

2019 ANNUAL REPORT



ACLU
Connecticut



Smart Justice leaders and elected officials gather for the signing of the prosecutorial transparency law.

Letter from the ACLU-CT's Executive Director and Board President

Dear ACLU of Connecticut Friends,

“We are one step closer.”

– AnneMarie Stockmeyer, ACLU Smart Justice Connecticut leader, in “[Smart Justice: Year One](#),” the ACLU of Connecticut documentary

In 2019, the ACLU of Connecticut worked tirelessly on criminal legal system reforms that would radically change the current state system. The results? Connecticut’s legislature unanimously passed the strongest prosecutor transparency law in the country. We also now have a nation-leading law requiring Connecticut police make body and dashboard camera footage available within 96 hours of a police use of force when the public requests it. And for the first time in state history, a formerly incarcerated person who is dedicated to criminal justice reform sits on the powerful state Criminal Justice Commission, responsible for appointing state prosecutors.

The ACLU of Connecticut continues to build strategic and rigorous campaigns across all departments, implemented by long-term and recently added staff dedicated to making transformational change in our state. As we enter a new decade, supporters like you have made the ACLU of Connecticut stronger than ever before. Your support has enabled us to grow from a staff of four to 14, strengthening our expertise in organizing, communications, litigation, and advocacy, and making us more prepared to take on the challenges facing our state and country.

True change requires vigilance. To ensure the gains made in 2019 are made real in 2020, the ACLU of Connecticut pledges to hold government and state entities accountable for their responsibilities to make our state’s justice system more transparent, just, and fair.

Throughout this report, you see the scores of committed people – volunteers, Smart Justice leaders, donors, board members, and activists – who showed up day after day believing that change is possible and demanding that change happen. We at the ACLU of Connecticut will continue standing with them by fighting for what is right.

Your generous support and commitment make it possible for the ACLU of Connecticut to build our power and presence throughout the state, to continue safeguarding and expanding liberty and justice for all. We are one step closer.

In solidarity,

David McGuire
Executive Director

Ben Solnit
Board President

ACLU-CT People, 2019

Staff

Dan Barrett, Legal Director
Elana Bildner, Staff Attorney
Laura Brownstein, Development Director
Anderson Curtis, Field Organizer
Téylor Davis, Donor Relations Associate
Claudine Fox, Campaign Manager
Meghan Holden, Communications Director
Gus Marks-Hamilton, Smart Justice Field Organizer
David McGuire, Executive Director
Melvin Medina, Public Policy & Advocacy Director
Kelly Moore, Policy Counsel
Rafael Rosario, Communications Associate
Grace Sinnott, Paralegal
Aubrie Smith, Administrative Support Manager

Smart Justice Leaders

Tiheba Bain	Ramón Garcia	Carrie Perez
Keith Barile	Warren Hardy	Marquita Reale
Tracie Bernardi	Shelby Henderson	Terri Ricks
Alexandra Brown	Kareem Holness	Donald Rivers
Steven Campbell	Curtis Hudson	Will Roberts
Timothy Coble	Tijuan Jackson	Manuel Sandoval
Beatrice Codianni	James Jeter	Yancy Singleton
Kerri-Lynn Dirgo	Kenny Fulton	AnnMarie Stockmeyer
		Dieter Tejada

Interns

Nathan Fox
Geraldo Parrilla
Mary Szarkowicz
Courtney Ulrich

Board of Directors

Ben Solnit, President*	Diana R. Hossain
Margie Adler, Vice President*	Rosetta Jones*
Rosa Browne, Vice President*	Zach Kohl
Zafar Rashid, Treasurer*	Tamara Lanier
Anne Hamilton, Secretary*	Margaret P. Levy
David Addams	Cristina LoGiudice
Robin Chase	Jonathan B. Orleans
Patricia Ciccone	Robert Post
Jeffrey Daniels*	Amir Rezvani
Michelle Duprey	Andy Schatz*
Ned Farman	Kenneth Speyer
Aigné Goldsby*	Katherine Zager
Allan Hillman	

[*Denotes executive committee member]



ACLU-CT added four new staff in 2019. From left to right: Claudine Fox, Elana Bildner, Kelly Moore, Rafael Rosario



Above: Public Policy and Advocacy Director Melvin Medina speaks at a Hamden rally for police accountability.
Right: Wethersfield residents gather to protest Anthony Jose "Chulo" Vega Cruz's death at the hands of Wethersfield police. Photo credits: Rafael Rosario, ACLU-CT

Solidarity

We use every tool at our disposal to work toward bold policy change with and alongside partners throughout Connecticut and the country.

The work to form a more perfect union, establish justice, and secure liberty is never-ending, and no one can do it alone. In 2019, we continued the effort to hold police accountable to democratic checks and balances by: protesting in solidarity with activists in Hamden, Wethersfield, and New Haven; lobbying for new laws; speaking out in the press; releasing rapid-response blog posts and sending freedom of information requests to get information into the hands of the people; and laboring through lawsuits against state and local police. The ACLU of Connecticut is uniquely positioned to use every aspect of our organization – our legal, legislative, organizing, and communications acumen – to fight for justice in every part of our country's democracy – the courts, legislature, city councils, governor's and mayors' offices, administrative agencies, and public conversations. We are at our strongest when our internal solidarity is reflected externally, as we empower our allies in Connecticut and sister ACLUs throughout the country.

In 2019, we:

- Successfully advocated for Connecticut to pass a new, nation-leading law requiring police to make body and dashboard camera footage available within 96 hours of a police use of force or an incident that is under investigation, upon request from the public.
- Leveraged an investigation from the ACLU of Northern California to raise the alarm, with immigrants' rights groups in our state, about eight Connecticut police departments that were sharing license plate location information with ICE.
- Continued our protesters' rights lawsuits against Stamford and Connecticut State Police employees.
- Condemned the legislature's passage of a Connecticut State Police contract provision that would shield State Police from state freedom of information laws.
- Shared information with activists and the general public about local police contracts that prevent police accountability and transparency.
- Joined the Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness to oppose a federal proposed rule that would hurt immigrant families seeking federal housing assistance.
- Convened sixteen women's rights and gender justice organizations to speak out together in support of full inclusion of transgender people in athletics.





Experience

In 2019, the ACLU of Connecticut's seventieth year, Smart Justice reflects the best of what modern campaigns for civil rights and liberties can be.

Smart Justice is guiding the country by securing landmark victories for racial justice and decarceration – and by seeking change in a new way. As a campaign led by formerly incarcerated people and people who are living with a criminal record, Smart Justice combines people's lived experiences with the legal, legislative, communications, and organizing experience of the ACLU of Connecticut. In today's world, achieving lasting progress requires uniting the power of people who are directly affected by threats to civil rights and liberties with the full force of the ACLU. Smart Justice is our first campaign to put this vision to the test, and the results speak for themselves.



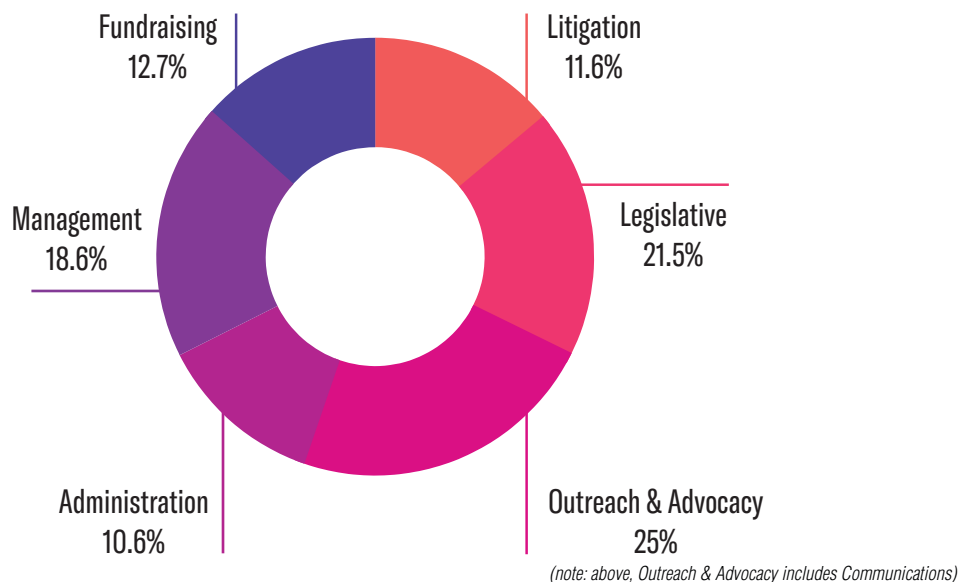
In 2019, we:

- Successfully pushed Connecticut to pass the first law in the country requiring wide-ranging transparency about prosecutors' decisions. The law also mandates, for the first time, the opportunity for members of the public to testify about prosecutors' appointments.
- Held Governor Lamont to his campaign trail promise to appoint at least one formerly incarcerated person who is committed to decarceration and racial justice to the Criminal Justice Commission (CJC), the entity that chooses prosecutors in Connecticut. Dwayne Betts made history by becoming the first justice-impacted person to serve on the CJC.
- Created "Smart Justice: Year One," a documentary about our Smart Justice leaders' journey from the 2018 gubernatorial race through the hugely successful 2019 legislative session.
- Sued the City of Stamford for its arbitrary and discriminatory bail-setting process.

Financial Information: April 1, 2018 – March 31, 2019

The ACLU-CT is comprised of two entities: the American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut and the ACLU Foundation of Connecticut. Contributions to the American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut support advocacy and lobbying on civil liberties issues and are not tax deductible. Contributions to the ACLU Foundation of Connecticut support our litigation, outreach work, and other non-lobbying efforts; donations to the Foundation are tax-deductible.

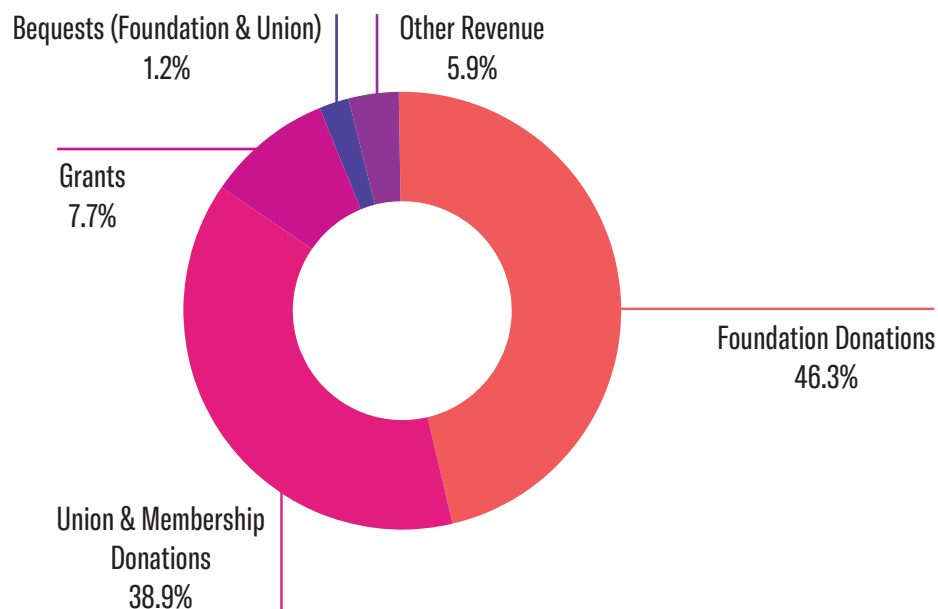
The ACLU-CT continues to invest donor support strategically and thoughtfully; in 2019 we hired four exceptional new staff members (see page 2 of this report) committed to defending and advancing civil liberties for all.



Expenses (Foundation & Union)

Litigation Program: \$148,007
Legislative Lobbying: \$274,919
Outreach & Advocacy Program: \$320,084
Administration: \$135,885
Management: \$237,827
Fundraising: \$162,662

Total Expenses: \$1,279,384



Support and Revenue (Foundation & Union)

Foundation Donations: \$955,258
Union & Membership Donations: \$802,688
Grants: \$160,000
Bequests (Foundation & Union): \$24,569
Other Revenue: \$122,580

Total Support: : \$2,065,095

By the numbers

375 requests for legal help from **94** towns in Connecticut

→ **209** public records requests to police departments across the state

→ **102** bills supported or opposed in legislative testimony

→ **13** new laws to advance civil rights and liberties

1,800 Litigation Hours

→ **2,260** news stories

→ **10,000+** supporters on social media

→ **25** Smart Justice Leaders

How You Can Help

Make a Gift

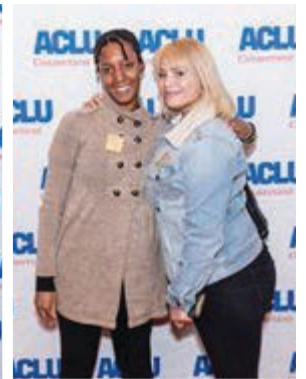
- You can invest in the movement to advance civil rights and liberties by donating to the ACLU Foundation of Connecticut or the ACLU of Connecticut. Donations to the ACLU of Connecticut support our legislative and policy work and are not tax deductible. Investments in the ACLU Foundation of Connecticut support our litigation, public education, and communications efforts and are tax deductible. You can also make a stock gift, donate from your IRA, or honor a loved one through a tribute or memorial contribution. Learn more at acluct.org/donate
- To donate by mail, please make a check payable to the ACLU of Connecticut or ACLU Foundation of Connecticut and send it to: 765 Asylum Avenue, First Floor, Hartford, CT 06105

Get Involved

- As our Smart Justice campaign enters its second year, we need you to join our growing team of dedicated advocacy volunteers. No matter where you live in Connecticut, we need your help to usher in a new era of smarter justice policies. Get involved with Smart Justice by visiting action.aclu.org/volunteer/aclu-connecticut-volunteer

Join the Conversation

- facebook.com/aclu.connecticut
- instagram.com/acluct
- twitter.com/acluct
- youtube.com search ACLU of Connecticut
- Visit us online at acluct.org





Cover: People rally in New Haven to protest police violence. Photo credit: Rafael Rosario, ACLU-CT

ACLU
Connecticut

765 Asylum Avenue, First Floor
Hartford, CT 06105
860-523-9146 | info@acluct.org
www.acluct.org