

THE BAIL PROJECT

ANNUAL REPORT 2022



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The cover features Renée from Phoenix, AZ (pp. 24-27), a client of The Bail Project.

**Freedom
should be
free.**

THE BAIL PROJECT

OUR MISSION

The Bail Project combats mass incarceration by disrupting the money bail system – one person at a time. **We restore the presumption of innocence, reunite families, and challenge a system that criminalizes race and poverty.** We're on a mission to end cash bail and create a more just, equitable, and humane pretrial system.

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A NOTE FROM ROBIN

Dear Friends,

This year marks the fifth anniversary of The Bail Project. I couldn't be prouder of how much we have accomplished. Of course, we couldn't have done it without you. Thank you for believing, as we do, that freedom should never be for sale and that everyone deserves to be treated equally and with dignity.

Growing up, I spent many summers in Pennsylvania coal country with my grandparents. I treasure the memory of holding my grandfather's calloused hand as we walked up the steps of the local courthouse to sit and watch trials. He considered it a matter of civic duty to know how the justice system works. It was also a matter of democracy. He knew that law and justice don't always go together, and justice withers when out of view. Public participation is essential.

Years later, when I decided to go to law school and later become a public defender, this lesson was still with me. Once you see what passes for justice in America, it is very hard to look away. For the past 40 years, I have worked in the criminal legal system, trying to change it from the inside out. The stories of the people we support at The Bail Project, by paying bail and offering to connect them to vital support, continually remind me that we have a long way to go before we achieve justice. Our system's principles may be strong in theory, but our courts often don't live up to them. Race and wealth largely determine outcomes. The promise of equal justice rings hollow. Money and power win the day.

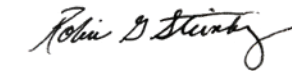
**"ONCE YOU SEE WHAT PASSES FOR JUSTICE IN AMERICA,
IT IS VERY HARD TO LOOK AWAY."**

Taking money out of the justice system is an obvious place to start if we are to create more fairness in the legal system, but it won't be easy. Entrenched interests have a lot to lose. Cash bail fills the pockets of the bail bond industry. It also gives overzealous prosecutors the upper hand. They don't have to prove a case. They can rely on the terrifying realities of jail to coerce people into pleading guilty, whether or not they should.

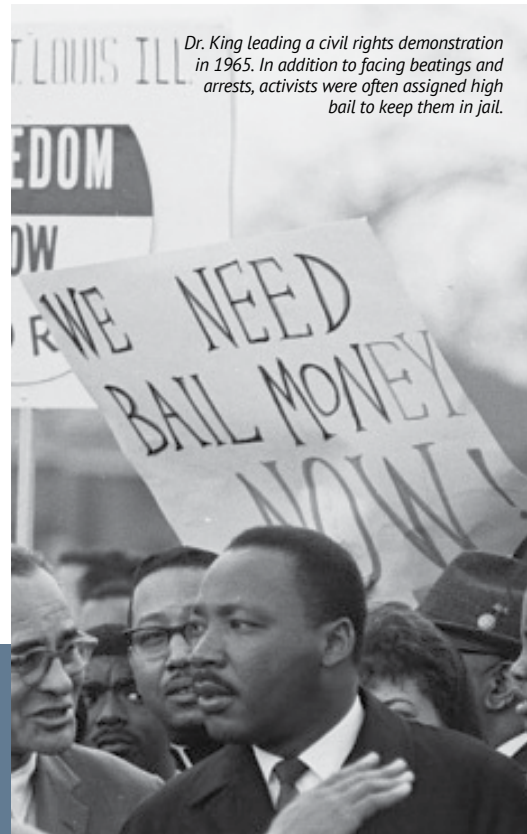
As reports of rising crime rates made their way into the headlines during the Covid-19 pandemic, bail reform became politicized at the expense of facts. The resulting misinformation and sensationalism clouded the moral clarity that many people felt during the 2020 protests for racial justice. We must focus on facts, not fear. The truth is that we can't buy safety by locking up more people before they've even had their day in court. Holding people who have not been convicted of anything in jail because they don't have enough money to pay bail is unfair and counterproductive. The evidence is clear that pretrial detention ultimately leads to more crime, making communities less safe. We can do better.

The Bail Project remains inspired, committed, and optimistic. With your support, we will continue to provide a helping hand to those most harmed by the bail system while working at the systemic level to eliminate wealth-based detention. Working together, we can fulfill our mission so that someday soon, freedom will be truly free.

Onward,



Robin Steinberg
CEO and Founder



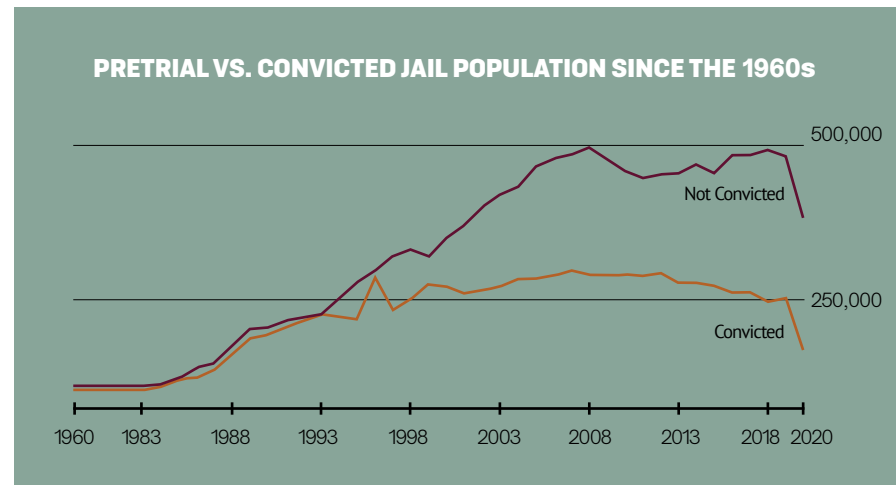
Dr. King leading a civil rights demonstration in 1965. In addition to facing beatings and arrests, activists were often assigned high bail to keep them in jail.

HOW BAIL GOT SO BAD

The injustice of cash bail is not new. People have been fighting to end cash bail for decades. Back in 1964, Robert Kennedy, then U.S. Attorney General, explained it clearly before the Senate Judiciary Committee:

"[The] problem, simply stated is: the rich man and the poor man do not receive equal justice in our courts. And in no area is this more evident than in the matter of bail ... [Bail] has become a vehicle for systematic injustice. Every year in this country, thousands of persons are kept in jail for weeks and even months following arrest. They are not yet proven guilty. They may be no more likely to flee than you or I. But, nonetheless, most of them must stay in jail because, to be blunt, they cannot afford to pay for their freedom."

Since then, the problem has only gotten worse. The percentage of people awaiting court dates in jail has increased dramatically, far surpassing those who are serving actual jail sentences.



Cash bail creates a two-tier system: one for people with money and one for people without. This injustice disproportionately harms the poorest Americans, especially those from Black communities and women, who are now the fastest growing incarcerated population.

It doesn't have to be this way. The criminal justice system is founded on strong principles like the promise of equal justice, the presumption of innocence, and the right to due process. Cash bail corrupts the process and gives cover to abuse and bias. It is time to take money out of justice.

DID YOU KNOW?

The number of incarcerated women in the U.S. has increased by more than 700% in the past 40 years. Cash bail plays a big factor. The pre-incarceration incomes of women are far lower than those of men, making it even harder to afford bail.

Research shows that judges, regardless of race, set higher bail for people of color, particularly Black people, than similarly situated white defendants.

OUR IMPACT

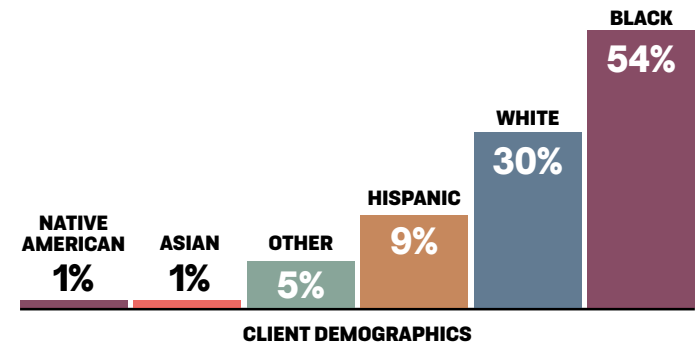
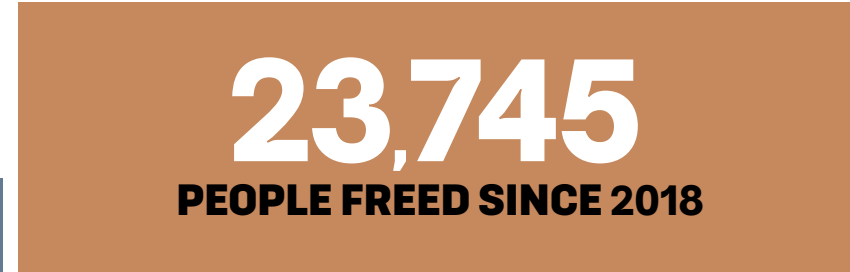
The Bail Project provides direct services to our clients in the form of free bail assistance and voluntary community-based pretrial support. At the same time, we are working for systemic reform, so that everyone, regardless of race or wealth, is treated equally under the law. By sharing the stories of our clients and the data that we gather on their successes, we can inform the public and lawmakers about what is really happening in our justice system and how it affects real families.

This is a powerful combination. By helping people in their most desperate hour and by sharing real stories and data with legislators on both sides of the aisle, we are working to create change at the local, state, and federal levels.

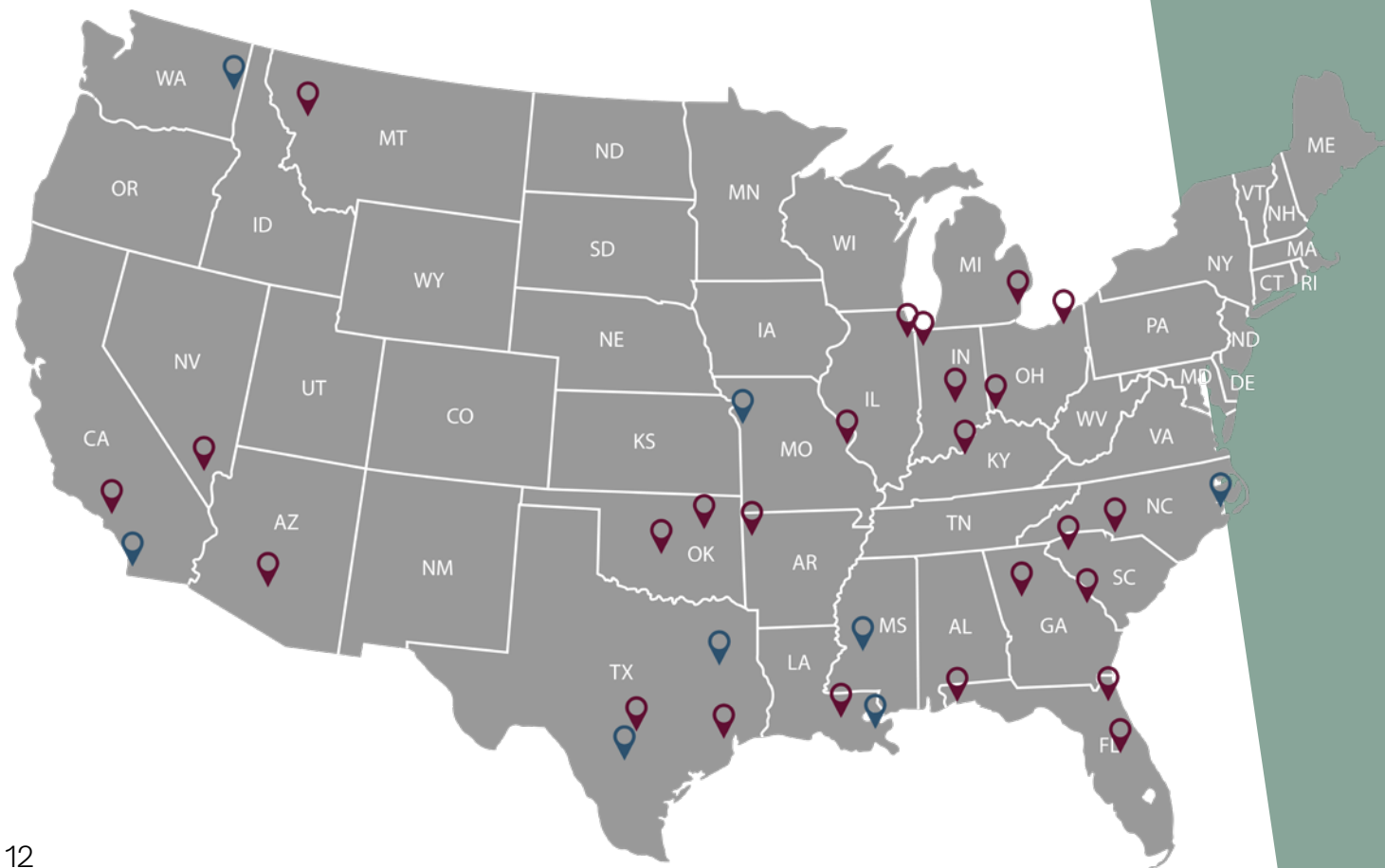
Now in our fifth year, we have provided free bail assistance to more than 23,000 people in dozens of jurisdictions across America. This fiscal year alone, we experienced significant success.

- Collaborated on a landmark settlement over bail practices in Detroit
- Launched a multi-million dollar pilot program in Illinois to support the implementation of bail reform
- Worked in coalition to advance bipartisan bail legislation in Ohio
- Continued our expansion in the South by launching three new branches in Florida

BY THE NUMBERS ¹



¹ Fiscal year 2022 = July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022. All figures as of June 30, 2022.



WHERE WE WORK

Families, community members, and public defenders contact The Bail Project almost every day to help someone languishing in jail just because they can't afford bail. Once we get a referral, our local staff jumps into action. We gather information, conduct interviews, post bail for those eligible, and implement **Community Release with Support**.

"Community Release with Support" is more than a nice sounding phrase. It is a proven model to help people return to court by providing effective court notifications, free transportation to court, and support in navigating social services and community resources to address their unmet needs – from housing to hunger, transportation to recovery treatment.

 BAIL PROJECT BRANCH

 PARTNERSHIP SITE

- AR - Fayetteville
- AZ - Phoenix
- CA - Los Angeles
- CA - San Diego
- FL - Jacksonville
- FL - Orlando
- FL - Pensacola
- GA - Atlanta
- GA - Augusta
- IL - Chicago
- IN - Gary
- IN - Indianapolis
- KY - Louisville
- LA - Baton Rouge
- LA - New Orleans
- MI - Detroit
- MO - Kansas City
- MO - St. Louis
- MS - Jackson
- MT - Flathead Reservation
- NC - Charlotte
- NC - New Bern
- NV - Las Vegas
- OH - Cincinnati
- OH - Cleveland
- OK - Oklahoma City
- OK - Tulsa
- SC - Greenville
- TX - Houston
- TX - San Antonio
- TX - San Marcos
- TX - Tyler
- WA - Spokane

Atlanta client, Taylor

Taylor recalls jail as a horrific experience. She worried about the health of her unborn baby and the risk of contracting Covid-19. Getting enough food to nourish herself and her baby was difficult in jail, and sometimes quarantine meant spending days on end in isolation for up to 23 hours a day. After experiencing a miscarriage the year before, she knew the toll stress could take on her body and she was worried that it would affect her pregnancy. She hadn't been convicted of anything, yet she was essentially serving a sentence.

Fortunately, Taylor's public defender told her about The Bail Project. Her family contacted us, and we posted her bail. The first thing she did was go to her mother's house for a home-cooked meal. She had been in jail for nearly a month. But now, she could finally breathe a little easier, though she knew this was only the beginning of picking up the pieces and rebuilding her life.


RESILIENCE

Taylor was five months pregnant when she found herself trapped in jail because she could not afford \$2,950 bail. An altercation with a family member had resulted in a call to the police. Before she knew it, her life was upside down.



For the past ten years, Taylor had been working in the food industry and toward her dream of one day opening her own soul food restaurant. She dreaded calling her boss, expecting to get fired. Before her detention, she knew she was a good candidate for a promotion. Now, she worried she would be unemployed just as she was about to have a child.

To her surprise, she was welcomed back. Filled with gratitude, she returned and worked until the very last week before going into labor and giving birth to a healthy baby boy.



Kayia Buckner (left), Louisville Bail Disruptor, and Carrie Cole (right), Operations Manager, posting bail in Jefferson County, Kentucky.

INVESTING IN SOLUTIONS

Looking at the state of criminal justice in our country, it is easy to get discouraged. Where to start? At The Bail Project, we hold fast to guiding principles. But we also understand that the road to progress is paved with practical solutions.

The Bail Project is a solutions-oriented organization. Most of the time, when someone doesn't appear in court, it's because of practical reasons. They didn't have bus fare. They were confused about the date. They were preoccupied with trying to put food on the table or struggling with substance use. We are pragmatists at heart. Early on we learned that common-sense approaches, like investing in effective court notification systems and providing free transportation to court, go a long way toward helping people make their court appearances. After providing bail, we make voluntary referrals to existing community resources and social services, based on the needs of the client.

But ensuring high rates of return to court is only part of the solution. A fair and functional system must balance the constitutional requirement to protect the right of the accused with the need to protect public safety. Those defending cash bail claim it makes us safer. It does not. Under a cash bail system, people who pose a danger to the public can go free, as long as they have the money, while the poor wait in jail for their day in court even if they were innocent all along.

To enhance public safety, we need a robust process for judges to make decisions about pretrial release and detention – a process where race and wealth do not determine the outcome. True public safety comes from addressing the underlying causes of crime.

Investments in practical solutions and interventions must be a part of the bail reform movement, and The Bail Project is leading the way.

In **Chicago**, we are doing precisely that through our Community Release with Support pilot with the Lawndale Christian Legal Center which connects people awaiting trial to workforce training, mental health support, violence interruption programs, and other resources as needed. This year, we grew this impact by partnering with the Chicago Low-Income Housing Trust Fund to address housing insecurity as well.

And in **Tulsa and Oklahoma City**, we are partnering with new “support hubs” that offer a one-stop shop for people with pending cases to access social services and resources.

DUTY

Hervis made national news in 2020 for waiting in line for over six hours to vote on Super Tuesday. A year later, the Texas Attorney General accused the 62-year-old of voting illegally and asked a judge to set \$100,000 bail.

When Hervis finally got to cast his vote at 1 a.m., the last thing on his mind was that fulfilling his civic responsibility would be used against him. He proudly told CNN, “It was my duty to vote. I wanted to get my vote in to voice my opinion.”

Houston client, Hervis

Unfortunately, Hervis was on parole when he voted, stemming from a 1995 conviction for burglary. He did not know he could not vote at the time. It was an honest mistake. Nevertheless, he was charged with voter fraud and bail was set at a jaw-dropping \$100,000. This was clearly not a case where the accused posed a danger to the public or a risk of flight, but in his fevered desire to suppress the turnout of people of color, the Texas Attorney General used the bail system to punish Hervis before the case had even started and to send a message. If convicted, Hervis could face a maximum of 20 years in prison.

Fortunately, Hervis’s attorneys at the ACLU of Texas reached out to The Bail Project upon his arrest, and we quickly jumped into action. We traveled to the jail where he was being held and paid the \$100,000 bail. More than a year later, Hervis’s case was finally dismissed.

STANDING UP TO THE BAIL BOND INDUSTRY

The Bail Project's evidence-based approach poses an existential threat to the \$2 billion-a-year bail bond industry whose business model depends on people believing that bail is necessary.

We know our bailouts are not a long-term solution. They are a humanitarian response while working to achieve lasting change. That is why The Bail Project's approach is human-centered but also evidence-based. The data from thousands of bailouts is indisputable: Bail is not what makes people return to court.

But entrenched interests don't go down without a fight. State by state, the bail bond industry is using its influence in statehouses to advance regressive legislation and target The Bail Project. The latest example is Indiana where they mounted a full-on assault and misinformation campaign. The playbook is familiar: Make people afraid. Give people the mistaken impression that bail reform leads to more crime. Focus on the rare bad story, rather than the tens of thousands of people who have come home to their families, returned to their jobs, helped their neighbors, and thrived.



Whenever negative media attention focuses on The Bail Project, it is easy to forget that we do not set bail. Judges do. We only help after a judge has determined that an individual is eligible for release by bail. The focus on who posts bail distracts from a more important point. Why should pretrial release be about money anyway? Bail reform would allow judges to make better decisions for public safety – decisions that should be based on law and evidence, not bank accounts.

FAMILY

Born and raised in Alaska, Renée moved to Phoenix to care for her elderly parents. Soon she was trapped in an abusive relationship. “When the police came, I thought they were there to help and protect me, but instead they arrested me.”

Phoenix felt like a foreign world to Renée. At the age of 52, she had decided to leave her life in Alaska and move to Arizona to be with her elderly parents who were in the early stages of dementia. That’s what family is for, she says.

Phoenix client, Renée



Being new to the big city and away from all her friends, she was isolated, so she felt lucky when she finally met someone and fell in love. Sadly, what started as a new happy chapter soon turned into a nightmare. The man was in the grips of a harrowing addiction, and he soon dragged her into the depths of it. He was violent and controlling. “I felt locked in a box,” says Renée.

One evening, things took a turn for the worse. He attacked her with a brick, hitting her several times. She called out for help, but no one could hear her. Afraid for her life, she reached for a gun and fired it into the air to alert the neighbors and police. The police did come, but instead of helping her, they put her in handcuffs. A judge set bail at \$1,000, and for the next month and a half, she sat in jail because she could not afford this amount.

The time in jail was traumatic. After the attack, she was in pain from what she thought was a broken leg, but no one offered her medical help. Most days, she was only fed peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and she quickly began to lose weight. She was forced to shower in front of male officers. She worried about her parents and wondered if she would ever see them again.



One day, another incarcerated woman told Renée about The Bail Project. She contacted us for help and our local team posted her bail. True to our model of Community Release with Support, we also referred her to a community health center called Valle del Sol for assistance with housing, substance use treatment, and counseling.

Renée went to see her parents right away. After a few days, she decided to check into treatment and ask for domestic violence counseling and therapy. She credits the other women she met in rehab with helping her heal and regain her sobriety. After 45 days, she began to feel like her old self again.

“I have friends now. I was in such an unhealthy relationship... so far away from the open air and safety of Alaska. Now, I feel free and happy again.”

LAUNCHING IN THE SUNSHINE STATE

Florida spends over \$2 billion a year on incarceration. Over 70% of people in Florida's local jails are just awaiting trial.

This year, The Bail Project opened three branches in Florida as part of our efforts in the South. We are thrilled to be in Jacksonville, Orlando, and Pensacola to offer free bail assistance and Community Release with Support to low-income residents, and to work with local partners and leaders to advance positive change.

Program bails people out of Escambia jail



Michael Jones poses with his fiancée, Julie Mariani, and his stepdaughters, Athena, 8, center, and Rimnah, 8, at their home in Pensacola on Thursday. Jones was assisted by The Bail Project. PHOTOS BY GREGG FACHONSKI/NEWS JOURNAL

Bail Project challenges system, reunites families

Kamell Morgan
Pensacola News Journal | USA TODAY NETWORK - FLORIDA

Michael Jones was given another chance to be a free man. Jones was released from prison in December for drug possession and stayed sober for a time. But he fell back into old habits, and in early June, he was arrested on charges of perjury that would mean prison.

He stayed in jail for almost two weeks on a \$4,200 bond, and fretted about his fiancée and young stepdaughters struggling without him there to help support them.

"I hate being incarcerated or locked up more than I hate anything in the world. I would rather be anywhere and any time rather than locked up," Jones said. "I have dreams about it, being taken away from my family. It is definitely a recurring dream and it scares the hell out of me."

While calling his fiancée on the phone in jail, he saw a sheet of paper with the number for a program called The Bail Project. He told his fiancée to take the number down and call them. The Bail Project interviewed him, and two days later, he was released from jail.

His case is still ongoing, but Jones said he has set up appointments for drug treatment and counseling, and his latest return to jail has motivated him to stay sober to not lose his family.

"They gave me this chance... I didn't deserve this, I really don't," Jones said still in disbelief two weeks after being released. "I know this, but they gave it to me. I don't know why but it was just absolutely a blessing."

See BAIL, Page 12A



Michael Jones sorts through legal documents at his home in Pensacola on Thursday. The Bail Project helped pay his \$4,200 bail and introduced him to social services after his recent arrest.

The situation in Florida tracks with the national trend of the past 40 years: Increasingly, the vast majority of people held in the state's jails are simply awaiting trial. They are disproportionately from Black communities. This has led to widespread jail overcrowding, creating unsafe conditions for both the people detained and those who work in these facilities.

It doesn't have to be this way. Instead of filling jails with people who cannot afford bail, we should be investing in the programs and resources that strengthen the community. If we create opportunities for economic mobility, we can tackle this problem at its root. The Bail Project stands ready to be a partner in these efforts, and in Jacksonville, we have the honor and privilege of counting on the support of the Jacksonville Jaguars as part of the NFL's Inspire Change initiative. Through their Inspire Change platform, the Jacksonville Jaguars are committed to conversations and actions that move us towards a more equal and just tomorrow. Inspire Change, a player-led initiative, works to ensure that access to opportunity is a reality for all and to create progress in police-community relations, criminal justice reform, education, and economic advancement.

HOPE

As a transwoman in a men's jail, Kayleeann feared for her life every day. She was assaulted physically, verbally, and sexually. She would scream for help, but no one would come. "Jail was the worst thing that ever happened to me," she says.

This was Kayleeann's reality for nearly two months because she could not afford \$5,000 bail. Our national ideals say she was innocent until proven guilty. In practice, she was already serving a sentence and, with it, enduring horrible trauma.

Indianapolis client, Kayleeann



When Kayleeann learned about The Bail Project, she didn't believe the organization was real. It's a reaction we encounter often. Why would anyone pay your bail without expecting anything in return? It's for many of the same reasons you support us. We believe in the promise of equal justice and the presumption of innocence. And we believe in human dignity and offering a helping hand to someone in need.

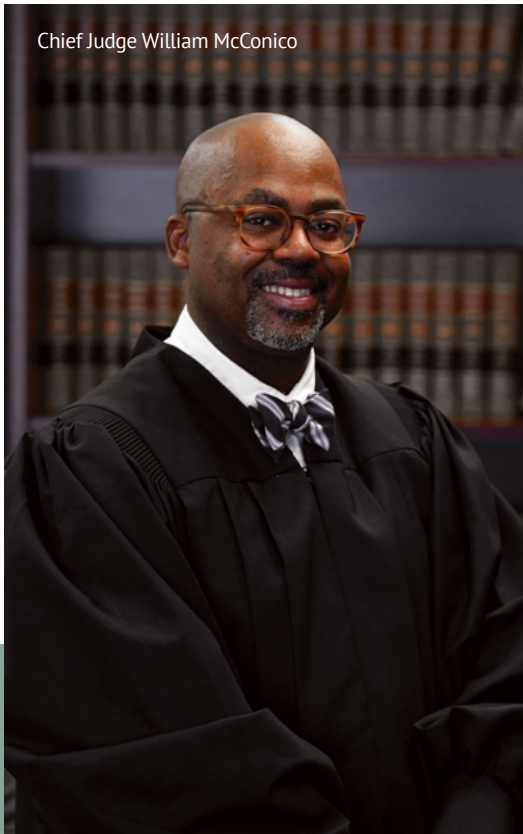
The Bail Project paid Kayleeann's bail, provided her with a phone so we could remind her about her court dates, and connected her to the No Questions Asked Food Pantry.

Kayleeann says that her entire life has changed as a result of this experience. She says the trauma she experienced will stay with her forever. She doesn't feel safe anymore, but she's taking it one day at a time and remains hopeful. "My biggest dream is to fall in love with someone who loves me for me and won't hurt me."

DID YOU KNOW?

Transgender people in jails are sexually victimized at a rate nearly ten times that of the general jail population. Nearly one third of this incarcerated population reports having experienced sexual assault or abuse in the last year.

Chief Judge William McConico



WHEN JUDGES TAKE A STAND

The words “Equal Justice Under Law” are carved in stone on the front of the U.S. Supreme Court in our nation’s capital. They are meant to remind us of the basic promise of our legal system – a promise that we must always be striving to fulfill.

Cash bail is incompatible with the promise of equal justice. Contrary to what critics say, ending cash bail is not about upending the criminal justice system. Quite the opposite. It’s about adhering to the principles our justice system is built on. Better justice is better for everyone.

Judges are uniquely positioned to help us fix this problem, but it requires moral clarity, objective thinking, and real leadership. This year, in Detroit, we saw what is possible when judges take a stand.

Detroit’s 36th District Court is the largest district court in Michigan and one of our nation’s busiest. In 2019, the ACLU of Michigan and the law firm Covington & Burling sued the chief judge and five magistrates over the court’s bail practices, which routinely discriminated against the poor and, in particular, people of color. In 2020, The Bail Project, which operates branches in Michigan’s Wayne County and Washtenaw County, joined as co-counsel.

Soon after the lawsuit was filed, the Michigan Supreme Court named a new Chief Judge for the district: Judge William McConico. Rather than fight the litigation, Chief Judge McConico saw it as an opportunity to address the misuse of bail, collaborate, and lead by example. The result was a groundbreaking settlement that greatly limits the use of bail and strikes at racial disparities in the pretrial system. Speaking at a press conference earlier this year to announce the settlement, Chief Judge McConico said the “agreement preserves judicial discretion, while ensuring that judges are exercising that discretion lawfully and wisely.”

Chief Judge McConico is leading by example as a true gatekeeper of our constitutional rights and a force for justice.

FORTITUDE

Robert's case was eventually dismissed. He was innocent. But if not for The Bail Project, the 66-year-old would have waited two years in jail for that determination. He understands the temptation to plead guilty just to get out of jail.



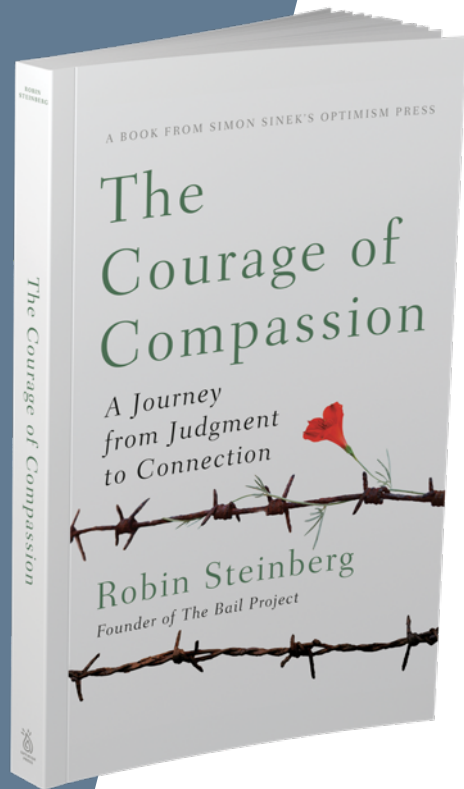
Indianapolis client, Robert

Robert has lived a life of struggle, but he has always been grateful for what he has. Though he had become homeless, he still had his car which offered him not only shelter but also a sense of independence. One day, he agreed to give a friend a ride. Soon police pulled them over. They searched the car and found drugs on his friend. Despite Robert's pleading that he did not have anything to do with it, both men were arrested, taken to the precinct, and charged with drug-related offenses.

In an impartial system, Robert would have had a chance to go before a judge and explain his side of the story. Given that he posed no danger to anyone, he would have been allowed to remain free while the case was pending and work with a lawyer to defend himself. But instead, the judge set bail at \$2,000, an astronomical sum for a man living out of his car.

Robert suffers from lupus, back pain, arthritis, and kidney problems. For nearly a month, he sat in jail, his health deteriorating, while he wondered how he would ever pay the bail. He knew he was innocent, but was it worth sitting in jail until a judge decided his case? He knew that could take years. Perhaps pleading guilty offered a faster way out.

One day, he noticed a poster in the jail for The Bail Project. He called immediately and asked for help. Our team interviewed him and posted his bail. Over two years later, the case was finally dismissed. His friend had taken sole responsibility for the drugs and cleared Robert's name. Speaking about his hopes for the future, Robert says his dream is to travel for the rest of his life. He dreams of owning a diesel truck and pulling a camper across America.



COMING SOON: THE COURAGE OF COMPASSION

A powerful memoir from the founder and CEO of The Bail Project about the potential for compassion to transform how we view one another, reveal our deeper human connections, and help us reimagine justice.

The Courage of Compassion is a gritty tale about confronting injustice and challenging ourselves to rediscover our shared humanity. Reflecting on a 40-year career in criminal justice, Robin Steinberg recounts the heart-wrenching stories of her clients and invites us to interrogate our fears and beliefs about justice and punishment. As she writes in her new book, the quest to improve the justice system will only truly begin “when we can finally see in the faces of those ensnared and imprisoned in our legal system, ourselves. And when we can see our children, in their children.”

Forthcoming April 2023 from Optimism Press, Penguin Random House.

FAITH



When The Bail Project came under attack in Kentucky with legislation to restrict charitable bail, over 50 faith leaders from different faith traditions – Christian, Jewish, and Muslim – took a stand.

Addressing lawmakers, they wrote:

“As Americans, we believe in the presumption of innocence and in the importance of everyone, of any income, being treated equally under the law.

As faith leaders, we believe in helping our neighbors and in offering redemption and a second chance.

And this is why we stand with The Bail Project. Please join with us in opposing HB 313.

By providing bail assistance to people who cannot afford it, The Bail Project does not fix the unjust system we have created. But it does provide grace, charity and compassion in the midst of that unjust system. It should be lauded, not restricted.”

We thank these leaders for their support and their call for people to help one another.

DETERMINATION

An honest mistake landed Michael in jail. "Bail was set at \$1,000. I didn't have this kind of money. At the time, my father was undergoing treatment for stage 5 polycystic kidney disease turned cancerous, so my parents were unable to assist me. I sat in jail for weeks. I don't wish this experience on anybody."

One night, Michael was hanging out with a few friends for a birthday celebration. It was getting late, and he was getting tired. A friend offered to let him crash at his place instead of driving all the way home. He called an Uber but, by mistake, entered the wrong address. As a result, Michael ended up going to the wrong house.

Indianapolis client, Michael



He had only been to his friend's house during the day, so in the pitch black, he assumed he had arrived at the correct address. A car of the same make, model, and color as his friend's was parked on the driveway. To make this unlucky coincidence worse, the front door to the house was unlocked.

Michael went in quietly and laid down to sleep on a sofa in the living room. Hours later he woke up in a panic as police officers arrested him for breaking and entering, a level 6 felony in Indiana. He tried to explain what had happened to no avail. Before he knew it, he was already being arraigned and a judge set bail at \$1,000. Michael sat in jail for weeks because he could not afford the bail. Neither could his parents who had mounting medical expenses. Fortunately, The Bail Project was able to help.

Once free, Michael was determined to prove his innocence. He pulled together all the text messages, the Uber receipt, and everything else he could find to show this was all a big misunderstanding. In the end, the charges were dismissed. But it took two years, time he would have spent locked in a jail cell had The Bail Project not intervened.

"You don't truly understand the importance of the presumption of innocence until you find yourself accused of something you did not do and then locked up in jail because you can't post the money for bail," says Michael, who is now in business school. "It's un-American. We are supposed to be presumed innocent until proven guilty but if you can't pay bail you are basically serving a sentence before you've been convicted of anything."

Isaac Wright (left) and Robin Steinberg (right)

OUR SUPPORTERS

The Bail Project's work would not be possible without your support. We are grateful for you! You are part of a growing community of people across America – over 500,000 strong – who stand for justice and equality and who believe a better future is possible. And you are in good company! Here's our Supporter Spotlight for Fiscal Year 2022.

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ISAAC WRIGHT

Also known by the social media handle DrifterShoots, the Army veteran and photographer became a supporter of The Bail Project after experiencing the injustice of cash bail firsthand. After leaving the military, Isaac learned to cope with PTSD through photography. He became an urban explorer, climbing bridges and buildings to capture awe-inspiring views and share them with the world. But his work also attracted the attention of law enforcement which charged him with burglary (for entering buildings to take photographs from the tops) and several other felonies. An Ohio judge set bail at \$400,000. Unable to afford this amount, Isaac sat in jail for months on end, spiraling into depression and nearly losing all hope. During this time, he met many people who were also awaiting trial behind bars because they did not have the money to pay bail. Most of them were also Black. After a bond reduction, Isaac managed to get out and fight his case from the outside. He promised himself he would not let the same thing happen to others. Now a best-selling NFT artist, Isaac donated a portion of proceeds from his piece "First Day Out" to The Bail Project and is helping us raise awareness.

CHAS TODD AND JANNIE MCINNES OF SCHEME ENGINE

Raising awareness about the human cost of bail is an essential part of The Bail Project's mission. This year, we were lucky to meet two amazing creatives – Director Chas Todd and Executive Producer Jannie McInnes from Scheme Engine – who volunteered their time and talents to help us launch our next public education campaign.





MARGO PRICE

The award-winning singer-songwriter and producer has been a supporter of The Bail Project for a while by donating a portion of proceeds from her merchandise and her line of cannabis through Willie Nelson's company, Willie's Reserve. In addition to her financial support, Margo amplifies our mission on her social media channels, helping us reach ever new audiences.



LIZZO

This year's Juneteenth, the incomparable Lizzo teamed up with The Bail Project and other nonprofits for her Third Annual Juneteenth Giveback, which encouraged fans to learn more about issues harming the Black community and to take action.



MASAI UJIRI

The Toronto Raptors vice-chairman and team president is not only a supporter of The Bail Project but has also met with several of our clients across the country in person to hear their stories.

KELLY WUEST – FREEDOM FUNDER

Our Freedom Funders, The Bail Project's monthly giving community, provide ongoing support to sustain our mission. The average contribution is \$28.97 per month. Pooled together, these monthly donations make a tremendous difference, powering our revolving bail fund. One of these Freedom Funders is Kelly Wuest from South Carolina. "When I heard about The Bail Project on the radio, it lingered with me, and I went online to find out more. I then started to see the role cash bail plays in larger scale problems," Kelly shared with us. She made a couple of one-time donations until she could budget to become a monthly donor. "I am humbled to watch the impact The Bail Project makes, and if my small contribution can help this organization grow, assist more people, and change the system, I will continue to be a supporter." Thank you, Kelly!



THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION FOR NORTHEAST FLORIDA

We are grateful to The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida for their invaluable support and thought partnership in helping us launch our Jacksonville branch this year. Their clarity of purpose, leadership, and commitment to investing in their local community have shined at every step of the way. We are thrilled to be of service in Jacksonville and could not have done it without their support.





Louisville team

OUR TEAM

Thanks to your support, in five years, The Bail Project has grown from a founding team of five to a thriving organization of 115 working for justice. Our organization remains community-based, with operations staff recruited from the very communities we seek to serve, while combining direct service, real-time data research, and advocacy into a cohesive national strategy for systemic change.

Our diversity makes us better and stronger. The majority of our staff (60%) identify as women, nearly 70% are people of color, and 1 in 4 of our staff have directly experienced jail, bail, or prison.

NEW BOARD MEMBERS



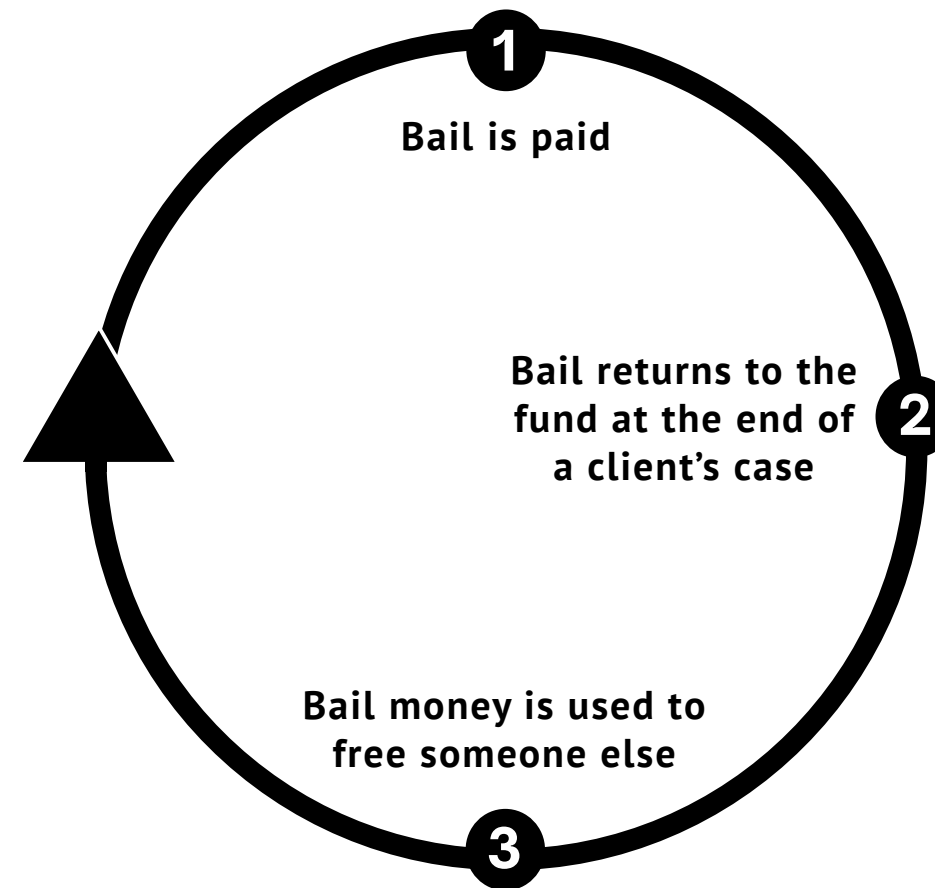
The Bail Project would not be what it is without our amazing Board of Directors. This year, we are welcoming into our board Brandon Buskey (left), Director of the Criminal Law Reform Project at the ACLU, and Zachary Herz-Roiphe (right), Vice President of Business Operations at Applectart and The Bail Project's former Chief Financial Officer.

THE REVOLVING FUND

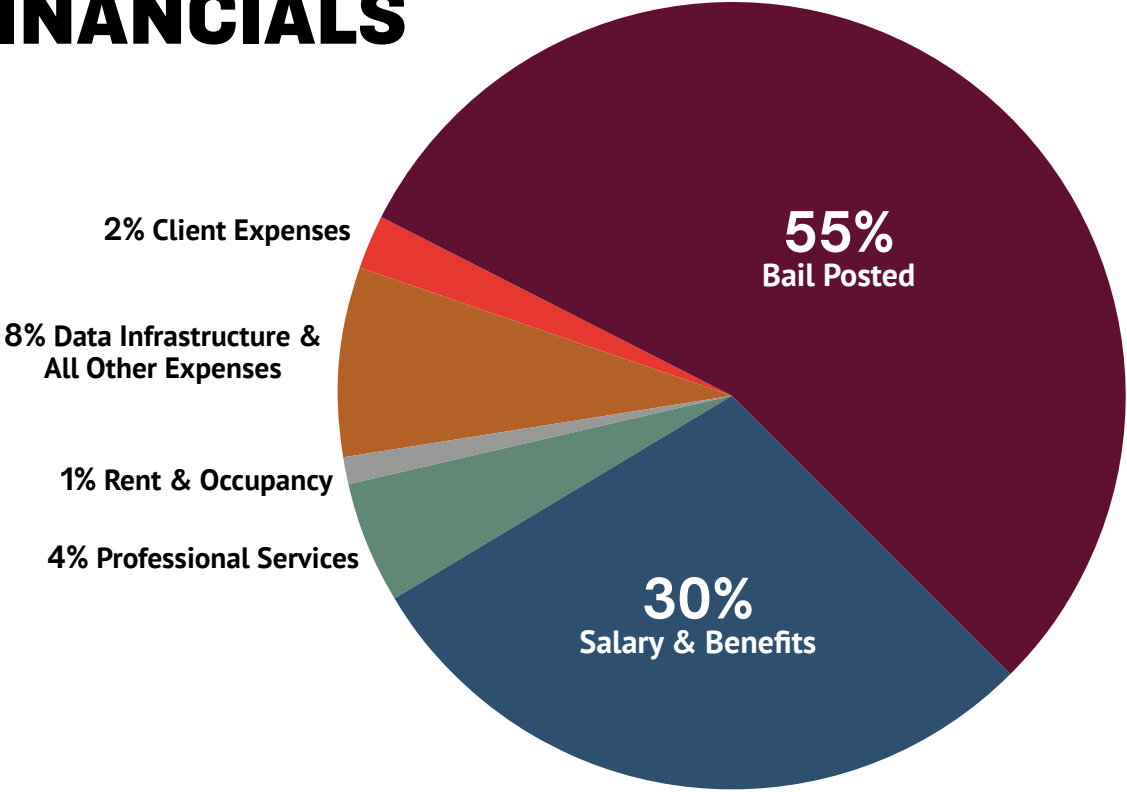
Thanks to our revolving bail fund, The Bail Project is able to help people right now, while also working for long-term systemic change until bailouts are no longer needed. Every single one of the dollars in our revolving fund goes to provide free bail assistance.

Since 2018, we've paid \$67 million of bail to help more than 23,745 people. Of cases that have closed, 93% of bail capital has been returned to the fund. That money is then "recycled" to pay new bails.² Our funds revolve at a high rate for a simple reason: It's not bail that makes people come back to court; it's support!

² All figures as of June 30, 2022 and include bail posted by partnership sites.



FINANCIALS



THANK YOU!