

# THE BARBARA MCDOWELL AND GERALD S. HARTMAN FOUNDATION

SOCIAL JUSTICE THROUGH LEGAL ACTION

## 2019 YEAR-END SUMMARY REPORT

The Foundation's efforts to accomplish social justice in 2019 included:

### Selection of Its 2020 Grant Recipients

Selecting the Foundation's five [2020 grant recipients](#), who each received \$40,000, for a total of \$200,000 in grant awards. The 2020 grantees and their funded cases, which were chosen from [a record 72 applicants](#) (by clicking on each grantee's name you can read more about each funded case):

- [Fair Elections Center](#) received a grant in their case aimed at restoring voting rights to felons.
- [National Center for Law and Economic Justice](#) received a grant in their challenge to unlawful police stops that impact minority communities.
- [National Veterans Legal Services Program](#) received a grant in their case challenging the discharge of members of the Navy and Marine Corps without the military disability retirement benefits to which they are entitled.
- [National Women's Law Center](#) received a grant in their challenge to the Department of Education's policy changes to sex discrimination claims in federally funded education programs
- [North Carolina Prisoner Legal Services, Inc.](#) received a grant in support of their case aimed at solitary confinement usage in state prisons.

## Receipt of 2019 Grantees' Six-Month and Year-End Reports

The Foundation received from its [2019 grantees](#) their six-month and year-end reports outlining their accomplishments stemming from their grant funded cases. The 2019 grantees and their cases were as follows (by clicking on each grantee's name you can read more about each funded case):

- [American Immigration Council](#) – a case challenging a Homeland Security policy that blocks otherwise eligible noncitizens holding temporary protected status from becoming lawful permanent citizens (green card) through sponsorship by a United States citizen family member.
- [Center for Gender and Refugee Studies](#) – litigated to reverse former Attorney General Jeff Sessions' June 2018 ruling in the case Matter of A-B-, vacating the previously controlling BIA precedent ruling Matter of A-R-C-G-, which had affirmed the right of domestic violence survivors to seek asylum.
- [National Center for Law and Economic Justice](#) - a class action lawsuit suit to redress and reform unconstitutional police ticketing practices by the Buffalo Police Department
- [National Immigration Project of the National Lawyers Guild](#) - a case brought in the Commonwealth Court of Pennsylvania at the Berks County Detention Center claiming that detained immigrant children suffered serious deprivations related to health services, mental health care, and language access, as well as traumatic night-checks that repeatedly interrupt children's sleep.
- [Prisoner's Legal Services of Massachusetts](#) – a case related to the imprisonment of men, but not women, in Massachusetts for substance abuse even though no crime had been committed, in violation of the due process clause of the 14th Amendment.

## Reaching Settlements in Pro Bono High Impact Litigation Project Cases

The Foundation continues to see positive results in cases initiated under the auspices of its [High Impact Litigation Project](#), including the two following cases:

- In June, the Foundation's High Impact Project, in coordination with Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP, Disability Rights Advocates and the Washington Lawyers' Committee, secured a groundbreaking settlement in a 2014 lawsuit filed on behalf of the United Spinal Association, DC Center for Independent Living, and two District residents with disabilities that alleged numerous critical deficiencies in the District's emergency preparedness plan which, if left

unaddressed, would have resulted in people with disabilities being left behind in large-scale disasters.

- In October, the American Immigration Council represented by Drinker Biddle and Jerry Hartman, in coordination with the Foundation's High Impact Project, settled a suit filed in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia to force the United States Customs and Border Protection (“CBP”) to turn over information through a Freedom of Information Act (“FOIA”) request about abuse allegations filed against CBP agents. As part of the settlement, CBP also will pay attorneys’ fees in the amount of \$60,000.

Further, the Foundation initiated three additional High Impact Cases, including:

- “Challenging the Seizing Without Due Process By New York City of State Tax Refunds for Transit Violations”
- “Investigating Landlords Violating Potential Tenants’ Housing Rights for Failure to Accept Section 8 Housing Vouchers from Persons of Color”
- “Investigating a School System’s Failure to Integrate Disabled Children into Normal Classrooms and Programs”

For updates on every case coordinated as part of the High Impact Litigation Project since the Foundation’s inception click here: <https://www.mcdowellfoundation.org/high-impact-project-case-updates>

## **Tenth-Anniversary Celebration**

The Foundation [celebrated the tenth anniversary](#) of its founding with a reception at Drinker Biddle in Washington, D.C. which paid tribute to the work of the Foundation’s namesake, [Barbara McDowell](#).

## **Other Accomplishments of Note**

- The addition of [five new members to our Board of Directors](#), who were approved by the current board in an unanimous vote.
- Publishing blog posts featuring the cases of two of our grantees:

- [Providing justice to immigrants seeking asylum](#)
- [Ending discrimination against disabled individuals](#)
- Issuing the Foundation's [2018 Annual Report](#) that was sent to over 200 individuals, including board members, donors, grantees and past applicants.
- Launching the Foundation's [newly designed website](#) including an updated and streamlined online application form.
- Announcing the launch of the Foundation's [first-ever fundraising campaign](#), including updated language on the [Donate page](#) of the website, and updates to the [Donor Information Guide](#) and [Case for Support](#).
- Completing charitable registrations for 12 states, allowing the Foundation to begin its fundraising campaign.

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