PAST PROJECTS
**PROJECT SUMMARY**

Creating a Response to Notario Fraud
Fall 2012

**The Client:** Ayuda has provided legal services to low-income immigrants in the DC metropolitan area since 1973. The organization offers multi-lingual legal and social services for low-income immigrants in the areas of immigration, human trafficking, domestic violence and sexual assault. Ayuda is the only non-profit provider in the DC metro area that provides a wide range of immigration and family law assistance, as well as social services, for all immigrants, regardless of country of origin.

**The Problem:** Immigration consultants, also known as “notarios” or “notarios públicos,” are common in immigrant communities throughout the U.S. Unethical or incompetent notarios may present themselves as qualified to practice law and offer immigration-related legal advice or services in exchange for exorbitant fees. Ayuda seeks to establish a project to respond to notario fraud in the Washington, D.C. area, and asked the Community Justice Project to assess the scope and nature of notario fraud and recommend strategies to guide the organization’s work on the problem.

**The Outcome:** The CJP team conducted a comprehensive review of law, policy, and institutional responses to notario fraud in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan region and produced a report, *To Protect and Serve: Access to Justice for Victims of Notario Fraud in the Nation’s Capital*, which offers research, analysis and recommendations to combat notario fraud in the future.

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Project Summary

Improving Conditions for Tenants in Bank-Owned Properties

Fall 2012

The Client: The Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia was formed in 1932 to provide civil legal aid to individuals, families, and communities in the District who could not otherwise afford to hire a lawyer. In addition to direct client services, Legal Aid staff advocate for systemic change on matters that grow directly out of individual cases. The Housing Unit represents tenants in housing cases with the dual goals of preventing eviction and homelessness and preserving affordable housing.

The Problem: More than 10,000 homes in D.C. have begun foreclosure, and renters occupy approximately one-third of those properties that have completed foreclosure and are now owned by banks. These renters face both battles against eviction by the banks and against the banks’ failure to maintain the properties. Legal Aid encountered a number of these tenants in Landlord-Tenant Court and sought to develop a systemic response, with a focus on improving the living conditions of tenants in bank-owned properties.

The Outcome: The CJP team developed and administered a survey to ascertain the needs of tenants living in bank-owned properties in D.C. Their survey results revealed that many of the bank-owned properties were vacant, presenting potential concerns regarding the welfare of D.C. tenants and their access to affordable housing. The students provided The Legal Aid Society with recommendations on how to address the high rate of vacant properties and the implications of these findings for Legal Aid’s future advocacy on behalf of tenants in foreclosed properties.
The Client: An 82-year-old formerly incarcerated woman living in Missouri who was granted clemency by the Governor and has been a model citizen since being released on parole 5 years ago asked The Community Justice Project to help her attain release from parole supervision.

The Problem: Parole supervision places an onerous burden on parolees, including the lack of fundamental rights such as voting, difficulty finding employment, and regular reporting to their parole agents, sometimes at offices many miles away from their homes. Missouri law gives the Board of Probation and Parole nearly unfettered discretion as to whether and when to release parolees from supervision. There was no clarity on when the client’s term of supervision would be fulfilled or how the client could go about getting released from parole.

The Outcome: The CJP team investigated Missouri parole law, authored a discharge petition, and organized a letter-writing campaign to advocate for the client’s release from parole.

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PROJECT SUMMARY

Organizing for a New DC
Fall 2012

The Client: Founded in 1996, WIN is a multi-racial, multi-faith, strictly non-partisan, District-wide citizens' organization, rooted in local congregations and associations. WIN is committed to training and developing neighborhood leaders, to addressing community issues, and to holding elected officials accountable in Washington, D.C.

The Problem: Elected officials have responded to the economic recession with cuts to programs that benefit residents, especially the most vulnerable residents, of the District of Columbia. At the same time, programs benefiting the corporate sector of D.C. have been spared these cuts. As the D.C. economy is recovering, some are advocating to keep austerity budgets in place for vulnerable residents. WIN is organizing to respond to this narrative, with a focus on registering and organizing voters for the November election, followed by a major media campaign. WIN asked The Community Justice Project to develop strategies and messages around specifically how to fund affordable housing and other WIN priorities.

The Outcome: The CJP team researched, developed, and supported implementation of strategies to support affordable housing, homeless services, youth, and job creation that partner with and hold the government and corporate sectors accountable for addressing these issues. The students identified funding sources and mechanisms for WIN's priorities, presented their findings to WIN leaders, and created materials to help the leaders in their organizing efforts.
The Client: The Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities Research at Georgetown University’s Lombardi Cancer Center is a community-based anchor for the cancer-related research at Georgetown University Medical School. The Lombardi Center is documenting the severity of air pollution in Southwest D.C. and the prevalence of pollution-related health problems among residents.

The Problem: Each day, the residents in a low-income neighborhood near Nationals Park in Southwest D.C. are exposed to a range of environmental pollutants, particularly air pollution, from nearby commercial, municipal and industrial sources. Initial research by The Lombardi Center on the effects of the pollution suggests that the pollution is causing serious short- and long-term health problems for residents. The Lombardi Center asked The Community Justice Project to develop a nuanced understanding of the impact of the pollution and identify potential legal remedies.

The Outcome: During the fall semester, the CJP team researched potential environmental hazards in Southwest D.C., met with community leaders and residents, and led a successful community organizing campaign. The project was then continued in the spring semester with a new team of students, who focused on a single environmental hazard identified by the community: air pollution caused by idling buses. The students created a detailed advocacy plan and engaged the community in an anti-idling campaign. The team also produced a report to the community, Promoting Environmental Health in Southwest D.C.: Recommendations for Change, which lists specific recommendations on how to continue the idling bus campaign as well as findings and recommendations on initiating new campaigns targeting other environmental hazards.
PROJECT SUMMARY

Developing a Gender-Responsive Approach to Sexual Assault in Prison
Spring 2012

The Client: The Project on Addressing Prison Rape is committed to eliminating sexual abuse for individuals in custodial settings. The Project on Addressing Prison Rape is a leader in addressing the implications and implementation of the Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003 (PREA) and its national standards. Since 2000, the Project on Addressing Prison Rape has provided training, technical assistance and legal guidance for correctional agencies, advocates and survivors who want to effectively prevent, respond and eliminate sexual abuse in custodial settings.

The Problem: The PREA Resource Center was created to be the national source for online and direct support, training, technical assistance, and research to assist adult and juvenile corrections, detention, and law enforcement professionals in their ongoing work to eliminate sexual assault in confinement. The Project on Addressing Prison Rape was charged with developing gender responsive strategies and training for the PREA Resource Center. To contribute to that effort, the client asked The Community Justice Project to identify the current state of PREA training and the gender responsive issues implicated by PREA, and to design training strategies for prison personnel.

The Outcome: The CJP team analyzed existing policies and training on sexual assault in prison and produced “Sexual Assault Responsiveness: A Guide for Training Development,” which provides concrete recommendations and examples of how to incorporate vulnerable populations into PREA trainings. The students also authored an article, Women in Criminal Justice: Gender Responsiveness Must Account for Gender: Incorporating Gender Nonconforming Individuals into Prison Rape Prevention, which was published in The American Bar Association’s The State of Criminal Justice 2012.

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PROJECT SUMMARY

Policy and Advocacy Strategies to Address the Connection Between Human Rights and HIV/AIDS for Low-Income Women
Spring 2012

The Client: The Women’s Collective (TWC) is a D.C.-based nonprofit that focuses on meeting the self-defined needs of low-income, marginalized women and girls of color and their families living with, or at risk of, HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. TWC’s mission includes providing culturally and gender based services in a non-judgmental environment that provides a voice for women, girls and their families.

The Problem: There is evidence that living in poverty enhances the risk of HIV transmission and shortens the lives of women with HIV due to lack of access to health care, housing and economic security. The Women’s Collective seeks to play a national and international role in developing policy that addresses the linkage between poverty and HIV for women and girls. TWC asked The Community Justice Project to develop policy and advocacy materials around this connection.

The Outcome: Through interviews with TWC staff and experts in the field, as well as extensive research on the unique needs of women living with HIV/AIDS, the CJP team developed a policy report, fact sheet, and client outreach materials examining the role stable housing plays in the health of women living with HIV/AIDS.
**Project Summary**

Access to Justice for Unemployment Claimants in the D.C. Court of Appeals

Fall 2011

**The Client:** The D.C. Access to Justice Commission was created by the D.C. Court of Appeals to help improve the ability of low- and moderate-income residents to access the civil justice system.

**The Problem:** An appeal of an unemployment decision in the D.C. Court of Appeals can take as long as two years to be heard and decided, all while an unemployment claimant has no mechanism for obtaining interim benefits. This means that many people who have been wrongfully denied unemployment benefits face severe economic consequences, from homelessness to hunger to loss of custody, due to administrative delays. The D.C. Access to Justice Commission seeks to remedy this barrier to justice, and asked The Community Justice Project to research the issue, identify potential solutions, and plan and execute a strategy for seeking these solutions.

**The Outcome:** The CJP team interviewed attorneys, advocates, and individuals familiar with D.C.’s unemployment insurance system, reviewed D.C. court decisions, files, and statistics, and researched other states’ systems. The team then identified potential remedies for unemployment insurance claimants, obstacles to implementation, and relevant political, social and economic factors. The students provided the Commission with a comprehensive report of their findings and recommendations. As a result of the CJP team's report, the Commission is now working with the Court of Appeals to gather and analyze more data about delays, and to implement solutions for pro se claimants.

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PROJECT SUMMARY

Confidentiality for Victims of Sexual Violence in Nepal
Fall 2011

The Client: The Forum for Women, Law and Development is a Nepali non-governmental organization (NGO) that has played a significant and critical role in the development of women’s rights in Nepal.

The Problem: Nepal is committed to ensuring that crimes involving sexual violence, like rape and sex trafficking, are prosecuted. However, victims of rape and sex trafficking who seek justice often find themselves targets of discrimination and at risk of retribution from the perpetrator. Victims are therefore less willing to be witnesses in trials or to seek necessary services. The Supreme Court of Nepal has ordered that laws be enacted that provide confidentiality to victims of rape and sex trafficking. The Forum for Women, Law and Development has agreed to draft such legislation. The Forum asked the CJP team to identify how other countries have addressed this challenge, and to make recommendations on how to structure and enforce the legislation.

The Outcome: The CJP team analyzed similar legislation in 13 countries, identified mechanisms to protect victim confidentiality from the moment a victim reports a crime to the conclusion of a trial, and created an advocacy plan to educate the public about the legislation. The CJP team also produced a comprehensive report that provides research, analysis, and recommendations for lawmakers in Nepal to consider in enacting legislation to better protect victims of sexual violence.

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PROJECT SUMMARY

Issues of Sexuality Faced by Rural Women in India
Spring 2011

The Client: Vikalp is an Indian NGO that promotes the rights of sexually marginalized rural women and has established women's courts in rural Gujarat that settle dowry demands, property and custody disputes, and domestic violence.

The Problem: Vikalp recently began working on rural women's health issues, with a particular focus on HIV/AIDS and violence against sexually marginalized women. Vikalp sought The Community Justice Project's assistance in generating strategies to address the challenges faced by its stakeholders.

The Outcome: The CJP team worked remotely with Vikalp to design a survey of women in the Gujarat province of India to improve Vikalp's understanding of the legal, social, and economic barriers that rural women face as a result of their sexuality. The students evaluated the legal background in India, investigated similar efforts undertaken by other organizations, helped Vikalp to identify its goals, refined the issues being surveyed, and identified the appropriate means for conducting the survey.

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This project was inspired by the Clinic’s work on behalf of one elderly prisoner in Missouri during a prior semester and the systemic criminal justice problems exposed during work on her case.

The Problem: In Missouri roughly 15 percent of the incarcerated population are elderly—many with no hope of ever leaving the prison system. Compared to other states, Missouri has the second largest percentage of prisoners over the age of 55. Elderly prisoners cost significantly more, and have much lower recidivism rates than their younger counterparts.

The Outcome: The CJP team researched geriatric parole laws and the cost of incarceration in Missouri, and crafted a law for introduction in the Missouri legislature. The team also coordinated lobbying for the bill, secured sponsors, and launched a website on geriatric parole.
**PROJECT SUMMARY**

The Prison Rape Elimination Act and the Unique Concerns of Female Prisoners  
Spring 2011


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**The Problem:** In 2011, The Department of Justice proposed regulations to combat sexual assault in prison. Female prisoners, particularly those with a history of domestic abuse and intimate-partner violence, are an especially vulnerable population and are at greater risk of being sexually abused during incarceration. The proposed regulations did not account for the experience of women who are sexually abused in prison, which is often quite different than that of men.

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**The Outcome:** The CJP team submitted comments to Attorney General Holder identifying the deficiencies in the proposed regulations regarding the particular needs and vulnerabilities of women in prison and asking for revised standards that address the particular needs of incarcerated women. The team secured numerous co-signers on the comments, ranging from advocacy groups and legal services organizations to university faculty from a range of disciplines.

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PROJECT SUMMARY

Connecting Reentering Women in D.C. with Safe Housing
Spring 2011


The Problem: Women who are leaving prison and reentering the D.C. community face unique challenges upon reentry, but are often overlooked in reentry discussions. Housing is often the most immediate need, and can be especially difficult to secure. The Community Justice Project and its partners sought to create a resource that would connect reentering women with services to help them integrate back into society and obtain economic and social independence without having to turn back to the activities and relationships that initially led to their incarceration.

The Outcome: The CJP team identified key housing service providers in D.C., gathered up-to-date information on their programs, and created a clear and concise guide that allows women to find housing that fits their specific situation and needs. The guide, A Housing Guide for Reentering Women in D.C., is now widely used throughout the city.

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PROJECT SUMMARY

International Perspectives on Divorce:
Increasing Access for Women
Fall 2010

The Client: Dr. Mohammed Mattar is the Executive Director of The Protection Project at Johns Hopkins’ Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies.

The Problem: The Protection Project asked The Community Justice Project to collaborate with clinic students from the Civil Justice Clinic at the Alexandria Faculty of Law in Alexandria, Egypt to research ways in which the newly-formed family courts in Egypt could ensure access to justice for women seeking divorces.

The Outcome: The CJP team and the Civil Justice Clinic students produced a comparative analysis of family courts in different countries, as well as a best practices manual. The CJP team traveled to Alexandria to present their recommendations at the Conference on Women’s Rights in Egypt and Arab Countries.
PROJECT SUMMARY

Justice for Patty Prewitt
Fall 2010

The Client: Patty Prewitt was convicted of murdering her husband and serving a life sentence with no possibility of parole until 50 years served. Patty has maintained her innocence through nearly three decades of incarceration and suffered a flawed trial and an excessively long sentence.

The Problem: In Missouri roughly 15 percent of the incarcerated population are elderly—many with no hope of ever leaving the prison system. Patty had already served 24 years of her sentence, and exhausted her appeals, when she asked The Community Justice Project to help her in seeking clemency from Governor Nixon of Missouri. Patty had already applied for clemency several times in the past but the governors denied or ignored her pleas.

The Outcome: The CJP team catalyzed public mobilization on Patty’s behalf through coalition building, media outreach, and social media.

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The Client: The Rebecca Project for Human Rights is a national legal and policy organization that advocates for public policy reform, justice and dignity for vulnerable families. The Project’s recently established Girls Initiative focuses on advocating for community-based, gender-responsive, trauma-informed, and strength-based programs for girls in the juvenile justice system.

The Problem: To support the work of its new Girls Initiative, The Rebecca Project asked The Community Justice Project to identify the unique challenges posed by girls in the juvenile justice system, including the pathways of girls into the system and the outcomes these girls experience. The Rebecca Project also asked the CJP team to make policy recommendations that could be presented to lawmakers.

The Outcome: The CJP team developed a white paper on girls caught in the juvenile justice system that included personal stories, data, and recommendations for how to improve the juvenile justice system on the federal, state, and local levels.
**PROJECT SUMMARY**

Comprehensive and Sustainable Self-Help Resources for Returning Citizens

Spring 2013

**The Client:** The D.C. Office on Returning Citizen Affairs provides zealous advocacy, high-quality services and products, and up-to-date, useful information for the empowerment of previously incarcerated persons in order to create a productive and supportive environment where persons may thrive, prosper and contribute to the social, political and economic development of self, family, and community.

**The Problem:** Approximately 60,000 D.C. residents have criminal records and approximately 6,000 individuals return from prison in D.C. each year. There is a significant shortage of resources to help returning citizens reestablish themselves in society and access housing, food, employment, and health care. While there are a number of organizations in D.C. that help returning citizens, there is limited coordination among them. ORCA asked CJP to develop a self-help resource that provides information on how to navigate return from incarceration and to create a sustainable plan for updating this resource.

**The Outcome:** The CJP team conducted a comprehensive analysis of returning citizens’ needs and existing resources through outreach to returning citizens and D.C. service providers. The team developed relationships with high-quality service providers, developed a simple and effective intake and referral process for ORCA, and created a “Prison-to-Home” pamphlet to give returning citizens and those helping them critical information about what steps they should be taking at each point in the reentry process. ORCA was able to implement these new systems in its new, expanded resource center, which opened in August 2013.
The Client: Ayuda has provided legal services to low income immigrants in the DC metropolitan area since 1973. The organization offers multilingual legal and social services for low income immigrants in the areas of immigration, human trafficking, domestic violence and sexual assault. Ayuda is the region's leading provider of multilingual legal and social services for low-income immigrants in the areas of immigration, human trafficking, domestic violence, and sexual assault.

The Problem: Immigration consultants, also known as “notarios” or “notarios públicos,” are common in immigrant communities throughout the U.S. Unethical or incompetent notarios may present themselves as qualified to practice law and offer immigration-related legal advice or services in exchange for exorbitant fees. Ayuda seeks to establish a project to respond to notario fraud in the Washington, D.C. area, and asked the CJP team to continue the work of the Fall 2012 CJP team by developing the strategy of using U visas and prosecutorial discretion as remedies for notario fraud.

The Outcome: The CJP team created a practical guide to help immigration practitioners recognize and address notario fraud. This manual offers advice and best practices to identify victims of notario fraud and to determine if there are remedies in immigration law to address the fraud. The CJP collaboration helped Ayuda to secure funding from the D.C. Bar Foundation to support its work on notario fraud.
PROJECT SUMMARY

Returning the Crummell School to the Community
Spring 2013

The Client: Empower DC is a citywide grassroots organization dedicated to building confident self-advocacy and organized political power among low and moderate income DC residents. Empower DC is working with the Ivy City community to develop neighborhood leadership and strategic campaigns around several issues including the restoration of the historic Alexander Crummell School as a community resource.

The Problem: Ivy City is one of the smallest neighborhoods in Washington, DC. Located in the District’s Northeast quadrant, Ivy City is bounded on three sides by major roadways and its low-income residents have borne a disproportionate burden of the District’s industrial activity for many decades. This small neighborhood is fighting the District government to stop the installation of a tour bus parking lot at the Alexander Crummell School. This fight is being led by the Ivy City Civic Association and Empower DC, who won an injunction against the tour bus parking lot plan and sought CJP’s help in the effort to turn the Crummell School into a community resource.

The Outcome: The CJP team surveyed key stakeholders, including developers, government officials, residents, and nonprofit organizations, identified possible pathways to redevelop the Crummell School, and created a strategic plan to guide Empower DC and other interested parties in the redevelopment effort.

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PROJECT SUMMARY
Reforming District Law for People with Developmental Disabilities
Spring 2013

The Client: Quality Trust for Individuals with Disabilities (Quality Trust) is an advocacy organization created by a consent agreement in the lawsuit that closed Forest Haven, an institution that housed Washington, DC residents with developmental disabilities (DD). Quality Trust envisions a society where everyone is respected, belongs, is valued, and shapes his or her own present and future. Its personalized and systemic advocacy and monitoring services empower people to grow, thrive and experience full and equal membership in their communities.

The Problem: The District is the only place in the United States where people who have been diagnosed with a moderate or greater level of intellectual disability are civilly committed to community services facilities, losing their right to make basic choices about their lives. Quality Trust and other advocates hope to begin a new effort to reform district law with the ultimate goal of moving people with DD away from a blanket approach of commitment and institutionalization and toward a system based on individualized plans and flexibility. Quality Trust asked The Community Justice Project (CJP) to do a comprehensive review and analysis of previously introduced legislation and existing services for people with DD in the District and to recommend an advocacy strategy for DD systems reform.

The Outcome: The CJP team gathered information from key stakeholders and analyzed current and proposed legislation and policy to identify ways to improve the system and address persistent problems that prevent further progress towards a District where people with DD are fully included in their communities. The CJP team authored a report that offers findings, analysis, and recommendations to move closer to full inclusion and rights for people with DD in the District.
**PROJECT SUMMARY**

Increasing Resources for Unaccompanied Homeless Individuals in D.C.

Fall 2013

**The Client:** SOME, Inc. (So Others Might Eat) is an interfaith, community-based organization that offers a comprehensive, holistic approach to caring for the homeless and extremely poor citizens in the District of Columbia. SOME, Inc. meets the immediate daily needs of the people they serve with food, clothing, and health care. They help break the cycle of homelessness by offering services, such as affordable housing, job training, addiction treatment, and counseling, to the poor, the elderly, and individuals with mental illness. SOME, Inc.’s comprehensive approach also incorporates advocacy for policies and programs that will better serve the needs of all homeless and other poor people in D.C.

**The Problem:** Unaccompanied homeless adults, meaning those who enter the system without a spouse or children, make up a significant portion of the homeless community in Washington, D.C. During the recession, attention and some resources were shifted toward assisting the increasing number of homeless families. Unaccompanied homeless advocates were patiently supportive that attention was paid to homeless families, but the community of unaccompanied homeless adults still has unmet needs. SOME, Inc. retained The Community Justice Project (CJP) to analyze the specific needs of this community and recommend strategies to meet those needs.

**The Outcome:** After conducting research and interviewing key players (government, service providers, and homeless persons) the team identified gaps in existing services, developed recommendations, and identified potential funding sources to further assist unaccompanied homeless adults in D.C. The team presented their report, “Unaccompanied Homeless Adults: Increasing Resources and D.C.,” to stakeholders and government officials at D.C.’s city hall, the John A. Wilson Building.

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PROJECT SUMMARY

Developing, Refining, & Implementing “Ban the Box” Legislation

Fall 2013

The Client: The DC Jobs Council is a coalition of workforce development service providers seeking to strengthen the workforce system in the District of Columbia so that it meets the needs of all residents, with a focus on those facing the highest barriers to employment and reemployment. The Council accomplishes this by advocating for an effective and efficient workforce system, building the capacity of workforce development service providers, and ensuring alignment between employer needs and workforce preparations.

The Problem: Over 8,000 D.C. residents return to their communities after incarceration each year searching for employment, but only 54% of those residents will be able to find jobs, largely due to background checks on job applications and the stigma of a criminal conviction. Steady employment is one of the highest indicators of success in reentering the community, and people who are excluded from the workforce often face homelessness, high rates of reliance on controlled substances, and increased recidivism. In 2010, D.C. passed a bill to “ban the box” in D.C. government applications. This law prohibits questions regarding criminal history on initial job applications. The Council sought CJP’s help in drafting legislation and generating support to expand this protection to private sector job applications.

The Outcome: The CJP team conducted a nationwide review of existing record-sealing, expungement, and “Ban the Box” measures and provided strategic policy recommendations to be pursued by the DC Jobs Council in the District of Columbia. The team identified common issues faced by existing “Ban the Box” measures and drafted a comprehensive model bill to be used as the framework for successful legislation in this region. The team produced model legislation that offers research, analysis, and recommendations for jurisdictions that seek to pursue “Ban the Box” measures in the future.
PROJECT SUMMARY

Advising a Bilingual, Multicultural LGBT Community Center on its Strategic Growth

Fall 2013

The Client: Casa Ruby is a multicultural community center in Washington, D.C. focusing on transgender, genderqueer, and gender nonconforming individuals of all races and ethnicities. Through employment & educational programs, referrals, HIV testing, food and clothing donations, computer access, and advocacy, Casa Ruby enables individuals to overcome discrimination and poverty so they may reach their full potential. Casa Ruby unites, strengthens, and empowers the transgender community. Casa Ruby’s mission is to create success stories, particularly within transgender, genderqueer, and gender nonconforming communities of color. Its vision is a world where transgender, genderqueer, and gender nonconforming people pursue their dreams without fear of discrimination, harassment, or violence.

The Problem: Casa Ruby is the culmination of years of effort by its founder, Ruby Corado, to open a multicultural community center for the District’s LGBT communities. While Casa Ruby builds on a strong foundation and history of services and advocacy, it is now entering a period of significant growth. Casa Ruby sought strategic guidance to plan and execute its growth into a nonprofit organization that provides a variety of services with the help of a large group of staff and volunteers and engages in advocacy for systemic change.

The Outcome: The CJP team interviewed Casa Ruby clients, volunteers, and board members, staff at direct service organizations serving the LGBT and Latino populations, local and national transgender advocates, and government officials. From this research, the team identified the unmet needs of the transgender community and developed a strategic plan for Casa Ruby to meet these needs through services and advocacy.
**PROJECT SUMMARY**

Coalition Building, Public Education and Strategic Advocacy to End Commitment for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities in D.C.

Fall 2014

**The Client:** Quality Trust for Individuals with Disabilities is an independent, nonprofit advocacy organization dedicated to ensuring that people with disabilities have access to the supports and services they need to live full and meaningful lives in the places and ways they choose. Quality Trust’s vision is a community where everyone is respected and valued, belongs and contributes, and shapes his or her own present and future.

**The Problem:** Quality Trust and other advocates hope to revitalize their effort to reform District law with the ultimate goal of ending commitment for individuals with intellectual disabilities. Quality Trust identified that the current political climate provides significant opportunity for regulatory and policy change in furtherance of this goal, and that a strong coalition of community members is necessary for this change to occur. Quality Trust has begun the process of revitalizing a coalition, and asked CJP to assist in revitalizing a coalition in support of ending civil commitment by focusing on mobilizing parents of individuals with intellectual disabilities. This project built off the recommendations for ending civil commitment developed for Quality Trust by a CJP team in 2013.

**The Outcome:** The CJP team created advocacy materials for Quality Trust to use in its efforts to mobilize parents and identified the steps Quality Trust could take to effectively mobilize parents and improve the likelihood of a bill passing once a bill to end commitment is introduced.
PROJECT SUMMARY

Developing Policy that Represents Tenant Voices Regarding Marijuana Use in Subsidized Housing

Fall 2014

The Client: The Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia (Legal Aid), D.C.’s oldest and largest general civil legal services organization, strives to make access to justice available for persons living in poverty in D.C. Legal Aid provides both direct services to individual clients in a variety of different areas and performs systemic advocacy on issues that have an impact beyond an individual client. The areas in which Legal Aid provides direct services include domestic violence/family, housing, public benefits, and consumer law. In their work related to systemic changes, Legal Aid often seeks structural solutions, for example, changes in law or regulatory schemes or reform of government or court practice.

The Problem: In recent months, the marijuana laws in D.C. have become more tolerant. However, federal laws prohibiting marijuana possession and use remain the same. This tension between federal and D.C. laws creates a unique challenge for public benefits programs that are federally subsidized, like public housing. Currently, D.C. Housing Authority (DCHA) can evict residents for marijuana use. Legal Aid asked the Community Justice Project to gather D.C. public housing resident opinions and to research practices in other cities regarding marijuana-related evictions of public housing residents with the goal of flagging possible policy reforms that DCHA might consider.

The Outcome: Through conversations with D.C. public housing residents and research of practices of public housing authorities in other cities, CJP students identified common themes and fashioned several policy options. CJP students presented these findings to the housing practice group at Legal Aid and compiled a report detailing their findings.

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PROJECT SUMMARY

Advising a New Women’s Reentry Non-Profit on Strategic Growth

Fall 2014

The Client: Founded in early 2013, The W.I.R.E. (Women Involved in Reentry Efforts) is a network of previously incarcerated women who have joined together to provide social support to women recently released from prison. As women who have successfully reentered society, The W.I.R.E. aspires to help women navigate their return and ensure that services are properly tailored to the gender-specific needs of women in reentry.

The Problem: Returning women struggle with a range of social and emotional needs, including family reunification, addiction, mental health and trauma recovery, and orienting to a changed way of life. Women in reentry must confront these issues while facing daunting challenges in obtaining housing, employment, public benefits, and other essential services. Traditional service providers and reentry organizations often fail to address the specific needs of returning women. The W.I.R.E. recently formed to meet the needs of this population and retained CJP to assist with strategic planning.

The Outcome: CJP student-attorneys met with a range of institutional and individual stakeholders inside and outside of The W.I.R.E. Student-attorneys worked with The W.I.R.E. to develop an organizational culture of strategic thinking. Through interviews, presentations to the Board, and the creation of organization-specific materials, CJP student-attorneys helped The W.I.R.E. articulate its objectives, identify critical steps for the organization’s growth, and develop a framework for future decision-making.