

PRO BONO REPORT

2023



1309 E. 7th St. Los Angeles, CA 90021
(213) 891-2880

INNERCITYLAW.ORG

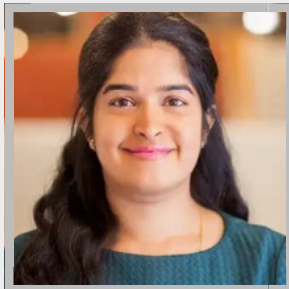
 [inncitylawcenter](https://www.linkedin.com/company/inncitylawcenter)

 [inncitylawcenter](https://www.facebook.com/inncitylawcenter)

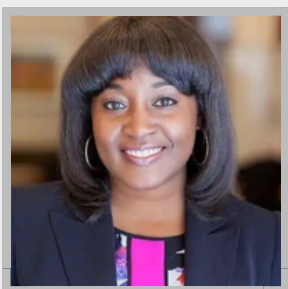
 [inncitylaw](https://twitter.com/inncitylaw)

 [inncitylawcenter](https://www.instagram.com/inncitylawcenter)

MEET OUR PRO BONO TEAM



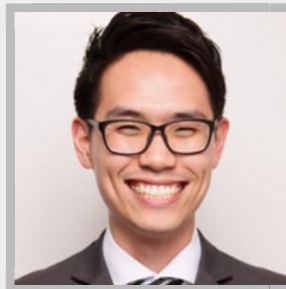
Vidhya Rangunathan
Director of Pro Bono



Erin E. Thompson
Special Projects
Manager



Jazmine Smalley
Eviction Pro Bono
Coordinator



Ted Lee
Staff Attorney



Kevin Arauz
Volunteer and
Outreach Coordinator

Dear Partners,

For 44 years, Inner City Law Center has fought for safe and affordable housing for everyone in Los Angeles. In 2023, our work became even more critical. As vital COVID-era protections ended, Los Angeles County saw an unparalleled rise in evictions and the number of people living on our streets increased.

As our clients struggled to move off the streets or to remain housed, you — our law firm, in-house, student, and community partners — stepped up and answered our call. You represented tenants facing eviction and veterans seeking benefits and discharge upgrades. You forced slumlords to bring their buildings up to code and to pay damages to their tenants. You utilized your special skills to negotiate down tax debts and draft end-of-life documents. You researched issues impacting our clients' right to housing and helped us to promote public policies that will reduce homelessness and improve our clients' lives. In total, you donated more than \$7.5 million worth of services to ICLC and our clients last year.

For all you have done and continue to do, thank you. We appreciate your time, support, and dedication to our organization and clients more than you know. We look forward to years of collaboration and partnership.

Sincerely,

Vidhya Rangunathan
Director of Pro Bono

YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE



Pro bono is vital to the work we do. If you are interested in learning more about our pro bono program or joining our pro bono efforts, click [here](#). If you are interested in general volunteer opportunities with ICLC, click [here](#).

YOUR IMPACT IN 2023

484
PEOPLE

You spent 14,763 hours serving clients, fighting unjust evictions, and helping vulnerable Angelenos receive millions in benefits.

484 attorneys, students, legal support staff, and non-legal volunteers donated their time to Inner City Law Center in 2023.

14,764
HOURS

\$7.5
MILLION

These hours are valued at more than \$7.5 million dollars.

OUR 2023 PRO BONO PARTNERS

Alder Law

Allen Matkins LLP

Alston & Bird LLP

ArentFox Schiff LLP

Barley Snyder

Beneficial State Bank

Bird Marella P.C.

Blank Rome LLP

Boies Schiller LLP

Brown Goldstein & Levy LLP

Bryan Cave LLP

Cohen Williams LLP

Cooley LLP

Covington & Burling LLP

Crowell & Moring LLP

Davis Wright Tremaine LLP

DLA Piper

Duane Morris LLP

Foley & Lardner LLP

Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP

Greenberg Glusker LLP

Halpern May Ybarra Gelberg LLP

Hogan Lovells LLP

Hughes Hubbard LLP

JAMS

Just Solutions Collective

Katten Muchin Rosenman LLP

Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton LLP

King & Spalding LLP

Latham & Watkins LLP

Law Firm of James Judge

Loeb & Loeb LLP

Manatt, Phelps & Phillips LLP

Mattes & Mahon, PC

Mayer Brown LLP

Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP

Musick, Peeler & Garrett LLP

Norton Rose Fulbright LLP

O'Melveny & Myers LLP

Paul Hastings LLP

Perkins Coie LLP

Proskauer Rose LLP

Quinn Emanuel Urquhart & Sullivan, LLP

Robins Kaplan LLP

Seyfarth Shaw LLP

SGG Immigration LLP

Sheppard, Mullin, Richter &

Hampton LLP

Shook, Hardy & Bacon LLP

Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher &

Flom LLP

Steptoe & Johnson LLP

Southern California Gas Company

The Walt Disney Company

Torrey Firm

Troutman Pepper Hamilton

Sanders LLP

Venable LLP

Willenken LLP

Willkie Farr & Gallagher LLP

Winston & Strawn LLP

PRO BONO PARTNERS UTILIZE GROUNDBREAKING TECHNOLOGY TO HELP FIGHT EVICTIONS

WHAT IS THE TENANT POWER TOOLKIT

The Tenant Power Toolkit is a collaborative effort between the [The Debt Collective](#), [The LA Tenants Union](#), [The Anti-Eviction Mapping Project](#), anti-eviction lawyers and legal service providers including [Gary Blasi](#), one of California's best known housing justice lawyers. We designed this toolkit to keep people in their homes, fight evictions, fight rent debt, and build the collective power of tenants. Together, we have the power not only to fight back against the system, but to change it.

[LEARN MORE ABOUT US](#)

In July of 2022, at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, ICLC partnered with Gary Blasi and The Debt Collective to develop and launch a unique online platform that allows tenants facing eviction anywhere in California to respond to the unlawful detainer action that has been filed against them.

Dozens of ICLC's pro bono partners are now utilizing the Tenant Power Toolkit to help tenants avoid default judgments and preserve their housing at weekly legal clinics at the Downtown Public Library and elsewhere. As of today, over 100 pro bono partners have helped more than 200 clients avoid default judgments with the Tenant Power Toolkit.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING SURVIVOR KEEPS HOUSING

ICLC's client Susan* is a survivor of human trafficking. She and her family had lived in their home for eight years when she received an eviction notice alleging an unauthorized assignment and sublet, despite her continuous tenancy and presence on the original lease.

Attorneys Oliver Gold, Jacob Dean, Lauren Trambley, and Elissa Ronquillo of Perkins Coie LLP partnered with ICLC to preserve Susan's housing. The Perkins team worked to analyze the facts and understand Susan's priorities. First-year associate Elissa deposed the landlord's representative and pressured the landlord to meet their legal obligations.

The landlord eventually agreed to dismiss the case. ICLC staff attorney Jeff Newman said, ***"Perkins Coie used their considerable resources to do very thorough discovery and motions, which is sometimes exactly what one needs to get opposing counsel to dismiss the case."***



STRUGGLING RETIREE GETS A HELPING HAND

Jim* is a retiree who found himself unable to meet basic needs like rent and groceries due to a reduction in government assistance. The final straw came when Jim received a traffic citation. He could not pay the citation or the resulting fines, and the courts refused relief.

Luckily, Shauna Woods and Gina Ahmar from Allen Matkins LLP, along with Ana Reisner, Ana Madrazo, and Sharon Rogers, stepped in to advocate for Jim. They studied his case, prepared for trial, and took a bold step by moving to dismiss the case. They succeeded! The dismissal removed a tremendous financial burden off Jim and brought him one step closer to getting back on his feet.

* Names have been changed and photos may not depict ICLC clients. We take client privacy seriously and make these changes to protect client confidentiality.

FIGHTING SLUMLORD FOR BETTER LIVING CONDITIONS



In 2020, Kimberly Klinsport from Foley & Lardner LLP agreed to serve as co-counsel in a case with some of the worst living conditions our attorneys have ever encountered. ICLC's clients were living with rampant infestations, lack of proper electrical and plumbing systems, dry rot around doors and windows, and cracked floors and ceilings. Most tenants had lived in their units for more than 20 years, yet requests for repairs were met with eviction notices, harassment, and offers of paltry amounts of money to move out.

Kimberly put together a team of experts, including Kendall Waters, William Lawther, Mai-Anh Tran, Jesus Torres, David Miller, Tami Smason, Kristina Fernandez-Mabrie, and Alyssa Titcher. The Foley team propounded written discovery and noticed depositions. They pushed opposing counsel to provide detailed responses by taking discovery disagreements to the judge. Over the next three years, they executed strategic plans and spearheaded settlement negotiations, which resulted in the clients in this building receiving more than \$1 million and helping pave the way to affordable and healthy housing.

REMOVING FINANCIAL BARRIERS TO HOUSING



Michael* is a hardworking truck driver who faced a string of financial struggles after work slowed down during the COVID-19 pandemic. Michael came to ICLC because his debts, including nearly \$10,000 in tax debts, were unmanageable.

Steve Boulanger, a Walt Disney Company attorney with expertise in tax law, answered our call for assistance and jumped right in.

After researching the relevant laws and reviewing Michael's financial records, he determined that Michael's taxes and debts had been wrongfully levied. Steve fought tirelessly and after negotiating with the government authorities, 100% of Michael's financial debts and penalties were discharged. The outcome was life-changing for Michael and his financial health.

FIGHTING FOR VETERANS

PROTECTING HOUSING FOR A VULNERABLE VETERAN

ICLC's client Corey* is a veteran who was grappling with sudden electricity and water shutdowns and persistent plumbing problems in their home. These issues jeopardized Corey's housing stability and exacerbated disabilities that Corey incurred while in service. Corey's requests to their landlord for reasonable accommodations went unanswered and with a limited income, they had no choice but to stay.

When Corey received an eviction notice, Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP attorneys Chris Jones, Estrella Lucero, Irvin De La O, and Jay Srinivasan substituted into the case. They navigated complex housing laws and utilized a client-centered approach to connect with the client. After determining that the client preferred to move out, the team from Gibson negotiated a five-figure relocation agreement for Corey and ensured the return of the security deposit. This outcome allowed Corey to finally move into a stable home with a sense of peace.

OBTAINING A LIFE-CHANGING DISCHARGE UPGRADE FOR A MARINE

Glen* served in the United States Marine Corps for four years. While deployed in Iraq, he experienced psychotic symptoms, including auditory hallucinations. Glen fulfilled his overseas duty but, after returning stateside, he spiraled downward. He was discharged with an Other Than Honorable status, which prevented Glen from accessing VA benefits. As a result, he soon became homeless.

We called on our friends at Mayer Brown LLP to join us on the case. Katie McCarthy led the representation with Mike Mackey supervising. Together, they reviewed the client's voluminous medical and military records, worked closely with him to establish the facts, and submitted a brief seeking a discharge upgrade for Glen.

Katie prepared tirelessly for a full evidentiary hearing before the review board and, during the week of July 4, the Board unanimously granted Glen's request for an honorable discharge, recognizing the conduct that led to his discharge resulted from mental health challenges he endured during service. After years of experiencing chronic homelessness, Glen will finally receive all the benefits he is entitled to as a veteran.

GETTING LONG DESERVED JUSTICE FOR A VIETNAM VETERAN



In 2019, ICLC lawyers met Harry*, a Vietnam war veteran who served as an infantry direct-fire crewman. When his unit was ambushed and he was physically injured, Harry received medical treatment, finished his term, and—after failing to hear about future assignments—believed he had completed his military service. Eight years later, Harry was detained by the Army for being AWOL, and received an Other than Honorable discharge status.

Crowell & Moring LLP stepped up. Attorneys Daniel A. Sasse, Cynthia Brady, Vivian Le, and Narain Kumar, took on Harry's case and fought for nearly four years. The Crowell team argued that over the years, Harry never received any additional orders or communication from the military. They provided additional documentation to the review board and continued pushing until finally Harry received the outcome he deserved—an upgrade to an Honorable Discharge, along with the vital benefits that come with this upgrade. Harry's medals were also reissued—including his Purple Heart and Vietnam Service Medal with four bronze service stars.

ANGELENOS SUPPORTING THEIR NEIGHBORHOOD

ICLC's Homeful.LA initiative harnesses the power of volunteers to meet the immediate needs of individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness. In 2023, our Homeful.LA team worked with more than 135 volunteers who collected and assembled over 1,000 hygiene kits, 250 items of clothing, and 400 backpacks with essential school supplies. These items were shared with dozens of community partners and more than 1,300 individuals and families experiencing housing insecurity.



BRINGING VITAL RESOURCES TO OUR COMMUNITY

In 2023, ICLC hosted a day-long resource fair at our office. This Community Connect Day provided our Skid Row neighbors with the legal, social, and health-based services and resources necessary to help them along the path to safe and affordable housing.

More than a dozen community organizations and agencies provided tenants' rights materials, assistance obtaining vital documents, information about accessing public benefits, health screenings, and food and other supplies for local residents and their pets. The event was so successful that we held a second one just a few months later, and we have continued these events into 2024.



TRAINING FUTURE HOUSING ADVOCATES

Since 2022, ICLC has partnered with Southwestern Law School to teach an Eviction Defense Clinic, which allows public interest-focused students to advocate for low-income tenants facing evictions. Many students have continued their work with ICLC as post-graduate fellows and staff attorneys. ICLC is grateful for this partnership and the students who fight for our clients.



"In our polarized culture it is easy to fall into negativity and cynicism, instead of working for positive change. I want to work to make communities better places, especially communities that are disadvantaged, lack resources, and lack access to legal representation."

Alejandro Gonzalez, Clinic Student and ICLC Intern



"My goal is to ensure that any legal knowledge I obtain through school and externships directly contributes to the greater good and amplifies the voices of those who may otherwise be unheard in the legal system."

Sarah A. Kreager, Clinic Student and ICLC Intern



"I am passionate about public service work because as the child of Black immigrants, I understand the inordinate amount of time and energy that marginalized communities spend navigating institutions, systems, and policies without a roadmap or guidance."

Shara Darden, Clinic Student and ICLC Intern