



2016 Annual Report



Business and  
Professional People  
the Public Interest

*For a Just Society*

### **Mission**

**BPI is a public interest law and policy center dedicated to addressing compelling issues of social justice and quality of life in the Chicago region.**

### **Vision**

**All people deserve equal justice and a quality of life that includes:**

- **Equal access to opportunity**
- **Healthy learning and living environments**
- **A voice in decisions that affect their lives**

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# Dear Friends,

Since we connected on this page of BPI's Annual Report last year, the world, our country, and this city are, collectively, in a starkly different place.

Challenges to the social justice values we share have grown. They are formidable—the entrenched and historic as well as the bracing new threats to justice and equity we've witnessed this year.

In this environment, it's fair to ask whether you as an individual or BPI as an organization can *possibly* make a difference.

A good question. With an affirmative answer.

Yes. The answer is a resounding yes.

Together we—you and BPI—continue to make a real difference in the lives of thousands of children, families, and individuals across Chicago and the region.

Proof is in the pages of this Annual Report, where you'll read about our progress on police reform in Chicago and how our work with the Grassroots Alliance for Police Accountability is helping to ensure that the people most directly affected by police reforms will play an active role in developing them.

You can also read about our early learning momentum in Altgeld-Riverdale, where the dynamic community coalition BPI formed five years ago is going strong, delivering new leading-edge programs in Pre-K to Kindergarten Transitions and Early Language Development. BPI is committed to making sure that every child in the community is on track to succeed by third grade.

Progress in BPI's housing work also continues at a robust pace—from mixed-income redevelopment in multiple communities to more housing on the North Side for low-income families to an innovative mobility program with the potential for national impact.

Of course, the problems we face remain daunting. But in an environment of uncertainty and challenge, we are making a difference together—BPI and each of you, our friends, community partners, and funders, joined in common cause for justice.

We're deeply grateful that you are with us in the fight.

Sincerely,



Nicholas J. Brunick  
Board President



E. Hoy McConnell, II  
Executive Director



# Police Accountability

## Why is BPI focusing on police reform?

Over the last 18 months, two devastating reports have been issued concerning the Chicago Police Department. Reports from Mayor Emanuel's Police Accountability Task Force (to which BPI provided extensive support) and the U.S. Department of Justice reached very similar conclusions. Chicago police officers use excessive force far too often. Among the more significant reasons: The Police Department doesn't have a good official policy about when it is appropriate to use force; doesn't properly train officers about appropriate use of force; doesn't provide adequate supervision; and the system intended to provide oversight and accountability outside the department is broken.

The costs are staggering. The greatest cost of course is the countless lives lost. The monetary cost is mind-boggling. Over the last ten years, the City has paid more than \$1 million a week to settle police misconduct lawsuits. Furthermore, police misconduct erodes trust in the Police Department. People who don't trust the police are less likely to report a crime or cooperate in an investigation. That makes it harder for police officers to do their jobs, and makes all of us less safe.



*BPI's 2017 Annual Dinner featured a robust discussion on police accountability, with (l to r) Steve Edwards, Lori Lightfoot, Theron Bowman and Tanya Watkins.*

## What is BPI doing to build community trust?

BPI is working closely with the Grassroots Alliance for Police Accountability, a group of ten community-based organizations from across the city. GAPA is leading a community-driven engagement process, working with some 2,000 residents to develop a proposal that will create a new oversight body and give the community a powerful new voice in police oversight and reform. GAPA members believe that building trust in the Police Department requires a more direct role for citizens in Police Department policymaking and implementation, including working to improve hiring, training, supervision, and other critical issues.

Our work with GAPA is designed to help ensure that the people most directly affected by police reforms will play an active role in developing them. We believe this is the most promising way to build community trust and make our city a safer place.

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### **What progress has been made on the road to reform?**

Though Chicago has a long way to go to address the widespread and deeply entrenched problems highlighted in the Task Force and DOJ reports, the City has taken a few important steps.

The City has begun to implement two major recommendations of the Mayor's Police Accountability Task Force. A new Civilian Office of Police Accountability (COPA) is being formed, and a new Office of Deputy Inspector General for Public Safety is being created.

The new COPA will have broader authority, greater independence, increased resources, and operate with greater transparency.

The creation of a new Deputy Inspector General for Public Safety is a major step forward. No official body previously existed that was empowered to engage in systemic review of Police Department policies and procedures. BPI is actively involved in the formation of this new office. Based on experience in other jurisdictions with similar offices, we are hopeful that the new Deputy IG for Public Safety will have a powerful impact on identifying and addressing systemic policing issues.

### **What else will reform require?**

The Department of Justice report concluded that the necessary police reforms are not likely to be enacted or sustained without the active oversight of a federal court. We strongly agree. In most cities where police departments have been the subject of major DOJ investigations, they have culminated in consent decrees that specified key areas for reform and required ongoing court oversight. New leadership at the U.S. Department of Justice, however, does not agree that the federal government should be involved in local police reform efforts. Consequently, BPI is exploring alternative paths to securing a consent decree and court oversight, which in our view are essential to make meaningful police reform a reality.



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# Early Learning in Altgeld-Riverdale

## **Why is BPI playing such an active role in early learning programming in the Altgeld-Riverdale community?**

It may seem surprising that BPI, an organization focused on law and policy, would take on the responsibility for ensuring the availability of an array of early learning programs for children pre-birth to third grade in Altgeld-Riverdale. For starters, a robust and compelling body of research leaves no doubt about how critically important the earliest years are for brain development, or how quickly some kids can fall behind their peers academically, socially, and emotionally without an adequate support system. Because nearly one quarter of the entire Altgeld-Riverdale population is under eight years old, and because prior to BPI's involvement, there was no organized focus on early childhood development, the conclusions for us were clear: Action on the early learning front was urgently needed. And BPI involvement could have a positive impact.

## **How does BPI's on-the-ground work in Altgeld-Riverdale align with our policy-focused mission?**

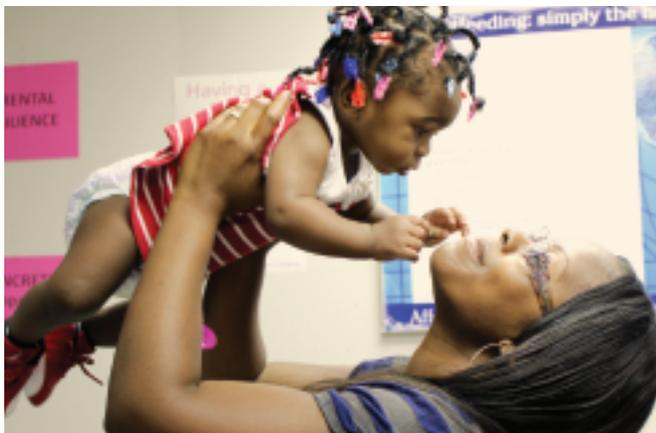
From the very start of our early learning initiative in Altgeld-Riverdale, we planned our program as a “demonstration”—one that would have the potential to assist other high-needs communities to successfully launch early learning efforts of their own. It's also why we engaged Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago to conduct an intensive three-year evaluation of our early learning work in the Altgeld-Riverdale community.

## **What role does the community play in the Altgeld-Riverdale Early Learning Initiative?**

Despite being home to a number of institutions and community groups, Altgeld-Riverdale had no mechanism in place for residents and organizations to collaborate on early childhood issues. So, we set about forming a broad-based community-wide coalition. Today, the Altgeld-Riverdale Early Learning Coalition is the driving force behind early learning in the community. Five years in, the Coalition meets faithfully every month and is the place where residents, childcare centers, service providers, educators, the police, and faith-based institutions come to connect, hear from early learning experts, and make decisions together. Importantly, BPI and the Coalition now offer a full continuum of early learning programming for Altgeld-Riverdale children pre-birth through age eight, described on the following page.



# Altgeld-Riverdale Early Learning Programs



## **Doula/Home Visiting Program**

The Altgeld-Riverdale Parenting Program provides doula (birth coaching) services, home visiting, and parent support groups to young women ages 21 and under. With a wealth of research documenting the importance of doula and home visiting programs to the cognitive, social-emotional, and physical development of children, this program fulfills a vital role in the community.

childcare centers. As one of Illinois' 11 community Innovation Zones, and as a result of our outreach and collaboration efforts, Pre-K enrollment has steadily increased in the community.

## **Pre-K to Kindergarten Transitions Program**

BPI's Pre-K to Kindergarten Transitions Program is a multifaceted, community-driven program working to ensure that all children enrolled in school and center-based Pre-K programs will enter and experience Kindergarten without anxiety, in good health, and prepared to succeed—cognitively, socially, and emotionally. Our program uniquely brings together all 18 Pre-K and Kindergarten classrooms in the community's four elementary schools and two childcare centers, serving 430 students.



## **Early Language Development Program**

BPI is partnering with LEAP (Language Empowers All People) and the Altgeld-Riverdale Early Learning Coalition to launch a new early language development program called "Parents Teach Every Day." Here we will strive to address both the "word gap" and parent engagement challenges by bringing interactive activities to teachers, case-workers, and doula/home visitors for families to use at home to help their infants and toddlers develop valuable language and social-emotional skills.

## **Kids Science Labs**

BPI partners with Kids Science Labs, a Chicago-based center, to offer a special science enrichment program to Altgeld-Riverdale students ages six to eight. This hands-on program makes science come alive for these students and, in the process, advances their cognitive development, creativity, and critical thinking skills.



## **Pre-K Enrollment**

BPI continues to work to make Pre-Kindergarten instruction accessible for all families and to increase enrollment in Altgeld-Riverdale schools and

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# Political Reform—A Victory for Honest Government in Illinois Supreme Court

Four years ago, after being denied access to information relating to possible corruption in Cook County Assessor Joseph Berrios’ office, the Independent Inspector General of Cook County, Patrick Blanchard, decided to sue. Blanchard turned to BPI and attorney Alexander Polikoff to serve as a court-appointed special state’s attorney representing the IG’s office.

In court, the Assessor contended that the IG did not have the authority to investigate his office because he—the Assessor—was an independently elected public official, responsible only to those who elected him. Surprisingly, this important question, which may affect other County offices—such as the Sheriff—had never before been addressed by Illinois courts.

In December 2016, in a unanimous opinion, the Illinois Supreme Court upheld the IG’s authority, calling Berrios’ argument “fundamentally flawed,” and holding that the Cook County Board did have the authority to empower the IG’s office with “the means of addressing possible corruption, fraud, and other specified types of malfeasance” within County offices.

Reacting to the Supreme Court’s opinion, IG Blanchard said that the ruling not only supported the authority of his office to “detect, deter and prevent corruption in the operation of Cook County government,” but affirmed the authority of other counties and municipalities to create Inspector General offices with investigatory powers, including the power to issue subpoenas.

As BPI’s Polikoff reflected, “It’s a victory not only for the Inspector General, but for open and honest government and for the people of Cook County and Illinois.”



*BPI attorneys Alex Polikoff and Emily Powers with Cook County Inspector General Patrick Blanchard*

# Housing Mobility—A Path to Reducing Concentrated Poverty

Evidence-based research overwhelmingly demonstrates that when low-income families of color move from segregated high-poverty neighborhoods to integrated lower-poverty communities, their life prospects are significantly improved. Beyond shelter, benefits include higher-performing schools, better health outcomes, increased job opportunities, and greater safety.

Unfortunately, the federal Housing Choice Voucher Program, the nation’s core initiative to foster mobility and expanded housing choice for low-income families, is not doing its “mobility job.” BPI hopes to move the policy needle with a rigorously designed research project involving 2,250 families with young children living in high-poverty Chicago neighborhoods.

The families would be randomly split into three equally-sized groups. The first group would receive housing vouchers good only for moves into low-poverty neighborhoods, plus comprehensive “two-generation” family counseling addressing each family member’s needs, individually and collectively. A second group would also receive vouchers good only for moves to low-poverty neighborhoods—but not receive the family counseling support. A third group would receive “regular” vouchers usable anywhere (not just low-poverty neighborhoods), also without counseling.

It’s our belief that this project will convincingly show three things: First, that families who receive both the “low-poverty” voucher and comprehensive two-generation counseling will make enduring moves into “opportunity neighborhoods,” and at a much higher rate than either of the other two groups. Second, that these families, compared to



*Photo by David Schalliol*

the others, will experience improved life circumstances across a wide range of factors, including employment, income, education, health, and more. Third, that these positive results and outcomes will be achieved cost-effectively, producing huge benefits to society at large.

We have lined up a set of highly qualified partners for our project—a specialized housing search consultant, a deeply experienced social service agency, and a university to handle the complicated long-term research. We hope and expect that the anticipated results, achieved in a rigorous demonstration employing what social scientists view as the “gold standard” of evidence-based methodology, will be impossible for policymakers to ignore—and that, as a result, the combination of targeted vouchers and comprehensive counseling will become an important new component of the federal Housing Choice Voucher program.

We have an initial funding commitment in hand for the proposed project, and are hard at work securing the remainder. We’re hopeful. Stay tuned.

# Public Housing



*The Julia A. Lathrop Homes public housing development on Chicago's North Side*

## **What's being done to help low-income families live in strong communities with good schools?**

BPI has long advocated that the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) should provide more housing in neighborhoods of higher opportunity, especially on Chicago's North Side where far less public and affordable housing is available. While little happened for a long time, today there is momentum to develop such housing at a much greater pace.

So, what has changed? Much, it seems. For one thing, in late 2016, BPI and CHA reached an important court-approved agreement in which CHA committed to relocating 524 family public

housing units in various neighborhoods of opportunity on the North Side. At this writing, CHA is well on its way—through a combination of new development, acquisition of existing units (some brand new), and long-term rentals.

Equally important to increasing public housing opportunities on the North Side is the role of CHA leadership. CEO Eugene Jones has pledged to fulfill CHA's Plan for Transformation goal of providing 25,000 new or rehabbed public housing apartments by year end 2017. Assisted by a revitalized real estate market, Jones' goal is in sight.

Finally, one other critically important development helps to explain the currently favorable climate for increased housing opportunities for low-income families on the North Side. After years of inaction or worse, a number of Chicago aldermen have recently stepped up to support the creation of additional public and affordable housing in their North Side wards.

The prospect for more low-income housing in strong neighborhoods is brighter than it's been in a long time. By next year, we'll know if our hopes have become reality.



*Children's playlot at Westhaven Park, a mixed-income community on Chicago's Near West Side*



*Mixed-income housing at 1200 N. Clybourn Avenue, on the former site of Cabrini-Green*

### **What's being done to replace the thousands of Cabrini-Green public housing apartments that were demolished?**

Until recently, progress at Cabrini proceeded at a snail's pace. All Cabrini high-rises were down by the early 2000s. Yet only a fraction of the public housing apartments lost had been replaced by 2015. Why? Mostly, because a string of resident lawsuits blocked action for long periods, and the housing market collapse of 2009 put a virtual stop to new development for years.

Now, however, we're pleased to say that the pace of Cabrini redevelopment is picking up.

Two new mixed-income buildings have recently been completed, and four new sites are now in the design stage and will be ready for construction some time over the next year or so. Not only will these new developments mean more housing for public housing families, but they also include retail and community space which will make living there more attractive for everyone.

# Reflections on *Gautreaux* at Fifty

Last August, the *Gautreaux* litigation against the Chicago Housing Authority reached age 50, a milestone. Initiated by Alex Polikoff when he was a volunteer ACLU attorney, the case was added to BPI’s docket a few years later when he joined the organization as Executive Director.

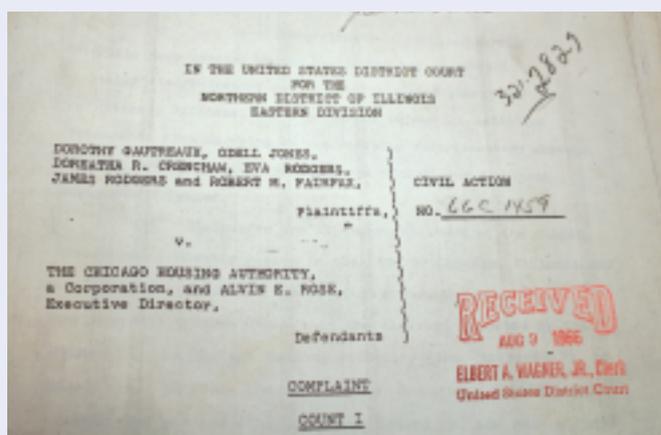
The lawsuit, which Alex argued successfully before the United States Supreme Court in 1976, alleged that the Chicago Housing Authority and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development had violated the Constitution as well as the 1964 Civil Rights Act through their intentionally discriminatory practices of concentrating public housing sites in African-American neighborhoods.

The Supreme Court ruling unprecedentedly authorized a metropolitan-wide remedy, paving the way for what came to be known as “housing mobility”—enabling residents of segregated, high-poverty neighborhoods to move with housing subsidies into unsegregated, low-poverty “opportunity” areas.

For decades now, *Gautreaux* has been at the heart and soul of BPI’s work to achieve a just society and remains vitally active in federal court to

this day. Why devote so much time and energy to a single lawsuit? Very simply, because over the years the *Gautreaux* case has helped change the face of public housing in Chicago, reform national public housing law and policy, and inspire some of the nation’s most innovative housing programs. Yet much remains to be done. Chicago is still a racially segregated city, and many of its neighborhoods are marked by deeply concentrated poverty with multiple effects on residential patterns, schools, employment, safety, and health. But it is undeniably better than it would have been without the achievements of *Gautreaux*. To this day, CHA development plans remain subject to *Gautreaux* court orders, and BPI’s *Gautreaux* lawyers play key roles in many aspects of ongoing public housing work in Chicago, including the development of new mixed-income communities that are steadily replacing the failed high-rises that led to the filing of the case.

We know there's no silver bullet or single solution for the ills of our still racially stratified society. Yet BPI remains committed to the goals that led to the filing of *Gautreaux* 50 years ago—and to achieving those goals not only for the thousands of children and families we represent, but for the community at large as well.



Original *Gautreaux* Court Filing—1966



Dorothy Gautreaux, Civil Rights Activist and Lead Plaintiff

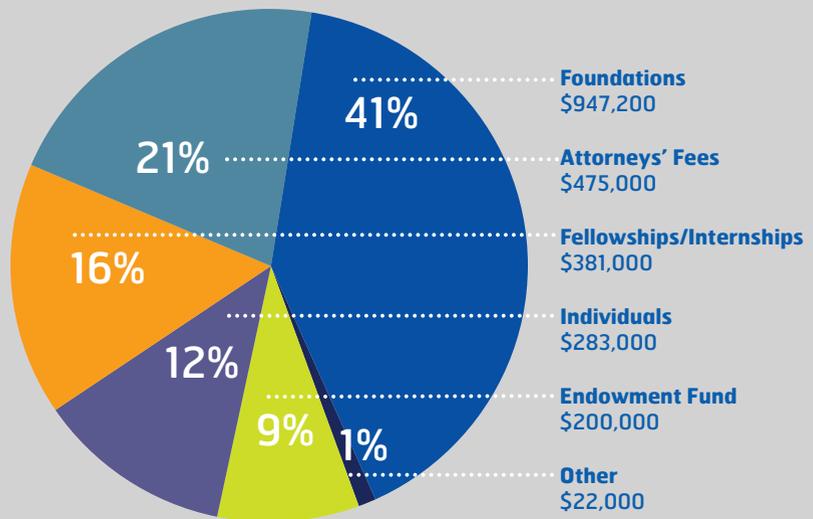
# 2016 Financials\*

\* Unaudited

## Revenue

Total—\$2,308,200

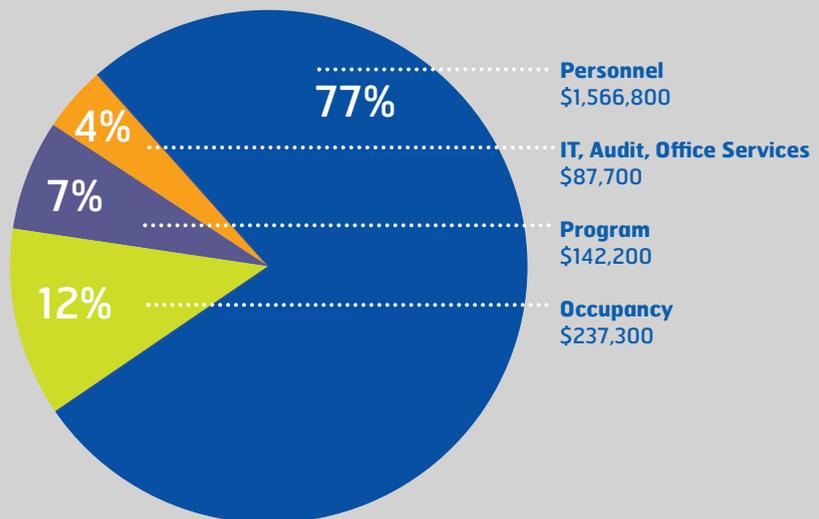
Foundation grants and individual donations accounted for about half of 2016 revenue, with attorneys' fees and fellowships contributing another third.



## Operating Expenses

Total—\$2,034,000

Staff compensation and program support constituted nearly 85% of operating expenses.



# BPI Staff



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**Adam Gross**

*Director, Justice Reform and Affordable Housing*

**Angela Bailey**

*Senior Education Associate*

**Emily Powers**

*Staff Counsel,  
Polikoff-Gautreaux Fellow*

**Marissa Manos**

*Administrative Director*

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**Andrea Rosen**

*Director of Communications*

**Paula Kruger**

*Technology Coordinator/  
Administrative Assistant*

**Alexander Polikoff**

*Co-Director, Public Housing;  
Senior Staff Counsel*

**Gloria Gatz**

*Finance Manager*

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**Betsy Lassar**

*Policy Analyst*

**Mara Easterbrook**

*Staff Counsel,  
Polikoff-Gautreaux Fellow*

**Deborah Johnson**

*Receptionist*

**Julie Elena Brown**

*Co-Director, Public Housing;  
Senior Staff Counsel*

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**Nora Mahlberg**

*Staff Counsel,  
Skadden Fellow*

**Ellen Elias**

*Director of Development*

**Susannah Levine**

*Director, Education and  
Early Learning*

**Hoy McConnell**

*Executive Director*

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# Reflections on BPI

**Jessica Webster**

**Polikoff-Gautreaux Fellow, 2003-05**

I thought I stumbled in my first job interview with BPI. Though I waxed poetic about my graduate degree from the Humphrey School of Public Policy, I told attorney Julie Brown I had no idea what I wanted to do with my life. I was passionate about racial justice, poverty, feminism, and the environment, but I was unsure of which fight to join. Julie said she understood, and I presumed that was the end of my BPI experience.

However, at my second interview, I read a *Chicago Tribune* article on BPI's wall titled "The Good Guys" that compared BPI favorably to Robin Hood and Charlie's Angels. Humble legal giant Alexander Polikoff featured prominently in BPI's history of achieving justice in multiple forms—environmental, racial, and economic. BPI was exactly where I wanted to start my career.

I was hired as the fifth Polikoff-Gautreaux fellow in 2003, surrounded by brilliant and accomplished colleagues. We loved to argue about strategy and collaborate on tactics. Whether we were advocating for the inclusion of affordable housing in affluent neighborhoods or partnering with parents for high-quality educational opportunities, I was a zealous student of BPI's model of combining research, policy advocacy, organizing, and litigation.

I departed BPI to attend law school and become a public interest lawyer like my BPI mentors.

As a Legal Aid attorney in Minnesota, I am still loyal to the BPI model and toolbox. I successfully fought against discriminatory practices in



*Jessica Webster testifies before the Minnesota House Health and Human Services Policy Committee.*

Minnesota's welfare program—including finger printing and family cap policies. I have achieved several wins at the Minnesota Legislature resulting in additional food and shelter resources for low-income families. I published a report in 2014 about statewide practices of shaming low-income children in the lunch room and ultimately passed legislation to prohibit the practice.

I will always be deeply grateful to have started my career at BPI.

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## **BPI's Polikoff-Gautreaux Fellowship**

BPI created the Polikoff-Gautreaux Fellowship 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 landmark lawsuit. To date, 20 Fellows have participated in the program, which is open to recent law and policy school

graduates and is designed to prepare the next generation of public interest professionals. Fellows do not create stand-alone projects, but instead are fully integrated into BPI's staff as attorneys and policy analysts. Our Fellows have gone on to pursue successful careers in nonprofit leadership, affordable housing law, legal aid, civil rights advocacy, and government.

# Contributions

*This list reflects contributions made from  
January 1 to December 31, 2016*

## Individual Contributors

### \$25,000 and above

Sheldon Baskin\* and Judy Wise  
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King Harris  
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Marc Hilton and Judy Aronson

\* Deceased

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Brinshore Development LLC  
The Chicago Community Trust  
Congaree River LLC  
Crown Family Philanthropies  
Dentons US LLP  
Foley & Lardner LLP  
Grand Victoria Foundation  
The Habitat Company  
The Harris Family Foundation  
John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur  
Foundation  
Leo S. Guthman Fund  
McDougal Family Foundation  
Miller, Shakman & Beem LLP  
Miner Barnhill and Galland, P.C.  
The Northern Trust Company  
The Oppenheimer Family Foundation  
Polk Bros. Foundation  
The Reva and David Logan Foundation  
Robert R. McCormick Foundation  
Schiff Hardin LLP  
Sidley Austin LLP  
The Spencer Foundation  
The Community Builders, Inc.  
UBS Employee Giving Program  
Woods Fund of Chicago

*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.*

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## *In Memoriam*

### **SHELDON BASKIN**



BPI is saddened by the loss of long-time Director Sheldon Baskin, who served on the BPI Board from 1989 until his death in June 2017. In addition to his expansive expertise in affordable housing, real estate, and urban affairs, Shelly brought to his Board service a fierce passion for social justice that was truly the organizing principle of his life. He could always be counted on for wise counsel, good ideas, generous support, and spirited participation.

Although of the next generation of BPI leadership, Shelly embodied the DNA of BPI's founding leaders—Gordon Sherman, Elliot Lehman, Bud Lifton, Alan Saks and others.

BPI is a better organization for Shelly's involvement. He will be deeply missed. Our condolences to Shelly's family, BPI Director Judy Wise, his wife of 41 years, and their children.



BPI is a public interest law and policy center that for 48 years has worked to create a just society. BPI strives to resolve compelling issues of social justice and quality of life in the Chicago region by addressing the many challenges of urban poverty, increasing housing and educational opportunity, strengthening communities, and improving Illinois' justice system.

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



**BPI**

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**Recipient of the MacArthur Award  
for Creative and Effective Institutions**

E. Hoy McConnell, II  
*Executive Director*