



SOME ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE BPI POLIKOFF-GAUTREAUX FELLOWSHIP

WHY THE “POLIKOFF-GAUTREAUX” FELLOWSHIP?

The Fellowship was created in 1999 to honor Alexander Polikoff who served as BPI's Executive Director for 29 years, and Dorothy Gautreaux, the public housing activist who gave her name to Polikoff's most significant lawsuit. Through the landmark *Gautreaux* lawsuit, Polikoff has helped thousands of public housing residents live in non-segregated communities throughout Chicago and changed the face of federal public housing policy.

WHY WAS BPI CREATED? WHAT HAS IT ACCOMPLISHED?

BPI was founded in 1969 by prominent Chicago businessman and social activist Gordon Sherman on the premise that the business and professional community has a special responsibility to confront the problems of modern society. Assembling a small group of like-minded supporters, he created BPI to fight for the public interest. Since its inception, BPI's accomplishments illustrate the organization's wide-ranging commitment to equal justice and a better quality of life for all Chicagoans. For example, through a combination of legal and policy advocacy BPI:

- Helped improve life opportunities for thousands of victims of racial discrimination by the Chicago Housing Authority
- Led a successful legislative initiative to increase the availability of affordable housing in the job-rich Chicago suburbs
- Launched a community-wide effort in a neighborhood comprised largely of public housing to ensure that neighborhood children from birth to eight (and their families) are supported with programs and services that promote the intellectual, emotional, and physical well-being necessary for future educational and life success
- Partnered with the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice to develop a blueprint of system reform with a detailed action plan

WHAT WORK DO FELLOWS PERFORM?

As a result of the diverse range of issues BPI's work addresses and the complicated political dilemmas they present, working at BPI requires a variety of skills, creativity, and a willingness to go beyond traditional legal remedies to bring about social change. During a typical day, a BPI attorney or policy analyst might do any of the following:

- Negotiate the components of a site plan for a new mixed-income community in a working group of public housing residents, community members, housing developers, the Chicago Housing Authority and City of Chicago staff
- Conduct research and determine early learning program priorities for a high needs Chicago community
- Conduct research and assist in drafting municipal ordinances and state legislation to increase affordable housing
- Draft a motion to enable the construction of public housing in the context of creating a mixed-income community
- Develop a policy proposal and advocacy strategy to restore community trust in the Chicago police

WHAT DO FELLOWS SAY ABOUT THE FELLOWSHIP?

- *In my first six months as a Fellow, I had the opportunity to research complex legal issues for BPI's pro bono representation of Chicago's Inspector General in a case before the Illinois Supreme Court, participate in community meetings relating to the education-focused redevelopment of a historic public housing complex, and analyze local and federal public housing policies and programs – all while learning from committed and accomplished colleagues.*

Emily Blumberg, 2011 Fellow

- *BPI is one of the few places in the country where you can combine law, policy research, advocacy and organizing strategies in order to make a difference on major public equity issues confronting our society today. For people who want to bring about social change, the Polikoff-Gautreaux Fellowship is a perfect fit.*

Nick Brunick, 2000 Fellow
President, BPI Board of Directors