

**BROOKLYN
COMMUNITY
BAIL
FUND**

2015-2016
**ANNUAL
REPORT**

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



If you're like me, \$500 will never be the reason you end up caged on Rikers Island or plead guilty to a crime you didn't commit. But many people don't have options. In New York City alone, upwards of 10,000 people are jailed yearly because they can't afford small amounts of bail. \$500 can be completely out of reach. Desperate to avoid jail or return to their families, many people plead guilty to crimes they didn't commit.

We post bail for a fraction of the thousands – as many as our staff and funds can reach. With each transaction, we secure someone's freedom, and it never feels anything less than urgent and the right thing to do. But we constantly ask ourselves: Why does this system even exist? How can we replace it with something far better?

We're not alone. The injustice that is bail is finally getting the broad attention it deserves. Journalists are writing feature stories about its consequences, both human and financial. There's a push to curtail the use of bail at the state and federal levels. And innovative solutions, like charitable funds, are building momentum.

By helping individuals, we reach families and communities that are vastly overrepresented in the criminal justice system. And transactions can lead to transformation. Our clients consistently

make all their court dates even without a financial incentive. We can help show that bail is not only unfair, it's unnecessary.

Our own organization has also transformed in the past year. We've grown from a staff of one to a team of nine. We recently expanded from our base in Brooklyn and now also serve Manhattan. In our second year of operation we expect to post bail for twice as many people as we did in year one. We're also taking on more challenging cases – people who are struggling with illness, addiction or abject poverty and who need support to make it to court and to make it in larger ways. And we're pushing the boundaries of what's considered to be the right type of reform.

There's a movement growing to end the criminalization of poverty. Join us. Invest in justice.

PETER GOLDBERG
JULY, 2016

OUR MISSION is to ensure equal access to the criminal justice system through direct service, advocacy and public education. We prevent damaging, unnecessary and costly pre-trial detention and connect clients in need to a range of support services. We advocate for fairer, smarter criminal justice, including the elimination of wealth as a factor in pretrial detention.

OUR EVOLUTION

**1ST
BAIL PAID**



APRIL, 2015

JUNE, 2015



**35TH BROOKLYN
DEFENDER SERVICES
CLIENT SERVED**

**HIRED SECOND
FULL-TIME STAFFER**



JULY, 2015

**BCBF FEATURED IN
*The
New York Times*
Magazine**

AUGUST, 2015



**BEGAN TO SERVE
LEGAL AID SOCIETY
CLIENTS IN BROOKLYN**



SEPTEMBER, 2015

**100TH
CLIENT SERVED**

SEPTEMBER 5,
2015

**LED PANEL ON BAIL
AT THE BROOKLYN
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**



OCTOBER, 2015

**HIRED THIRD
BAIL PAYER AND
CASE MANAGER**



DECEMBER, 2015

**HOSTED FUNDERS
BRIEFING ATTENDED
BY 15 FOUNDATIONS**



JANUARY, 2016

**PROVIDED TECHNICAL
SUPPORT TO THE
CHICAGO COMMUNITY
BOND FUND**



MARCH, 2016

**HIRED BAIL
SUPERVISOR**



APRIL, 2016

**500TH
BAIL PAID**

**EXPANDED
OPERATIONS TO
MANHATTAN**



MAY, 2016

Speech by Magdon from the Noun Project
Speaker by Magdon from the Noun Project
Currency by Creative Staff from the Noun Project
Panel by gisa Park from the Noun Project
City by Juan Pablo Bravo from the Noun Project

THE WORK WE DO

HOW WE SERVE

PAY BAIL FOR LOW-INCOME NEW YORKERS

- Prevent unnecessary imprisonment
- Avert coerced guilty pleas
- Allow presumptively innocent people to fight their cases
- Keep families together
- Avoid loss of jobs and housing

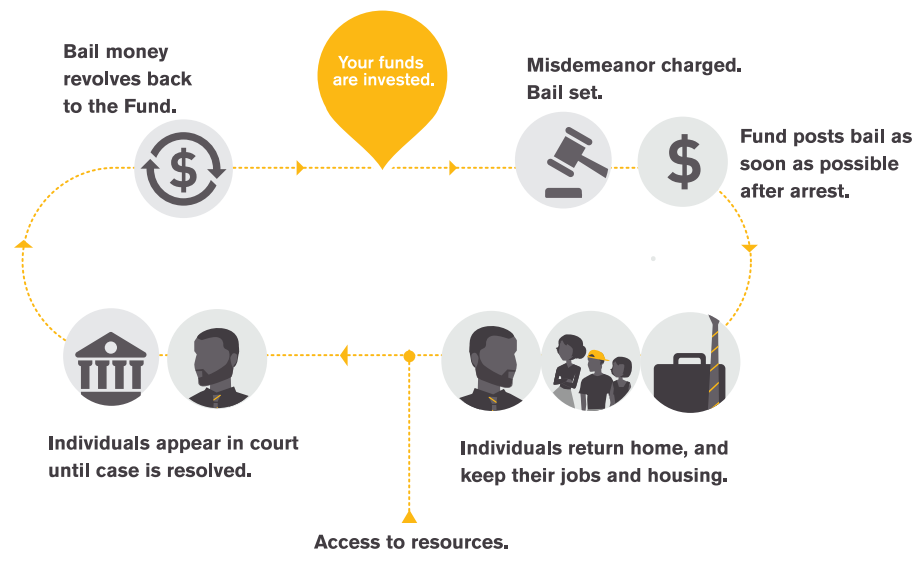
PROVIDE SUPPORT THROUGH CASE-MANAGEMENT

- Assess clients' holistic needs
- Partner with New York social service providers

ADVOCATE FOR SYSTEMIC REFORM

- Featured in NY Times Magazine cover story "The Bail Trap"
- Hosted panel on bail in NYC at Brooklyn Historical Society
- Offered technical assistance to new bail fund in Chicago

HOW IT WORKS



OUR PARTNERS

ALL BROOKLYN AND MANHATTAN PUBLIC DEFENDERS

- Brooklyn Defender Services
- Legal Aid Society
- NY County Defenders
- Neighborhood Defenders Of Harlem

21 SOCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS, INCLUDING...

- The Osborne Association
- Housing + Solutions
- The Fortune Society
- The Door

WHO WE SERVE

OUT OF 520 PEOPLE...



19%

YOUTH

The inability to afford bail can be the first step in the school-to-prison pipeline

90%

PEOPLE OF COLOR

Bail reinforces existing inequalities and disproportionately harms people of color

100%

PRESUMPTIVELY INNOCENT

Bail robs the presumptively innocent of a fighting chance at justice

OUR RESULTS

YEAR ONE

520

LOW-INCOME
NEW YORKERS
SERVED

95% OF CLIENTS

RETURN FOR ALL REQUIRED
COURT APPEARANCES, WITH
NO FINANCIAL INCENTIVE

20 YEARS

OF JAIL TIME PREVENTED

1/3 OF CLIENTS

HAVE ALL CHARGES
DROPPED

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO START-UP BAIL FUNDS



FACT

COMPARED TO INDIVIDUALS

KEPT IN ON BAIL:

BAIL FUND CLIENTS ARE **200%**
MORE LIKELY TO HAVE THEIR
CASES DISMISSED
OR RESOLVED FAVORABLY

“**THE BROOKLYN COMMUNITY BAIL FUND** has truly been a miracle for many of my clients. It has enabled them to return home to their families and jobs and to fight their criminal cases in a meaningful way. It enables us to advise our clients to turn down unreasonable and harmful offers from the DA.

- LAUREN KATZMAN, PUBLIC DEFENDER AT LEGAL AID SOCIETY

“**WHEN BAIL WAS SET,** I didn't know what would happen. I had been in that apartment for 16 years. I had never been late on my rent, but I couldn't pay my rent and the bail. When my bail was paid, I didn't have to worry about that and I was able to keep my apartment.

- ARNALDO ALVAREZ, BAIL FUND CLIENT

NANCY DIAZ

BAIL FUND CLIENT

HAVING BAIL SET

“When the judge said I needed to pay bail, I didn’t have anyone to bail me out. Who are my kids going to stay with? Who is going to take them to school? And who’s going to give them breakfast?”

THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

“We’re stealing food for kids so they can eat. So what makes you think...if the mother is stealing food for those kids, keeping her away from those kids for three days is going to make the situation better? What are you going to do with all these people in jail? They need help. Help them succeed and do something to move on. Don’t send them to jail.”

LIFE AFTER HER CASE

“I’ve been blessed because I didn’t go to jail. I’m struggling to see if I can get a job even though I don’t have my GED. It’s hard. I’ve been going to church more often, every Wednesday and Sunday with the kids. I’ve been going to food pantries. I’ve been trying to fit little things into my life that I didn’t do before.”

STEVEN MILLER

BAIL FUND CLIENT



WORKING WITH THE BAIL FUND

“Having people like you taking chances on people and believing in some part of the person’s story, and putting money to get that person out, that’s beautiful. All you see is what’s on paper. But people do change. You always need somebody in your corner. When you’re in that predicament you start doubting yourself. The only thing that keeps you fighting is knowing that someone believes in you.”

BEING PART OF A COMMUNITY

“If all it takes is me coming back to court for you to help someone else, I’m going to do that. Because you have people who are truly innocent of crimes and don’t have the assets to get out.”

RIKERS ISLAND

“Rikers Island is a nightmare for sure. It’s a world inside a world. Anything goes there.”

A NOTE OF THANKS FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

If you're receiving this report, chances are you've helped the Brooklyn Community Bail Fund in some capacity. Thank you! With your financial contributions, time and effort, and friendship, we've hit the ground running.

When the Fund launched in April 2015, we thought we might serve 150 people in our first year. Imagine my incredible surprise, and now pride, to report that we actually paid bail for 520 people who otherwise would have spent days, weeks, or possibly even months in a jail cell. Add up all that time and it comes to a staggering 20 years. Because 95 percent of our clients made all of their court appearances, our up-front investments in their liberty and lives are revolving back to the Fund, just as we anticipated.

Our success is directly tied to the number and diversity of our supporters. Institutional funders took us seriously because so many individuals stepped up to contribute to the Fund. Collectively, we're rejecting a two-tiered system of justice.

Your concern about the way that bail punishes poverty as if it were a crime, and your confidence in our ability to do something about it, has gotten us off to an unbelievably encouraging start. But posting bail for New Yorkers who can't afford it is only part of our work, and our reach in this regard is limited. Our goal is to transform the system so that no one goes to jail simply because they are too poor to post bail. We're in this fight for as long as it takes, and we need your support. I hope you'll continue to journey with us toward justice.

Stuart Post
STUART POST

FY 2015 FINANCIALS FUNDING & COSTS



\$910 THE AVERAGE PRICE TO SECURE OUR CLIENT'S FREEDOM

OVER **90%** OF MONEY WE PAY REVOLVES BACK TO US, AVAILABLE TO HELP ANOTHER PERSON IN NEED



- **Corporate** Contributions
\$24,070
- **Individual** Contributions
\$282,627
- **Foundation** Contributions
\$423,199

TOTAL REVENUE: \$729,896



- **Program** Costs*
\$583,198
- **Management** Costs
\$54,208
- **Fundraising** Costs
\$39,818

TOTAL EXPENSES: \$677,224

*includes bail paid to date

OUR DONORS

\$100,000+

Agnes Varis Trust*
FJC
David and Aviva Schwarz
Stavros Niarchos Foundation
The Murray & Sydel
Rosenberg Foundation, Inc.

\$50,000-\$99,999

New York Community Trust
John and Renate Winston

\$25,000-\$49,999

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Brooklyn Community
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Sills Family Foundation

\$10,000-\$24,999

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\$500-\$999

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\$250-\$499

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*Contributions to Ken Rabb
Memory Fund

BROOKLYN COMMUNITY BAIL FUND

“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.”

- ROBERT F. KENNEDY, 1964

OUR TEAM

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Derrick Cain
INTAKE SPECIALIST

Gaby Shorr
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Jessica Coyle
MANAGER OF DEVELOPMENT

Michael Brantl
BROOKLYN LAW FELLOW

Nicole Follmann
BAIL ASSOCIATE

Pilar Weiss
SPECIAL PROJECTS COORDINATOR

Rachel Foran
DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

Terrence Bogans
DIRECTOR OF COURT OPERATIONS

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