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THE IMPACT OF EBCLC

“You cannot change any society unless you take responsibility for it, unless you see yourself as belonging to it and responsible for changing it.”

— Grace Lee Boggs, Civil Rights Activist, 1915-2015



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Welcome to EBCLC's 2014-2015 Annual Report! We've made this year's report an interactive PDF packed full of extra content.

Interactive PDFs are best viewed full-screen, and the functionality isn't usually supported in your web browser—so in order to easily navigate and enjoy the extra features of the report, you'll want to download this file and then open it, rather than just viewing it in your browser (e.g. Safari or Firefox).

We hope you enjoy learning more about the impact EBCLC made this past year, and let us know if you have any trouble viewing the report.

Thank you from all of us at EBCLC!



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DEAR EBCLC SUPPORTER,

This past year has been one of intense struggle and deep reflection. 2014 and 2015 marked the 50th anniversary of the War on Poverty, the Civil Rights Act, and the Voting Rights Act; milestones that remind us of the progress we are able to make as a society when a committed group of individuals work together to impact social change. And at the same time, they remind us that there is still so much work to do in our fight for justice.

This year, the killing of unarmed African Americans by law enforcement has inspired national conversation and action to address persistent racial inequalities. As legal advocates, EBCLC staff and students know that our work to address the causes and conditions of poverty is inherently linked to our work to address the legacy of racial and economic injustice. Together, we fight for justice that is, in the words of President Obama, "not just the absence of oppression, but the presence of economic opportunity."

Within this report are just a few examples of how EBCLC uses its collaborative, holistic and multimodal approach to increase justice, health, security, productivity, and hope for our clients and communities. In the past year, EBCLC has:

- Launched a partnership with UC Berkeley's Undocumented Students Program to provide collaborative legal representation for undocumented college students and their families.
- Celebrated ten years of its Clean Slate Reentry Practice, which has served nearly 10,000 East Bay residents in the past decade, helping clients with criminal records access greater employment opportunities.



- Changed California law! This past year, EBCLC was involved in a record number of bills that stand to positively impact the lives of Californians.

Whether it's providing direct legal services or drafting legislation, the work of EBCLC has reverberating impact that not only improves outcomes for our clients, but works to transform unjust systems and policies. As lawyers, we are called to engage in this crucial work, and at EBCLC we are committed to answering that call.

I hope you will join us in this work and support EBCLC's mission to provide excellent and impactful legal services and inspiring and meaningful legal training that makes a difference.

Tirien Steinbach
Executive Director



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2014 IN NUMBERS


120+ law students trained



4,000+ Clients & Families Served



5 New Bills Signed into Law!

HEALTHY: 
96% of EBCLC's Health & Welfare clients successfully obtained or maintained disability benefits, Medi-Cal, in-home supportive services, and other benefits.

SECURE: 
100% of eviction defense cases were successful in helping clients maintain or obtain fair and stable housing.

94% of immigration clients  successfully obtained or maintained legal immigration status.

PRODUCTIVE:
80% of previously unemployed clients with criminal records found jobs thanks to Clean Slate Services, and 83% said these services increased their confidence in the job market.

65+ jobs were created through EBCLC's Green Collar Communities Clinic, which helps low-income entrepreneurs start worker-owned cooperatives.

4.8 million - the number of Californians with suspended driver's licenses who stand to benefit from EBCLC's traffic court bill

HOPEFUL:
85% of Education Defense and Justice for Youth clients successfully gained access to needed special education, avoided school expulsion in favor of restorative justice, and successfully navigated juvenile court

JUSTICE = THE RIGHT TO EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

While most law students spend their law school careers worrying about grades, looming debt, and finding a job, EBCLC Immigration Attorney, Prerna Lal, spent hers facing deportation. Due to a complicated web of archaic immigration laws, Prerna—who was brought to the U.S. from Fiji at fourteen—fell out of immigration status as a minor.

“I became trapped in the United States, unable to live a complete life here, and unable to leave. I could not drive, could not work lawfully, could not travel abroad, and could not even obtain loans or financial aid to enroll in higher education at the time,” she says.

As a result, Prerna began organizing with other undocumented students, eventually founding the DreamActivist Network, mobilizing thousands of young undocumented people to push for change in federal and state legislation. Prerna’s activism eventually motivated her to attend law school, where she continued to face significant barriers due to her undocumented status: she was in removal proceedings, facing deportation throughout her legal education. If not for the Windsor decision that enabled Prerna’s U.S. citizen same-sex spouse to sponsor her, she would still be without legal status to this day.

Yet despite tremendous odds, Prerna went on to become one of the first undocumented lawyers to be licensed in the United States, and the first in the District of Columbia. Fortunately for us, she recently joined EBCLC as the Immigration Attorney for UC Berkeley’s Undocumented Student Program, one of the first programs of its kind in the country. The Undocumented Student Program was founded in 2010 to provide guidance and support to undocumented students at Cal. As the program staff attorney, Prerna assists students and their



Undocumented Student Program Director, Meng So (L) with EBCLC Immigration Attorney, Prerna Lal (R).

families in accessing immigration benefits and represents clients seeking legal immigration status. This year, Prerna expects to assist approximately 400 students and their families with a wide range of legal issues.

“Of her clients, she says, “These students and their families all have different stories to tell and different places they come from. But there’s one thing they have in common, which is that somebody loves them enough to send or bring them here. It takes a lot of courage and conviction, a lot of love, to do this. Ideally we want people with this kind of courage in our country.”

JUSTICE = THE RIGHT TO A FAIR CHANCE

This year marks the ten year anniversary of EBCLC’s Clean Slate Reentry Program. Ten years ago, Congresswoman Barbara Lee called on EBCLC to host a reentry summit where Alameda County residents could receive legal assistance to clean up their criminal records. Nearly 1,000 people showed up that day with the same goal in mind: to find a job. EBCLC Executive Director, Tirien Steinbach, and EBCLC alum, Margaret Richardson, responded to that need in the community by founding the Clean Slate Program.

Ten years later, we have a lot to celebrate, and a lot of work ahead. In the past decade, Clean Slate has served nearly 10,000 clients, pioneered a one-stop reentry clinic with the Alameda County Public Defender’s Office, and replicated its model across California. And we’ve seen results. Thanks to Clean Slate services,

- 80% of previously unemployed clients found jobs
- Clients who had jobs saw their annual earnings increase by an average of \$4,000-\$6,000.
- 83% of clients said that Clean Slate services increased their confidence in the job market

With that said, Clean Slate attorneys continue to battle a criminal justice system that disproportionately impacts poor people and people of color—EBCLC’s clients. Yet day in and day out, Clean Slate clients and community partners remind us of the potential for people to work together to change their lives and their communities.



Clean Slate Recognizes Violet Henderson-Green

This year, at the Clean Slate 10 Year Anniversary Celebration, we honored one client in particular, Violet Henderson-Green, with the Clean Slate Empowerment Award. Since she walked through EBCLC’s doors eight years ago, Violet has been a mentor and a source of inspiration to so many.

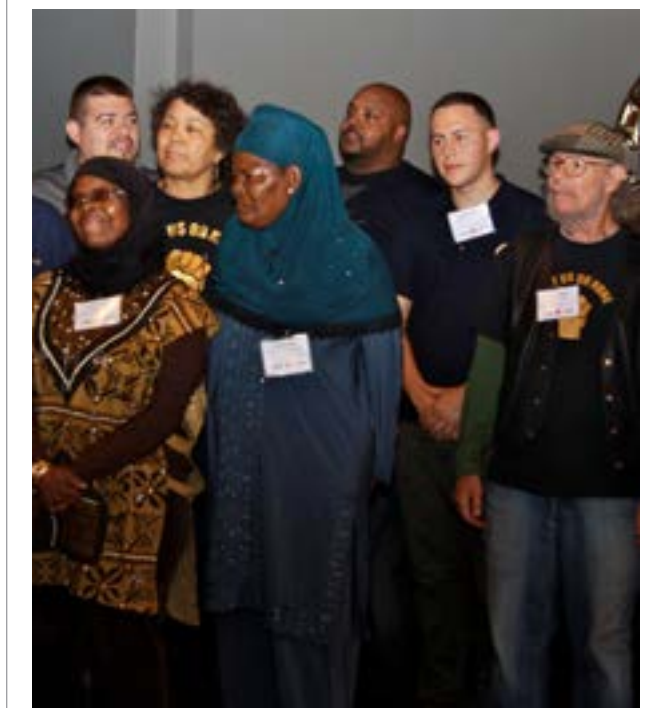
On the next page, read Violet’s letter about how Clean Slate helped her move beyond her past mistakes and build a better future for her and her family.

Thank You for Supporting Clean Slate!

In honor of the Clean Slate 10 Year Anniversary, we launched a ten-month \$50,000 campaign to raise money to support Clean Slate service provision, policy advocacy, and impact litigation. We have four months to go until the campaign closes and we are halfway to our goal! We greatly appreciate your continued support.

To donate to the Clean Slate 10 Year Anniversary Campaign today, [click here.](#)

Here’s to another 10 years!



DEAR EBCLC SUPPORTER,

The day I signed my employment papers to work at the San Francisco Municipal Transit Agency, I was given a sheet of paper that had the name “Clean Slate” on it with an address and a phone number. The clerk gave me this information because she saw that I had admitted on my job application that I had some felony convictions, and before the City would allow me to work they needed to know what the convictions were for.

I was so ashamed to let my employer know what crimes I had been convicted of. “That was in the past, what difference does it make now?” I thought to myself. I had been unemployed for ten months, gone through the interview process for the position of General Laborer, and was fortunately chosen to fill the position as the only female out of five candidates. I couldn’t let the opportunity pass me by.

I began working with the staff of the East Bay Community Law Center’s Clean Slate program, and while it was difficult having to relive some of the painful events of my past, it turned out to be very rewarding.

The Clean Slate staff at EBCLC are the best people I know. They welcomed me to the office and treated me with respect. There, I was able to share my story, including the details of my difficult past, without judgment. Instead, over time, they were able to show me that I was a victim of the men who encouraged me to commit crimes for their benefit.

Clean Slate was not able to have my record expunged because of the felony convictions, but they were able to assist me in getting a **Certificate of Rehabilitation**. I was overjoyed and felt a sense of newfound freedom. The staff had done a fantastic job, but they were not satisfied at stopping there. Eliza Hersh

looked at my case and felt that, because of the length of time since I had finished my sentence, there was still more work to do. She and the law students went to work petitioning the Governor for a full pardon.



Clean Slate and the East Bay Community Law Center is the gift that keeps on giving in my life. This year, out of all the clients that walked through the doors for help, I was awarded the Empowerment Award at the 10 Year Anniversary Celebration for my “resilience, mentorship, inspiration, and dedication to Clean Slate’s mission.” I couldn’t have been more proud to accept that award with my two children and granddaughter sitting in the audience.

Now, as I share my story with you in this Annual Report, keep in mind that I am just one of thousands of people who at one time had no clue that this opportunity was available to them.

This cannot be a well-kept secret and it cannot disappear. People like me, who at one time in their lives made a terrible mistake and ended up on the wrong side of the law, have the right to know that this wonderful opportunity is available to them. Let us as a community do everything we can to make sure that Clean Slate stays around for another ten years.

Thank you,
Violet Henderson-Green.

Violet Henderson-Green is a former Clean Slate client and the recipient of the Clean Slate Empowerment Award. She is also a proud mother, grandmother, one of the only female laborers who built the new Bay Bridge, and a zero waste coordinator for the Metropolitan Transit Agency in San Francisco.

EBCLC’S LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY AS OF OCTOBER 15, 2015

East Bay Community Law Center co-sponsors bills when, in the course of our direct services for low-income Californians, we see a clear need for policy reform to benefit our communities. This year, EBCLC engaged in more legislative advocacy than ever before, and our efforts were rewarded when Governor Brown signed five EBCLC co-sponsored bills into law! These are our bills for the 2015 legislative session:

VICTORY!

[SB 405, Driving Debt Down \(Hertzberg\)](#)

Stop Traffic Courts from Pushing People Further Into Poverty
Over 4.8 million Californians have suspended driver’s licenses because they cannot afford to pay a traffic ticket, and California courts were barring the door to the poorest residents by requiring payment in full up front before scheduling a court hearing. SB 405 will reduce the number of persons with license suspensions for violations that don’t affect public safety, and allow Californians fair access to traffic court, regardless of income level. Through an amnesty program, the bill will also reduce certain court-ordered debts. EBCLC worked in partnership with Western Center on Law & Poverty, Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights, A New Way of Life, and Legal Services for Prisoners With Children to support Senator Hertzberg’s outstanding leadership on these issues.

VICTORY!

[SB 501, Wage Garnishment \(Wiecowski\)](#)

Protect California’s Most Vulnerable Citizens from Oppressive Wage Garnishment
SB 501 would reduce the percentage of low-income wages that collectors can take, and provide protections for private student borrowers who do not benefit from their education.

VICTORY!

[SB 504, Starting Over Strong \(Lara\)](#)

Give California’s Youth a Fair Chance to Succeed
Until recently, California’s youth were charged up to \$150 to seal their juvenile record in addition to the steep court fees their families must pay. An inability to seal a juvenile record

can result in an inability to access stable employment, housing, or student loans in the future.

SB 504 eliminates the cost of juvenile record sealing for California’s youth and their families. The law gives young people a chance to start over strong when they become an adult, thereby decreasing recidivism and improving public safety. Governor Brown signed the law September 30th, 2015 as a result of work by a collaboration that included EBCLC and Legal Services for Prisoners with Children.

ACTIVE

[SB 608, Right to Rest \(Liu\)](#)

End the Criminalization of Homelessness

Most of us take for granted that sitting, sleeping, sharing food and practicing religion are not criminal acts. But an increasing number of laws across the state make homeless people and people of color in public spaces the targets of harassment, citation, arrest, and jail for these simple daily acts. With this two-year bill, Senator Liu is leading a conversation about how counterproductive these criminalization policies are, and EBCLC is at the forefront of state and local policy change around this cutting edge civil rights issue.

VICTORY!

[SB 641, Debt Buying: Default Judgment \(Wiecowski\)](#)

Protect California Courts and Consumers from Abusive Debt Buyers

Imagine the contents of your bank account—gone—taken for a court judgment you have never heard of on a debt you may not even owe. Debt buyers have been seizing consumers’ wages or bank accounts without ever giving those consumers notice that they were being sued, until after it is too late to go to court. SB 641 would allow consumers to defend themselves against these stealth lawsuits by debt buyers beyond the current two-year statutory period. The bill is a simple matter of justice, with this solution incubated in EBCLC’s own Consumer Justice Clinic.



EBCLC'S LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY AS OF OCTOBER 15, 2015 (CONTINUED)

VICTORY!

 [AB 816, Worker-Owned Job Creation:
The Worker Cooperative Act \(Bonta\)](#)

*Support Worker-owned Business Development in California's
Low-income Communities*

This year, EBCLC's Green Collar Communities Clinic, in collaboration with Arizmendi Association of Cooperatives, Sustainable Economies Law Center, and a broad coalition of worker-owned businesses, entrepreneurs, and community-based organizations, introduced a first-of-its-kind bill to grow jobs and develop California's economy by providing businesses a framework to form worker cooperatives. AB 816 stands to help support small businesses, create jobs, and empower California communities.

ACTIVE

[SB 23, Repeal of the Maximum Family
Grant Rule \(Mitchell\)](#) 

*Stop Denying Indispensable Benefits to California Mothers and
Children*

SB 23 would repeal the Maximum Family Grant (MFG) rule in the California Work Opportunities and Responsibility to Children (CalWORKs) program in order to provide for the basic needs of a newborn. Under the MFG rule, some infants are denied basic needs assistance, which leads to poorer outcomes and ultimately increased costs to the state. SB 23 would protect newborns' health and safety while prohibiting the state from inserting itself into the private reproductive and medical decisions of families just because they are poor. Though the bill was stalled this year, Senator Mitchell's leadership and the coalition's support—from Western Center on Law & Poverty, the ACLU, reproductive rights groups and many others—will take this crucial issue into the next session.

JUSTICE = THE RIGHT TO SELF-SUFFICIENCY

When Derick Cade came to EBCLC, he had several outstanding traffic tickets totaling \$8,000 in fines, a suspended driver's license, and no ability to pay. He had been actively looking for a job for months, but kept getting denied because he didn't have a valid license. He tried to have his day in court so he could get in front of a judge and ask for community service, but was repeatedly told he would have to pay the full amount he owed before he could get his license back.

"I was at a dead end," he recalls. So he took his cousin's advice and paid a visit to EBCLC's general clinic, the Neighborhood Justice Clinic (NJC). Following his visit, NJC's Program Coordinator, Mari Castaldi went right to work. She submitted an application on Derick's behalf, documenting the progress he's made despite the limitations posed by his license suspension. The court eventually dismissed his remaining fines and fees, but Mari, Derick, and EBCLC did not stop there.

"Sometimes, you got to let somebody understand real life. That's what I did, the assembly members accepted that, and now the new bill is passed."

In the past year, the staff and students of NJC have seen hundreds of clients walk through their doors in need of legal remedies for their outstanding traffic tickets and resulting license suspensions. Determined to change these unjust policies, EBCLC, in collaboration with our community partners, drafted SB 405 (the Driving Debt Down Bill). When Mari asked Derick to join her in Sacramento and provide personal testimony in support of the bill in front of over 15 members of the State Assembly's Committee on Transportation, Derick reluctantly agreed.

"I went there and told them my situation," Derick recalls. "I said I want to be able to drive and get around to take my kids to school, take them to their doctor's appointments." That very same day, thanks in large part to Derick's brave testimony, the bill passed out of the committee unanimously.

For EBCLC, our clients, and millions of Californians, passing SB 405 represents a tremendous step on the road to ending license suspension as a punishment of people who can't afford to pay. With the help of our community partners, EBCLC was able to successfully challenge policies that drive poor people further into poverty, allowing them a better chance at self-sufficiency. Today, Derick can't wait to take advantage of that chance. "I'm looking forward to getting my truck driver's license to start a business and provide for my family," he says, beaming.

"EBCLC was the best thing that could have happened in my life."

What makes EBCLC's policy advocacy work unique is that it's driven entirely by the need expressed in the community. That means that every day, our clients offer us the insight and inspiration necessary to do our work effectively. With your support, EBCLC has not only been able to positively impact the lives of our individual clients, but the lives of millions of Californians.

Derick Cade (L) with EBCLC Program Coordinator, Mari Castaldi (R).




FUND FOR THE FUTURE

For EBCLC's 25th Anniversary, we launched the \$1 million Fund for the Future (FFTF) campaign to increase EBCLC's capacity to provide training and services. The goal of the campaign was two-fold: 1) to support in-house postgraduate law fellows, and 2) to expand services to clients. As the campaign winds to a close, here are some updates and ongoing plans for the wonderful capacity-building support we received from EBCLC's generous donors:

EBCLC's Postgraduate Fellowships:

The majority of the FFTF was used to fund postgraduate fellowships to cultivate our programs and inspire the next generation of community lawyers. While we will continue to raise funds to support postgraduate positions, EBCLC's remarkable cohort of FFTF fellows are already making a tremendous impact on our work and our clients' lives:

- **Sarah Crowley:** Sarah is the Racial Justice Senior Fellow in the Clean Slate Reentry Legal Services Practice, where she has brought an affirmative litigation practice that expands our available legal "toolbox" for addressing privacy and consumer rights for formally incarcerated people facing employment discrimination.
- **Cory Isaacson:** Cory joined the newest practice group, Education Defense and Justice for Youth (EDJY), which works to break the "school-to-prison pipeline" by providing holistic legal services in the areas of special education, school discipline, juvenile delinquency and juvenile record sealing. Cory's fellowship project greatly expanded our work, and has inspired Cory to be a lifetime youth advocate. You can now regularly hear her on our local NPR station's (KQED) *Perspectives*. 



Sarah Crowley



Cory Isaacson

- FFTF has also helped EBCLC support two Equal Opportunity Legal Fellows (EOLC), with matching support from Equal Justice Works/Americorps. Current EOLC fellows, Vinuta Naik and Mirella Nieto, are increasing the Clean Slate Practice's ability to holistically serve clients with barriers to employment.

While serving low-income East Bay residents and helping to supervise law students, EBCLC postgraduate fellows will acquire the skills and experience to successfully launch careers as public interest lawyers and law clinic instructors.

EBCLC "Mobilization" for Clients:

The FFTF also raised money to increase EBCLC's ability to serve clients through an investment in improved technology and accessibility.

EBCLC is poised to actualize some of the ideas for expanded mobilization, including: increased staffing of self-help and limited scope assistance programs, improved pro bono coordination to

leverage more and better services for clients, a mobile office to conduct outreach and off-site intake, additional shared satellite offices closer to low-income client communities, and improved mobile technology for faster court and administrative filing.

EBCLC is now in the planning phase of implementing its mobilization efforts. We are seeking partnerships with leaders in the tech industry who can provide funding or in-kind donations of mobile technology to help leverage our Fund for the Future dollars to have the greatest impact.

To find out more about how you can partner with EBCLC to advance its mobilization goals, please contact Nana Duffuor at nduffuor@ebclc.org or 510-269-6632.

THE IMPACT OF YOUR DONATION

How your donation makes an impact



EBCLC receives roughly **\$400,000** in unrestricted funding from just over 600 donors

The majority of these funds go towards **supporting our staff of 45**, including 25 attorneys, in addition to training for 120+ law students

Last year, the staff and students provided free services to **4,485 clients** and engaged in policy advocacy for seven bills

On average, **85% of these clients have a positive outcome** after receiving EBCLC's services and five bills were passed!

Thank you for your support!

\$0 EBCLC provides thousands of legal services to East Bay residents each year, completely free of charge

HOW EBCLC IS FUNDED:

Government: 31%

In the last five years, IOLTA funding (the second largest funder for legal services) decreased by 75%.

Meanwhile, the number of Californians living below the poverty line rose to 7.5 million, and less than 20% of them can afford a lawyer.

As a result, 50% of low-income Californians seeking legal services for which they are eligible are turned away due to lack of organizational resources.

UC Berkeley School of Law: 20%

As the largest clinic of the law school, EBCLC trains over 150 UC Berkeley law students each year.

Foundations: 15%

Individual Donors: 11%

Thanks to the generosity of over 600 donors, EBCLC is able to use these unrestricted funds to advance our work based on the needs of our client community.

Law Firms: 7%

Last year, the country's most profitable firms contributed less than one-tenth of 1% of their gross revenue to legal aid. EBCLC works closely with the Bay Area's legal community to drive that number up by raising awareness of the need for legal aid.

Thanks to the generosity of 60 Bay Area law firms, in 2014, EBCLC received approximately \$240,000 in firm contributions, in addition to legal support from over 100 pro bono attorneys.

Cy Pres & Attorney's Fees: 8%

Fund for the Future: 5%

Corporations: 3%

[Click here to donate to EBCLC today](#) 

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Economic Security & Opportunity (ESO): Removing Barriers to Financial Wellbeing

EBCLC's holistic approach to economic justice, the Economic Security & Opportunity (ESO) Program, includes: 1) the **Consumer Justice Project** to assist people facing unfair or predatory debt collection practices; 2) the **Clean Slate Reentry Legal Services Project** to help people who have had contact with the criminal justice system overcome barriers to employment, housing, education, and civic participation; and 3) a community economic development program, the **Green-Collar Communities Project**, to help low-income workers and entrepreneurs create environmentally sustainable and worker-owned businesses. All three ESO projects provide vital legal services aimed at improving the economic independence and sustainability of Alameda County families and individuals.



Education, Defense & Justice for Youth (EDJY): Dismantling the School-to-Prison Pipeline

EBCLC's Education, Defense & Justice for Youth (EDJY) Program represents young people at the intersection of the juvenile justice and education systems. EDJY recognizes that a young person's legal problems are often deeply entwined with other issues and, therefore, legal advocacy must address the entire client. To this end, EDJY represents clients in special education and expulsion proceedings through the **Justice in Schools Project**, as well in their related delinquency cases and juvenile record sealing proceedings through the **Youth Defense Project**. The goal of EDJY is to utilize community partnerships, individual advocacy, and system-wide policy change to dismantle the "school-to-prison pipeline" and thus remove both criminal and civil legal barriers between young people and the opportunity to succeed in school and beyond. **Video:** [*Bending Toward Justice: EBCLC's Education Defense and Justice for Youth Program*](#)



Health & Welfare: Providing School & Medical-Legal Partnerships

EBCLC's Health & Welfare Program launched medical-legal partnerships at UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland

and at school-based health centers operated by La Clínica de la Raza at Oakland's most disenfranchised schools. These partnerships provide free, on-site, holistic, multimodal legal services and community education, connected to health care and family support services, designed to improve health and academic performance and meet the needs of the whole child and family. The long-term goal for the program is to improve quality of life in Oakland and create a model for the nation by helping to create healthy neighborhoods where community members are provided the support they need to be successful and positively contribute both locally and globally.

Housing: Ensuring Stable, Habitable, and Fair Housing for Tenants

EBCLC's Housing Program provides free and competent legal representation for low-income tenants facing eviction, discrimination, and habitability problems. As EBCLC's highest volume program, these indispensable services can make all the difference between a family staying housed and becoming homeless. In addition, EBCLC's lawyers continue to work with local officials to implement a regional response to the ongoing mortgage foreclosure crisis, including tenant and homeowner education.

Immigration: Securing Legal Pathways to Citizenship for Vulnerable Individuals & Families

EBCLC's Immigration Program helps immigrants regularize their legal status, come out of the shadows, and gain access to vital medical care, employment, and stability. In addition to the wide variety of immigration applications prepared by EBCLC, including claims for political asylum, U visas, adjustment of status, naturalization, and Violence Against Women Act petitions, the Immigration Law Project added DACA Clinics to assist the Administration's "Dreamers" with applications for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. More recently, the Immigration Project hired an attorney to provide legal support to UC Berkeley's Undocumented Students Program, serving hundreds of UC Berkeley's undocumented students and their families.