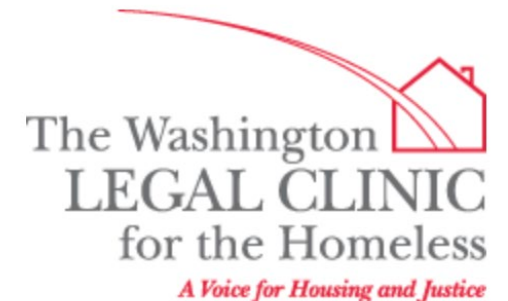


# The Community Connections Campaign

Washington Legal Clinic For The Homeless

[www.legalclinic.org](http://www.legalclinic.org)

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# Purpose

- Founded as ad hoc project of the DC Bar in 1986
- Homelessness major social issue both nationally and locally
- DC residents experiencing life on the street or in shelter due to
  - cuts in federal funding for affordable housing
  - de-institutionalization of residents with mental illness
  - crack epidemic that tore families and support networks apart
- Group of lawyers explored how to alleviate suffering of homeless neighbors
- Crafted program to get lawyers out of offices and into the places where potential clients accessed other services, i.e., shelters, dining programs and day centers, to improve access to justice.

# Legal Clinic Activities

- Relies on DC legal community to extend its reach and amplify its voice
- Network of volunteer attorneys, legal assistants, and law students, assists many clients and address broad range of issues
- Accepts no public monies but raises funds to support its \$2 million budget primarily from foundations, law firms and individual donors.
- Since 2003, the Public Welfare Foundation donated office space to the Legal Clinic in its own headquarters, the historic True Reformer Building, on U Street in northwest DC.

# Legal Clinic Accomplishments

- Through Legal Assistance Project, staff attorneys and volunteer lawyers and paralegals provide representation to clients on a broad range of civil legal issues.
- Expand investment in programs that effectively end homelessness, e.g., temporary housing vouchers extension for formerly unhoused DC residents.
- Represents tenant associations to enforce the tenants' rights regarding building conditions, proposed disposition and tenant right to purchase, or potential loss of subsidy.
- Works with DC government agencies to preserve existing affordable housing units.
- To minimize punitive nature of law enforcement interaction with homeless, trains all Metropolitan Police Department recruits in a "Homelessness 101" curriculum.

# My Work as a Volunteer Attorney

- For 20 years worked with 100+ homeless or near homeless clients to secure public benefits, obtain needed documentation such as birth certificates or social security cards, secure housing and avoid eviction.
- Member of its Legal Ambassador Program.
  - Involved in fundraising, recruitment, and systemic advocacy to advance mission of the Legal Clinic and housing justice in Washington, DC.