

IN JUST TIMES

a publication of the

NATIONAL LAW CENTER
ON HOMELESSNESS & POVERTY



Changing Laws, Changing Lives

November 2018



DONATE NOW »

Dear friend,

I hope you had a wonderful Thanksgiving, filled with family, friends, and gratitude.

At the Law Center, we came together just before the holiday to honor leaders in the fight to end homelessness and to raise critical resources to continue our work. Our annual McKinney-Vento Awards ceremony was a very special occasion that highlighted the many ways to make a difference.



Maria Foscarinis
Executive Director

NFL player Vernon Davis, [last year's honoree](#), presented the 2018 Stewart B. McKinney award to Kaiser Permanente for its [commitment of \\$200 million to fund housing and services organizations](#) serving homeless people across the country, showcasing the difference that private sector investment can make.

[Sue Vento](#) presented the 2018 Bruce F. Vento to [Congressman Elijah Cummings](#) for his years of service and commitment to social justice, and especially his leadership on Title V of the McKinney-Vento Act, in partnership with the Law Center. [View his powerful speech here.](#)

Julie Jordan, Law Center board member and event chair, presented the 2018 pro bono counsel award to the Goldman Sachs Legal Department Pro Bono committee, which [worked with the Law Center](#) on our NYC Housing Not Handcuffs survey, capturing the impact of criminalization on homeless people in midtown Manhattan.

And [Khadijah Williams](#), the newest Law Center Board member, presented our 2018 Personal Achievement award to Valerie Grischy. Valerie is a San Diego resident who became disabled, lost her job, and is now living in her vehicle. She is one of several named plaintiffs in our [federal court class action case challenging the city's laws](#) that daily threatens Valerie and hundreds like her with fines, arrest and impoundment of their vehicles. We honored her and her fellow plaintiffs for the personal courage in speaking out and taking a stand against this injustice.

Today is Giving Tuesday, and I hope you'll take the [opportunity to support the Law Center](#)! We work every single day to protect the basic human rights of our most vulnerable neighbors, and I hope you'll join us. Together we can end and prevent the injustice of homelessness in America.

With gratitude,
Maria



Maria Foscarnis
Founder & Executive Director

This #GivingTuesday, join the fight to end homelessness.



Support the Law Center this #GivingTuesday, either on our [Facebook fundraiser](#) or directly through www.nlchp.org/donate.

NEWS from the LAW CENTER

DC Council Votes to Decriminalize Fare Evasion

The Law Center celebrates an important victory after the DC City Council, in its first of two votes on the measure, voted 11-2 for DC Bill 22-408, The Fare Evasion Decriminalization Amendment Act. This bill will convert the excessive criminal penalties that have led to arrest, jail-time, and criminal records for those suspected of failing to pay a \$2 fare on the DC Metro to a civil fine, as vehicle traffic violations are treated. Criminal enforcement of fare evasion has proven especially harmful to young people, black and brown residents, and low- and no-income residents, including those experiencing homelessness, who rely on public transit and are most likely to be targeted by enforcement. The DC Council will take a final vote on the bill on December 4, but the bill is still in danger of being amended or weakened, so those in DC wishing to support the campaign should [send a letter to their Councilmembers](#), or watch for opportunities for engagement on [our Twitter feed](#) with the hashtag #ItsNotFare.

Help Protect Immigrant Families from Poverty, Hunger, and Homelessness

Together with hundreds of other national and local organizations, the Law Center is participating in the [Protecting Immigrant Families Campaign](#) against the Department of Homeland Security's [proposed Public Charge Rule](#). The proposed rule is impractical, dangerous, and will result in millions of hardworking families forgoing critical, life-saving benefits, including housing and nutrition programs. The Law Center and [The National Housing Law Project](#) have created a template comment letter for those in the housing and homelessness sector to [submit comments](#). The template is available by emailing Arianna Cook-Thajudeen at acooktha@nhlp.org to request a copy. Comments are due December 10.

To learn more about the rule and what you can do:

- Check out our [short FAQs outlining the basics](#) of the proposed public charge rule's impact on families seeking and using federal housing subsidies.
- See our revised ["Technical" Fact Sheet](#) (for a more in-depth dive into the rule).
- Use our [Public Charge and Housing Talking Points](#).
- Watch the recording of our [Public Charge and Housing Webinar](#).
- Use the Protecting Immigrant Families Campaign's [Social Media Tool Kit](#) and check out their [resources](#) on editorial and article writing.



New Report: Serving and Protecting? Survey Results on Homeless New Yorkers' Experience with Law Enforcement

The Law Center, in conjunction with the [Housing Not Handcuffs Campaign](#), recently released a new report titled, "[Serving and Protecting? Survey Results on Homeless New Yorkers' Experience with Law Enforcement](#)". In January 2018, the Law Center coordinated volunteers from Goldman Sachs, Fried Frank Harris Shriver & Jacobson LLP, and Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP in conducting surveys of 90 persons experiencing homelessness at Holy Apostle Soup Kitchen in Manhattan. The report analyzes results from these surveys, which overwhelmingly indicated that law enforcement often harasses, cites, and arrests homeless persons for activities such as sleeping, eating, or merely existing in a place. The report also offers constructive policy recommendations that aim to decriminalize homelessness and reach permanent housing solutions.

Housing Not Handcuffs Campaign Two Year Anniversary and Web Convening

The Housing Not Handcuffs (HNH) Campaign celebrated its two year anniversary on Thursday, November 15, 2018. The Campaign was launched in 2016 by the Law Center, together with the National Coalition for the Homeless and more than 100 other national and local organizations, in order to combat the criminalization of homelessness and promote the right to adequate housing. The Campaign now has almost 800 endorsements including several from public officials and members of law enforcement, as well as over 300 from local and national organizations. In honor of the anniversary, HNH held a web convening in which Maria Foscarnis, Executive Director of the Law Center, spoke about the several victories that the Campaign has had over the past two years. Members of local organizations gave updates about their work, and Campaign members discussed their goals for the next year. If you have not yet endorsed the HNH Campaign, please visit [our website](#) to learn more. Follow the campaign on twitter [@HNHCampaign](#).

NLCHP in the Media

The Nation (Nov. 20) [All of a Sudden, Politicians Are Ready to Tackle America's Housing Crisis](#)

Bloomberg Businessweek (Nov. 20) [The Homeless Crisis Is Getting Worse in America's Richest Cities](#)

Las Vegas Review-Journal (Nov. 19) [Help homeless by giving to charity, Las Vegas officials say](#)

Santa Cruz (Nov. 16) [Community Survival Camp Established at Santa Cruz Post Office](#)

Times Standard (Nov. 16) [My Word: Housing is a human right](#)

Turlock Journal (Nov. 16) [Dismantling of Turlock encampment leaves inhabitants looking for shelter](#)

New York Times (Nov. 13) [New Public Spaces Are Supposed to Be for All. The Reality Is More Complicated.](#)

Santa Fe New Mexican (Nov. 7) [Santa Fe halts enforcement of panhandling law for legal review](#)

H

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.

www.nlchp.org