

UJC IN 2020

11,913 CASES CLOSED

24,388 PEOPLE IMPACTED

by our direct services.

\$4,583,524.50 RECOVERED

in public benefits for clients in desperate need.

OUR BOARD

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LETTER FROM OUR DIRECTOR

Friends,

It's hard to believe that we've been under lockdown conditions for almost a year. On the one hand, it all still seems strange, frightening, and new; on the other, it's almost hard to remember what it was like to casually shake hands, or eat out at a restaurant. And I suspect we have a long time yet to go.

This has been a difficult year for all of us. But whenever I'm tempted to complain, I remember: I can work from home – and I have a home to work from – and I haven't lost my job. I'm not scared of having the police called on me for walking on the "wrong" streets, and if they were called, I wouldn't be scared for my life simply because of the color of my skin.

Few of our clients here at the Urban Justice Center can say the same. Every day, they suffer the corrosive effects of unregulated capitalism and nativist white supremacy and now, compounding all of that, a pandemic and a cratering economy. Surviving has meant exposing themselves and their loved ones to a deadly disease, on a daily basis, just to make ends meet. It's meant choosing between dangerously overcrowded shelters without adequate ventilation, or sleeping on the streets. It's meant staying with their abusers because they have no other place to go.

It's meant one sacrifice after another, so on their behalf, I am asking you to please donate today, so we can keep up the fight tomorrow. Get your work place in too; matching donations are an incredible way to turn a small gift into a game changer.

In 1985 we sued the city to ensure that homeless youth under 21 were not kicked out of foster care directly to the streets - and won. Thirty five years later, we are still fighting - this time, to get homeless people off the streets and into pandemic-safe housing. Since the beginning, we have always fought for the voiceless.

In the pages of this report, you'll read how we are doing this today.

Think how much more we can do with your help in '21.

If you take away anything from this report, let it be this:

Black lives matter. Change is possible. Human rights for all.



KEEPING UP THE FIGHT '21



We are in a moment of unique opportunity for social progress, which is why we have committed to **Keeping Up the Fight into '21**. In this report, you'll read some of the ways we're doing that, including:

- Bringing in the Freedom Agenda as a new UJC Project, because we will not let the torture of incarceration in NYC jails continue;
- Bringing the 2nd class of fellows into our Social Justice Accelerator, because we believe with support and incubation the next generation of non-profit leaders are ready to show us the way;
- And, perhaps most importantly, continuing the work our Projects do with individual clients in the streets, in shelters, in jails, and over Zoom, to help nearly 25,000 people every year.

Your support makes our work possible!

URBANJUSTICE.ORG/KEEPING21



Freedom Agenda welcomes new members and allies to

join them in this struggle.

To get involved, visit:

FA.URBANJUSTICE. ORG/GET-INVOLVED

FREEDOM AGENDA

"When I stood on the steps of City Hall in 2016 to launch the #CLOSErikers campaign, there were over 10,000 people incarcerated there. We were told that closing Rikers would never happen. Four years later, the number of people in jail has dropped by more than half, and we have forced the City to face the human rights crisis that is Rikers Island, and pass a plan to close it. We have made important progress, but Rikers Island is not yet closed.

In the coming years, we will continue the vital work of building power with directly impacted people to erase that stain on our City — not just the physical buildings. We are dedicated to eradicating everything that Rikers Island represents: policies & practices that propagate state-sanctioned violence against Black & Brown people; that starve communities of resources, then punish their struggle to survive; that presume guilt based on skin color & lack of wealth; and that seek to convince us we can end cycles of harm by dehumanizing people accused of crimes, a lie that denies all of us true safety."

Darren Mack, Co-Director, Freedom Agenda

"When I first met the staff of Freedom Agenda, I immediately knew that their critical work would make a meaningful, deep impact. We are proud and honored to welcome them to the UJC community and to join them in advocating for some of New York's most vulnerable residents."

Sara Solfanelli, Chief Operating Officer & General Counsel, Urban Justice Center

YOUNG PROFESSIONAL BOARD

When the pandemic hit, our Young Professional Board sprang into action, mobilizing their work connections to get UJC listed in their corporate match campaigns and getting out the word about what UJC was doing to help those most affected by the pandemic.

Please check out URBANJUSTICE.ORG/YPB for the application and requirements to see if it's right for you!



"As someone who moved to NYC from a small town, it was important for me to partner with an organization that is focused on overlooked communities in my new community. By joining YPB, I have formed a true partnership where I have learned so much from the work that UJC does every day, and also allowed me to provide ideas and opportunities on how UJC can grow its important work. YPB has impacted me profoundly in terms of maintain a connection to social justice efforts, and I have found UJC incredibly receptive to my opinions and ability to make an impact."

Jack Lancaster, Bain



"I've always wanted to engage and give back to my community. A couple of years ago, I happened to stumble upon UJC via Facebook and was very intrigued with the organization's mission statement. UJC actively aims to address the many facets of marginalization within our city and society. When I found YPB, I was so excited that an organization like UJC would have a place for someone like me, a young professional with no legal background or non-profit experience to contribute to their overall social justice mission. I have been a member for two years and it has been a very rewarding experience."

Krystine Santos, Estée Lauder

The powerful image on our cover is a mosaic of photos taken by artist **AJ Stetson**, who has been photographing New Yorkers in their masks throughout the pandemic and exhibiting the images in public. Once it is safe to do so, we will be hosting Stetson for an in-person exhibition of these larger than life photos in our office at 40 Rector Street. To find out more about AJ, visit **ajstetson.com**, or find him on Instagram **@ajstetson**.

"SINCE RECOVERING FROM COVID BACK IN APRIL, IT HAS BEEN A PRIVILEGE TO PHOTOGRAPH—WITH PERMISSION AND SOCIALLY DISTANCED—MORE THAN A THOUSAND NEW YORKERS THROUGHOUT THE BOROUGHS, ALL OF WHOM HAVE EXHIBITED THE SIMPLE ACT OF KINDNESS OF WEARING A MASK. I AM HONORED TO BE COLLABORATING WITH UJC IN SHARING THIS DISPLAY OF COLLECTIVE RESILIENCE, DIVERSITY, STRENGTH, AND EMPATHY."

AJ STETSON

SINCE THE PANDEMIC...



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FROM OUR PROJECTS

Mental Health Project

MHP adapted to meet the changing needs of our client community in 2020.

We connected clients to medical care and benefits, including COVID-related relief. We fought back against proposed State Medicaid cuts, and expanded our Access to Recovery Coalition. We represented clients at Social Security hearings, appealed denials in federal court and succeeded in protecting the rights of unrepresented litigants before the SSA. We pushed to end solitary confinement, expand mental health treatment, and worked to ensure people released from City jails receive discharge planning.

We also moved our educational workshops and peer events online to decrease the isolation made worse by this pandemic.

Human Rights Project

In 2020 our focus has been on relaunching our formerly annual NYC Human Rights Report Card, which serves as an educational and accountability tool that highlights local human rights legislation and grades New York City Council members on their human rights voting records.

HRP looks forward to releasing the 2020 Report Card online in the coming months and to growing the project in 2021 to reengage with global and regional human rights mechanisms through the United Nations (UN) and Inter American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR).

Sex Worker Project

Despite the pandemic, government budget crises and xenophobic, transphobic and racist immigration policies, SWP was able to continue our life changing direct legal services in New York City, securing asylum and immigration relief for dozens of survivors of human trafficking and people working in the sex trades.

We were also able to put direct cash assistance, PPE and metrocards into clients' hands during the pandemic. SWP launched the Decrim wORk! campaign to decriminalize and destigmatize adult consensual sex work in Oregon, and expanded our staff presence to offices in DC, New Orleans and New York City.

Peter Cicchino Youth Project

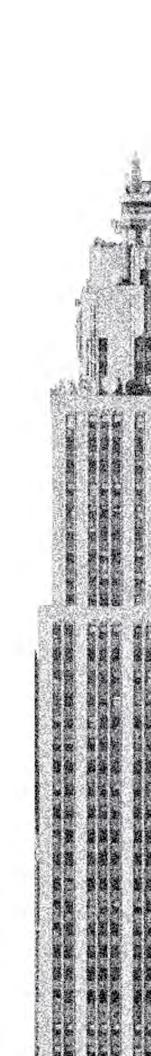
In 2020, PCYP has continued to grow our relationship with our partners, hosted virtual clinics and online fundraisers, and continued our immigration practice and name change program.

Though the year has been challenging, we have seen clients receive their green cards, their stimulus checks, work permits, etc. Necessarily, we also expanded into COVID related relief. Due to their status, one client believed they were ineligible for the \$1,200 Economic Impact Payment.

However, after we thoroughly reviewed the eligibility criteria with them and took on the application process, our client was able to apply for the stimulus check and successfully receive payment. A meaningful win!

SWP client Norma (center) with her attorney Molly (right) & Case Manager/Department of Justice Accredited Representative Abby (left), on the day Norma won her immigration court case — ending a decade-long struggle with removal proceedings, allowing Norma to stay permanently and continue her activism in NYC!

Photo Credit Clement Lee



OUR SOCIAL JUSTICE ACCELERATOR CURRENT CLASS

Two years ago, we realized there was a gap in the world of nonprofit advocacy. New groups started to take on urgent issues became bogged down in the red tape of setting up a nonprofit, and were never able to tackle the problems they intended to solve. So we launched the Social Justice Accelerator, which borrows from the Silicon Valley "angel investor" model to fast-track early stage advocates by inviting them to join UJC for two years to receive critical support and mentorship.

This fall, we're graduating our first SJA class and the results have been incredible:

ASYLUMCONNECT

AsylumConnect, the world's first tech resource platform designed for those fleeing persecution due to LGBTQ+ status, grew to cover 35 U.S. states and launched in Mexico, connecting over 20,000 verified users to verified LGBTQ+ affirming and immigrant friendly resources.

THE BRAVE HOUSE

"I am so grateful to be a part of the Social Justice Accelerator, which not only provided us with a space to launch The Brave House and hold events, but also connected me to the other SJA fellows. I could stop by their office or schedule coffees (even now via zoom!) to brainstorm ideas and think through challenges and strategies together.

Being a part of the broader UJC community helped me approach our work with a more intersectional lens."

Lauren Blodgett, Founder and Executive Director, The Brave House

COLLEGE ATHLETE ADVOCACY INITIATIVE

The College Athlete Advocacy Initiative has worked with lawmakers and fellow advocates to help shape and influence historic reform in college sports, publishing articles in USA Today, launching a viral PSA video on athletes' rights, and presenting on college athlete exploitation at TEDxDayton 2020.

POWER OF PURPOSE

Before the pandemic, **Power of Purpose**, which interrupts the violence, crime, and cycle of criminal justice involvement plaguing youth ages 14 to 18 in the Bronx, had launched successful partnership with local schools, community leaders, and the NYPD to provide mentoring and youth support.

These initiatives are on-hold during quarantine, but they are ready to roar back as soon as it is safe to do so.

SURVEILLANCE TECHNOLOGY OVERSIGHT PROJECT

"As part of UJC's Social Justice Accelerator program, the Surveillance Technology Oversight Project (S.T.O.P.) has grown from an idea to a powerful movement for change.

This summer, the New York City Council passed S.T.O.P.'s top legislative priority, the Public Oversight of Surveillance Technology (POST) Act, a historic law which requires the NYPD to disclose all surveillance tools to the public."

Albert Fox Cahn, Founder and Executive Director, Surveillance Technology Oversight Project

SOCIAL JUSTICE ACCELERATOR RIGHT FOR YOU?

Has 2020 inspired you to start a non-profit to fight for justice? Apply to become part of the Social Justice Accelerator and move this world closer to true social justice for all.

We have extended the application deadline for the 2nd Class of the Social Justice Accelerator to start at UJC in March.

TO FIND OUT MORE AND APPLY, VISIT URBANJUSTICE.ORG/SJA

JUST LISTEN TO A FEW OF THE ADVOCATES WHOSE CAREERS WE'VE HELPED LAUNCH:

"Being a part of UJC gave VAP a credibility that opened doors and allowed us to form partnerships immediately. We got to launch from a foundation that would have taken years to build."

Coco Culhane Founder of the Veteran Advocacy Project "The Urban Justice Center was essential in building the International Refugee Assistance Project into the organization we are today."

MacArthur Genius Grant
Winner & founder of IRAP

TAKING ICE TO COURT

For years, our clients - survivors of domestic violence, defrauded tenants, cheated workers, and more - have been terrified of making necessary or even routine courthouse appointments because ICE agents have been conducting warrent-less raids inside what should be the halls of justice. These threaten a pillar of American democracy - your day in court - and so, since 2019, we have been actively pursuing a lawsuit, Doe vs ICE, which would stop this chilling practice.

In September, the courts ruled that our lawsuit could move forward, demonstrating the legitimacy of our claims. We hope for a speedy judgment on the behalf of our clients and all immigrants in New York City.

"We know that ICE presence in NYC Courts has had a chilling effect on survivors coming forward to seek help or access justice. Historically, immigrant DV survivors are untrusting of the legal system and due to increased ICE presence in the courts, the immigration legal community has witnessed an increased reluctance of survivors to come forward."

Atossa Movahedi, Director of Legal Services & Development,
UIC Domestic Violence Project

NEW UJC BOARD MEMBERS

This year, UJC welcomed a record three new members to our Board of Directors. All three have a long background with UJC, and with social justice as a field. We asked each what made them join the Board:



"I first joined UJC's junior board in 2016, and have had the opportunity to support the launch of new initiatives as the organization has continued to grow. I'm excited to join the board to further support the senior leadership in growing UJC, as we continue to help more communities in need."

Michal Miernowski



"I joined the board of directors because I value the collective work of the Urban Justice Center to shift power, opportunity, and representation into the hands of the people most impacted by social inequities. As someone who has experienced those inequities first hand, I am honored to help lead the organization and look forward to supporting UJC's mission and the respective goals of each Project."

Brooke Richie-Babbage

board member."

"I've been a part of the UJC's

orbit for almost two decades -

as a litigation partner, advocacy

colleague, supporter, and

now board member. I am a

deep believer in the power of UJC's unique model, and in its

potential to bring about genuine,

lasting social change. I'm thrilled

to continue my relationship with

the organization and its team as a

Johnny Perez

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

\$200.1k+

The New York Community Trust NYC DOHMH 0911 048 AO **HRA CSBG** NYC HRA AHTP NYC HRA DSS Non Res

NYC HRA IOI

NYC HRA HPLP

NYCC DoVE

NYS IOLA

NYS OCA

NYS OTDA DAP

Robin Hood Foundation

\$200k - 50.1k

Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez

H. Van Ameringen Foundation

Hispanic Federation Hunger Solutions Of

ICAN - Independent Consumer Advocacy Network

Mertz Gilmore Foundation

New York, Inc.

National Religious Campaign Against Torture

NEO Philanthropy / Oak Foundation

NYC City Council

NYC DOHMH Reentry

NYC DYCD Discretionary NYC HPD HPI NYC Mayor's Office NYS DCJS T563137 NYS OCFS C027541

NYS OTDA STEHP **SBS** Discretionary

Services For The Underserved

The Abbey Fund

\$50k - 25.1k

Ben & Jerry's Foundation

Brooklyn Community Foundation

DOHMH MCCAP

Mayor's Fund To Advance New York City

North Star Fund NY State Senator

Iessica Ramos NYC HRA IOI

NYS OVS 456

NYS OVS 490

Open Society Foundations

Open Society Institute Schwab Charitable

The Jericho Project Vanguard Charitable

\$25k - 10.1k

Boston Foundation Bradley Tusk Brian & Erin Pastuszenski Edward & Ellen Roche Relief Foundation Imani Henry -

Equality for Flatbush

Joe Hamid Joel Frank

Justin Pollack

Lily Auchincloss Foundation Inc

Michael Barasch, Esq. / Barasch & McGarry

Michal Miernowski

New York University Phyllis Louis-Dreyfus

Raymond James Charitable Fund

Stonewall Community Foundation

Suzanne Peck & Brian Friedman

The Koffler Family Fund

Valentine Perry Snyder Fund

\$10k - 5.1k

Benjamin Thypin Citigroup Payment Services

Cliff Bar Family **Foundations**

Epstein Teicher Philanthropies

Food Chain Workers Alliance

Ira Lichtiger & Joyce Bluestone

Marc Falcone & Caitlin Halligan

Morgan Stanley Global **Impact Funding** Trust, Inc.

National Immigration Law Center

Neal Kwatra

NY Council Member Margaret Chin

NYC SBS City Council Discretionary

Rebecca Katz

Sidhu-Singh Family Foundation

The Lucius N. Littauer Foundation

Unitarian Universality Fund

Valerie Block & Alexis Romay

Wild Geese Foundation

Winky Foundation

\$5k - 2.1k

Amalgamated Charitable Foundation Andrew Milgram

Ardea Holdings LP Arnold & Sandra

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Barry A. Munger & Sarah O'Neill

Bradford & Kate Peck

Business Center For New Americans

Carolyn Gemmell

Christopher & Leah Tahbaz

Christopher Woodbury Amalgamated

Charitable Foundation

Andrew Milgram Ardea Holdings LP

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Bradford & Kate Peck

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Alliance NY Assemblymember Catalina Cruz

NY Council Member Benjamin Kallos

NY Council Member Keith Powers

NY Council Member Mark Levine

NY Council Member Robert E. Cornegy Jr. Olivia Durif-Varambon **Omaha Community**

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\$2k - 1k

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Evan Solomon Ford Foundation

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Greg Fischer & Alexandra

Jens P. Hansen

Gerassimides

Jewish Communal Fund

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Joshua Glick

Julian Barlow Justin Reich & Elsa

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Katrina Baker Kayu Muigai

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Lena Sradnick

Leslie Sim Louise Williams

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Marco Da Silva Marian & Hans

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Community Fund

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Schiffman Foundation Inc.

The South Asian Bar Association Of New York Fund

Toledo Community Foundation, Inc.

Turnstile Tours, Inc. Vice Media LLC

Vlad-Modrzejewski Charitable Fund

William Thompson

Zach Vonnegut Zheng He

OUR PROJECTS

AsylumConnect uses technology to help LGBTQ+ asylum seekers and other persecuted LGBTQ+ people find verified affirming legal, medical, mental health, and social services in seconds, 24/7.

The Brave House supports young immigrant women in New York City, with a focus on those who are survivors of gender-based violence.

The College Athlete Advocacy Initiative advocates for the fair treatment, protection, and representation of college athletes in the multibillion-dollar college sports industry

Domestic Violence Project protects the rights of intimate partner violence survivors to allow for a self-determined and safe future.

Freedom Agenda is a member-led project dedicated to organizing people and communities directly impacted by incarceration to achieve decarceration and system transformation

Human Rights Project promotes recognition and implementation of the full spectrum of human rights in the United States.

Mental Health Project works to enforce the rights of low-income New Yorkers with mental health concerns.

Peter Cicchino Youth Project provides legal representation to homeless youth in NYC, with a focus on the needs of LGBTQQ youth.

Power of Purpose is a solution to the violence, crime, and cycle of criminal justice involvement plaguing youth ages 14 to 18 in the Bronx.

Safety Net Project advocates to ensure access to public benefits for low-income New Yorkers; defends tenants against eviction & provides legal support for tenant organizing campaigns, and supports & organizes with homeless New Yorkers.

Sex Workers Project provides legal services, advocacy, education, and organizing for the human rights of sex workers.

Street Vendor Project works to correct social and economic injustice faced by NYC street vendors.

Surveillance Technology Oversight Project (S.T.O.P.) litigates and advocates the dismantling of local and state-level surveillance, particularly those systems targeted at historically over-policed communities.

Please make a donation so that we can keep up the fight tomorrow:

URBANJUSTICE.ORG/ KEEPING21

