

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. 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: *When Cee met HYI, she was fleeing an abusive relationship. She had lost custody of her daughter, she was on the brink of losing her housing, and she couldn't pay her utility bills. Her mental health had deteriorated to the point where she was suicidal. HYI quickly addressed her immediate need for safety, food, and mental health treatment, and then focused on her housing. With HYI's legal support, Cee was able to keep her housing subsidy and receive financial assistance to help with the utility bills. Having a lawyer during a time of crisis helped Cee to take care of basic needs and relieved some of the burdens she faced. Within a few weeks, Cee looked and sounded like a different person. Today, she is stably housed and has regained custody of her daughter.*

Helping Families with Public Benefits: Many people face significant barriers in obtaining public benefits to pay housing, medical and food costs. HPRP assists in administrative disputes to get and preserve state disability, welfare, childcare subsidies, food stamps, Medicaid, and veterans' benefits.

HPRP makes a difference: *HPRP met Susan and her young daughter when Susan was in a job training program. Her only source of income during the training, temporary cash assistance (TCA) of \$503 a month, had been terminated twice in three months. Without TCA benefits, Susan was at risk of losing her home and losing the training credits she had earned. Her HPRP attorney filed two appeals, arguing that Susan's benefits were wrongly terminated. As a result, the benefits were fully restored. Susan was able to stay in her home, take care of her daughter, and finish the training program. She now has a permanent job in the biosciences field that pays \$16 an hour – 5 times more than she was receiving in TCA benefits.*

Helping Homeless Veterans: HPRP operates 3 legal clinics for veterans who are experiencing homelessness, helping veterans obtain service-connected disability benefits and discharge upgrades from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

HPRP makes a difference: *A veteran suffered a serious knee injury while serving in the U.S. Army in the 1980s. Ongoing medical care left him unable to work and the Social Security Administration determined him to be totally disabled. He filed a claim with the Veteran's Administration. The VA failed to review the claim. For nearly three years, the veteran's financial circumstances, not to mention his physical and mental health, deteriorated. After extensive work by HPRP, the VA recognized its error and awarded the veteran monthly benefits of almost \$3,000, along with retroactive benefits of \$188,000.*

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.