

**2020**

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**BPI**  
*For a Just Society*

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## LETTER FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

### Dear Friends, This is a year unlike any in our history.

There has certainly been no more important time for BPI's advocacy. We are working hard to dismantle systems of injustice, co-create structures that empower communities, and address some of the most critical challenges facing Chicago today in police accountability, criminal justice reform, housing, and early childhood learning.

The ravages of a global pandemic have magnified the effects of systemic racism across our country, state, and city—we have seen deep structural inequalities disproportionately borne by Black and Brown communities. Live-streamed images of police brutality have laid bare what so many have chosen to ignore and what many communities have known and lived for far too long: that systemic racism pervades our criminal justice system with devastating impact on individuals, families, and communities.

As BPI strives to meet this moment of change, we invite you to view our work in action on the pages of this report.

As BPI's new Board President and Executive Director, we are appreciative of the contributions to these efforts made by so many individuals—BPI's staff and Board, community and philanthropic partners, and generous friends and supporters. Among them are two extraordinary individuals to whom BPI owes an enormous debt of gratitude: Hoy McConnell, BPI's Executive

Director for over 20 years until his retirement in March of this year, and Nick Brunick, BPI Board President for the past seven years. Their vision, leadership, and commitment have deeply impacted every aspect of BPI's mission, work, and organizational life — and will for many years to come.

As we look ahead, we know that BPI's work in pursuit of a just society will continue to demand unity of purpose, fierce commitment, and a bold level of optimism. We are deeply grateful to all of you who stand with us in partnership and common cause, fueled by our shared commitment to racial justice and equity.

Sincerely,



**Jonathan M. Kaden**  
BPI Board President



**Cara Hendrickson**  
BPI Executive Director

# JUSTICE

The BPI Justice Reform team advocates for reducing the size of the criminal legal system and eliminating the racial disparities that permeate it. Utilizing the principle that those closest to the problem are the experts in the solution, we work in coalition with a wide variety of stakeholders to advance our decarceration and supportive reentry work.

Our decarceration work is focused on government policies and community campaigns that reduce the rate of imprisonment and the number of people held in custody or under custodial supervision. We use a two-fold approach to doing this work: rethinking prisons and releasing or diverting people from prison.



**REFORM**

## RETHINKING PRISONS

BPI partners with the **Illinois Coalition for Higher Education in Prison** and the **Freedom to Learn Campaign** to help with the expansion of quality college-in-prison programs across Illinois. These efforts have included:

- researching and drafting briefings for advocates and legislators
- development of communications strategies for various campaigns
- strategic planning for coalitions



## RELEASING/DIVERTING

We support policies and legislation that advance sentencing reform, decriminalization, and mechanisms of release, as well as advocating for the increased use of executive clemency. We do this work in collaboration with key advocacy organizations that work closely with impacted people and their families. BPI has provided public education on drafting clemency petitions; representation of an incarcerated individual serving an excessive sentence; consulting with advocates regarding legislative strategy; and drafting of materials for subject matter hearings before the Illinois General Assembly.



## PARTNERSHIP FOR HOUSING ACCESS

This pilot program provides Housing Choice Vouchers to graduates of the Circuit Court of Cook County Drug Court Rehabilitation Alternative Probation (RAP) program, in partnership with the Housing Authority of Cook County and TASC (Treatment Alternatives for Safe Communities). Justice-involved individuals commonly face a lack of safe and affordable housing and needed support services, and this pilot program seeks to fill a critical void in reentry support.

## THE CHICAGO 400 ALLIANCE

The Chicago 400 Alliance is dedicated to providing policy support to formerly incarcerated individuals affected by Illinois residency restrictions. BPI has supported events to raise awareness of the 1,400 people incarcerated past their release date as a consequence of residency restrictions. In partnership with the Chicago 400 Alliance and other advocates, BPI has advanced changes to address these restrictions.

# POLICE

**BPI's Police Accountability Program works to enact systemic police reforms in Chicago and to ensure that those most directly affected by the reforms play an active role in developing them.**

Since 2016, BPI has provided extensive support to the **Grassroots Alliance for Police Accountability (GAPA)**, a coalition of community-based organizations that has developed and advocated for an ordinance that fundamentally reimagines the relationship between the Chicago Police Department and the communities it serves. This ordinance would create new partnerships to bring police officers and residents together to build mutual trust and increase public safety at the neighborhood level, strengthen the police accountability system, and give civilians a powerful new role in police oversight.



# ACCOUNTABILITY



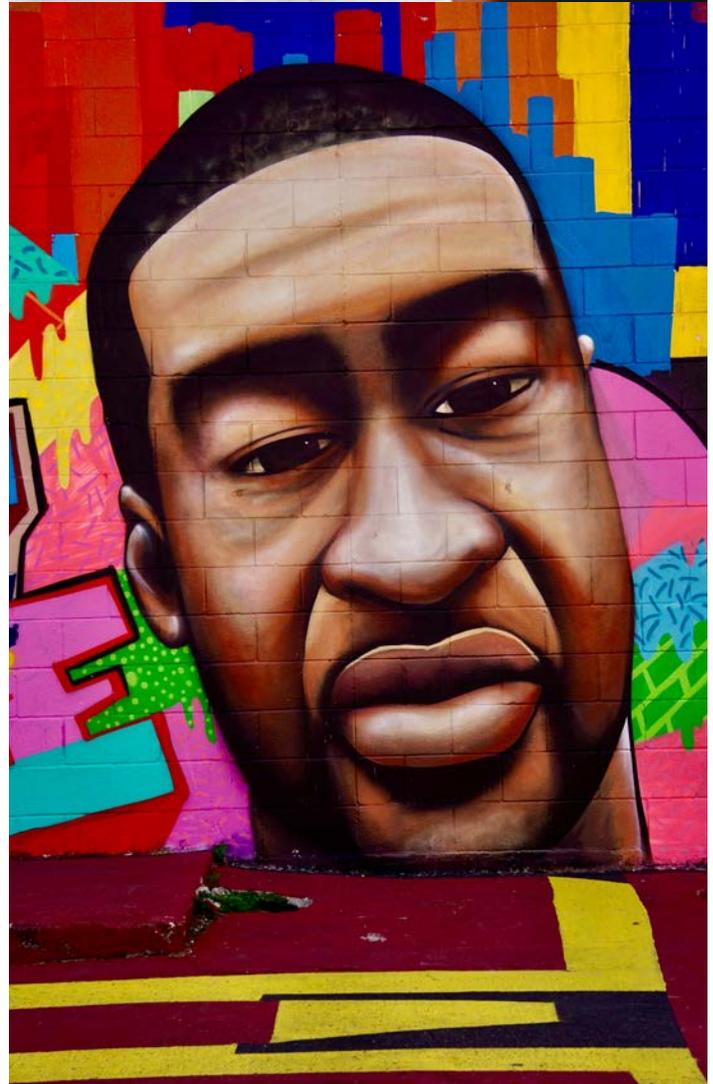
## A CITYWIDE CIVILIAN COMMISSION

BPI has provided support to the Grassroots Alliance for Police Accountability (GAPA) as it worked with aldermen and City of Chicago officials to introduce an ordinance to create a citywide civilian commission. The commission will advance systemic police reform by playing a key role in selecting leaders, including the Police Superintendent, developing strategic goals and priorities for the Police Department, and working with the Police Department to ensure policies and priorities are rooted in best practices and grounded in the needs and values of the community.

In the wake of the police killing of George Floyd, with worldwide attention focused on oppression and police brutality, GAPA leaders and many aldermen felt it was necessary to strengthen the proposed ordinance, and BPI has worked intensively with GAPA leaders to develop additional provisions to increase accountability and build trust.

## WORKING TO ADDRESS BARRIERS TO REFORM IN POLICE CONTRACTS

BPI is working with other advocates to eliminate contract provisions that make it harder for people to report police misconduct and easier for police officers to lie about it, and that require officials to ignore and destroy evidence of police misconduct.



# HOUSING

Since 1970, BPI lawyers have represented public housing residents and applicants in the seminal public housing desegregation lawsuit, *Gautreaux v. Chicago Housing Authority*.

Through *Gautreaux*, we have for 50 years been working to break down the unconstitutional racial segregation and economic isolation that produced what may once have been the worst public housing system in the nation. Over the past year we have worked to ensure that CHA adheres to its commitments in the 2019 *Gautreaux* Settlement Agreement to develop public housing and manage its waitlists in ways that maximize access to public housing across the city.

A nighttime photograph of a city skyline, likely New York City, with numerous skyscrapers illuminated. In the foreground, there are several multi-story residential buildings with balconies and windows, some of which are lit up. The overall scene is dark, with the city lights providing the primary illumination. A thin yellow horizontal line is visible near the top of the image.

# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The **Gautreaux Settlement Agreement** successfully focused the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) on achieving the development commitments it made in the 2019 Settlement. With a higher level of cooperation from both City and State funders, new phases of housing development are well underway at more mixed-income sites than has been true since the Great Recession.

In 2019 and 2020 new **CHA family housing** was completed in:

- Lathrop Homes
- Roosevelt Square
- Washington Park
- Rogers Park
- Albany Park
- Logan Square
- Belmont Cragin neighborhoods

CHA has completed a new **Family Resource Center** in Altgeld Gardens, complete with a new Chicago Public Library that includes community space and a state-of-the art childcare center that increases the number of children that can be served in the Altgeld community.

## INITIATIVES

Over the coming year, BPI will be exploring strategies to increase the success of existing CHA mixed-income developments to provide inclusive, welcoming communities across a broad spectrum of incomes.





# EARLY CHILDHOOD

**BPI launched the Altgeld-Riverdale Early Learning Initiative in 2012 as a community-driven effort to build a comprehensive and coordinated early childhood system that supports children from birth to age eight in the Altgeld-Riverdale community on Chicago's Far Southeast Side.**

The engine of this program is the Altgeld-Riverdale Early Learning Coalition, a network of over two dozen residents, community organizations, social service providers, early learning centers and on-site elementary schools, as well as key government agencies such as the Chicago Housing Authority, the Chicago Park District, and Library. BPI is the Coalition's ongoing convener, project manager, and facilitator.



# EDUCATION



## Despite the pandemic, the programs of the Altgeld-Riverdale Early Learning Initiative have pressed on, pivoting to online platforms to address the needs of families and children through a continuum of evidence-based interventions.

When BPI's work began in Altgeld in 2012, there was no mechanism in the community for residents and organizations to collaborate on early childhood issues. Today, the Initiative's keystone Altgeld Riverdale Early Learning Coalition continues to meet monthly, bringing together all the major stakeholders who touch the lives of young kids. It continues to be a place for effective collaboration, community problem solving, and information sharing, all while continuing to provide a robust array of programs for kids from birth to age eight.

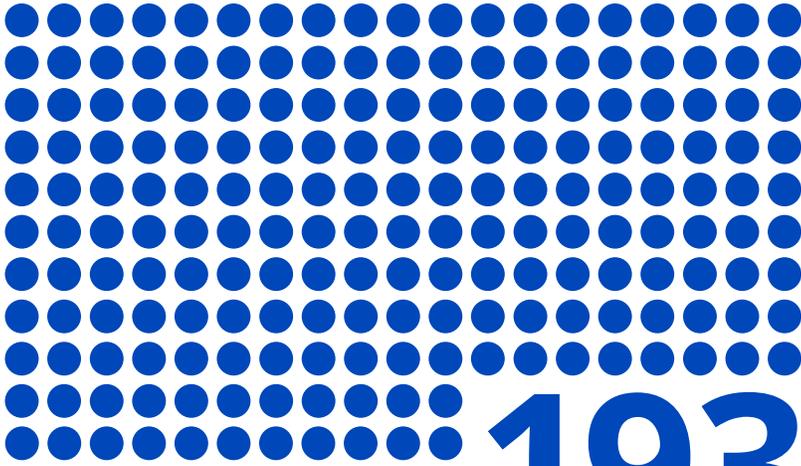
The Early Learning Coalition has played an important role in the pandemic response by providing a forum for all the major community stakeholders to share COVID-related information and services. Through monthly meetings, schools, child care centers, the health clinic, social service providers, CHA, the library, the park district, residents, and others share resources and strategize around COVID-related needs.

Our status as a well-known, well-organized, and trusted community-based coalition made the Early Learning Coalition one of just a handful of community collaborations to receive funding through Illinois Action for Children to provide emergency resources to families in need during the Coronavirus pandemic.

BPI has also embarked on a new strategy for pre-kindergarten enrollment in the time of COVID. BPI engaged with partners to create a pre-k enrollment campaign specifically designed for the Altgeld-Riverdale community and designed to address concerns and barriers specific to COVID. Using a human-centered design framework, we have worked with parent ambassadors to host focus groups and interviews with families and early learning program providers, talking through effective messaging regarding enrollment and understanding barriers to enrollment that could be addressed in the marketing materials. The result is a menu of materials that reflect what caregivers and stakeholders believe will be truly useful and impactful.

# 8 YEARS

Number of years the Coalition has been active



Number of families provided emergency funding to support basic needs in 2020

# 6 EDUCATIONAL PARTNERS

BPI works in 3 CPS schools, 1 charter school, and 2 community-based early learning organizations



# 100%

## PRE-K PROGRAMS

Coalition efforts touch every pre-k program in the Altgeld-Riverdale community

# 721 CHILDREN

Approximate number served by Coalition programs annually



## UNDER 9

Almost one-quarter of the Altgeld-Riverdale population is under age 9



## MEMBERS

Participate regularly in the Altgeld Riverdale Early Learning Coalition

# BPI TURNS 50

When Gordon Sherman founded BPI in 1969, it is unlikely he could have foreseen where the next 50 years would take us. Our 50th Anniversary Dinner on May 16, 2019, attended by over 600 BPI friends and partners, celebrated that journey and marked the road forward into the uncertain terrain of our next 50 years.

Highlighting our program was a very special keynote speaker—**Mayor Lori Lightfoot**, just four days after her historic inauguration. The Mayor’s words that night still resonate a year later—perhaps, in the context of the events of 2020, even more profoundly:

**“Over the last 50 years, BPI has been about bringing people together, being fierce advocates for what is right, and never resting. Our north stars, just**

**like BPI’s, must be equity and inclusion so that every opportunity is not defined by race, ethnicity, country of origin, religion, or who you love. This is our time to stand together and show the world that we know how to address and solve the challenges before us.”**

To help BPI advance its work in pursuit of racial and economic equity, friends and supporters contributed generously throughout the year to BPI’s “Strive for Equity” 50th Anniversary Campaign. Deeply grateful for their partnership in our work in pursuit of “a just society,” BPI is energized and inspired by all of our community and government partners, friends, supporters, and fellow advocates as we stand in common cause to confront the challenges ahead.

# CONTRIBUTORS

BPI is deeply grateful for the generous support of the following individuals and organizations in 2019. Throughout our five decades, the support of countless individuals, foundations, law firms, banks, and corporations have made BPI's every effort possible. Thank you for your partnership in our work to create a just society.

The listing below reflects contributions made from January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2019. Contributions made in 2020 will be included in next year's Annual Report.

## INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTORS

### \$25,000 AND ABOVE

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Hoy and Patti McConnell

Lowell Sachnoff

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King Harris/Harris Family Foundation

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**UP TO \$249**

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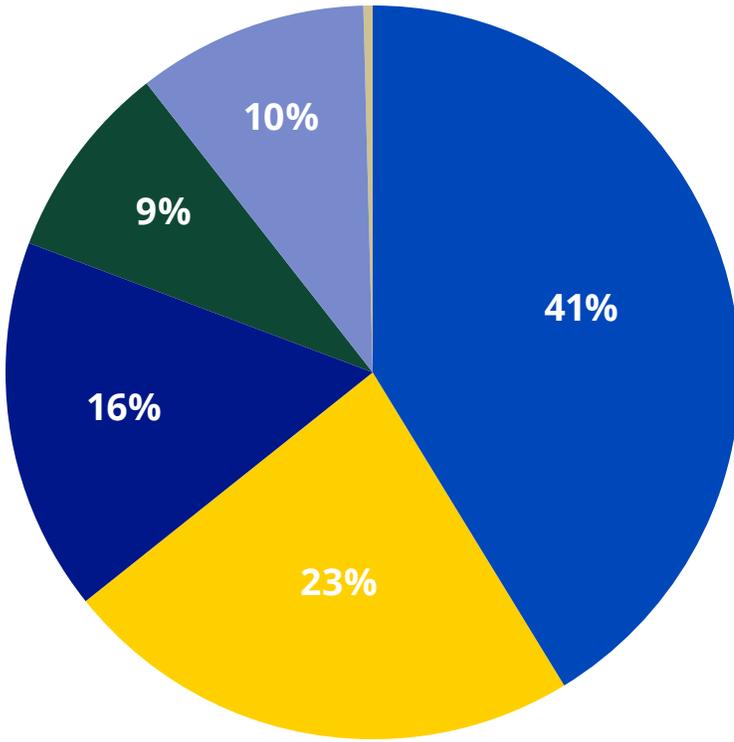
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BPI has made every effort to make this list accurate and inclusive. If you discover an error or omission, please accept our apologies. We would appreciate your advising us so that we may correct our records. Thank you.

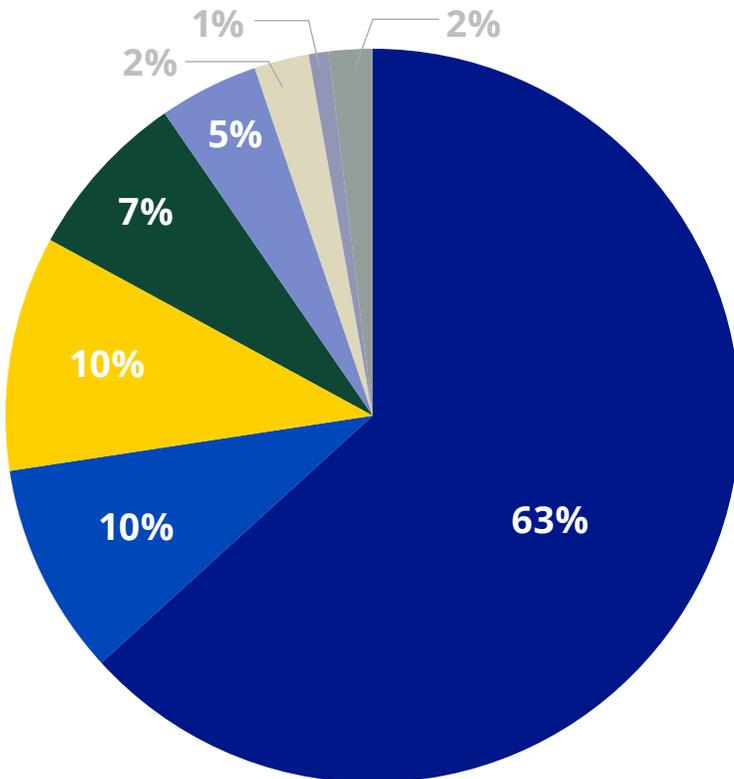
# FINANCIALS

## Sources and Uses of Funds: January 1–December 31, 2019 (actual)



### SOURCES OF FUNDS

Foundations	\$969,000
Individuals	\$550,000
Attorneys Fees	\$383,000
Fellowships/Internships	\$244,000
Endowment Fund	\$200,000
Miscellaneous	\$5,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,351,000</b>



### USES OF FUNDS

Personnel	\$1,484,000
Program Support	\$244,000
Occupancy	\$227,000
Special Events	\$171,000
Outside Services	\$106,000
Office Expenses	\$57,000
Communications	\$16,000
To Operating Reserves	\$46,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,351,000</b>

# STAFF



**Julie Elena Brown**  
Co-Director, Public Housing and Mobility; Senior Staff Counsel



**Kimberly Campbell**  
Director of Communications



**Hillary Chutter-Ames**  
Skadden Fellow; Staff Counsel



**Ellen Elias**  
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**Marsheda Ewulomi**  
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**Ashton Hoselton**  
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**Deborah Johnson**  
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**Marissa Manos**  
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## **ABOUT BPI**

BPI is a public interest law and policy center that for 50 years has worked to create a just society. Our work today focuses on addressing the challenges of poverty and racial inequity, increasing housing and educational opportunity, building vital communities, strengthening early childhood learning, and reforming the criminal justice system.

Considered one of Chicago's most tenacious and versatile advocates for the public interest, BPI lawyers and policy specialists engage in legal and policy research, advocacy, litigation, organizing, and collaboration with community, nonprofit, government, academic, and business organizations to accomplish our mission.

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