



TAKEROOT JUSTICE

BUILDING POWER, GROWING MOVEMENTS



2020-2021 Overview Report

2020-2021

Overview Report

Welcome	3
Mission & Internal Structure	4
Our Work During Covid	5
Advancing Racial Justice Movements	6
Capacity Building	7-8
Consumer Justice	9-10
Equitable Neighborhoods	11-12
Housing Rights	13-14
Immigrants' Rights	15-16
Participatory Research & Policy	17-18
Workers' Rights	19-20
Resource Management Team	21-22
20 Years of TakeRoot	23-25
Our Finances	26
Our Donors	27
Community Partners	28
Staff and Board	29

20 YEARS OF MOVEMENT BUILDING IN NYC COMMUNITIES

Dear Friends,

September 2021 marked TakeRoot Justice's 20 year anniversary – we have been supporting movements for change and helping build power in New York City's marginalized communities for more than two decades. When we were founded as the Community Development Project at the Urban Justice Center in September 2001, we got to work helping communities respond to the crisis of the 9/11 terrorist attacks and their aftermath. We fought to ensure proper health protections for day laborers cleaning up Lower Manhattan, helped former World Trade Center restaurant workers form one of the city's first cooperatively-owned restaurants, and provided critical support to Muslim communities being targeted by racist and discriminatory arrests and raids.

Since then, we have accomplished so much, from landmark protections for workers and tenants, to a thriving worker cooperative movement, to community control over neighborhood development processes, and much more. Now, twenty years later, our city faces another crisis from the COVID-19 pandemic, and this time we are responding as TakeRoot Justice, an independent organization helping communities recover from the pandemic in partnership with grassroots organizations across the city.

And yet there is so much more still to be done. As the pandemic continues to profoundly impact NYC, TakeRoot and our partners seek to center racial justice in the city's recovery. This is a time for bold action and systemic change, and we will fight to ensure that those most impacted – communities of color and low-wage essential workers – are prioritized and have a voice in shaping post-pandemic New York.

TakeRoot's work supporting transformative movements for change has never been more important. We invite you to join us and our partners as we begin our next twenty years of dismantling racial, social and economic oppression to build systems grounded in equity. Together, there is no limit to what we can accomplish.

In solidarity,
Sadia Rahman and April Herms
Interim Co-Directors



MISSION & INTERNAL STRUCTURE

TakeRoot Justice provides legal, participatory research and policy support to strengthen the work of grassroots and community-based groups in New York City to dismantle racial, economic and social oppression.



TakeRoot Justice employs a unique model of partnership with grassroots and community-based groups. Our partners take the lead in determining the priorities and goals for our work, and advance our understanding of justice. This upends the traditional power dynamics between communities and service providers. Our theory of change leverages short-term and individual successes to build the capacity and power of our partners, who in turn can have longer-term impact on policies, laws and systems that affect their communities.

Embodying our Values

TakeRoot models our internal structure on anti-oppressive and democratic principles to build a workplace culture that mirrors the progressive change we pursue through our work. We are a unionized workplace proudly represented by the National Organization of Legal Services Workers (NOWLS) UAW Local 2320. We encourage all staff members to participate in key organizational decisions and to help manage integral aspects of our internal operations through a system of committees, or “circles” that oversee areas such as hiring, budgetary decisions, racial justice work, internal and external community building, communications, policy, and more.

OUR WORK DURING COVID

The COVID-19 pandemic radically shifted the landscape in which we and our partners work, exacerbating the immense inequality and lack of resources in low-income communities. Tenants already struggling with high rents found themselves unemployed and at risk of homelessness. Low-wage essential workers who frequently struggled with wage theft and workplace abuse became lifelines for a city under lockdown, at great risk to their health and safety. Organizing work that happened on the streets, in workplaces, and in building lobbies was suddenly too risky to conduct in person.

TakeRoot and our partners immediately pivoted to confront this new reality and organize around the most pressing community needs emerging from the pandemic. We developed remote Know Your Rights trainings for tenants, workers and immigrants. We helped organize a citywide rent strike and advised tenants during the eviction moratorium. We provided legal representation and support for essential delivery and in-home workers to ensure proper working conditions and pay. And through it all, we worked to stay abreast of changing legislation regarding the eviction moratorium, worker safety rights, changes in unemployment, immigration policy, and sick leave to better serve and educate our partners and clients.

Read on to learn more about how each of our teams and practice areas supported communities and movements during COVID=19.

TakeRoot's Guardian Angel during COVID-19

Like many NYC workplaces, TakeRoot was caught by surprise in March 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic prompted statewide office closures and forced an abrupt shift to remote work. Our success in navigating this transition was due in no small part to Angel Siaca, a maintenance worker and engineer in our building who went above and beyond to look after our office while it was closed, bringing in our mail and ensuring everything was secure. Over the course of the pandemic, Angel has continued to play a critical role in keeping our office operations running smoothly while most of our staff continue to work remotely. We couldn't have done this without him and are immensely grateful for all of his hard work on TakeRoot's behalf. Thank you, Angel!



ADVANCING RACIAL JUSTICE MOVEMENTS

TakeRoot strives to center racial justice in all of the work that we do. We recognize that white supremacy and centuries of violence, oppression and inequality are root causes of the systemic injustice faced by low-income communities of color in NYC. This injustice shows up when landlords illegally evict low-income tenants, when employers steal wages from immigrant workers, when developers attempt to privatize public land in majority-POC neighborhoods and when debt collectors target immigrant and POC consumers, to name just a few examples from our work. We use our legal, research and policy expertise to support movements to end these racist practices and address systemic harms done to vital, vibrant NYC communities of color.

TakeRoot also has several Circles - interdisciplinary working groups comprised of staff from different practice areas and teams - that lead us in centering racial justice values and practices in our work.

The Racial Justice Circle

This Circle builds on our existing work with racial justice organizers around the city and the intersecting oppressions we have witnessed through our work with clients. Through the Racial Justice Circle, we strengthen our ties to racial justice movements and ground all of our work with community partners in racial justice principles.

The Anti Oppression Circle

This Circle focuses on ensuring that racial justice is centered in TakeRoot's internal operations. The Anti Oppression Circle organizes anti-oppression and anti-racism trainings for staff and ensures that racial justice principles inform our hiring, training and onboarding of new staff.

HAPPEN (Holistic Abolition of Prisons and Police Everywhere Now)

This Circle was formed in 2017 to support Black and Brown-led movements for transformative justice and the abolition of policing and mass incarceration, and further our organizational mission. HAPPEN has continued its organizing with many partners across our various practice areas, and collaborated with long-time partners in Communities United for Police Reform on countless protests, campaigns, and social media blasts in support and power for the many lives lost to police killings, state violence, and the carceral state.



CAPACITY BUILDING

We believe that the shared control of resources and wealth is a key component to a just society.



What We Do

We work toward the equitable control of resources by helping communities create worker-owned cooperative businesses and other non-exploitative institutions, with a particular focus on Indigenous, Black and Brown communities that have been historically exploited and marginalized.

We empower our clients through creative technical assistance and legal solutions aligned with dismantling economic oppression.

We do this through:

- Legal assistance for the formation and sustainability of worker-owned cooperatives, community-based organizations and coalitions.
- Legal training for organizations that support cooperative development, worker-owned cooperatives, nonprofits and unincorporated groups.
- Technical assistance to local campaigns on public policy efforts, including citywide and statewide policies affecting small businesses and worker cooperatives.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Forming Worker Owned Cooperatives

We help low-wage immigrant, BIPOC, women and LGBTQ+ New Yorkers develop worker cooperatives benefiting broad sectors of the city and beyond. These co-ops are tools of economic justice, turning low-wage workers into business owners; dramatically increasing their wages and control over working conditions. We are currently partnered with the Center for Family Life, to support a group of mainly immigrant Latine women to form a new cooperative that provides cleaning services to a range of clients as part of the Brightly franchise. Our assistance includes advising on incorporation, drafting of governance documents, and negotiating franchise agreements.

“Seeing how much these women are doing to build their own business is inspiring. They’re working full time jobs, dealing with child care, and showing up to Zoom meetings to learn everything. This includes the legal, financial, and operational aspects of running a business. It's amazing to see the leadership they take on in balancing everything as they figure out democratic self management and how to build the skill sets that they need.”

-PATRICIA ALEJANDRO, STAFF ATTORNEY

Looking Ahead

TakeRoot is currently working with a coalition of attorneys from other organizations and institutions across the city to research the current structure of New York State worker cooperative incorporation with a goal of developing concrete policy recommendations. Ultimately, the goal is to create a comprehensive framework that will be shared directly with worker owners and worker cooperative developers.

CONSUMER JUSTICE

We believe all New Yorkers have a right to financial empowerment and protection from predatory financial practices.



What We Do

Our practice provides individual legal representation for low-income consumers and partners with community organizations to address systemic policies that destabilize communities, limit their growth, and curtail their ability to hold on to resources. Our clients come from low-income communities that have been destabilized by rising living costs and stagnant wages. These communities are targeted for sub-prime loans and other deceptive and abusive practices by banks, lenders, bail bonds companies, landlords, car dealers, identity thieves and other financial predators.

Our Consumer Empowerment Services Include:

- Community education workshops and materials that promote public awareness around consumer and financial empowerment strategies.
- Direct legal services to represent consumers in litigation from unlawful debt collection practices and to assert their rights.
- Legislative and policy advocacy in support of partner campaigns to bring reform in the areas of employment agency fraud, injustice in the bail bond industry, and increased regulation of debt collectors and process servers in NYC.

CONSUMER JUSTICE

Looking Ahead

Now that the eviction moratorium has ended landlords are seeking to recoup losses and are expected to go after tenants aggressively for rental arrears and eviction. We expect that an uptick in rental arrears case filings in civil court will lead to an increase in those cases within our practice.

Additionally, as the courts re-open, it is harder than ever for individuals to represent themselves and protect their rights. New procedures are being implemented daily and each borough is handling litigation differently. Many people were displaced during the pandemic and are not living at the residences where the court is sending notices.

With this in mind, we are determined to stay up to date on legislation and continue educating and protecting our clients to ensure an equitable New York City for everyone.



Protecting Consumers From Predatory Practices

Our team represented a client named Sam* who was coerced into signing a contract for a new car without understanding it due to language barriers. Sam is a native Spanish speaker who was only shown the contract in English and had no choice but to sign because he needed a car for his work as a driver. Our team worked with Sam to dispute the unlawful warranties he was sold at the dealership and were able to get him a \$4,800 refund. Sam's case is an example of the ways in which low-income consumers are taken advantage of every day, often with disastrous results for their finances and lives. None of our clients can afford to pay for lawyers, yet having legal representation is often the key factor in cases that have an enormous impact on our clients' lives and livelihoods.

*Name has been changed for confidentiality.

EQUITABLE NEIGHBORHOODS

We believe the people who live and work in New York City must have a voice in the future of their neighborhoods.



What We Do

We work with grassroots groups, neighborhood organizations, and community coalitions in historically under-resourced areas to fight for stable and affordable housing, community spaces, community input on land use, good-paying jobs and other opportunities that allow people to thrive. We support our partners with a variety of legal strategies, including litigation, legislative and administrative advocacy, trainings, and strategy development.

We Do This Through:

- Educating communities on their rights through community-led workshops.
- Direct representation of organizations and coalitions, including litigation.
- Advocating for policy changes through partnership with coalitions such as the New York City Community Land Initiative and the Abolish the NYC Tax Lien Sale Coalition.
- Creating and supporting community land trusts - non-profits that treat land as a public good and provide agency to community members in ensuring long-term affordability and economic investment in their neighborhoods.

EQUITABLE NEIGHBORHOODS

Recent Accomplishments

- We launched the #NYCHAREalTalk workshop series, through which more than 500 NYC Housing Authority resident trainers have co-educated their neighbors about building health standards and upcoming NYCHA plans involving privatization and infill development.
- We negotiated more than \$165,000 in rent relief for small businesses.
- We successfully advocated as a member of the Abolish the NYC Tax Lien Sale Coalition for an end to the Giuliani-initiated liens sale policy through which City has abandoned tenants to slumlords and exposed low-income BIPOC homeowners to scams and forced displacement.
- We launched the Designed by Community Fellowship, a paid fellowship and project funding opportunity to support community members in designing and developing hyper-localized solutions related to the COVID-19 crisis for and with NYC public housing residents. Projects included working with resident advisory boards to host online events, outreach, and community assessments to determine the needs of residents during the pandemic.



Negotiating Wins for the Community

Over the last two years, TakeRoot represented Grand Street Guild, a resident association that includes 600 low-income families in a project-based Section 8 development on the Lower East Side. We led negotiations for them that culminated in the signing of an enforceable community benefits agreement, all achieved without going to court. In exchange for allowing the owners to add market-rate rental buildings to the development, the association won the following concessions:

- An obligation for the owners to renew the Section 8 program for currently protected apartments for as long as the federal program exists.
- Limits to rent increases for units not protected until 2050, at which point they will be stabilized.
- An obligation to develop the new buildings for residents making low incomes.
- Specific access to new and future amenities for association members.

HOUSING RIGHTS

We believe that access to safe, affordable housing is crucial to an equitable New York City.



What We Do

Our team works side-by-side with tenants and tenant organizers as they fight against gentrification to demand better living conditions, affordable rents, and a voice in the policies that shape their neighborhoods. By partnering with tenant associations, community-based organizations, and city- and state-wide coalitions, we help tenants build their power. Our advocacy has resulted in millions of dollars of repairs in low-income housing and kept countless New Yorkers in their homes.

We hold landlords accountable by representing tenants in litigation to combat willful neglect and correct poor and dangerous housing conditions. We help community groups and tenants come together in coalitions across the city to advocate for policies that stop predatory and abusive landlords.

HOUSING RIGHTS

Protecting Vulnerable Tenants During COVID

Since March 2021, TakeRoot's Housing Rights Team has held over 100 tenant meetings, trainings, workshops, and legal clinics. We have represented nearly 800 tenants in cases fighting eviction and harassment, and suing for repairs. We have provided legal advice to 140 callers through our housing hotline.

As the end of the statewide eviction moratorium has triggered an eviction crisis of historic proportions, TakeRoot Justice has joined the City's Right to Counsel program in Housing Court. To counter the profoundly isolating and disempowering experience of Housing Court, we have created a new monthly Participatory Defense workshop for our clients facing eviction, where they can meet together, share their stories, build relationships with one another, and join in popular education and leadership development activities.



Citywide Rent Strike: When We Fight, We Win!

The economic devastation and massive job losses resulting from the pandemic put many people at risk of eviction. Early on in the pandemic, we advocated with partners for the Eviction Moratorium. We represented four tenant associations across seven buildings in Sunset Park, Jackson Heights, Concourse, and the East Village as part of the biggest rent-strike in New York City history. We were successful winning \$500,000 (and counting) in forgiven overdue rent, in addition to holding numerous landlords accountable for repairs. We are proud of our accomplishments, but know our work is far from done. Looking forward, we are committed to ensuring that the continued COVID economic recovery includes robust tenant protections and an increased commitment to affordable housing for all New Yorkers.

IMMIGRANTS' RIGHTS

We believe that the freedom of movement and migration for all people is a human right.



What We Do

We provide legal representation to immigrant clients and support organizing and movement building in immigrant communities. We also lead efforts to tackle systemic oppression immigrants face in the courts, policing, surveillance, employment, housing, access to benefits, medical care, and education. Our clients are referred to us by our community partners - organizations that are led by immigrants of color who are working to build power, lead campaigns for legislative and policy change, and creating spaces where immigrants can thrive.

We build power in immigrant communities by:

- Providing educational workshops with essential and up-to-date information on changing immigration policies to empower individuals in case of ICE interactions.
- Representing immigrants targeted by ICE and challenging unjust immigration laws and enforcement practices.
- Staffing community-based legal clinics to screen members and take on cases for immigration relief including removal defense, asylum, applications for visas, and naturalization.
- Supporting the development of rapid response networks and other community mobilization efforts against unjust and illegal policing of immigrant communities.

PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH & POLICY

We believe that local groups are the experts on what their communities need to thrive.



What We Do

Our work helps amplify community voices at the policy level: We partner with organizing groups on research projects and policy analysis to document problems, formalize issues for policy-makers, and help move campaigns forward. We use a Participatory Action Research model that centers organizers and community members in the design and development of research and policy.

What is Participatory Action Research?

Participatory Action Research means that community members and organizers choose the issue area and lead the research process, and that the research is used to make change. Too often, community voices are absent from mainstream research and policy, despite the fact that community members and organizers know their issues best. We bridge that gap, providing training and support to partners so that they can understand, conduct, and use research. These reports are used to advance legislative campaigns, garner press coverage, and further community organizing campaigns.

Curious How It Works?

We've developed a Research for Organizing Toolkit; a start-to-finish resource of Participatory Action Research, with tools, templates, training guides and case studies. Take a look at www.researchfororganizing.org.

PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH & POLICY

Research Techniques we Train Include:

- Facilitating Focus Groups: leading small group discussions on a research question. These are useful for getting qualitative data, and are an effective way to get people's personal stories, testimonies, and experiences.
- Survey Design and Administration: Surveys are helpful for getting information or data from a wider group of people and are better for getting quantitative information.
- Mystery Shopping: trained community members posing as customers and calling or visiting a business, then documenting experiences and interactions. Mystery shopping helps document things like employment practices, consumer fraud, or compliance with existing laws.

Our 2020-2021 Reports

October 2020: "[Vouchers to Nowhere: How Source of Income Discrimination Happens and Policies That Can Fix It](#)" was released in partnership with Voices of Community Activist & Leaders (VOCAL-NY). The Report details patterns of discriminatory practices by agents and landlords that make it nearly impossible for voucher-holders to access safe, affordable housing in NYC.

December 2020: "[Licensing a Legacy: African Hair Braiders' Vision for Reforming Professional Licensure in New York City](#)" was released in partnership with African Communities Together. The report reveals the barriers to obtaining the State-mandated Natural Hair Styling Professional License and details recommendations for how to eliminate the barriers.

July 2021: "[It's Still War in Here: A Statewide Report on the Trans, Gender Non-Conforming, Intersex \(TGNCI\) Experience in New York Prisons and the Fight for Trans Liberation, Self-Determination and Freedom](#)" was released in partnership with Sylvia Rivera Law Project (SRLP). The report sheds light on the ongoing crisis for transgender and gender non-conforming people in New York State prisons, in context of the larger crisis of mass incarceration.

September 2021: "[An Unavoidable System: The Harms of Family Policing and Parents' Vision for Investing in Community Care](#)" was released in partnership with RISE. The report documents the harm of the family policing system and outlines how parents impacted by the system envision families can receive care and support without the surveillance, control, trauma and loss inflicted by the current system.

WORKERS' RIGHTS

We believe when workers stand up for their rights in the workplace, they are transformed and empowered in every area of their lives.



What We Do

We advance the rights of New York's City's low-income and undocumented workers, by combining community organizing with community lawyering to ensure labor and anti-discrimination laws are enforced, and that workers are empowered to lead lives of strength and dignity. Our partners are grassroots worker centers, advocacy groups, and their members—including domestic workers in private homes, restaurants, nail salons, garment factories, food processing, and construction.

We partner with community groups to:

- Litigate for the recovery of stolen wages, combat violations such as unpaid minimum wages and overtime, tip theft, discrimination, sexual harassment, and retaliation against workers who assert their rights under the labor laws .
- Hold community education workshops on workers' rights.
- Build legislative and policy advocacy campaigns.
- Defend human trafficking survivors in cases around New York City.

In 2020 we secured \$2.3 million in settlements and judgments for unpaid wages and damages.

WORKERS' RIGHTS

Looking Ahead

Our work helps keep workers out of poverty by recovering lawfully due wages and remedying unlawful discriminatory practices.

We advance workers' rights advocacy by bringing claims to courts and administrative agencies, and through demand letters to employers. Given recent changes in the New York City Human Rights Law, domestic workers are now fully protected under the anti-discrimination laws that protect other workers and we expect more discrimination claims to be brought by domestic workers. We hope to continue our practice of conducting remote Know Your Rights trainings with community partners, which have been effective in communicating with larger audiences through platforms such as Zoom and/or Facebook Live.



Ensuring Overtime Payments

Our team represented nine construction workers in a wage claims case against their former employer. They had worked for about a year on an office construction job, often putting in 70-80 hours weeks and sometimes sleeping onsite. Their employer, a major real estate developer in Manhattan, failed to pay them overtime wages. Our team met with the workers and analyzed their work histories to calculate the unpaid overtime and other damages owed and presented the facts and damages calculations through a demand letter sent to the employer. The employer responded, and after negotiations, we successfully obtained over \$20,000 for each worker, which covered their full unpaid wages plus an additional amount for liquidated damages.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT TEAM

We believe that our organization's ability to best serve its communities requires diligent management of its contracts & resources.



The Resource Management Team has been an integral part of TakeRoot Justice for years, but just recently launched as one of the organization's practice areas. We're excited to help implement our organizational mission and values by supporting the work both internally and through our coalitions.

What We Do

Internally, we collaborate with all of TakeRoot Justice's Practice Areas to ensure our government contracts are managed properly and our organization's work is well-resourced. Externally, we coordinate City-wide coalitions to leverage our partners' and allies' collective power to dismantle systems of oppression and fight for systemic change.

Who We Are

We are a dynamic team with a great depth of knowledge and expertise. We plan on developing informational tools and resources that can be used internally to inform our best practices and that can be shared with the broader community to help build the capacity of other organizations and coalitions.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT TEAM

What Our Services Include

- Coalition Coordination – we are designated as coordinators of various coalitions, facilitating the work of our partners and allies funded together under government grants. This work involves campaign strategy development & advocacy, contract administration, and serving as a constant resource of information for fellow coalition members and funders. Coalition coordination is built upon the strength of our relationships with other coalition members, and we prioritize building and maintaining these partnerships.
- Advocacy – as our team works directly with funders, elected officials, administrators, and TakeRoot Practice Areas, we are well positioned to participate in and lead advocacy strategies to enhance our resources and improve New York City by fighting for marginalized communities through the terms of our contracts.
- Contract Management – we handle all aspects of our government contracts, keeping our financial resources flowing to those working directly with clients and to our organization as a whole. This involves constant liaising with each of the Practice Areas and our fiscal and operations departments, as well as the City and State governments.
- Data Management & Analysis – we manage TakeRoot Justice’s data and data systems. Collecting and analyzing information about our cases and projects is essential to measuring the impact of our work and reporting different data sets to our funders.



20 YEARS OF TAKEROOT

2001

The Community Development Project is founded as a project of the Urban Justice Center to provide housing, workers' rights and transactional legal services for marginalized New Yorkers.

2002

We partner with several organizations to form the Beyond Ground Zero Network to raise awareness of the plight of 9/11 cleanup workers, hold construction and cleanup contractors liable for negligent health and safety practices, and advocate for federal funds to address the epidemic of 9/11-related illnesses among Lower Manhattan workers and residents.

2005

In partnership with the Restaurant Opportunities Center of New York we launch COLORS, the city's first worker-owned cooperative restaurant formed by former World Trade Center restaurant workers.

2007

Our Consumer Justice team publishes a report entitled "Debt Weight: The Consumer Credit Crisis in New York City and its Impact on the Working Poor." The report finds that unscrupulous debt collectors were abusing the NYC Civil Court system to obtain more than \$800 million in judgements against consumers each year, much of which was obtained without following proper court procedures or obtaining proper licensing. This report leads to widespread reforms in the civil court system, with much greater scrutiny of consumer debt case filings and strengthened protections for consumers.

2008

Our Housing Rights team files several unprecedented strategic lawsuits against hedge-fund backed landlords to highlight that their business plans hinged on displacing NYC tenants.

Our Consumer Justice Practice Area partners with advocates to address the impact of the financial crisis on low income communities, many of whom had been previously targeted for subprime credit cards.

2009

Our Housing Rights team helps draft and lobby for the first NYC Tenant Protection law.

20 YEARS OF TAKEROOT

2010

Our continued advocacy as part of the Beyond Ground Zero Network results in the creation of the World Trade Center Environmental Health Center, a group of federally-funded health clinics for Lower Manhattan workers and residents experiencing the health effects of 9/11.

The New York State legislature passes the groundbreaking Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights, the first of its kind that served as a model for similar bills in other states. This is the culmination of a decade-long effort by Domestic Workers United in partnership with TakeRoot and others. We represented dozens of domestic workers in workplace violation cases and drafted the legislation that ultimately became the bill of rights.

2013

Our Housing Rights team represents 350 NYC Housing Association residents on the Lower East Side in a successful suit for repairs. It is the city's largest single action by tenants suing their landlord in the Civil Landlord Tenant Court, ever.

2014

Our Capacity Building team becomes a founding member of the Worker Cooperative Business Development Initiative and successfully lobbies for \$1.2 million in City Council funding to financially support the incubation of worker cooperatives.

2016

Our Immigrants' Rights team partners with immigrant-led grassroots groups to document experiences of recently arrived New Yorkers who were targets of predatory and deceptive employment practices. Their resulting report recommends stricter regulation of employment industries, and leads to a multi-year legislative campaign that culminated with the passage of the New York State Justice for Jobseekers law.

Alongside organizers, our Housing and Immigrants' Rights team push the NYC Human Rights Commission to issue first ever U-visa certifications for immigrant tenants facing criminal harassment & threats by their landlords, giving legal force to residents' experiences.

2017

New York City enacts Right to Counsel legislation guaranteeing a lawyer for all NYC tenants facing eviction, after years of advocacy from TakeRoot Justice and tenant organizing partners. This law is the first of its kind in the US, and serves as a model for similar legislation in cities across the country.

20 YEARS OF TAKEROOT

2018

In collaboration with partners from United for Small Business New York City (USBnyc), the Capacity Building and Equitable Neighborhoods teams help launch the commercial lease assistance program, which was designed to provide legal support for small businesses throughout the city.

2019

TakeRoot Justice launches as an independent organization.

Housing Rights organizing leads to the adoption of historic rent law reforms that closed loopholes through which landlords could remove apartments from rent stabilization and raise rents.

Equitable Neighborhoods partners with organizers in Chinatown and the Lower East Side to submit rezoning proposal to transform community vision for the future of the area into law, and successfully sues to stop development that does not fit with that vision.

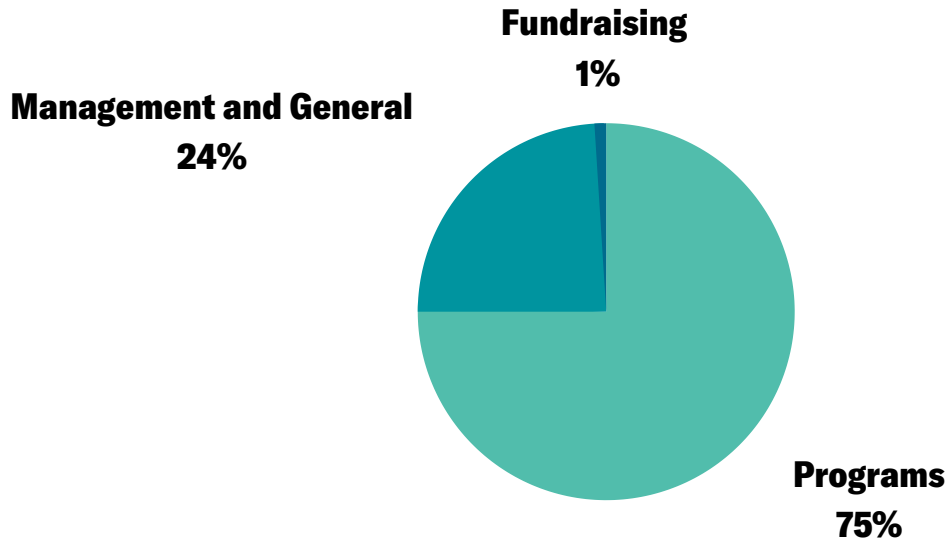
2020

TakeRoot Justice expands our expertise to address new issues that arise from the COVID-19 pandemic, including worker safety issues and unemployment benefits. We schedule regular virtual presentations and trainings for our partners covering unemployment insurance applications, worker safety, COVID-19 related sick leave and vaccine mandates.

-2021



OUR FINANCES*



Where Your Money Goes

Revenue & Expenses

	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
Support and revenue:			
Contributions and grants	\$7,429,993	\$25,000	\$7,454,993
Expenses:			
Program Services	\$4,850,527		\$4,850,527
Supporting Services:			
Management and General	\$1,596,122		\$1,596,122
Fundraising	\$42,837		\$42,837
Total Supporting Services	\$1,638,959		\$1,638,959
Total Expenses	\$6,489,486		\$6,489,486
Net Assests	\$940,50	\$25,000	\$965,507

*Information from our first audit as an independent 501(c)3, covering July 2019 - June 2020.

OUR 2020-2021 FUNDERS

Our thanks to these donors who power our work.

Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP

Brooklyn Community Foundation

Citibank Community Development with the Service Design Studio at the Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity

Crowell & Moring LLP

Green Thumb Industries

M&T Bank

Mertz Gilmore Foundation

Neighborhoods First Fund

New York City Council

New York Community Trust

New York Foundation

New York State Health Foundation

New York State Legislature

New York State Interest on Lawyer Account Fund

New York State Office of Court Administration

NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development

NYC Department of Small Business Services

NYC Human Resources Administration

Oak Foundation

Robin Hood Foundation

Rockefeller Brothers Fund

Scherman Foundation

Skadden Fellowship Fund

The Michael Simonson and Beth Lief Fund

The New York Bar Foundation

Trinity Church Wall Street

Virginia & Ambinder LLP

Wachs Family Fund

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

African Communities Together
ActionNYC
Adhikaar
Arab American Association
Asian American Federation
Asian Americans for Equality
Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development
Banana Kelly Community Improvement Association
Black Alliance for Just Immigration
Brooklyn Movement Center
CAAAV Organizing Asian Communities
Carroll Gardens Association
Catholic Charities Community Services
Catholic Migration Services
Center for Family Life
Center for Urban Pedagogy
Chhaya Community Development Corporation
Chinese Staff and Workers' Association
Community Action for Safe Apartments/New Settlement
Cooper Square Committee
Crown Heights Tenant Union
Cypress Hills LDC
Damayan Migrant Workers Association
Democracy at Work Institute
Desis Rising Up and Moving
Domestic Workers United
Domestic Violence Project at the Urban Justice Center
Equality for Flatbush
Fifth Avenue Committee
Flanbwayan Haitian Literacy Project
Flatbush Tenant Coalition
Goddard Riverside SRO Law Project
Good Old Lower East Side
Green Worker Cooperatives
Haitian Women for Haitian Refugees
Harlem Solidarity Defense
Housing Conservation Coordinators
IMPACCT Brooklyn
Justice Center en El Barrio
La Colmena
Lenox Hill Neighborhood House
Make the Road NY
Mary Mitchell Family and Youth Center
MinKwon Center for Community Action
Mirabal Sisters Cultural & Community Center
Mothers on the Move/Bronx Organizing Neighborhoods & Development
Movement for Justice in El Barrio
National Domestic Workers Alliance
National Mobilization Against Sweatshops
Neighbors Helping Neighbors
Neighbors Together
New Immigrant Community Empowerment
New York City Community Land Initiative
Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition
NYC Network of Worker Cooperatives
P.A./L.A.N.T.E. Harlem
Pan-African Community Development Initiative
Participatory Budgeting Project
Peter Cicching Youth Project at the Urban Justice Center
People Power Movement
Project Hajra
Red Hook Initiative
Ridgewood Tenants Union
Right to Counsel NYC Coalition
RISE
South Bronx Tenant Movement
St. Nicks Alliance
Sex Workers Project at the Urban Justice Center
Sylvia Rivera Law Project
Tenants & Neighbors
Tenants United Fighting for the Lower East Side
University Settlement
Urban Homesteading Assistance Board
Urban Upbound
VOCAL-NY
WE ACT
Woodside on the Move
Worker's Justice Project/Proyecto Justicia Laboral

STAFF*

Jennifer Akchin, Staff Attorney
Patricia Alejandro, Staff Attorney
Kadijah Almarales, Staff Attorney
Wendy Baez, Facilities & Operations Manager
Corina Bogaciu, Senior Staff Attorney
Amali Chung, Data Entry Specialist
Soojung Chung, Senior Contracts Manager
Tanisha De Jesus, Paralegal/Advocacy Coordinator
Jackie Del Valle, Senior Program Manager/Stabilizing
NYC Coordinator
Kimberly Fayette Staff Attorney
Naoki Fujita, Senior Staff Attorney
Iliana Garcia, Supervising Advocacy Coordinator/
Paralegal
Ahdenah Glass, Senior Program Manager/ Leap-AHTP
Coordinator
Michael Grinthal, Director of Housing Rights
Aline Gue, Senior Paralegal/Advocacy Coordinator &
DOJ Fully Accredited Representative
April Herms, Interim Co-Director
Antonia House, IOI Program Manager/CILEC
Coordinator
Sophonie Milande Joseph, Community Planner
& Advocacy Coordinator
Michael Leonard, Supervising Attorney
Paulina Leyva Hernandez, Paralegal/Advocacy
Coordinator
Selena Lilly, Director of Data Management
Irene Linares, Senior Research and Policy Coordinator
Lakeish London, Senior Contracts Manager
Belinda Loomis, Data Entry Specialist
Ryan MacDonald, Staff Attorney
Frederick Magovern, Staff Attorney
Erin Markman, Director of Research & Policy
Miguel Medrano Azpiroz, Senior Staff Attorney
Linden Miller, Staff Attorney
Addrana Montgomery, Senior Staff Attorney
Claribel Morales, Staff Attorney
Marcos Ortiz, Director of Finance
Kerriann Pauls, Director of Coalitions & Contract
Management
Nadia Qurashi, Director of Immigrants' Rights
Sadia Rahman, Interim Co-Director
Aby Rivera, Paralegal/Advocacy Coordinator
Natalie Schulmonds, Senior Development &
Communication Manager
Paula Z. Segal, Senior Staff Attorney
Nasoan Sheftel-Gomes, Interim General Counsel
Julia Shumlin, Paralegal/Advocacy Coordinator
Amandeep Singh-Kahlon, Senior Staff Attorney
Tito Sinha, Director of Workers' Rights
Stephanie Storke, Staff Attorney
Ashley Viruet, Staff Attorney
Visnja Vujica, Staff Attorney
Cheryl Walker, Staff Attorney
Tedmund Wan, Senior Staff Attorney
Michele Yankson, Staff Attorney
Melanie Zuch, Senior Staff Attorney

BOARD OF DIRECTORS*

Michele Burger, Hunter College
Lee Bynum, Aspen Leadership Group, Minnesota Opera
Sean Doyle, Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP
Molly John, Ernst & Young
LaDonna Lusher, Virginia & Ambinder

Laine Romero-Alston, US Department of Labor, International
Labor Affairs Bureau
Sonny Singh, Musician & Social Justice Educator
Naoki Fujita, Union Board Representative

*Current as of April 2022