Law Center congratulates our Housing Justice Fellows on being sworn into the California State Bar.

Pictured left to right:  
Joseph Kim,  
Derrick Moon,  
Jenna Karvunidis,  
Ishvaku Vashishtha  
(Equal Justice Fellow),  
Herbert Martinez,  
Isa Badia Bellinger



## Our Pro Bono Program

Pro bono attorneys, paralegals, and other legal professionals are heroes at Inner City Law Center. We simply could not take on all of the cases that we do without the help of our dedicated pro bono partners.

Each year, our pro bono partners help keep low-income tenants housed, fight for families to access safe and affordable housing, advocate on behalf of unhoused veterans who were unfairly discharged from the military, assist with housing policy and strategy, and help our clients remove barriers to income and housing.



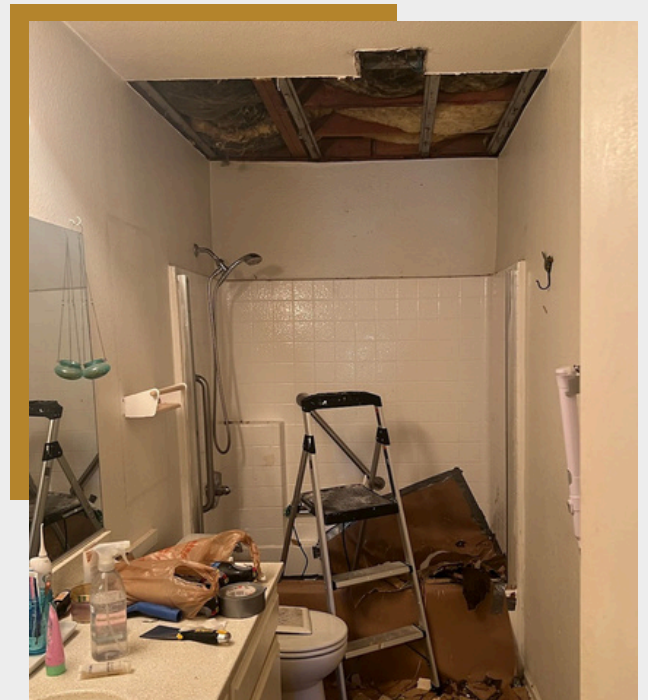
*ICLC client Ross with his pro bono attorney Neil Thackor of Norton Rose Fulbright.*

In 2023 **484 volunteers** donated **14,764 hours** (valued at \$7.5 million!) to Inner City Law Center and our clients.

Rat and cockroach infestations, mold, no heat or hot water, and unsafe common areas – these were some of the conditions our 42 clients faced. Their landlord told them “I like renting to Latinos because they don’t complain.”

After the landlord evicted our clients and lied about the relocation money they were owed, our pro bono partners at Troutman Pepper jumped in to file suit against this slumlord.

Troutman worked closely with ICLC staff to negotiate a successful settlement of \$2 million, ensuring each client received near \$50,000 for the damages and distress they endured. This life-changing outcome allowed our clients to finally obtain safe housing.



“Pro bono allows Inner City Law Center to serve a vital role – it allows ICLC to expand the services and resources we can provide to our clients and provides an opportunity for members of the private bar to serve individuals and communities close to their heart.”

– **Vidhya Ragunathan**, Director of Pro Bono

# Clinics, Workshops, Trainings, and More

In addition to the free legal services we offer, Inner City Law Center hosts special clinics and workshops every day of the week to support, educate, and empower the communities we serve – including struggling veterans, families in crisis, people with disabilities, renters facing eviction, and people experiencing homelessness.

In 2023 we hosted **86** clinics, workshops, trainings, and outreach events!

**60** Trainings for non-profits, government agencies, and the general public.

**5** Hygiene Kit Donation & Assembly Drives to provide basic necessities for those experiencing homelessness.

**2** Back-to-School Drives where we collected, assembled, and distributed school supply bundles to youth experiencing homelessness.

**2** Community Resource Fairs with dozens of services in the heart of Skid Row.



# Our Annual Awards Luncheon

On June 14, 2023, more than 400 lawyers, volunteers, clients, staff, and supporters like you came together to celebrate Inner City Law Center's 23rd Annual Awards Luncheon at the Omni Los Angeles Hotel. Together, our incredible network of supporters raised over \$810,000 to help fund Inner City Law Center's fight to end homelessness! At the luncheon, Inner City Law Center presented former L.A. Board Supervisor Sheila Kuehl with the 2023 Humanitarian Award and Troutman Pepper law firm with the 2023 Katharine Krause Award.



# Thank You to Our 2023 Awards Luncheon Sponsors

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Judicate West

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You've seen our impact, now it's your chance to help us do even more.

Homelessness in Los Angeles is a humanitarian crisis, and we can't afford to let it get worse. You can keep vulnerable people in Los Angeles from falling into homelessness by becoming a monthly donor to Inner City Law Center. It is as simple as visiting [innercitylaw.org/hero](http://innercitylaw.org/hero) or scanning the QR code below.

When you become a monthly donor, you become part of something bigger: the compassionate movement to end homelessness. Thank you!





# INNER CITY LAW CENTER



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