

IN JUST TIMES

a publication of the

NATIONAL LAW CENTER
ON HOMELESSNESS & POVERTY



Changing Laws, Changing Lives

April 2017

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Dear Friends —

Earlier this month, three homeless and formerly homeless people were tried and convicted in Denver for violating that city's Urban Camping Ban. The defendants, members of Denver Homeless Out Loud, an advocacy group and Law Center ally, are also challenging the constitutionality of the ban in federal court, a challenge the Law Center supports.



Maria Foscarinis
Executive Director

Days before the criminal case went to trial, the Law Center released [Housing Not Handcuffs: A Litigation manual](#). The manual reviews legal challenges to laws criminalizing homelessness, summarizes scores of cases, and analyzes trends, finding that since the prior edition was published in 2014, the majority of court rulings in such challenges have been favorable for homeless plaintiffs.

The manual complements the report published by the Law Center in November 2016, [Housing Not Handcuffs: Ending the Criminalization of Homelessness in U.S. Cities](#), which documented significant increases in criminalization since the prior report in 2014—and startling increases over the past ten years. Denver stood out for its especially harsh practices, and was one of just four cities highlighted in the report’s Hall of Shame. Late last year, police were captured on video [snatching blankets from homeless](#) people in frigid weather.

The manual is a tool intended to help advocates challenging such laws across the country, part of the Law Center’s work to support the [Housing Not Handcuffs Campaign](#). As discussed in the manual, court rulings can have widespread positive impact, and litigation is an essential strategy.

As criminalization continues to increase, we expect to increase our legal challenges, and lawyers and legal advocates are critical to the fight. We are especially grateful to the members of our [LEAP program](#) and to all our [supporters](#).

Thank you.

Campaign Updates: Housing Not Handcuffs

HOUSING NOT HANDCUFFS

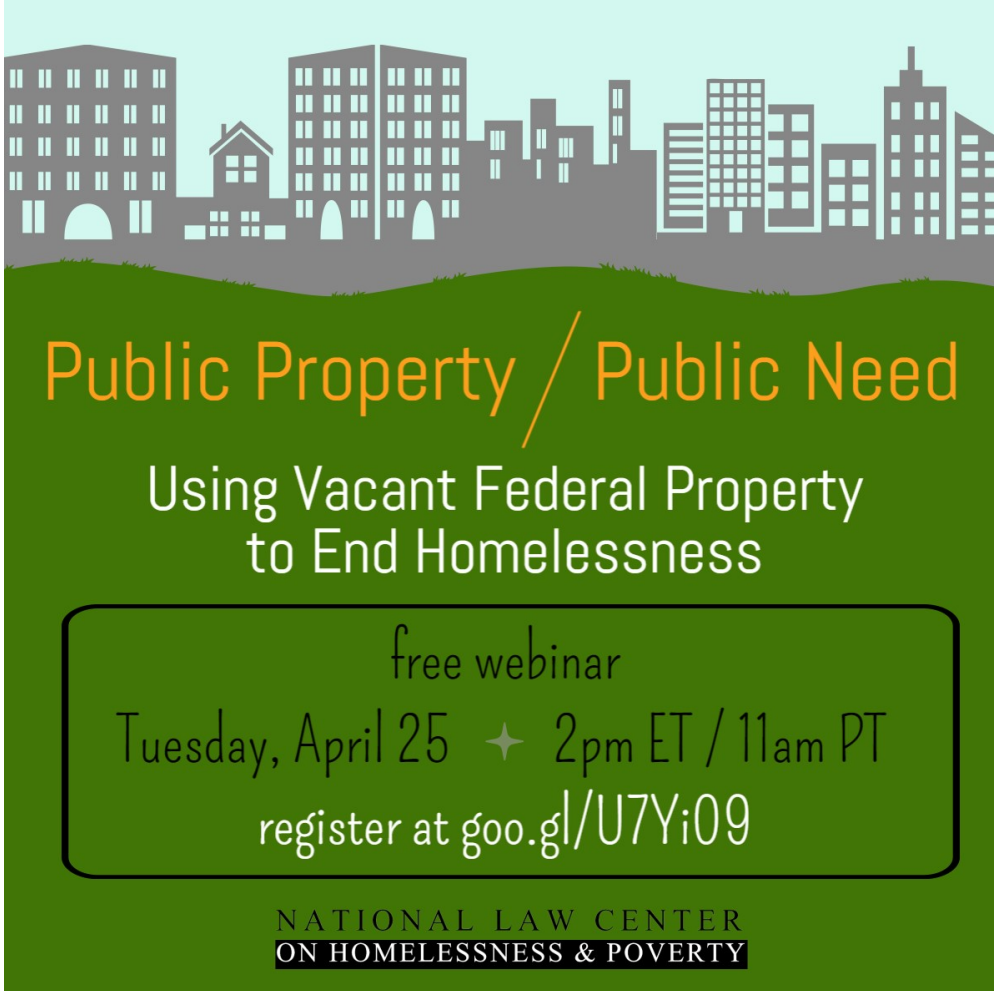
On March 27, the Law Center held the first 2017 quarterly web convening of the Housing Not Handcuffs Campaign ([recorded version](#) available) with more than 160 participants. At the convening, the Law Center launched its new [Housing Not Handcuffs Litigation Manual](#) and other participants gave updates of their work across the country. Some highlights:

- **The National Coalition for the Homeless** shared information on the [National Day of Action for Housing](#);
- **Students from the Yale Law School International Human Rights Clinic** discussed their [report on criminalization of homelessness in Connecticut](#), with application of human rights standards.
- **Naomi Smoot** from the Coalition for Juvenile Justice discussed their [report on the intersection of juvenile justice and youth homelessness](#);
- **Peter Sabian** of the Rhode Island Homeless Bill of Rights Working Group discussed their recent anti-panhandling advocacy, which has garnered significant media coverage, including in US News & World Report and on [Rhode Island Public Radio](#);
- **Nicole Bramstead** from Urban Pathways discussed progress on working with the NYC Continuum of Care on criminalization issues, and highlighted the recent victory in

getting New York City to pass the nation's first [ordinance guaranteeing the right to counsel in eviction cases for poor persons](#).

If you have not done so yet, please [endorse](#) the Housing Not Handcuffs Campaign, follow the campaign on [twitter](#) and like the campaign on [facebook](#).

New Release: Public Property/Public Need

The graphic features a stylized city skyline with various buildings in shades of grey and white against a light blue sky. Below the skyline is a green hill. The text is centered on the green background. The title 'Public Property / Public Need' is in orange, with a diagonal slash. Below it, 'Using Vacant Federal Property to End Homelessness' is in white. A white rounded rectangle contains the text 'free webinar', 'Tuesday, April 25 ✦ 2pm ET / 11am PT', and 'register at goo.g!/U7Yi09'. At the bottom, 'NATIONAL LAW CENTER ON HOMELESSNESS & POVERTY' is written in white, with 'ON HOMELESSNESS & POVERTY' in a black box.

Public Property / Public Need

Using Vacant Federal Property
to End Homelessness

free webinar

Tuesday, April 25 ✦ 2pm ET / 11am PT

register at goo.g!/U7Yi09

NATIONAL LAW CENTER
ON HOMELESSNESS & POVERTY

On April 25th, the Law Center will release its new report, entitled, "Public Property/Public Need: Using Vacant Federal Property to End Homelessness." The report is designed help homeless service providers **obtain unused federal land and real property** under Title V of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (Title V.) Pursuant to Title V, local governments, state agencies, and non-profit groups that serve homeless people have a right of first refusal to property that is no longer needed by the federal government. Moreover, the federal government will convey these properties by deed or lease to successful applicants **for**

free. To date, the federal government has transferred approximately 500 buildings and nearly 900 acres to organizations serving homeless people in over 30 states to provide emergency shelter, housing, medical care, job training, food, and other services to over 2 million people each year. **Join us for a free webinar on April 25th at 2pm ET/11am PT** to learn more about how non-profit organizations and local governments can take advantage of this little known federal program. To register, please [click here](#).



Save The Date: Law Center Announces 2017 Forum

NATIONAL LAW CENTER
ON HOMELESSNESS & POVERTY

Save the Date!

**HOUSING
NOT HANDCUFFS**

National Forum on the
Human Right to Housing

June 6-7, 2017 • Washington, D.C.
hosted by Sidley Austin LLP

nlchp.org

#Right2HousingForum

The poster features a teal background with white and orange text. At the bottom, there is a white silhouette of a city skyline with a person and a child walking in the foreground. The website 'nlchp.org' and the hashtag '#Right2HousingForum' are located at the bottom left and right respectively.

The criminalization of homelessness is on the rise, and funding for housing and services are threatened like never before. Advocates are stepping up to meet the increasing challenges at the local, state, and federal levels. Our forum this year will focus on expanding the reach of the newly-launched Housing Not Handcuffs national campaign, which fights against the criminalization of homelessness—and for a right to adequate housing instead.

The forum will include discussions on a number of important topics, from the intersectional forms of discrimination that result in the criminalization of homelessness to the models of advocacy that are succeeding in cities and counties. The main goal and focus of the forum, however, will be strategizing and planning our collective work moving forward.

Join Our Team Today!



Reporting to the Deputy Director, the Operations Manager is responsible for executing the Law Center's operations, with responsibilities in human resources, financial oversight, and administration. The Operations Manager assists the Deputy Director in the financial management of the organization, working with and coordinating outside accountants and bookkeepers. To learn more, please [click here](#).

Changing Laws. Changing Lives.

The National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty (the Law Center) is the only national organization dedicated solely to using the power of the law to end and prevent homelessness.

With the support of a large network of pro bono lawyers, we address the immediate and long-term needs of people who are homeless or at risk through outreach and training, advocacy, impact litigation, and public education.

