

ILLINOIS PRISON PROJECT

ANNUAL REPORT
2021-2022





OVERVIEW

Throughout the last fiscal year, the Illinois Prison Project:

- Freed 22 people from prison, sparing our clients 160 years behind bars and saving taxpayers more than \$17 million.
- Filed 201 petitions for our incarcerated clients.
- Mailed 357 toolkits with legal information about the clemency process, medical release, sentence credits and more to incarcerated people, their families and lawyers.
- Provided free legal consultation to 91 people through our twice-monthly legal clinics.
- Assisted 15 people with reentry support.

IN MEMORIAM

With heavy hearts, we share that our beloved friend and colleague, Tewkunzi Green, passed away in February 2022. Tewkunzi worked as a Community Educator at IPP and was passionate about supporting families of incarcerated individuals.

Tewkunzi, who was a survivor of domestic violence, was granted clemency in November 2020 after serving nearly 14 years in prison.

After her release, she continued to advocate for the freedom and well-being of people in women's prisons and provided counsel and comfort to family members of incarcerated people. Her work inspired IPP to apply for a grant, which ultimately funded her

position and others within our organization.

Our team was inspired and fortified by her work and her insights. Tewkunzi was a fierce advocate, a loving mother to one son who was the pride of her life, a daughter, a sister, a friend and a teacher to so many of us. She was known for her constant smile, beautiful laugh and her to-the-point words of wisdom.

Since her passing, the IPP staff joined Tewkunzi's many friends and family members in grieving her loss and honoring her life. It will take us the rest of our lifetimes to truly recognize the extent of her gifts to us on this earth.

Rest in peace and power, Tewkunzi.





DIRECT REPRESENTATION



IPP client Stephen (left) with his family after he was granted medical release.

MEDICAL RELEASE

The Joe Coleman Medical Release Act, a bill written and championed by IPP, became law on Jan. 1, 2022. For the first time in Illinois' history, incarcerated people with terminal illnesses or serious disabilities now have an expedited pathway to release. If their petition is granted by the Illinois Prisoner Review Board, people in prison can end their sentences, return home to their loved ones, and receive quality medical care not otherwise provided by the Illinois Department of Corrections.

In just seven months, our team filed 18 medical release applications on behalf

of incarcerated clients, ultimately securing freedom for five people.

Among them is Stephen. At 65 years old, Stephen lived permanently in the infirmary at Western Correctional Center after he contracted a severe infection that left him paralyzed below his chest.

After more than three decades in prison, Stephen was granted medical release in March 2022. He returned to a loving and supportive family and, for the first time since his imprisonment, received stable, quality medical care.



IPP client Corey Knox at a press conference for IPP's Treatment Not Torture campaign.

TREATMENT NOT TORTURE

In September 2021, IPP launched the Treatment Not Torture campaign on behalf dozens of people with documented mental illnesses who nonetheless were tortured for years or decades with solitary confinement, then repeatedly punished when they broke down as a result of prolonged isolation.

IPP and pro bono partners from Facebook and the Community Justice and Civil Rights Clinic at Northwestern University filed clemency petitions for 43 people and asked the governor to spare our clients more than eight centuries of additional imprisonment.

WOMEN & SURVIVOR'S PROJECT

In June 2022, the Women & Survivor's Project launched a new, innovative clemency cohort to free criminalized survivors of abuse and gender-based violence, each of whom has spent at least 20 years in prison.

IPP recruited more than two dozen pro bono attorneys from law firms including Latham & Watkins LLP, Cooley LLP and DLA Piper to pair with each client. Lawyers in the cohort also participated in eight continuing legal education courses that spanned topics from trauma-informed interviewing, to documenting abuse, to storytelling through lawyering.

THREE STRIKES, YOU'RE OUT

Illinois' draconian three strikes law affords prosecutors the discretion to seek mandatory life sentences for people convicted of their third serious felony charge.

IPP represents more than 100 clients serving natural life sentences for gas

station robberies in which no one was hurt, for possessing drugs in their own apartments and for muggings at knifepoint.

In the past year, IPP filed clemency petitions for 69 clients.



March 2022 event featuring panelists Earlonne Woods and John "Yahya" Johnson of the Ear Hustle podcast, moderated by WBEZ reporter Natalie Moore.

EMERGING ADULTS

Decades of aggressive, ineffective sentencing policies mean thousands of people in Illinois are serving at least 20 years in prison. Even more egregious, a substantial portion were convicted and condemned before their twenty-first birthday.

In 2019, Illinois joined a growing movement to end extreme sentences for youth through the passage of the Youthful Parole Bill. The measure creates a mid-sentence parole review

for people sentenced to long sentences before their twenty-first birthday.

However, the measure does not apply retroactively, meaning thousands of people who would otherwise be eligible for parole are excluded merely because they were imprisoned before the law took effect. Through the Emerging Adults campaign, IPP works to bring justice to those unfairly excluded due to nothing more than the date on which they were sentenced.



SYSTEMIC ADVOCACY

#WEAREMORE CAMPAIGN

During the 2022 election season, some Illinois politicians reprised draconian, decades-old anti-crime rhetoric and advocated a return to carceral policies that would expand incarceration and fail to make communities safer.

The #WeAreMore Campaign is a public awareness campaign that centers people impacted by incarceration to push back against fear-mongering and support the expansion of mechanisms that release people from prison.

Working with Soapbox Productions & Organizing, IPP created four micro-documentaries that feature people freed through clemency. Each video challenges society's traditional understanding of safety, incarceration and victimization.

IPP kicked off the campaign with a press conference attended by partner organizations, advocates and state lawmakers. In addition, the videos reached more than 1,000 people on social media.



Kensley "Sonny" Hawkins (left) and Michael Penny (right) on set for the #WeAreMore campaign.

MASTER FILE ACCESS

IPP worked alongside policymakers and other stakeholders to craft legislation that would give incarcerated people access to their master files.

Until now, people in prison were barred from viewing such files, which contain information about their cases,

disciplinary records, programming credits and job assignments.

The measure, which was signed into law in May and will take effect in January 2023, will give people access to records necessary to navigate court proceedings, clemency filings and more.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT





Left: Ambassadors during a voter registration canvass. Right: A panel discussion hosted by IPP about voting in prison.

AMBASSADOR FELLOWSHIP

IPP's Ambassador Fellowship Program trains system-impacted people in advocacy and outreach. In doing so, Ambassadors learn to use their lived experience to fight against mass incarceration. During the paid, eight-month fellowship, participants receive trainings on storytelling, leadership,

community organizing, networking and more.

This year, IPP was proud to graduate its first cohort of Ambassadors and begin training a second. The Ambassadors hosted 30 events, reaching more than 2,500 people in all.

AMBASSADOR SPOTLIGHT

Vincent Boggan, a former IPP client, received a 75-year sentence when he was just 22 years old. After more than three decades behind bars, Governor JB Pritzker commuted Vincent's sentence in 2020 and he returned home.

Vincent was a member of IPP's inaugural Ambassador Fellowship class, where he participated in trainings on topics spanning from communication

styles, to legislative advocacy, to social media. He even traveled to Springfield, where he spoke at a press conference in the state Capitol.

A passionate advocate, Vincent joined the IPP team after he completed the fellowship program. In his current role as a community navigator, he provides resources to people with incarcerated loved ones and supports know-your-rights trainings in prisons across Illinois.

COMMUNITY NAVIGATORS

IPP's community navigator program, launched in 2022, is an innovative peer education effort that aims to provide comprehensive know-your-rights instruction to people imprisoned in Illinois. A small selection of participants from each prison take part in a series of trainings led by IPP staff. Upon completion of the program, participants are paid a stipend and have gained the skills necessary to help their peers navigate a variety of legal and institutional barriers.

In its first year, 60 people participated in the program at 11 prisons across Illinois. IPP staff presented on four topics:

- The clemency application process.
- The medical release application process.
- The Illinois Department of Corrections' grievance process.
- The protocol to request a transfer to another prison.



The IPP Education Team (center) hosts workshops for community organizations, school groups and more on the history and legacy of mass incarceration.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

INCOME

Individual contributions	\$ 251,902.54
Foundation contributions	844,979.50
Corporate contributions	1,686.00
Government grants	319,105.30
TOTAL	1,417,673.34

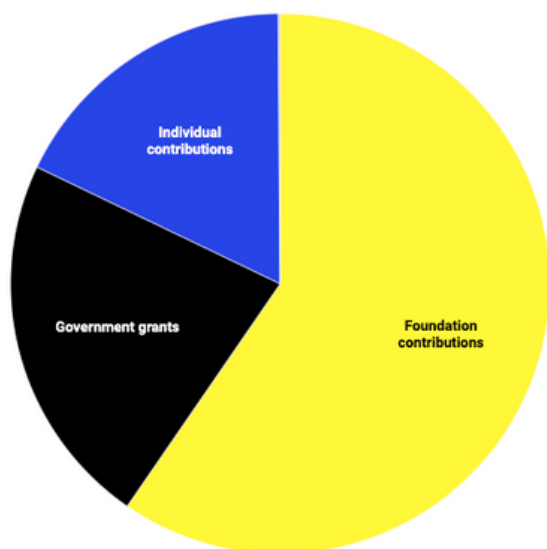
EXPENSES

Grants, contracts and assistance	\$ 447.66
Professional services	145,637.48
Payroll expenses	1,057,461.58
Office expenses	41,191.58
Business expenses	44,257.73
Travel and meetings	9,512.18
Facility and equipment expenses	58,256.93
TOTAL	1,363,226.30

NET ASSETS

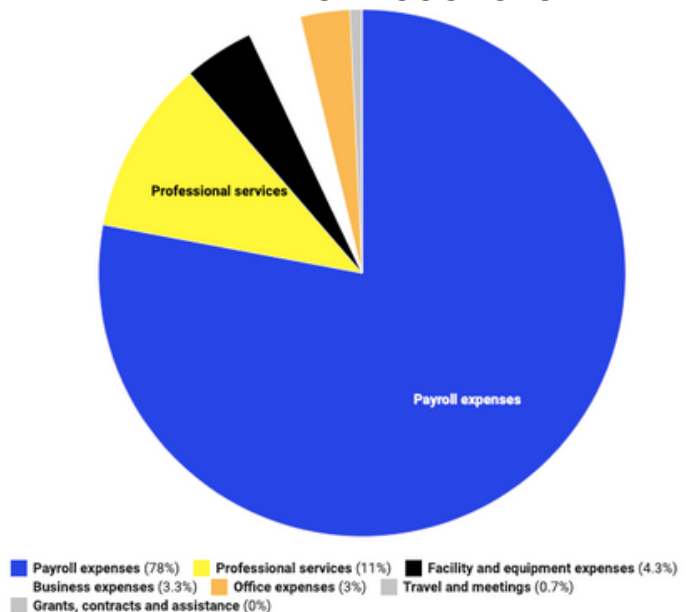
TOTAL	\$ 59,147.04
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REVENUE SOURCES



Foundation contributions (60%) Government grants (23%) Individual contributions (18%) Corporate contributions (0.1%)

EXPENDITURE SOURCES



Payroll expenses (78%) Professional services (11%) Facility and equipment expenses (4.3%) Business expenses (3.3%) Office expenses (3%) Travel and meetings (0.7%) Grants, contracts and assistance (0%)

TEAM

STAFF

VINCENT BOGGAN

Community Navigator

CANDACE CHAMBLISS

Legal Director

MIRA DE JONG

Staff Attorney

WALI DEUTSCH

Communications Manager

KAITLYN FOUST

Assistant Director of Education

GINEVRA FRANCESCONI

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YUCHABEL HARRIS

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RENALDO HUDSON

Director of Education

BRIAN JOHNSON

Senior Legal Program Manager

REBECCA LANNI

Deputy Director

ANTHONY JONES

Community Educator

EMILY MOLLINEDO

Legal Fellow

SHAWN MULCAHY

Director of Communications

RACHEL WHITE-DOMAIN

Director, Women & Survivors Project

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