

Impact of the Homeless Persons Representation Project

Using the Law to End Homelessness in Maryland

Targeted Legal Services

HPRP is the only legal services program in Maryland that works to end homelessness. HPRP targets its legal work on issues that will directly prevent or eliminate homelessness.

Community-based Approach

HPRP staff and volunteers conduct outreach and meet with people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in shelters, soup kitchens, community-based associations, and on the street to provide legal representation.

Education and Advocacy

HPRP staff offer forums in the community for clients, service providers, and others on legal issues confronting people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. HPRP staff address systemic hurdles to ending homelessness, including improving government services, programs and laws, with knowledge derived from client experiences.

HPRP in Action

Helping Homeless Youth: The Homeless Youth Initiative (HYI) provides comprehensive legal representation to unaccompanied homeless youth ages 13-25, serving approximately 120 youth annually. In 2017, HYI was selected by the American Bar Association as one of twelve Model Programs nationwide providing civil legal services to homeless youth.

HPRP makes a difference: *Michael, 17 years old and homeless, sought help from HYI because he was unable to get food stamps. His mother kicked him out of her home when he was 15, but she continued to collect benefits for him. When Michael applied to get food stamps on his own, the Department of Social Services (DSS) said he was already receiving benefits through his mother and failed to process his application. His HYI attorney argued that Michael's mother was legally responsible for reporting to DSS that he had left her household, and that DSS should have treated Michael's food stamps application as such a report and issued benefits to him directly. As a result, DSS removed Michael from his mother's case and awarded food stamps benefits to him.*

Housing Homeless Families: Recognizing that housing is the major solution to homelessness, HPRP represents families and individuals in their attempts to move out of shelters and into permanent housing.

HPRP makes a difference: *Ms. W, a woman with severe physical disabilities & chronic illness, was a participant in the Housing Opportunity for Persons With Aids Program, a rental subsidy program where the participants' rent is based on their income. Ms. W's portion of the rent was \$0, however, her landlord charged her over \$400 per month in additional rent for 2 years. HPRP filed suit against Ms. W's former landlord in federal court for violations of the False Claims Act, the Maryland Consumer Protection Act, and common law fraud and unjust enrichment. The case was settled and Ms. W received \$10,275. She planned to use the funds to purchase a motorized wheelchair, a wheelchair lift, and other needed personal and household items.*

Eliminating Barriers to Employment: Criminal records are a significant barrier when seeking housing or a job. HPRP assists people facing homelessness in expunging records of non-convictions and convictions for nuisance offenses.

HPRP makes a difference: *A 37-year-old Baltimore man now has a permanent home after his HPRP pro bono attorney successfully had his criminal record expunged. The pro bono attorney was able to persuade the court that convictions previously ruled ineligible for expungement were judged incorrectly, and therefore could be expunged. Without the knowledge and insight of the attorney, the client's record would not have been cleared. Since the expungement, the young man has moved from transitional housing into his own home in Cockeysville.*

Who is HPRP?

HPRP has a staff of 9 attorneys who work with over 400 volunteer attorneys, paralegals and law students to provide legal services, education and advocacy to prevent and eliminate homelessness. HPRP handles over 1,000 client matters each year.