



BPI PROGRAM OVERVIEW

PUBLIC HOUSING

BPI's public housing work is an outgrowth of its groundbreaking *Gautreaux* public housing desegregation lawsuit against the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA). As counsel for public housing residents in the *Gautreaux* case, BPI lawyers have worked for over 40 years to break down the racial segregation and economic isolation that produced what may have been the worst public housing system in the nation. Today, BPI promotes both housing mobility and the revitalization of public housing communities.

Current Initiatives:

- BPI works on Chicago's Public Housing Transformation, focusing on the following issues:
 1. **Comprehensive physical planning.** BPI staff serve on working groups that oversee redevelopment at 11 CHA sites where concentrated public housing is being replaced with mixed income communities. BPI is working to ensure that the planning efforts include not just the development of mixed income housing, but that also the key components of healthy, viable communities such as good schools, parks, programming for children and youth, retail and commercial development, and the like.
 2. **Compassionate relocation.** BPI's support of the CHA Transformation Plan was predicated on the need for compassionate relocation sensitive to the needs of residents forced to move. We have continued to monitor and urge improvements in CHA's initially very poor relocation system in the ten years the Plan has been underway.
 3. **Adequate social and supportive services.** CHA claims the Transformation Plan will "rebuild lives", not just housing. To that end, BPI urges effective, appropriate services be provided to all CHA families, whether moving to mixed income developments, private housing with vouchers, or traditional public housing. BPI helped develop an intensive supportive service model now being piloted at two developments. CHA's new services program, FamilyWorks, already incorporates lessons learned from the pilot program.
 4. **Traditional, 100% public housing developments.** Approximately one third of CHA's family public housing will remain in traditional, 100% public housing

developments. These families are likely to be the most troubled, and located in the least advantageous locations. BPI questions the wisdom of keeping these developments in their current form, and is working with CHA to revise its long term goals for these developments, as well as advocating for ways to address the very significant service needs of the families.

5. **Mobility counseling.** One of the most important lessons of the Gautreaux case is the efficacy and importance of mobility counseling to assist families to move to neighborhoods of opportunity. Whenever appropriate circumstances arise, BPI works to ensure that effective mobility counseling is offered to relocating families, or families otherwise in a position to take advantage of such a program.

Milestones:

- 2009** BPI publishes *The Third Side: A Mid-Course Report on Chicago's Transformation of Public Housing*, which examines CHA's Plan for Transformation in its tenth year. It provides an in depth assessment of what has gone well, and what has not, and makes recommendations for the many remaining years of Plan implementation.
- 2006- 2007** BPI helps develop and launch a pilot program providing in-depth social services and mobility counseling for hard-to-house CHA families at Dearborn Homes and Madden/Wells.
- 2000-2008** BPI serves as a member of each Working Group overseeing development at 10 CHA mixed-income redevelopment site. Gautreaux court orders are required for development at each site.
- 1999** BPI goes on record in support of CHA's Plan for Transformation, conditioned on compassionate relocation of residents.
- 1995** Gautreaux Court designates Henry Horner area as first "Revitalizing Area," authorizing public housing replacement within a mixed-income development.
- 1987** After years of CHA incompetence, BPI secures appointment of Receiver to build new scattered site public housing.
- 1976** BPI's *Gautreaux* U.S. Supreme Court victory results in regional Section 8 mobility program.
- 1969** BPI wins *Gautreaux* litigation and court imposes locational requirements on CHA new scattered site housing

Current BPI Staffing:

Alex Polikoff, Lead Counsel and Director
Julie Elena Brown, Senior Staff Counsel
Kate Pomper, Staff Counsel
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