



Chicago Appleseed
FUND FOR JUSTICE

Changing Lives by Changing Courts



Chicago Council
of Lawyers

The public interest bar association

A Collaboration to Advance Justice

Chicago Appleseed is a nonpartisan, independent research and advocacy organization building trustworthy and unique connections between community advocates and the justice system. Chicago Appleseed protects the most vulnerable persons in the system by advancing a fair and effective court system. To bring about the most effective reforms possible, Chicago Appleseed works in collaborative partnership with the Chicago Council of Lawyers, the public interest bar association in Chicago, in advancing the administration of justice.

As part of the Appleseed Network, a group of public interest justice organizations across the country, we work together to draw upon the expertise of Appleseed justice centers around the United States, thereby giving us the benefit of collaboration partners with proven track records of success. Our work promotes social justice and government effectiveness by identifying barriers and inequities affecting vulnerable populations within our justice systems.

Chicago Appleseed and the Chicago Council of Lawyers jointly lead four main areas of focus: Access to Justice, Criminal Justice, Family Law Courts, and Immigration Courts. The Chicago Council of Lawyers leads our effort around police accountability.

For more information, please reach out to Malcolm Rich at malcolmrich@chicagoappleseed.org

750 N. Lake Shore Drive, 4th Floor, Chicago IL 60611
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Access to Justice Committee

The Access to Justice Committee works to identify ineffective, inefficient, and unfair civil court management policies and procedures, recommends improvements, and advocates for their implementation. The Committee is co-chaired by Emily Seymore and Mark DuPont and is staffed by pro bono attorneys, legal aid attorneys, government employees and other institutional stakeholders, and community representatives. It meets at lunchtime every fourth Thursday of the month.

The Committee works on a range of issues that affect the policies and procedures of the civil court system. Some of the projects that the Committee has been working on include:

- Judicial Performance—Development of evaluation and performance improvement plans for sitting judges.
- Eviction Court—Systemic reform of eviction courts, and the creation of a pilot project for pro bono representation of tenants.
- Central Panel of Administrative Hearing Officers—Centralization of the pool of administrative hearing officers in order to professionalize and increase independence from decision-making agencies.
- Certification of Court Administrators—Promotion of access to training, certification and the professionalization of court administrators.

To join the Committee, please reach out to Aditi Singh at aditisingh@chicagoappleseed.org.

Family Law Committee

The Family Law Committee is a joint program committee of Chicago Appleseed and the Council of Lawyers, working on projects to improve the experience of parents in the Cook County courts, with a particular emphasis on unrepresented parents.

With the guidance of the Committee and the work of dedicated pro bono attorneys, Chicago Appleseed staff analyzed the constitutionality of Cook County's child support courts that offered one track to divorcing parents and another to parents who had never been married. We were invited to serve on the Presiding Judge's Task Force to consolidate the division, which happened this year. We helped the court gain additional funding to expand the Hearing Officer program into the branch courts and are working to secure the future of the program.

The Committee is also engaged in creating community-based workshops to help parents navigate the courts without attorneys. With the assistance of pro bono attorneys, staff is assessing the Department of Health & Human Services non-judicial child support process with support of Committee members.

If you are interested in joining the Family Law Committee to identify projects and advise our program work, please contact Elizabeth Monkus at emonkus@chicagoappleseed.org.

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Criminal Justice Advisory Committee

The Criminal Justice Advisory Committee uses research, advocacy, legislative proposals, technical assistance, and project management to improve all areas of our criminal justice system, with a focus on decarceration and racial equity. CJAC's work varies widely and includes everything from the enforcement of core constitutional rights to evaluation and design of individual Cook County programs. We work in partnership with stakeholders, practitioners, community groups to develop effective, systemic solutions, manageable implementation plans, and the community-based support necessary to bring about meaningful permanent change. Together we strive to decriminalize poverty by bringing the highest standards of justice to Cook County's criminal courts and to divert people from the criminal justice system entirely. Recent work includes:

- The Sixth Amendment Right to Counsel—Evaluation of access to counsel in Cook County, development of a new court order, and ongoing monitoring of implementation.
- Criminal Justice Debt, Court Fines, Fees, and Costs—Research into the impact of criminal justice debt on poor communities and communities of color in Cook County and development of a coalition effort to change both state laws and local practices.
- The Fifth Amendment Right to Counsel—Joint program evaluation of historic pilot program appointing Cook County Public Defenders to represent people in police custody.
- Money Bond and Pretrial Justice Reform—Development of the Coalition to End Money Bond and support of state legislation, local policy changes, and supreme court rulemaking.

To join the Committee, please reach out to Sharlyn Grace at sharlyngrace@chicagoappleseed.org.

Immigration Committee

The Immigration Committee is a joint program committee of Chicago Appleseed and the Council of Lawyers, working in conjunction with the Appleseed Immigration Coalition. Most recently the Appleseed Immigration Coalition created and distributed a manual, *Getting Off the Assembly Line: Overcoming Immigration Court Obstacles in Individual Cases*, on deportation issues for immigration attorneys.

Chicago Appleseed is assisting local immigrants' rights groups with increasing representation in immigration bond court.

If you are interested in joining the Immigration Committee, please contact Malcolm Rich at malcolmrich@chicagoappleseed.org.

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Next Gen Board

The Chicago Appleseed Next Generation Board (“Next Gen”) is a dedicated community of emerging leaders who are committed to fighting for a fair and just legal system for all through systemic reform of the civil, criminal, immigration and family courts in Illinois. Next Gen supports Chicago Appleseed by fundraising, organizing educational events and through pro bono support, while developing the next generation of civic leaders and advocates in Chicago.

Next Generation Board members protect and promote the civil rights of Chicagoans by:

- Hosting quarterly Community Conversations that engage the broader legal community and generate public knowledge on current events and issues;
- Fundraising social and networking events that deepen relationships among advocates and support the organization’s mission; and
- Pro bono involvement in Chicago Appleseed’s Criminal Justice, Access to Justice, Family Law or Immigration Advisory Committees to advance the organization’s mission and work.

If you are in the first seven years of your career, passionate about social justice and interested in joining the Chicago Appleseed Next Gen Board, please contact Aditi Singh at aditisingh@chicagoappleseed.org.

Social Media

Please follow our work through our social media and join the conversation around court reform.

Twitter: @ChiAppleseed and @ChiCouncilLaw

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ChicagoAppleseed>
<https://www.facebook.com/ChicagoCouncilOfLawyers/>

Blog: <http://www.chicagoappleseed.org/blog/>
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