



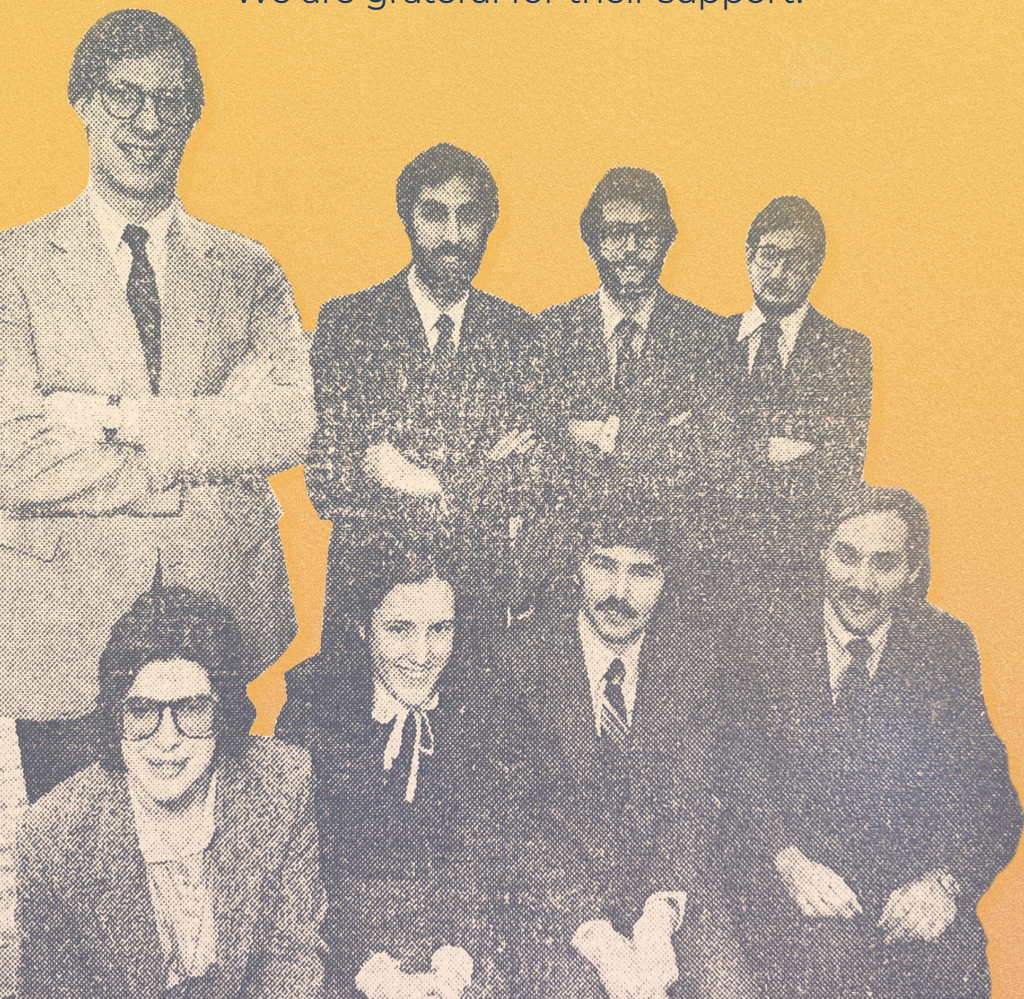
**Law Center *for*
Better Housing**

STANDING
FOR
RENTERS'
RIGHTS
FORTY
YEARS OF
HOUSING
JUSTICE

THE VISION OF LCBH'S FOUNDERS ENDURES

After 40 years,
our work is still powered by
volunteer attorneys
and community groups.

We are grateful for their support.



Whoever first said “The more things change the more they stay the same” should meet the volunteer attorneys who started LCBH.

This booklet celebrates their contributions to housing justice and your important role in carrying LCBH’s mission forward. It also marks an important announcement that I hope you will warmly embrace.

The Lawyers’ Committee for Better Housing is now the Law Center for Better Housing. Switching a few words and keeping the LCBH acronym may seem minor, but we think it’s a big deal.

Ten volunteer attorneys powered LCBH’s early work. In 2021, 83 volunteers helped LCBH protect tenants from eviction.

LCBH’s founders helped to write and pass Chicago’s Tenant Bill of Rights. LCBH still pushes for policies that protect renters’ rights.

What’s different?

The Law Center for Better Housing is a place. It is a hub of activity where attorneys, social workers, and community organizers gather to make Chicago a more fair, equitable, and just place to call home.

Join us! LCBH needs your support more than ever.

With gratitude,

Mark Swartz,
Executive Director



Jack Kaplan

LCBH Founder and first Executive Director

In 1979, David Orr was a candidate for 49th Ward alderman (Rogers Park and Edgewater) where I lived. During his campaign, the conditions of affordable rental housing was a serious issue that needed attention.

Like me, several young lawyers were active in David Orr's campaign. LCBH's work began through our friendships. We came up with a strategy that involved assigning a lawyer to investigate a building's ownership history, conditions, and legal status. We met monthly to compare notes and learn from each other.

In 1981, a grant allowed LCBH to hire staff: me as Executive Director, and Barbara Grau as Staff Attorney. I remember community meetings where tenants were excited that a lawyer was interested in their plight. We collaborated with community groups and tenants saw building conditions improve.

More than 40 years later, I still recognize the organization. LCBH keeps one foot in neighborhoods, where it listens to community residents and addresses their concerns. And they continue to join and build coalitions that improve the lives of tenants across the city and state.



"Working alongside a diverse group of individuals with the common goal of achieving LCBH's mission has been rewarding and inspiring. The board is constantly brainstorming new and innovative ways to improve housing stability for Chicago residents."

*Collette Allison Woghiren,
LCBH Board Member and
Partner, Neal, Gerber & Eisenberg*



"I am excited to be a part of the continued growth and vitality that the Law Center for Better Housing represents."

Jack Kaplan



“I’ve seen the remarkable impact that just a few hours of volunteering can have on the lives of tenants.”

Brett Barnett

Brett Barnett

*LCBH Volunteer
and President, LCBH Young Professionals Board*

LCBH’s mission is dear to my heart. That’s why I began pro bono work and joined the Young Professionals Board (YPB) a few years ago. Today, I continue to volunteer and am the YPB president.

Volunteering at an eviction sealing clinic or devoting 30 minutes to drafting documents through LCBH’s Rentervention program are not huge asks for the volunteer but make a world of difference for the renter.

LCBH’s eviction sealing clinics were each only a few hours in length but removed life long barriers to housing for hundreds of tenants like my client “Olivia.” With Olivia’s motion to seal now granted, she can finally buy her dream house and have a new beginning for her family.

Volunteering not only helps LCBH expand the scope of their work, but it also allows me to be an advocate for people who really need and appreciate my help. I’ve been able to make a difference for some people, which is, I think, helpful for everybody.



“Working with our volunteers during the sealing project was a career highlight. We are incredibly grateful for the attorneys who devote their free time to tenants in need.”

*Kaitlin Cutshaw,
LCBH Pro Bono Coordinator*

Sharon W.

LCBH Client

My employer cut my job during Illinois' eviction moratorium. I gave my landlord a COVID declaration form, but the landlord still filed an eviction.

The property management company was not working out any type of agreement with me so that I could catch up. To me, it was an easy fix. The income was coming, but they were eager to get me into court.

I contacted the governor's office, and they told me to call the Law Center for Better Housing (LCBH).

Working with LCBH was a ray of sunlight. Right away I spoke with Michelle Gilbert (LCBH Legal Director). She told me not to worry, LCBH will be on it. Michelle put me in contact with Shiva (an LCBH volunteer). They were like a tag team. Shiva told me, "I am always here for you, you can call me anytime." He even walked me through applying for rental assistance!

I felt like I knew Michelle and Shiva, even though I had never met them in person. No matter what the property management company put us through, we came out on top.



"I am fortunate: my family and friends remain safe, but many others are suffering due to lack of basics: housing, jobs, food. Yet, I can sleep knowing LCBH staff are advocating for renters like Sharon, so they can keep their homes."

Sharon Eiseman,
LCBH Donor and Supporter



"Now I'm in a different apartment. I'm relieved. I'm happy. I can come in after work and just breathe."

Sharon W.

LCBH *by the Numbers: 2021*

Our Services

Brief Advice	917
Extended Representation	505
Tenants Using LCBH's Rentervention Chatbot	9,757

Our Reach

Households Served	5,164
Individuals Served (all ages)	13,013
Individuals Served (under age 18)	2,995

Our Clients

Black	62%
Latinx	20%
White	13%
Women	65%
Incomes below \$20,000	64%

Our Impact

Financial Benefits Secured (Rent Waived, Relocation Assistance, Rental Assistance)	\$ 1,644,207
COVID Eviction Protection Letters Sent to Landlords	2,655
Number of Volunteers	83

2021 Statement of Income and Expense

Operating Revenues	\$ 4,740,953
Operating Expenses	\$ 4,245,716
Net Gain/Loss from Operations	\$ 495,237



The Law Center for Better Housing partners with attorneys, social workers, and community organizers so that all Chicago renters have a safe, stable, secure place to call home.



LCBH staff, community partners, and volunteer attorneys at May 2022 legal clinic.

Standing for Renters' Rights is in our DNA

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