



# Homeless Persons Representation Project, Inc.

Annual Report 2014

July 1, 2013 - June 30, 2014



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(JULY 1, 2013 - JUNE 30, 2014)

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# A Message From Our Leaders

Dear Friends:

We are pleased to present the Annual Report for the Homeless Persons Representation Project (HPRP) for Fiscal Year 2014 (July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014). While homelessness continues to be a significant problem for many, and Maryland continues to be the 4th most expensive state for housing in the country, HPRP continued to expand to serve as many people struggling with homelessness as possible.

Through our community-based intake locations in Baltimore City and Montgomery County, HPRP staff and our excellent volunteers responded to those needs, opening 858 cases and closing 1099 cases on legal matters likely to help persons struggling with homelessness obtain or maintain housing, income and employment. In Fiscal Year 2014, HPRP launched a new legal clinic at the **VA Medical Center** in Downtown Baltimore to represent veterans in claims for VA disability and pension benefits.

With a modest annual budget, HPRP was able to assist so many people because of the generosity of our volunteers. By June 2014, HPRP's Pro Bono Program included 335 volunteer attorneys, paralegals and law students who conducted intake and provided legal representation to the majority of HPRP clients. Inside, you will read about the launch of an exciting new partnership with volunteer law students from **American University's Washington College of Law**.

HPRP's advocacy work to advance solutions to homelessness also continued, as HPRP successfully **championed bills related to youth homelessness** and raised the profile of the need for funding for the **National Housing Trust Fund** through its **Speaker Series on the Importance of Housing**, which featured Congressman Elijah Cummings.

HPRP is grateful to all our funders and donors who made it possible for us to change the lives of so many of our neighbors who experience the injustice of homelessness. The Sixth Annual Campaign to End Homelessness raised over \$290,000 with the generous assistance of Honorary Campaign Chair Michael A. Brown of Miles & Stockbridge PC and a dedicated Campaign Committee.

We are grateful for all those who support our work to end homelessness in Maryland.

Sincerely,



Antonia K. Fasanelli, Esq.  
Executive Director



Irving E. Walker, Esq.  
Board President

## Mission and Vision

HPRP's mission is to end homelessness in Maryland by providing free legal services, including advice, counsel, education, representation and advocacy, for low-income persons who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Our staff and volunteers pursue this mission by offering legal services through outreach in shelters, soup kitchens, welfare offices, community centers, and on the street. Our direct representation informs broader-based systemic advocacy and impact litigation to address the root causes of homelessness.

# About Our Pro Bono Program



*HPRP Legal Clinic Coordinator, Christina Askins, trains volunteer law students on criminal record expungement.  
Photo credit: Eric Stocklin*

HPRP could not have touched the lives of so many individuals this year without its talented and dedicated volunteer lawyers, paralegals, law students and others. In 2014, 335 volunteers donated over 515 hours of service to HPRP and its clients, including over 469 hours, valued at \$140,985, donated by attorneys. Volunteer matters outpace those handled by staff attorneys.

## Volunteer Appreciation Reception

On April 28, 2014, HPRP held its annual volunteer appreciation at The University of Baltimore School of Law, whose generous sponsorship helped to make the event possible. Awardees in the following categories were presented with artwork created by residents of the Helping Up Mission, one of HPRP's intake locations.

### **OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER ATTORNEYS**

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Rebecca Romig, Esq.  
*Senior Legal Services*

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DLA Piper LLP

### **OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER STUDENT**

Lauren Vint  
*University of Baltimore School of Law*

### **OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER**

Christian Piatt



*Left to Right: Peter Coleman, Lauren Vint, Christian Piatt, Chris Edwards, Andrew Schatz, and Rebecca Romig*

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Kara Boyd	Kara Fischer	Catherine Hulme	Dionna Lewis
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# HPRP Volunteers

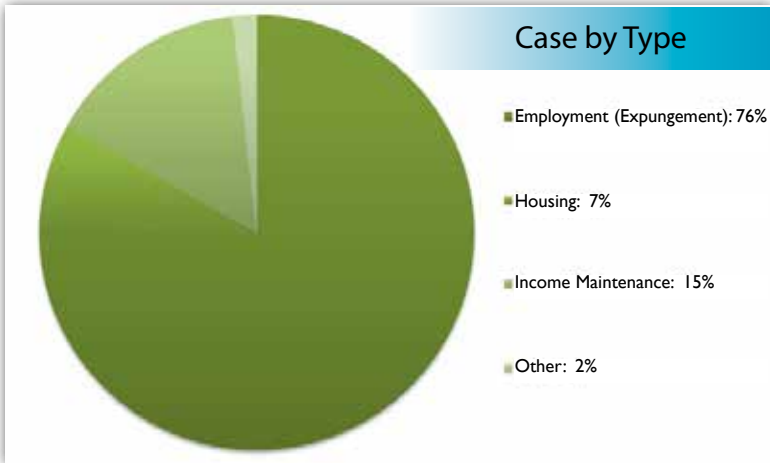
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John Marlow  
Lisa Marquardt  
Aaron Marshall  
Cody Mason  
Melinda Matlock  
Jeffrey Matus  
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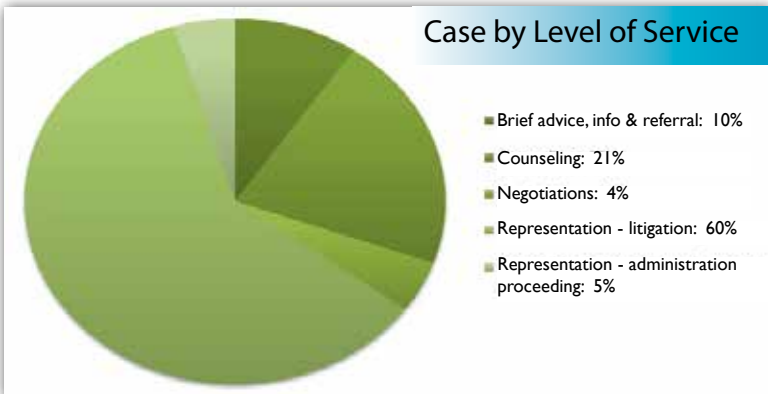
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# Case and Program Highlights



HPRP opened 858 cases and closed 1099 cases. These cases constitute matters in which HPRP staff or volunteers represented people struggling with homelessness in legal disputes to prevent or end homelessness. HPRP also received 1189 calls where brief advice, information, or referral was given. These calls reflect the “unmet” need because of insufficient resources or other reasons.



## HPRP Champions Homeless Youth Legislation

Created in 2012, HPRP's Homeless Youth Law Project provides free legal representation to homeless youth ages 13 to 25 and engages in systemic advocacy in partnership with homeless youth and youth-serving organizations. In the 2014 Session, HPRP led a coalition that successfully urged passage of legislation creating a demonstration project to study the number, characteristics, and needs of unaccompanied homeless youth in 9 Maryland counties. The first effort of its kind in Maryland, the demonstration project will inform budgetary, policy, and legislative action to address youth homelessness statewide. HPRP also assisted the Public Justice Center in a successful effort to pass legislation making unaccompanied homeless youth eligible for an existing college and trade school tuition waiver for foster youth. Notably, the tuition waiver allows qualifying students to use grants or scholarships for housing and other living expenses, rather than requiring that such awards first be applied to tuition.

## New Pro Bono Partnership with the American University Washington College of Law

Creating volunteer opportunities for law students has been a unique aspect of HPRP's Pro Bono Program for years. Since 2009, HPRP has trained University of Baltimore and University of Maryland law students to interview potential clients at its community-based intake sites in Baltimore City. In January 2014, HPRP expanded its law student engagement program to law students from American University Washington College of Law ("AUWCL"), who now conduct intake at HPRP's expungement legal clinic at the Shepherd's Table soup kitchen in Silver Spring, Montgomery County, Maryland. AUWCL's Office of Public Interest, led by then-Assistant Director David Steib, was instrumental in establishing the program.

## HPRP Defeats Unfair Housing Authority Eviction Policy

To stem the tide of homelessness, HPRP provides representation in eviction defense matters and through this work, identifies and challenges unfair eviction practices. In 2013, HPRP identified and challenged one such unfair policy at the Housing Authority for Baltimore City (HABC). For tenants participating in the Housing Choice Voucher Program, which helps low-income families afford market-rate rental units, all household members must be reported to HABC. An unreported household member is considered an unauthorized occupant, which is cause for HABC to terminate the participant's voucher. HABC took this a step further, however, and began terminating vouchers for families where the sole proof of an unauthorized occupant was the receipt of a piece mail.

Recognizing that many persons, not simply homeless persons, use the address of family members to receive mail, HPRP saw an injustice – and a significant cause of homelessness – in HABC's practice of terminating vouchers for this minor infraction. HPRP began defending families facing loss of vouchers for this reason, an effort that culminated in an appeal before the Maryland Court of Special Appeals on behalf of a grandmother, who cared for her minor grandson and received mail for a homeless family member. The Court of Special Appeals unanimously found in Matthews v. Housing Authority of Baltimore City, 216 Md.App. 572 (2014) that "receipt of mail" was insufficient proof of unauthorized occupancy to terminate a voucher.



# The Speaker Series



## The Future of the National Housing Trust Fund

For the sixth in HPRP's Speaker Series on the Importance of Housing, HPRP joined the Maryland Affordable Housing Coalition to bring together a panel of experts to discuss the need for funding for the National Housing Trust Fund (NHTF). Created in 2008, the NHTF was designed to fund the creation of affordable housing, but was not funded.

The event featured Keynote Speaker **Congressman Elijah E. Cummings**, followed by a panel which included: **Sheila Crowley**, President and CEO of the National Low Income Housing Coalition, which launched the nationwide campaign to fund the NHTF - *United For Homes*; **Paul Graziano**, Baltimore City Housing Commissioner; **Trudy McFall**, Chairman, Homes for America and then President of the Maryland Affordable Housing Coalition; and **Jeff Singer**, Instructor at the University of Maryland School of Social Work. Concurrent with the Speaker Event, HPRP released "**Housing Our Neighbors: The National Housing Trust Fund & Affordable Housing, a White Paper**" by Jeff Singer detailing the need for renewed national funding for affordable housing development, including funding for the NHTF. The white paper is available on our website: [www.hprplaw.org](http://www.hprplaw.org)

Following the event, Baltimore City Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake joined the United for Homes Campaign calling for funding for the NHTF. In January 2014, Senators Barbara Mikulski and Ben Cardin signed onto a letter with 31 other Senators asking the Director of the Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA) to begin funding the NHTF through contributions from Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac (as originally provided by statute). In March 2014, Governor Martin O'Malley issued a public statement in support of funding for the NHTF. In December 2014, the FHFA Director announced that he would begin making contributions to NHTF.

The white paper and the Speaker Series were generously sponsored by HPRP board member Jane Harrison.

# Linda Kennedy Fellowship



The Linda Kennedy Fellowship in Advocacy honors the late Linda Kennedy, Esq., a courageous and determined advocate for persons with disabilities and persons without housing. Linda was a champion for equal treatment of our clients and neighbors who struggle with homelessness. Her tireless work, particularly with people seeking to overcome barriers to housing and employment imposed by criminal records, had a significant impact in our community. Linda provided critical representation to our clients in their

efforts to expunge arrest records and resolve collateral issues related to criminal records. Linda's deeply caring manner with which she addressed the needs of each client was special. The Linda Kennedy Fellowship in Advocacy provides a second- or third-year law student with an internship at HPRP to work on policy and systemic issues that promote an end to homelessness in Baltimore City and in Maryland.



The 2013-2014 Linda Kennedy Fellow, Xheni Llaguri, was a second-year student at the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law. During the 2014 Maryland General Assembly session, Xheni worked on several bills aimed at ending youth homelessness including a tuition waiver bill to help reduce financial barriers to a college education for unaccompanied homeless youth and a bill to create a demonstration project in 9

Maryland counties to count unaccompanied homeless youth. Both bills successfully passed the legislature and were signed by then Governor Martin O'Malley.

**The 2013-2014 fellowship was generously supported by:  
Lenna Kennedy  
Lynn Nixon**

# Financial Highlights

## Total Revenue: \$931,072



■ Foundations: \$269,289

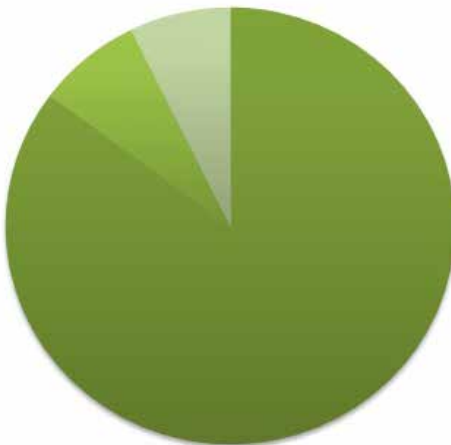
■ Grants: \$351,329

■ Contributions: \$229,488

■ Program Services: \$3,835

■ Interest & Settlement: \$77,131

## Total Expenses: \$882,652



■ Program Services: \$751,755

■ Fundraising: \$66,469

■ Management & General: \$64,428

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Jasmin Torres  
Courtney Tosh  
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