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Upcoming Council Events

- **Legal Matters for Corporate and Private Foundations**
Philadelphia, PA— **MAR 7**
- **Leading Together Conference**
Miami, FL— **APR 30-MAY 1**
- **HR Summit**
Atlanta, GA— **SEP 11**

Upcoming Webinars

- **Fostering the Grassroots Leadership Capacity of Community** **FEB 27**
- **Post-graduation Scholarships: What Are They and How Can You Use Them?** **MAR 6**

Visit cof.org/events to register!



Preventing and Ending Homelessness by Removing Legal Barriers: A Partnership Taking Best Practice to Scale

Moderator

- **Amy Horton-Newell**, JD, Director, American Bar Association Center for Public Interest Law

Presenters

- **Antonia Fasanelli**, JD, Executive Director, Homeless Persons Representation, Baltimore, MD
- **Debbie Powell**, Deputy Associate Commissioner, Family and Youth Services Bureau, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- **Selena Hunn**, Senior Program Manager, Equal Justice Works



- Administrative, civil and criminal legal issues create legal barriers to benefits, education, employment, housing, treatment and services for people experiencing homelessness.
- Only a lawyer and/or the court can remove legal barriers.
- If legal barriers are not addressed at the outset, then our efforts to house and employ people are often frustrated when standard background checks show credit issues, noncompliance with child support orders, unpaid tickets/fines, outstanding warrants, etc.
- The ABA motto of “*Defending Liberty, Pursuing Justice*” underscores the mission of the ABA Center for Public Interest Law and Commission on Homelessness & Poverty: to remove legal and justice system-based barriers that create or perpetuate homelessness and poverty.
- Lawyers can not only remove barriers and secure benefits—lawyers can enforce rights and lead legislative efforts that improve policy, funding and systems.



Lessons Learned from Interdisciplinary Collaboration to End Veteran Homelessness:

- Engage lawyers early and often
- Increase legal services
- Coordinate efforts to best leverage resources
- Strategically invest in critically needed services



Equal Justice Works

Mobilizing Passionate Public Service Leaders

Kristen Uhler-McKeown, Director of Public Programs
Selena Hunn, Senior Program Manager



Our Vision

We believe that a community of lawyers committed to public service can fulfill our nation's promise of equal access to justice for all.



Our Mission

We create opportunities for lawyers to transform their passion for equal justice into a lifelong commitment to public service.



Fellowship Components

1. **Project:**

Aligned directly to a single, state-based or national fellowship program defined by Equal Justice Works and focuses on a particular civil legal aid issue area or community.

2. **Sponsor:**

Secured by Equal Justice Works to support a cohort of legal fellows (and law students) as a single fellowship program. Government and private foundations.

3. **Host Organization:**

Selected competitively as program sites by Equal Justice Works through a Request for Proposals (RFP) process. Provide supervision and additional support to fellows.

4. **Candidates:**

Selected competitively as legal fellows by selected Host Organizations, according to specific program criteria, including candidate eligibility, activities, and timelines.



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Current Programming



Crime Victims



Veterans



Disaster Recovery



Immigration



Housing



Crime Victims Justice Corps

Address the legal needs of victims of a range of crimes, including human trafficking, campus sexual assault, fraud, identity theft, and hate crimes.



Georgia Housing Corps

Promote community redevelopment and address housing instability for low-income residents affected by the foreclosure crisis in the state of Georgia.



Veterans Legal Corps

Provide direct representation to low-income and homeless veterans, active duty service members, and military families, to address a complex range of legal issues.



AmeriCorps VISTA

Build capacity at legal services and community organizations that help preserve affordable housing and bring individuals and communities out of poverty.



Disaster Recovery Legal Corps

Deliver critical legal assistance to communities affected by the 2017 Hurricanes.



Housing Justice Program

Tackling housing instability and the eviction crisis in targeted communities in Virginia through legal services and advocacy



Program Features

- One to two-year fellowship
- National- or state-based program
- Program-specific eligibility requirements and timeline
- Cohort: Community of practice, peer-to-peer learning
- Enhanced training and technical assistance, subject matter experts
- Impact evaluation
- Equal Justice Works Leadership Development Training



Fellowship Benefits

- Training and Technical Assistance
 - Skills-based, in person Leadership Development Training (LDT)
 - Year-round training curriculum for Host Site supervisors and Fellows
 - Training curriculum for VLC Law Student Members
- National network
 - Equal Justice Works Fellows
 - Active public interest lawyers
 - Alumni



Service locations

Nationwide

Issue Areas

Low income and homeless veterans employment matters, medical-legal partnerships, child support, and VA benefits



Veterans Legal Corps

Provide direct representation to low-income and homeless veterans, active duty service members, and military families, to address a complex range of legal issues.

- AmeriCorps national service program - 12 month fellowship
- Cohort of 24 Fellows and more than 230 law students
- Ongoing training and technical assistance with subject matter experts

Supported by: The Corporation for National and Community Service







VLC Practice Areas

- Securing VA disability benefits and/or SSDI/SSI benefits
- Eliminating legal barriers to housing
- Reducing or dismissing fines, warrants, and tickets
- Reducing unwarranted - or unreasonably high - child support orders
- Preventing foreclosures and evictions
- Eliminating legal barriers to employment
- Addressing other legal issues facing veterans, active duty servicemembers and their families



Scope of Work

- **Direct Legal Services**
 - Providing comprehensive legal services to veterans and military families
- **Addressing Community Needs**
 - Identifying and addressing the needs of the community through education and outreach
- **Volunteer Management**
 - Increasing the pool of trained veterans law practitioners



Medical-Legal Partnerships

- Outreach and education for veterans
- Creating and expanding legal services organizations' MLPs
- Legal screenings and referrals
- Obtaining stable housing
- Preventing eviction
- Criminal record sealing
- Securing disability benefits



Medical-Legal Partnerships

- Pro bono attorneys are often unable to provide continuous, full-time direct legal services, outreach, and education to address legal needs faced by veterans in need and their loved ones.
- Fellows serve at medical centers and clinics to:
 - Engage, train, and manage volunteers
 - Direct legal services
 - Referrals to mission partners for wraparound services



Impact in 2017-2018

2017 - 2018		
Performance Measure	Goal	YTD
# of veterans <i>served</i>	3,600	3,569
# of cases <i>submitted</i>	1,392	1,434
# of community needs addressed	240	183
# of <i>volunteers leveraged</i>	240	1,034
Economic benefits achieved	\$4,200,000.00	\$5,558,998.77



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Maryland Veterans Legal Assistance Project

Antonia K. Fasanelli
Executive Director
Homeless Persons Representation Project

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Why Create a Veterans Project?

- 2008 National Alliance to End Homelessness report:
 - Highest number of homeless veterans in region – **No Housing!**
- 2008 MD Department of Veterans Affairs report:
 - MD veterans receive very low levels of compensation - **No Income!**
 - Needed help applying for benefits needed
- Baltimore Claims Office Challenges:
 - Posted worst figures for processing claims in the country
 - Claims processed in 2-3 years
- 2008 – no free civil legal aid for veterans in claims for VA benefits or discharge upgrades – **No Help!**



Legal Needs of Veterans

- Areas of Representation: CHALENG Survey – available at <https://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/docs/CHALENG-2017-factsheet-508.pdf>
 - VA service-connected disability and pension claims
 - Discharge Upgrades
 - Expungement/Warrants
 - Obtaining IDs
 - Housing matters (eviction/foreclosure)
- Additional areas screened:
 - Child Support Arrears – ABA/VA/HHS Pilot Initiative
 - Cases placed at Univ. of Baltimore Law Clinic



VLAP: Getting Started

- First Step – Survey Veterans
 - @ VA Medical Center
 - Survey Conducted by University of Maryland Law Students
 - Focused on Veterans Benefits – showed need for legal assistance
- Second Step – Collaborators
 - State Bar Pro Bono Program - Pro Bono Resource Center
 - MSBA Special Committee on Military Law and Veteran's Affairs (now Section)
 - Law Schools (2)

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VLAP: Getting Started

- **Third Step – Consider Model Programs**
 - Homeless Advocacy Project – Philadelphia, PA (full rep.)
 - MACV Project - Minnesota (Rural or Brief Advice)

- **Fourth Step – Funding**
 - 2008:
 - Law Firm paid for first training;
 - **American Bar Association** Enterprise Fund Grant – for Project and Statewide Conference
 - 2012:
 - Equal Justice Works AmeriCorps Fellow & small family fndn.
 - 2014:
 - Equal Justice Works Fellow, small family fndn. & large fndn.
 - State bar support
 - 2018:
 - Equal Justice Works Fellow, several family fndns.



VLAP: Getting Started

- **Fifth Step: Relationship with VA**
 - VA General Counsel
 - Memorandum of Understanding with VA (required)
 - VAMC License Requirement (required)
 - Restriction on types of cases?
 - Other VA contacts?
 - Other provider on VAMC campus?



VLAP: Efficient Volunteer Engagement

- **HPRP Trains all Volunteers & Provides Malpractice Insurance**
 - Require # of cases or # of clinic hours in exchange for free (or low cost) training
- **Interview Veterans at Legal Clinics**
 - Volunteer law students, paralegals or attorneys
- **Represent Veterans**
 - Volunteer and Staff Attorneys (students and paralegals can support)

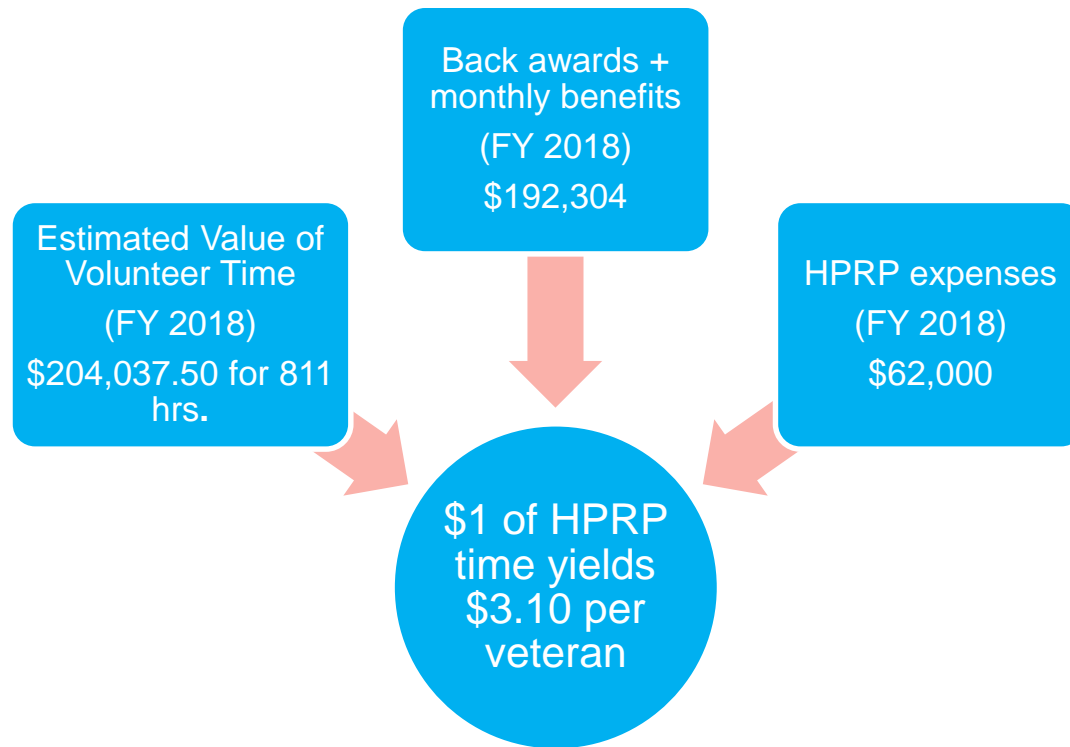


VLAP Today – Access Points

- **7/2013: Baltimore City VAMC Annex Legal Clinic**
 - Twice per month, in person
- **2/2015: Rural Legal Clinic – Perry Point VAMC (NE MD)**
 - On grounds of VAMC with nonprofit provider
 - Skype veterans to pro bono lawyers in urban/suburban areas
 - Once per month
- **6/2016: Rural Legal Clinic – Nonprofit that serves veterans (So. MD)**
 - Skype veterans to pro bono lawyers in urban/suburban areas
 - Once per month
- **2019: Legal Clinic at Community-Based Outpatient Center in DC suburban County**
 - Will be once per month



HPRP Veterans Legal Assistance Project ROI



*FY 2018 = July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018
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Client Success Stories

From HPRP's Rural Legal clinic:

- Mr. K, a 57 year old veteran, was unable to maintain employment because of mental health and auto-immune conditions related to his military service. At the time of his intake with HPRP, he was attending doctors appointments or VA programming on a daily basis to treat his service connected disabilities and lacked stable housing. Mr. K's HPRP lawyers represented him in his claim for VA service-connected disability benefits and he obtained a \$50,000 back award and a 100% rating with a monthly compensation award of \$2,915.55 for total disability based on individual unemployability. Mr. K is now stably housed.



Client Success Stories

- **Discharge Upgrade**

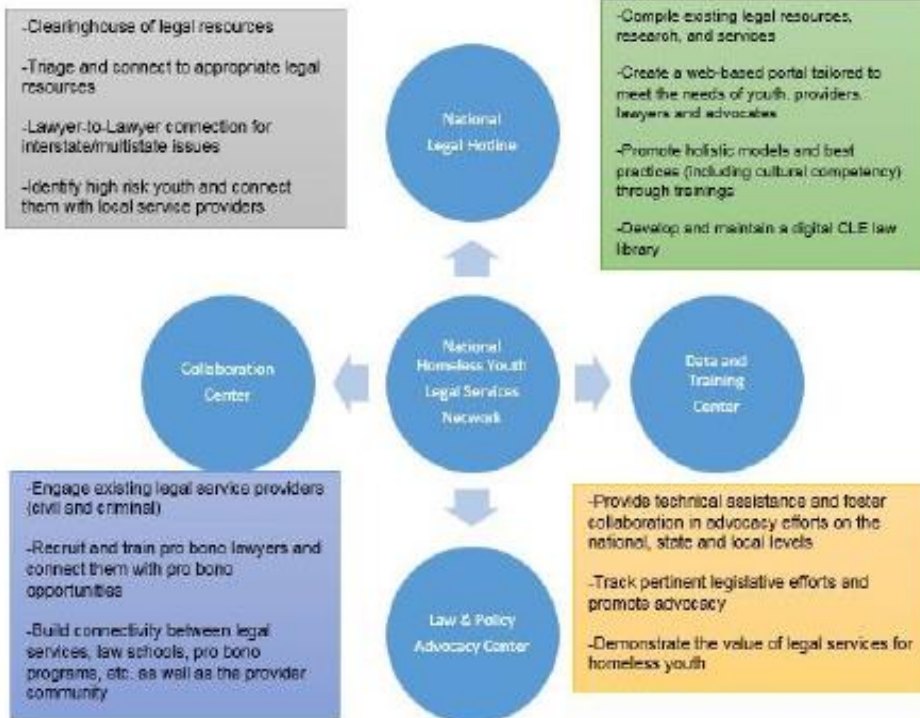
- Mr. A served in the Army from 2009-2013 and was exposed to combat in service and nearly killed by an improvised explosive device (IED). Received general discharge for failure to complete alcohol rehabilitation. Since discharge, Mr. A has worked hard at his sobriety and obtained Master's degree, but was repeatedly denied employment *because of his* discharge.

Mr. A's HPRP pro bono attorney learned that despite the reason for his discharge, the veteran actually completed alcohol treatment while in service!

- Evidence: Proof of successful completion of treatment and testimony of the treating therapist;
- Action: HPRP's pro bono attorney filed an upgrade application with the Army Discharge Review Board and asked for a personal hearing based on error and equitability
- Result: The Discharge Review Board commented on how rare it is that an attorney is present at the hearings, and that they were impressed with the organization and layout of the material and argument. In record time, the Discharge Review Board granted the upgrade on in December 2017.




AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION Homeless Youth Legal Network



The ABA has committed funds to support the development and implementation of a national Homeless Youth Legal Network (HYLN)—a new initiative to increase legal services for youth and young adults experiencing homelessness by fostering greater capacity and connectivity. As a catalyst and convener to address the *legal* issues of homeless youth and improve outcomes for those transitioning from the child welfare system and exiting the juvenile justice system through direct representation, the ABA invites federal partners and national, state and local organizations to join the effort to develop the Homeless Youth Legal Network.

Get involved

The ABA Commission on Homelessness & Poverty invites your participation.

For more information, please contact:
 Kelly Russo
 Director, ABA Commission on Homelessness & Poverty
 (202) 662-1699
Kelly.Russo@americanbar.org



Here's what we know:

More than half the country doesn't have any lawyers serving homeless youth.

Legal barriers impacting youth experiencing homelessness—and minors specifically—can be complex.

Legal barriers to housing and employment will present roadblocks.

There is momentum on the national, state and local levels to prevent and end youth homelessness.

There are lessons to be learned from the success in the veteran space—particularly in the interdisciplinary collaboration among Federal partners, funders, advocates, service providers and the legal community.



How to Engage with ABA HYLN:

- Visit our website: www.ambar.org/HYLN
- Follow us on Twitter: [@ABAHYLN](https://twitter.com/ABAHYLN); and Facebook www.facebook.com/ABAHYLN
- Join our listserv by e-mailing hyln@americanbar.org
- Help us map existing programs and unmet legal needs by taking our survey: <http://bit.ly/2jwUWme>
- Request free Technical Assistance: Kelly.Russo@americanbar.org



FYSB's Mission

To support the organizations and communities that work every day to put an end to youth homelessness, adolescent pregnancy and domestic violence.





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FYSB Family & Youth
Services Bureau

Runaway & Homeless Youth Program



FYSB Family & Youth
Services Bureau



Seeking Solutions to Youth Homelessness

1974: The Runaway and Homeless Youth Act laid the foundation for much of FYSB's 45-year history of helping runaway and homeless youth leave the streets.

Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs

- Street Outreach Program
- Basic Center Program
- Transitional Living Program and Maternity Group Homes





Street Outreach Program

Provides street-based aid and prevention services to street youth who have been subjected to or are at risk of sexual exploitation and abuse.





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Basic Center Program

Addresses the immediate needs of runaway and homeless youth under age 18 by providing an array of services including shelter, food, medical care, and counseling.



FYSB Family & Youth
Services Bureau



Transitional Living Program & Maternity Group Homes

Provides longer-term residential services to homeless youth ages 16 through 21, including shelter, life skills, educational opportunities, and career counseling.





Counting Homeless Youth: The Voices of Youth Count

Who is homeless? Youth homelessness can mean:

- Sleeping on the streets
- Staying in shelters
- Being kicked out of home
- Running away
- Couch surfing with friends and relatives





Counting Homeless Youth: The Voices of Youth Count

Prevalence of youth homelessness over a 12-month period:

- 1 in 10 young adults ages 18 – 25 (or 3.5 million)
- 1 in 30 youth ages 13 – 17 (or 700,000)

Prevalence rates of urban and rural counties:

- Urban – 9.6% among young adults; 4.2% among youth
- Rural – 9.2% among young adults; 4.4% among youth





Counting Homeless Youth: The Voices of Youth Count



Some youth are at greater risk than their peers.

- Youth with less than a high school diploma or GED – 346% higher risk
- Youth reporting annual household income of less than \$24,000 – 162% higher risk
- LBGT youth – 120% higher risk
- Unmarried parenting youth – 200% higher risk





Legal Needs and Barriers Identified by Homeless Young People and Providers

- Lack of ID – “Without an ID, you are nobody.”
- Parental rights
- Landlord/tenant issues
- Emancipation
- Higher education
- barriers
- Criminal record
- Turning 18
- Name or gender change
- Obtaining school records





Legal Needs and Barriers Identified by Homeless Young People and Providers

Helping homeless youth and young adults reduce barriers:

- To inform young people of their legal rights, go anywhere homeless youth are.
- To prevent homelessness for youth in foster care, case managers should check in with them weekly.
- The best advocacy for homeless youth in the child welfare or criminal justice system comes from a person outside the system approaching a young person on a personal level.





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HPRP Homeless Youth Initiative

Antonia K. Fasanelli
Executive Director

Homeless Persons Representation Project

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Homeless Youth in Baltimore City

- In 2017, 1,690 youth under the age of 25 were counted as homeless and unaccompanied by a parent or guardian in Baltimore City.
 - 20% percent lived on the street, in a park or in a car,
 - 19% lived with a stranger and
 - 11% lived in an abandoned dwelling.
- Furthermore, Black youth and lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) youth – populations disproportionately subject to poverty, discrimination, criminalization, and harassment – are significantly overrepresented amongst homeless youth.



Legal Needs of Homeless Youth

- U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness 2016 report
“Enhancing Access to Legal Services for Youth Experiencing Homelessness” unaccompanied homeless youth often encounter legal barriers to stabilizing their lives. These legal obstacles include:
 - wrongful denial of housing,
 - employment and income supports, and
 - healthcare.

<https://www.usich.gov/news/enhancing-access-to-legal-services-for-youth-experiencing-homelessness/>



Legal Service Method

- Youth-centered!!!
- Meet youth where they are, both literally and figuratively
- Partner with homeless youth services and youth workforce programs to address any civil legal needs youth identify as priority areas

LOCATIONS

- Drop-In Center (Youth Empowered Society)
- Shelter (Eastside Yo! Center)
- Center for Urban Families, STRIVE Future Leaders Program (local affiliate) - <https://strive.org/programs>



HYI's Homeless Youth Legal Network

- Recruit lawyers with experience in particular issue areas:
 - Child welfare;
 - Family Law;
 - Social Security – survivors & disability benefits;
 - Name Change;
 - Expungement
- Enables HYI to provide holistic representation
- Volunteers trained by homeless youth themselves, together with HYI staff



Client Impact Stories – “The Justice League”

- 17 year-old “Nestor” was living on the street when referred to HPRP’s HYI. 3 legal issues:
 - accessing housing;
 - obtaining Social Security Survivor’s benefits; and
 - obtaining food stamps.
- HYI ensured:
 - He was connected with an HYI network volunteer with experience in child welfare law to advise him about accessing housing through the foster care system;
 - Another HYI volunteer attorney represented Nestor in accessing Social Security Survivor’s benefits; and
 - HYI staff helped Nestor access Food Stamps and advised him of his education rights.

Nestor dubbed his legal team “the Justice League.” While his Social Security matter is pending, Nestor has Food Stamps and is living in a more stable housing situation while awaiting permanent housing.



Client Impact Stories

- HYI met 24 year old “Charlotte” in October 2017. She was fleeing physical and emotional abuse, which caused her mental health to deteriorate to the point where she was suicidal. She was facing loss of her housing because she was unable to pay her gas and electric bill. She had already lost custody of her two-year old daughter. She was devastated and overwhelmed with civil legal needs related to safety, housing, public benefits, disability, and energy assistance. HYI quickly addressed her immediate needs for safety, food and mental health treatment and then focused on her housing. Through HYI’s intervention:
 - Charlotte retained her government-provided housing subsidy; and
 - obtained financial assistance to pay her utility bills.

Within a matter of weeks, Charlotte looked and sounded like a different person. Today, Charlotte is stably housed and has regained custody of her daughter.



Systemic Change

- With current and formerly homeless youth, primarily from Youth Empowered Society (YES) Drop-In Center, to advance state & local policies
- **Success:**
 - Maryland's 1st Task Force to Study Housing and Supportive Services for Unaccompanied Homeless Youth (2013);
 - Youth REACH, an ongoing initiative to enumerate and understand the needs of unaccompanied homeless youth statewide (2014);
 - Establishing a higher education tuition waiver for unaccompanied homeless youth (2014);
 - Preventing homelessness for youth aging out of foster care by mandating certain reporting to the Courts (2015); and
 - Passage of the Ending Youth Homelessness Act (EYHA), legislation which created Maryland's first state program to fund housing and supportive services for unaccompanied homeless youth (2018).



Funding

- 2012 – HYI launched as Skadden Fellowship, support of small family foundation
- 2015 – several small family foundations
- 2017 – American Bar Association selection as HYLN Model Program followed by large foundation multi-year grant, small family foundations



Thank you.

Please feel free to reach out with questions:



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 - https://www.americanbar.org/groups/public_services/
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