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## DEAR FRIENDS,

In 2023, after more than half a century as BPI, our organization took the bold step of changing our name to become **Impact for Equity**. Our new name and branding bring us closer to what this organization has proudly been and continues to be – a law and policy center identifying some of the most pressing issues of racial, economic, and social justice in Chicago and Illinois, and serving as a catalyst for the change needed to address them.

We also adopted a new tagline: *Combating injustice together*. We have always believed that true change requires the collective strength and determination of many. It is through partnership, collaboration, and the unwavering support of individual advocates that we have been able to make such significant strides in our fight against injustice. When we stand together, we are truly a force for positive change.

In this year's annual report, we focus on two initiatives in each of our program areas: **criminal legal systems** and **housing**. We are particularly proud of these efforts, as they challenge existing practices and policies that do little to advance public safety or foster equitable access to affordable housing. If successful, they have the potential to affect widespread and meaningful change.

Looking ahead, we know that the road to true justice and equity is long and the path uncertain. We also know that together, we are stronger. We are inspired by the resilience of our communities and the belief that a more just and equitable region is possible. It is this belief that fuels our resolve and renews our commitment to the fight.

None of Impact for Equity's work would be possible without the dedication and passion of our supporters, staff, and partners. Thank you for standing with us, for believing in our mission, and for being a part of this journey. In partnership, we will continue to combat injustice and work tirelessly to create a Chicago and Illinois shaped by justice, fairness, and equity.

With deep gratitude,

**Cara Hendrickson**  
Executive Director

**Rosanna Márquez**  
President, Board of Directors





## ABOUT IMPACT FOR EQUITY

After 54 years, BPI rebranded as Impact for Equity. Rooted in Chicago, Impact for Equity has driven statewide changes across Chicagoland and Illinois, pursuing racial, economic, and social justice since our founding in 1969. We recognize sustainable solutions must consider the interconnected challenges of criminal legal system reform and affordable housing.

Impact for Equity’s legal tools, policy research, advocacy, impact litigation, research, and data analysis help advance policy advocacy that addresses the structural racism and systemic oppression that has led to inequities and injustices in the Chicago region. Our organization is committed to engaging in policy advocacy that engages and empowers the communities it serves.

### This commitment is embodied in our organizational values:



#### **Collaboration**

Building collective power by working respectfully and sharing power.



#### **Determination**

Honoring the struggle through humility, tenacity, innovation, and risk-taking.



#### **Effectiveness**

Striving for results that lead to enduring change.



#### **Equity**

Requiring justice and fairness in access, process, and results.



#### **Integrity**

Approaching our work with honesty, intentionality, and transparency.



*The team at Impact for Equity convenes annually to reflect on the work toward racial, economic, and social equity and map out strategies for change.*

At Impact for Equity, we envision a world where every person has the right and opportunity to live their fullest life in a thriving community free of systemic barriers. We work to actively build collaborative networks with community organizations, advocacy partners, policymakers, and stakeholders, recognizing that together we can co-create solutions that prioritize community needs.

It takes deep collaboration and persistence to combat injustice and create systemic change across institutions. Impact for Equity is a committed catalyst that partners with change makers for laws and public policy that deliver long-lasting racial, social and economic justice.





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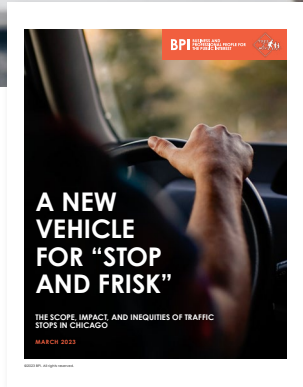
# CRIMINAL LEGAL SYSTEMS

**Impact for Equity's Criminal Legal Systems team works to reimagine how we achieve public safety, increase accountability, and reduce the harm of the criminal legal system.**



# Non-Public Safety Traffic Stops: The New Stop and Frisk

Traffic stops are the most common interaction Americans have with police, yet concerns about racial inequities in traffic stop enforcement are prevalent. **Impact for Equity is deeply engaged in research and advocacy related to the Chicago Police Department (CPD)’s widespread use of pretextual traffic stops, or traffic stops based on a minor traffic violation when there is no reasonable suspicion of criminal activity.** To understand the use of traffic stops and their consequences in Chicago, we conducted a detailed analysis of traffic stop data by CPD.



In 2023, Impact for Equity released a comprehensive report titled “A New Vehicle for Stop and Frisk,” revealing hundreds of thousands of unnecessary traffic stops from 2015 to 2021, disproportionately targeting and harming Black and Latine motorists without enhancing public safety. Our analysis revealed that non-public safety traffic stops have increased nearly 700% in recent years. In 2023 alone, more than 537,000 traffic stops were made in Chicago, the second highest number in two decades.



Importantly, while these stops consume police resources, they do not promote public safety. More than half of all traffic stops are made for licensing and registration issues alone, and less than 4% of these stops even generate a traffic ticket. The data also exposes significant racial disparities, with Black drivers six times more likely to be stopped than white drivers, and Latine drivers more than twice as likely.

Our report and subsequent publications have been the subject of webinars, panel discussions, hearings, and numerous media reports, catalyzing a city-wide conversation about this controversial police practice.

We have also led the creation of the Free2Move Coalition, a group of organizations and individuals focused broadly on mobility justice. As part of the Free2Move Coalition, we are suggesting the adoption of evidence-based national best practices to change the widespread use of traffic stops and to make our city safer for everyone who lives here. **We have presented our work to stakeholders including at a subject matter hearing convened by the Chicago City Council's Committee on Pedestrian and Traffic Safety. In partnership with the Coalition, along with national experts, advocates, community organizers, and system stakeholders, we continue to educate and advocate for strategies that create an equitable system of traffic safety.**



*Joi Imobhio speaks at a City Hall press conference prior to the Committee on Pedestrian and Traffic Safety meeting focused on pretextual traffic stops.*

## Winning the Win: Putting Police Accountability Reforms Into Action

Our Criminal Legal Systems team works to ensure that when reforms are enacted, they are effectively carried out.

As the result of justice-seeking advocacy by many, including Impact for Equity, the city of Chicago now has the most democratic form of police oversight in the country. In 2023, we continued our partnerships with the Grassroots Alliance for Police Accountability (GAPA) and the Empowering Communities for Public Safety Coalition (ECPS) to support the effective implementation of the Community Commission for Public Safety and Accountability (CCPSA) as well as sixty-six locally elected District Councilors. Along with our partners, we coordinated the Coalition's community support, provided



resources to District Councilors and Commissioners, and monitored and encouraged public participation in Commission and District Council meetings. We raised community-inspired issues to the Commission including CPD's proposed budget, private arbitration for CPD misconduct, goals for the new superintendent, gang database reforms, and other pending CPD policies.

The SAFE-T Act, Illinois' omnibus criminal justice legislation, contains dozens of provisions related to police accountability. **In 2023, Impact for Equity launched a project to evaluate implementation of several of the policing provisions, focused on three priority areas: mandatory revisions to use of force standards, utilization of body-worn cameras by police, and oversight of police officer certification by the state.** Through open records requests, review of court and other public records, and legal research, we are creating resources and analysis of the effectiveness of this trailblazing reform.

We also continued to advocate for the implementation of the requirements of the federal consent decree governing the Chicago Police Department. Impact for Equity testified in federal court regarding the significance of reforms, provided comment to the City Council regarding delays in the CPD progress on the consent decree, and pressed for the urgent establishment of a transparent, community-informed workforce allocation study and plan.



*Loren Jones speaks at a rally about private police arbitration on the most serious cases of police misconduct.*



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# HOUSING

**Impact for Equity's Housing team advocates for access to fair and affordable housing for residents throughout Chicago and Illinois.**



## Building on Opportunity: Unlocking Vital Development of Public Housing

Chicago faces an intensifying housing crisis caused by decades of disinvestment and uneven development in communities across the city and region. aunched in 2000, the Plan for Transformation sought to revitalize distressed public housing sites as mixed-income communities on Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) land. The Plan promised to rehabilitate or redevelop 25,000 units of public housing within a decade, but progress has been uneven, slow, and met with institutional challenges. Despite some progress over the 20 years since the Plan was announced, there are still large stretches of vacant land and multiple blocks of vacant buildings on several mixed-income development sites owned by CHA.

**In 2023, Impact for Equity published *Building on Opportunity*, a report that takes a deep dive into six of the approximately twelve CHA mixed-income sites.** The report profiles different communities with CHA-owned land and highlights some of the unique challenges and existing opportunities to







Ashley Meeder presents to the Chicago Area Fair Housing Alliance on the history of housing segregation and vacant public housing sites in Chicago.

rapidly increase housing production and deliver long-term benefits to communities across the city.

One of the report's most significant findings is that the six profiled sites have over 110 acres of vacant land and an additional 22 acres of land with vacant buildings. **Taken together, this land is equivalent to approximately 25 Chicago city blocks, or about five times the area of Chicago's Millennium Park.** This vacant land or underutilized at CHA mixed-income sites could provide urgently needed housing but is instead a painful reminder of what is missing for people who have spent decades waiting and hoping for investment in their communities.

*Building on Opportunity* emphasizes that it is crucial for the City and CHA to prioritize development at mixed-income sites with inclusive processes that center communities most impacted by decades of marginalization and exclusion. By focusing on these communities,

Chicago has a unique opportunity to fulfill an overdue obligation to their residents and address the affordable housing crisis.

## **Housing for All: Strategies for Affordable Housing in Low-Affordability Areas**

Many seemingly neutral policies create barriers to affordable housing and continue to uphold historical inequity, perpetuate today's affordable housing crisis, and can separate low-income families from the jobs that have the potential to create social mobility.

These barriers are as pervasive now as they were more than twenty years ago, when Illinois' housing advocacy community (including Impact for Equity) began to advocate for a tool to increase the amount of affordable housing in job and opportunity rich communities in Illinois. As a result of that advocacy, the Affordable Housing Planning &



Appeal Act (AHPAA) was signed into law in 2003.

In 2023, a small coalition of organizations including Impact for Equity worked with State Senator Ann Gillespie and State Representative Abdelnasser Rashid to overhaul portions of the Act that were clearly not working as intended. The result of that advocacy was Senate Bill 1476, which went into effect at the start of 2024, and includes changes to improve the likelihood that the law will lead to the creation of affordable housing in communities without a sufficient supply.

Communities identified as having the lowest percentage of affordable housing must create an affordable housing plan, and those plans must now include a description of any local laws, market conditions, and local government policies that do not affirmatively further fair housing and any other factors that may constrain the development or preservation of affordable housing. In addition to naming these restrictive policies, requirements are now in place to lay out strategies to eliminate or mitigate them.

The amendments also broaden the opportunity for appeal of denials of affordable housing by expanding who can file cases with the State Housing Appeals Board. In order to ensure business considerations aren't keeping bad decisions from being appealed, the law now will allow anyone who would be

eligible to apply for residency in the proposed affordable housing development and housing advocacy organizations to file appeals in addition to the affected developer.

Now is the time for communities covered by the Act to purposefully plan to increase affordable housing. **The need is great, and the tools provided by AHPAA provide opportunities for communities to craft meaningful plans to increase their supply of affordable housing and for advocates like Impact for Equity to ensure the strengthened law serves to create urgently needed housing.**



*Martin Cozzola is a member of the Racial Justice in Legal Services cohort.*





## THE SAKS FAMILY:

# A LIVING LEGACY OF SOCIAL IMPACT

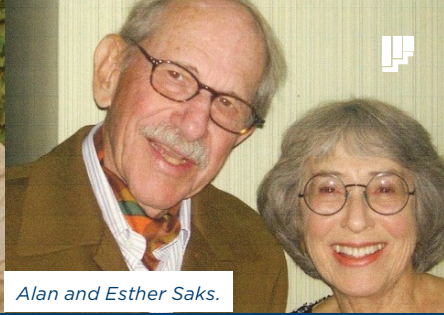
For decades, the Saks Family has embodied the true essence of committing one's life to social justice. **Esther and Alan Saks** served as examples of dedicated leadership that evoked positive change in communities across Chicago and the country, a legacy their family continues today through their four daughters: Ruth, Beth, Jane, and Naomi.

**Alan** had a deep love for the many communities that make up the ethnic and racial diversity of Chicago. When he saw businesses disinvesting in communities plagued by redlining in the 1960s, he chose to further his commitment through business and civic engagement. In 1969, Alan became a founding member of BPI, now Impact for Equity, where he applied his business acumen, passion for social justice, and innate sense of fairness and humor to pursue racial and social equity in Chicago, Illinois, and beyond. Alan served on the Board

of the organization for more than 35 years until his death in 2005.

**Esther** was his full partner in life and activism, sharing a deep commitment to civil rights and social justice. She is still well known for using her River North Gallery for political and civic activism. In a 1987 interview with the Chicago Sun-Times, Esther stated, "We were brought up to believe that we owed something to the society from which we were benefiting, that you don't just live for yourself." To honor Alan's legacy and his profound commitment to racial equity, Esther established the Saks Public Interest Internship Fund in 2006.

**The Saks Internship Fund** has been a bedrock of Impact for Equity's commitment to developing the next generation of public interest leaders for nearly twenty years. The Fund enables the organization to host and mentor law students, policy students, and undergraduates as



Naomi, Esther, Beth, Jane, and Ruth Saks.

Alan and Esther Saks.

fellows, interns, and externs. Each student becomes part of the Impact for Equity staff, working alongside attorneys and policy analysts to make meaningful contributions to the work for social justice. The Saks Internship alumni have pursued successful careers in affordable housing law, legal aid, civil rights advocacy, nonprofit leadership, and government. No matter where they land, their experience as a Saks Intern has a lasting ripple effect on their commitment to social justice.

Following in their parents' footsteps, all four daughters make equity and social justice a central component of their lives. **Ruth** worked with Alan to engage Saxon Paint & Hardware, the family business, in LGBTQ activism long before it was popular, legal, or acceptable. While other businesses feared losing customers Saxon was the very first business to march with a float in the Chicago Pride Parade.

**Beth** served on Impact for Equity's Board of Directors until 2007. She has spent her career dedicated to the nonprofit sector. She was CFO for The Global FoodBanking Network for eighteen years expanding the small start-up into a global operation working in more

than 50 countries and feeding 40 million people annually.

**Jane** was among 40 honorees celebrated by Impact for Equity in 2009 for making their mark in the social justice landscape. Her organization, Project& and Monuments to Movements, creates new models of social impact in arts and culture, engaging in complex and challenging conversations about race, justice, cultural access, labor, democracy, LGBTQ communities, legal systems, and violence.

The Saks' youngest daughter, **Naomi**, has worked in healthcare, committed to making healthcare more accessible, responsive, and kind. As an interfaith chaplain and palliative care leader, she is highly regarded as a professional who can guide individuals and communities through some of the most challenging processes.

Esther Saks passed away in September 2023, but the Saks family's legacy and impact live on through the Saks Public Interest Internship Fund and through their children and grandchildren, who continue to serve as generous supporters and advocates for the mission of Impact for Equity.



## CHAMPION OF THE PUBLIC INTEREST:

# MICHAEL STRAUTMANIS

Every year, Impact for Equity recognizes some of Chicago's most ardent voices in the call for change toward a more just society. The Champion of the Public Interest holds a shared belief with Impact for Equity that every person has the right and opportunity to live their fullest life in a thriving community and free of systemic barriers. They are visionary leaders who have significantly impacted all members of our community. Their passion and dedication extend to all facets of their personal and professional lives.

In 2023, we were delighted to recognize **Michael Strautmanis** with the Champion of the Public Interest Award. Michael serves as the Obama Foundation's Executive Vice President for External Affairs, working to extend President and Mrs. Obama's legacy through the development of the Obama Presidential Center in Chicago. Michael also leads the My Brother's Keeper Alliance, President Obama's signature initiative to create safe, healthy, and nurturing communities for boys and young men of color across the nation.

Michael has long dedicated himself to issues of social justice, a pursuit he credits to his earliest interactions with Impact for Equity.

**“It was this organization, and the people in it, that served as my North Star and gave me the belief that I could live out my dreams,”** said Michael.

Before joining the Obama Foundation, Michael spent over a decade in Washington, D.C., working to increase access



to economic opportunity, strengthen the judicial system, and champion equity and inclusion in the White House, federal agencies, and Congress. An active member of Chicago's civic community, Michael serves on the boards of Next Street, the Emerald South Economic Development Collaborative, the Billie Jean King Leadership Institute, the Illinois Finance Authority and Headspace Health.

We congratulate Michael Strautmanis on his many, and continuing, accomplishments in championing the public interest and working in support of social equity.



*Dana Loatman and Joshua Harris of the Obama Foundation.*



*Left to right Brian Kenner, Desmon Yancy, Adam Gross (Alumni of the Year), Mecole McBride, Damon Smith, and Cody Stephens.*

## FORMER CHAMPION OF THE PUBLIC INTEREST RECIPIENTS

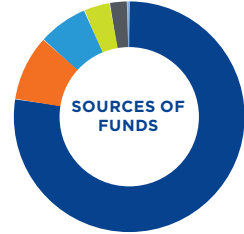
Daniel Levin	Vicky and George Ranney	Chris Kennedy	Velma Brown-Walker
Gail Schechter	Toby Herr	Tim King	Robert Mariano
Milton Davis	Rev. Dr. Jeremiah A. Wright, Jr.	David Hoffman	Vince Warren
Eunice Crosby	Valerie Jarrett	Gloria Castillo	Lori Lightfoot
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Sandra Young	Hon. Walter Burnett	Dawn Clark Netsch	Evelyn Diaz
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Melody Hobson	Randolph Stone	Cheryl Hyman	Connie L. Lindsey
John W. Rogers, Jr.	James Forman, Jr.	Dr. Elena Quintana	Leon Walker
David A. Weinberg	Hon. Julie Hamos	Scott Budnick	
Lennette Coleman		Alex Kotlowitz	



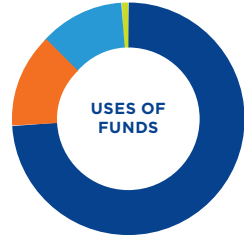
## Financials

Sources and Uses of Funds: January 1–December 31, 2023 (actual)

Source of Funds	Amount	Percentage
● Foundations	2,746,494	77.4%
● Individuals/Corporate	332,157	9.36%
● Attorney Fees	243,000	6.85%
● Internships & Fellowships	136,200	3.84%
● Endowment Funds	88,859	2.5%
● Miscellaneous	1,200	0.03%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,547,910</b>	



Use of Funds	Amount	Percentage
● Program Services	2,639,139	74%
● Fundraising/Communications	444,098	13%
● Administration	428,329	12%
● To Operating Reserves	36,344	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,547,910</b>	



## Staff

As of August 2024

**Carmen Aiken**  
Development Associate

**Julie Brown**  
Special Counsel

**Martin Cozzola**  
Staff Counsel, Housing

**Amy Cross**  
Managing Director of  
Advocacy

**Andrea Dantus**  
Staff Counsel, Criminal Legal  
System

**Sally Gonzalez**  
Managing Director of Finance  
and Operations

**Nida Hasan**  
Communications Manager

**Cara Hendrickson**  
Executive Director

**Daniel Hertz**  
Director of Housing

**Joi Imobio**  
Policy Strategist, Criminal  
Legal System

**Loren Jones**  
Director of Criminal  
Legal System

**Brice Kanzer**  
Managing Director of  
Development and  
External Relations

**Elizabeth Lassar**  
Policy Analyst, Housing

**Ashley Meeder**  
Staff Counsel, Polikoff-  
Gautreaux Fellow

**Sydney Sakharia**  
Program Manager

**Chelloni Simmons**  
Administrative Manager

**Amy Thompson**  
Staff Counsel, Criminal  
Legal System





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As of August 2024

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## Contributors

Impact for Equity would like to thank all of our donors for their steadfast support of our mission, vision, and values.

*The listing below reflects contributions made from January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023. Contributions made in 2024 will be included in next year's impact report.*

### **\$100,000+**

The Annie E. Casey Foundation

The Joyce Foundation

John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

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### **\$50,000 - \$99,999**

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*Staff Counsel for Housing, Martin Cozzola, and Executive Director, Cara Hendrickson, at the Pro Bono & Community Service Fair hosted by the Chicago Bar Foundation.*



*Left to right Amy Thompson, John Bouman, and Deborah Harrington.*

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Ann Spillane

Mikolene Taylor

Lawrence Wagner

Susan Winer

Karen Arewa Winters



An innovative public interest law and policy center, **Impact for Equity** combats systemic barriers to equity and fights for racial, economic, and social justice.

**Impact for Equity**

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Chicago, Illinois 60602

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EQUITY<sup>SM</sup>**  
Combating injustice together

