Legal Council celebrated its 30th anniversary this past year. We even had a sold-out gala, chaired by our very first board president, Karen Anderson and her wife Kari.

We have been able to reflect on all the good that Legal Council has done over the years, including:

- Launching the nation’s first medical-legal partnership in 1991 with Cook County Hospital. (Now, we have more than 15 partnerships across Chicago!)
- Helping tens of thousands of Illinoisans and their families get the legal assistance they need to live healthy and free.
- Holding our government accountable through lawsuits and policy changes, so that our health and education systems work well for everyone.

A small legal aid organization doesn’t have more than three decades of success without the steadfast support of kind, generous individuals, foundations, community partners, and clients. So we thank you for always being there.

Thank you for helping Legal Council be the strong and ever-growing agency it is today, as we now enter our 31st year of providing the best legal care possible.

Sincerely,

Tom Yates
Executive Director

As Tom notes, there is much to be proud of in Legal Council’s decades-long history. We are so grateful for all those wonderful supporters, volunteers, and clients who have made Legal Council’s successes possible. We reflect on the past while focusing on the future.

With that in mind, our priorities over the coming years include:

- Improving the health and well-being of Illinoisans and their families by eliminating systemic barriers to care and public benefits.
- Defending and protecting access to affordable, quality health coverage for all Illinoisans, especially for people earning lower incomes.
- Further expanding our educational and legal services to immigrant communities in Illinois facing barriers to health care, food assistance, and other benefits.

While there is still so much left to do, we know it’s possible with you as a partner in Legal Council’s efforts. Thank you for helping to ensure the long-term success of our organization. Legal Council will be here as long as there is a need. Thanks to you.

Let’s keep moving forward.

Jena Levin
President, Board of Directors

Legal Council for Health Justice uses the power of the law to secure dignity, opportunity, and well-being for people facing barriers due to illness or disability.

Vision

Everyone deserves a fair chance to lead a life of dignity and opportunity.
Near the Dan Ryan Expressway, Chicagoans who are homeless have built a community of understanding and of survival.

In 2018, our advocates started visiting a popular homeless encampment off the Dan Ryan Expressway, commonly referred to as “Ruble” among residents. Ruble is a place of proud independence and survival in the face of great adversity. At one of our earliest visits to Ruble, Legal Advocate Kate Miller tried to meet with a resident named Mark. Immediately, Mark became upset and refused to meet with our legal team. He shouted repetitively that he didn’t “want to be medicated.”

A fellow resident explained to Kate that Mark had recently been hospitalized against his will. During that time, he was physically restrained and injected with medication. Understandably, this experience, along with other past traumas and his mental health condition, instilled in him fear and distrust.

These type of incidents weren’t unfamiliar to the residents of Ruble. Mental illnesses are prevalent in the nation’s homeless population and in Chicago, where more than 1,300 people are homeless and have a mental health condition. But when residents at this camp act out as a symptom of their mental health, the camp community always responds with patience and tolerance.

“The people at Ruble are survivors who have figured out how to live together and take care of each other,” said Kate. “The mindset of the camp is that people are free to live as they please, as long as they are not harming others.”

Ruble is a well-organized camp with responsibilities assigned to each resident, organized clean-up, management of resources, and general camaraderie. But scarcity of resources and general instability threaten the well-being of those who live there. In order for these residents to thrive, the ability to afford routine health care and housing is essential.

“The advocacy that Legal Council provides is life-changing for our clients,” said Sam Guardino, Homeless Outreach Program Director at Thresholds. “Financial assistance through Social Security and other public benefits programs allows our clients to recover and live independently. These benefit programs are less costly to taxpayers than the alternatives, like repeated hospitalizations, emergency rooms, nursing homes, and jails.”
In 1991, Chancelor Cunningham woke up and couldn’t breathe. Initially, a doctor misdiagnosed him with bronchitis. Later, when things weren’t improving, a new doctor diagnosed the pneumonia and admitted him to a hospital in Bronxville for an extended stay.

“They told me I had pneumonia,” Chancelor recalled. “But I wasn’t getting any better.”

After almost a month in the hospital, Chancelor’s diagnosis changed again: he had AIDS. In the early days of his diagnosis, Chancelor pushed forward with the help of his mother, a woman he describes as outspoken, triumphant, and an unstoppable force. “My mom was relentless. For about six months to a year, she was always there for me. She didn’t want me to be a victim of stigma.”

For Chancelor and many of Legal Council’s clients with HIV, the support systems in our communities are a lifeline. Along with expert legal assistance, Legal Council offers a case specialist at Haymarket Center, a housing case manager, and an employment case manager. For Chancelor and many of Legal Council’s clients with HIV, the support systems in our communities are a lifeline.

Many factors influence someone’s health, including food insecurity, no income, or unstable housing. Individual health is determined by more than someone’s genetics, and that’s even true for individuals living with chronic health conditions. For example, people with HIV are more likely to live in poverty, and face a significantly higher rate of health conditions like HIV in the nation’s homeless population—six to ten times higher than the general population.

This year, Chancelor worked with his mother to start a clothing drive to support people living with HIV, and he has been an outspoken advocate at the office of Legal Council. Along with being a member of Legal Council’s Client Advisory Board, he collaborates with a support group at Mercy Hospital with his psychologist, where others look to him as an example. His goal as an advocate is to help people living with HIV get the treatment and assistance they need.

“Chancelor has someone—who is always there for him,” said Marina. “Someone who’s ready to help him tackle the obstacles he faces, and who’s so acutely aware of the barriers they need to succeed.

Today, together with our wealth of connections and partnerships, we’re building better futures across the state. Giving back to his community

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High-quality early care and education programs have lasting effects on IQ, boost academic and economic achievement, and help prevent chronic disease in adulthood. But many families with low incomes face barriers in getting their children to their care programs. When families live in poverty, don’t have access to quality healthcare, or face other social problems in their households, children are more likely to miss out on early childhood learning opportunities.

By embedding legal aid at Children’s Place Head Start, our legal experts can easily identify the unmet social needs of children and their families, and work collaboratively to craft solutions and overcome these barriers. In 2018, Legal Council welcomed attorney Hannah Bakowski to launch this Head Start medical-legal partnership with the goal of improving family stability, child well-being, and kindergarten readiness.

The Children’s Place Head Start medical-legal partnership is sponsored by Anonymous, Barack Ferrazzano Kirschbaum & Nagelberg LLP/BFKN Foundation.

Two special education bills crafted by Legal Council advocates became law this year. These laws eliminate barriers to parent participation in education decisions for their children, and provide opportunities for redress to families of children who were harmed by Chicago Public Schools (CPS) illegal delays or denials of special education services.

Previously, following the grassroots advocacy and calls for accountability led by Legal Council, an Illinois State Board of Education investigation found that CPS officials had broken the law by delaying and denying services to children with disabilities. Some services that were delayed or denied include school transportation services, additional student aides, and extended school year options that prevent student skill loss caused by an interruption to special education services.

The two new laws:
• Allow parents until 2021 to file a state complaint against the school district for the mistreatment of their children and to receive compensatory services in return for the educational opportunities lost (Public Act 101-0507).
• Guarantee all parents in the state are notified if their child’s Individualized Education Plan (IEP) has not been implemented ten days after it is written. This law also requires districts to inform parents at least once each year of their right to access records of the services provided to their children (Public Act 101-0515).

This is a milestone victory for Illinois children in special education, especially for Chicago Public School students who have gone years without the proper services they needed to thrive at school.

For CPS students like Nathan, who went months without the special education services he needed to learn, there may be no recovering from educational opportunities lost from the school district’s delay and denials of special education services.

Nathan is a 10-year-old boy with autism who loves science, origami, and YouTube. Not only was he denied the classroom support he was legally entitled to receive, but the school also illegally kept him from going on field trips because of his disability.

“His mood was terrible,” said Nathan’s mom, Tamara. “I would have to leave my nursing school classes to pick him up from school. He was having so many half days, so many full days out of school.”

Since reaching out to Legal Council, Nathan now has an individualized education plan that best meets his learning needs. He has a special education aide committed to his classroom success, and every school professional who interacts with Nathan must go through training on his education plan.

Now, Nathan’s mom says he has much better school days.

“This is his first time being on the Honor Roll for all four quarters. He was so happy,” said Tamara.
Legal Council helped launch the Illinois HIV Action Alliance statewide coalition in June 2019, alongside many of the most influential social justice organizations in the state. Illinois’ HIV-specific criminal law is harmful and unjust, and criminalizes people with HIV who are aware of their status and have not disclosed, often without being able to later prove disclosure of their status. The medical community and American society have made great progress in our understanding of HIV and how it is transmitted, prevented, and treated. Despite this, people in Illinois and other states still face antiquated laws that are rooted in harmful stereotypes and outdated science.

The Illinois HIV Action Alliance seeks to eliminate HIV-based social stigma and criminalization by centering the voices of people living with HIV, and promoting the dignity, rights, and respect of the community through engagement, advocacy, and education.

“Isn’t it ironic that Illinois’ HIV criminalization laws actually make things worse for those with HIV and the general public? We will not stop until these outdated laws in Illinois and beyond are updated or rescinded as to not discriminate against people with HIV,” said Program Director Kenya Garrett-Burnett.

Legal Council also advocated against various federal rules and regulations threatening the health and well-being of immigrant families. In September, the Department of Homeland Security shared a new “public charge” rule that would make using health, anti-hunger, anti-poverty, or affordable housing programs a disqualifier for remaining lawfully in the U.S. This change would force thousands of Illinois families to make an unthinkable choice—health care or lawful permanent status—and make Illinois sicker, hungrier, and poorer.

The past year, Legal Council continued its statewide advocacy efforts in two prominent Illinois coalitions: Protect Our Care IL and Protecting Immigrant Families IL. Alongside our partners in Protect Our Care IL, Legal Council responded to attacks against the Affordable Care Act, Medicaid, and food assistance through SNAP. Most notably, Protect Our Care IL is responsible for advancing changes to strengthen the state's Medicaid program. These changes will make keeping Medicaid coverage easier for the Illinoisans who depend on it and ensures that Medicaid works for families across the state.
Formerly incarcerated individuals living with serious mental illness now have access to civil legal assistance, thanks to a new partnership Legal Council launched this year with Thresholds.

Under the partnership, individuals with serious mental illness who receive services from Thresholds’ Justice Program can access free, trauma-informed benefits advocacy. Megan Harkins, staff attorney and Equal Justice Works fellow, joined Legal Council in 2018 to launch this innovative partnership.

“I am able to assist clients with the long-term goal of economic stability, while the [Thresholds] team works to stabilize clients in the short-term by helping them access resources to meet their basic needs, in addition to physical and mental health care,” said Megan of the partnership. “By working together, we are able to support clients as they return to their communities and help them navigate the many barriers they face due to their justice involvement and symptoms related to mental illness.”

A stable source of income is critical in combating recidivism and improving a person’s health, welfare, and quality of life. This partnership targets individuals who are among the highest cost drivers of medical, criminal justice, and social service costs, and prioritizes access to a unique model of civil legal aid to improve the chances of receiving a steady income through Social Security benefits and end the cycle of incarceration and homelessness.

These individuals, like all those living with severe mental health conditions, have an especially difficult experience navigating the complex process of applying for Social Security benefits. On any given day, between 25-30 percent of the individuals at Cook County Jail struggle with a mental illness.

“Thresholds’ partnership with Legal Council has equipped our staff with critical knowledge to help advocate for our clients,” said Laura Lord, Assistant Program Director of the Thresholds Justice Program. “Megan has become a part of the team, and formed positive relationships with both our clients and staff. Legal Council is always available and easy to reach, and we’re so grateful for their partnership.”

In 2019, Legal Council forged a new partnership with Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago (PHIMC) to create the Community Reentry Project: Safe and Sound Return Partnership Taskforce. This new project engages multiple community partners to create a comprehensive system of prevention, care, and support services. This system ensures that people both living with and those at the highest risk of HIV transition smoothly from incarceration back into their communities.

The project works directly with women who are incarcerated in Cook County Jail, providing assistance to stabilize their home and children while they are incarcerated. Additionally, the project facilitates presentations on guardianship and public benefits as well as providing the tools necessary to apply for public benefits and access to legal services upon their release.

Reintegration for formerly incarcerated individuals already presents many challenges, but reintegration is even more difficult for formerly incarcerated individuals with chronic health problems, meaning they also have a greater risk of recidivism. The Community Reentry Project is a unique model that uses a public health approach to reentry and has seen an almost 30% drop in recidivism among participants.

Illinois amended the Early Intervention Services System Act to guarantee access to Early Intervention services for approximately 30,000 Illinois children who have been exposed to lead. This amendment, spearheaded by Legal Council advocates, ensures children with lead poisoning are automatically eligible for the life-changing care and services they need by defining lead poisoning as a medically diagnosed condition that typically results in delays or interruptions to a child’s development.

This is not only a victory for the health and well-being of thousands of children, but this accomplishment is also a win for the state as a cost-effective practice. Many children who go without Early Intervention services must receive special education services in preschool and elementary school, but Early Intervention costs 2.5 times less than special education.
In January, Legal Council settled our class action lawsuit MA v. Bellock with the Department of Healthcare and Family Services in favor of more than 1,200 medically complex children who need in-home nursing. Under previous rules, medically complex children across the state were losing necessary in-home care without sufficient warning. The children impacted needed in-home care for basic functions, including eating, drinking, breathing, and oxygen regulation. The determination to deny necessary care to these children was previously being made by a third party contractor which used a determination process that lacked transparency. This process was primarily composed of an assessor using a checklist that did not include detailed questions about the patient’s nursing needs. Through this process, 98% of children were found to be no longer eligible for their previously approved services, and 66% of children would no longer receive any nursing services.

The settlement ruled that third party contractors were no longer to be used in the process of case review and that sufficient notice about any approval, denial, or change to a child’s nursing services must be provided to families, including any relevant information about appealing a decision. This settlement helps provide necessary levels of complex care to children while saving money, as the average case costs $20,000 more per child when hospitalized versus when in-home nursing is provided.

In March, the AIDS Foundation of Chicago awarded Legal Council with their Innovation Award for our work in changing the hepatitis C cure policy. Left: Ruth Edwards, Senior Director of Program Services, accepts the Innovation Award on March 8, 2019 | Right: Meghan Carter, Staff Attorney, and Ruth Edwards led Legal Council’s hepatitis C advocacy.

Thousands of low-income Illinoisans now have access to a life-saving hepatitis C cure, thanks to the tireless advocacy of Legal Council attorneys. After receiving a formal threat of litigation, officials at the Illinois Department of Health and Family Services negotiated with Legal Council lawyers to end the department’s policy of rationing coverage for a cure to hepatitis C for Medicaid participants. This policy change came after years of strategic advocacy to remove unnecessary and life-threatening barriers to the treatment. Left untreated, hepatitis C can cause liver failure, liver cancer, and death. But prior to the change, children enrolled in Medicaid were required to have severe liver damage that could not be undone before receiving coverage for the cure. The expansion of the availability of hepatitis C therapy will have a great impact on the clients that we work with,” said Illinois infectious disease doctor Nancy Glick. “Removing the barriers to treatment will not only help the individuals infected with hepatitis C, it will have important public health implications for ending the epidemic for us all.”

This is also a significant win for the HIV community, as more than a quarter of people living with HIV in the U.S. also have hepatitis C. Legal Council attorneys collaborated with co-counsels at Jenner & Block LLP and the Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation of Harvard Law School, and other partners at the AIDS Foundation of Chicago, to identify and recruit Illinois Medicaid participants for a federal class action lawsuit to challenge the unlawful restrictions.

Innovation Award
Legal Council for Health Justice

WINNING TREATMENT FOR PEOPLE WITH HEPATITIS C

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CLASS ACTION WIN FOR IL KIDS

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The Legal Beagles returned for the 2018 AIDS Run & Walk! Together our team raised $15,000 for our free legal services to people living with HIV.

In response to cruel and inhumane policies threatening the well-being of immigrant families, Legal Council partnered with the Protecting Immigrant Families Illinois coalition to lead a candlelight vigil in downtown Chicago.

Seventeen attorneys, law students, and paralegals directed more than 100 pro bono hours at our annual Medical Records Marathon, in partnership with the Lesbian and Gay Bar Association of Chicago.

Legal Council presented two workshops on public benefits and legal rights in the workplace at the Positively Aging Conference, hosted by TPAN. Illinois leaders in law and medicine were in attendance.

Legal Council hosted its first gala in celebration of the agency’s 30th anniversary. More than 400 attendees celebrated 30 years of health justice, and joined us in honoring Howard Brown Health Dr. Nicole Hamp, and Rep. Greg Harris for their dedication to advancing Legal Council’s mission.

Legal Council hosted its 5th Annual May Ball in the West Loop. More than 150 Legal Council supporters got dressed up for a night of Hollywood Glitz & Glamour.
CLIENT AND CASE PROFILES

2,013 INDIVIDUAL CLIENTS
2,629 LEGAL CASES
130 TRAININGS LED BY STAFF
3,860 PEOPLE TRAINED IN HEALTH POLICY, SOCIAL SECURITY, EDUCATION & MORE

AGE
- Under 18: 16%
- 18-24: 6%
- 25-34: 15%
- 35-44: 15%
- 45-64: 43%
- 65+: 5%

GENDER
- Male: 64%
- Female: 30%
- Transgender, gender-fluid, gender non-conforming: 5%
- Unknown: 1%

RACE
- White: 27%
- Black: 48%
- Hispanic: 17%
- Asian: 2%
- More than one race: 2%
- Native: < 1%
- Unknown: 3%

POPULATIONS SERVED

91%
Disability

42%
HIV

31%
Homeless

16%
Children

200,000 PEOPLE REPRESENTED IN 4 CLASS ACTION LAWSUITS

LEGAL PROBLEMS
- Public Benefits: 40%
- Health: 26%
- Housing/Consumer/Utility: 8%
- Education: 6%
- Family: 3%
- Individual Rights: 3%
- Employment: 2%
- Other: 12%

GEOGRAPHY
- Chicago South Side: 30%
- Chicago North Side: 26%
- Chicago West Side: 26%
- Outside of Chicago: 18%

3,860 PEOPLE TRAINED IN HEALTH POLICY, SOCIAL SECURITY, EDUCATION & MORE

2,013 INDIVIDUAL CLIENTS
2,629 LEGAL CASES
130 TRAININGS LED BY STAFF
### FUNDING & ADMINISTRATION

#### Revenues and other support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Unrestricted</th>
<th>Temporarily Restricted</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-government grants and contributions (including individuals)</td>
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<td>Net assets released from restrictions due to satisfaction of program restrictions</td>
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Total Revenue $3,285,189

#### Expenses

<table>
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<td>$278,640</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>$278,640</td>
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</table>

Total Expenses $3,283,481

### GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

- Chicago Department of Family and Support Services
- Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities
- Illinois Department of Human Services
- Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program, Parts A & B
- University of Illinois-Chicago Coordination of Health Care for Complex Kids (CHECK)

### COMMUNITY SUPPORT

#### Corporate Support

- **Platinum**
  - Access Community Health
  - Benesch, Friedlander, Coplan & Aronoff LLP
  - Center for Housing and Health

- **Gold**
  - Actuate Law LLC
  - Benesch Friedlander Coplan & Aronoff LLP
  - Children's Home and Aid

- **Silver**
  - Abbott
  - AbbVie
  - Asofsky Family Foundation

### Community Support

- **Premium**
  - Advocate
  - Benesch Friedlander Coplan & Aronoff LLP
  - Chicago Spirit Brigade

- **Bronze**
  - Advocate
  - Benefits & Volunteer
  - Children’s Home and Aid

### MEDIA SUPPORT

- **Premium**
  - ChicagoPride.com
  - C. Grost Photography

- **Bronze**
  - Chicago Pilsen Community Foundation
  - C. Grost Photography

### Annual Report 2019

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We apologize for any inadvertent omissions—we appreciate all our supporters!
SILENT AUCTION DONORS

4 Star Restaurant Group
5 Rabbit Cerveceria
A Woman’s Gym
About Face Theatre
After-Word Bookstore
Allen J. Grant and Associates
Annyavanye Theatre
Art & Science Salon
Babes with Blades Theatre Company
Best Western Plus, Hawthorne Terrace
Big Bar
Boka Restaurant Group
Bourbon Sarahs Hotel and World Trade Center
Boundary Tavern & Oyster
Brazilian Bocce
Brass
Broadway in Chicago
Café con Leche
Carnivale
Check, Please!
Chicago Athletic Association
Chicago Botanic Garden
Chicago Diner
Chicago History Museum
Chicago Opera Theater
Chicago Parkway Truck
Chicago Shakespeare Theater
Chicago Stufvels
Chicago White Sox
Chicago’s First Lady Cruises
Club Lucky
Corner Bakery Café
Debbie’s Irish Pub
D & S Frame Office Equipment
Dollop Coffee
DS Tequila Co.
Dwaei’s Board and Beer
East Bank Club
Equity imprint
Fat Cat
Few Spirits
Fireplace Inn
Flamingo’s Prime Steakhouse & Wine Bar
Fremonts
Fudge Pot
Gertrude Garden Center
Glant
Restaurant
Giordano Dance Chicago
Glen Tavern
Goodman Theatre
Hilton
Horseshoe Casino
Joffrey Ballet
John G. Shedd Aquarium
Kim Janas
Kleptope and Hotels and Restaurants
Knoedel’s Bar & Grill
Koval Distillery
La Quinta Inn & Suites Chicago Downtown
Lady Gregory
Lakeview East Chamber of Commerce
Landmark Theatres
LaQuinta Inn & Suites New Orleans French Quarter
Lettuce Entertain You
LG’s Bar
Lincoln Park Zoo
LondonHouse Hotel Chicago
Lou Malnati’s
Lucky Strike Lanes
Magnolia Bakery
Meeting House Tavern
MGM Resorts International
Music of the Baroque
Noopies
Octavio Canina and Kitchen
O’Donovan’s Pub and Restaurant
Old Town Garden
Ophelia Restaurant
O’Shea’s Restaurant
Pamela
Paul Concialdi
Polish and Pour
Post-Highlight Music Theatre
Professional Pet Portraits by John Ham
PRF Wine International
Rabbis Hide
Raven Theatre
Revolution Brewing
Richard Dayhoff
RPM Champagne
Rutland John Ruso Gallery
Rosenthal Group
Sanders Fine Portraits
Sarah Whit Interior Design
S菘nak
Sushi Top
Spin
Stage Left Theatre
State Restaurant
Sue and Larry Yellen
Taliesin Preservation
Tedd Adams
The Bagel
The Godfrey Hotel Chicago
The Leigh Gallery
Tesla Motors
The Ogge
The Park Grill
The Second City
The Space House
the Wt Hotel
Timeline Theatre Company
Tom James Custom Clothiers
Togo Citgo
Union Station
Untroubled Tour
Vacation Hospitality Group
Wildfire
Wildly for Humanity
Wishbone
Zagat’s Custom Clothiers

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