

## 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 30 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 to develop public housing in successful mixed income communities
  2. Compassionate relocation sensitive to the needs of residents forced to move
  3. Adequate social and supportive services
  4. Building mixed income communities that are viable and inclusive
  5. Effective mobility counseling for families choosing housing vouchers to maximize their chances to move into neighborhoods that provide the best possible life opportunities
- Together with others, BPI is working to create a new national housing mobility program stemming from the successful *Gautreaux* Assisted Housing Program. The idea springs from a proposal in a recently published book by BPI's Alexander Polikoff, *Waiting for Gautreaux: A Story of Segregation, Housing, and the Black Ghetto*. The proposed new program would target the neighborhoods with the most severely concentrated poverty in approximately 15 metropolitan areas, allocating 50,000 Housing Choice Vouchers annually to families who want to move. It would build on the lessons of the *Gautreaux* program, *Moving To Opportunity*, and other successful mobility programs, and would operate separately from the regular Housing Choice Voucher program.

#### Milestones:

- 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.

- 2005** In response to litigation, CHA agrees to reporting mechanism for lease-up in mixed-income developments.
- 2003** BPI, with partner organizations, brings Wallace litigation charging CHA with resegregating CHA families through Section 8/HCV relocation.
- 2001** New *Gautreaux* "Opportunity Area" mobility counseling program begins with cooperation of BPI, CHA and Leadership Council for Metropolitan Open Communities.
- 2001** Under threat of litigation, CHA agrees to independent monitoring of relocation process under auspices of former U.S. Attorney Thomas Sullivan.
- 1999** BPI goes on record in support of CHA's Plan for Transformation, conditioned on compassionate relocation of residents.
- 1997** U.S. Appellate Court upholds order that public housing redevelopment efforts are not exempt from *Gautreaux* court orders.
- 1995** BPI begins community revitalization initiative in Horner area (renamed West Haven), striving to organize area residents and involve social service providers, schools, and government agencies in addressing neighborhood's most pressing non-housing needs.
- 1995** Court designates Henry Horner area as first "revitalization area," authorizing demolition and 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, Staff Counsel
- Kelli Harsch, Staff Counsel
- Nadia Underhill, Polikoff-Gautreaux Fellow
- Katie Hill, Polikoff-Gautreaux Fellow