

2018

**CITY  
BUREAU**

**YEARBOOK**

and ANNUAL REPORT

**F**ounded in October 2015, City Bureau brings journalists and communities together in a collaborative spirit to produce equitable media coverage and encourage civic participation. From the start our goal has always been to make a more informed, engaged and inspired Chicago. We've made this collection of our best efforts from 2018 for you, our most loyal supporters, to commemorate and celebrate what our collective efforts have made possible. We hope you enjoy!

# CONTENTS

Our Programs	<hr/>	2
<b>Bettina Chang</b>		
Editorial Director		4
HOPE Court		6
After the Trial		8
Restorative Justice		10
<b>Andrea Hart</b>		
Community Engagement Director		14
On Crime Reporting		16
Guest Curators		17
<b>Darryl Holliday</b>		
News Lab Director		20
Documenters Summit		22
City Scrapers		23
<b>Harry Backlund</b>		
Operations Director		24
Growing Team		26
New Digs		28
Our Impact		29
On the Road		30
<b>Daniel X. O'Neil</b>		
Board Chair		32
Financials		33
Soap Box Ball		34
Acknowledgements		38
Our Board		38

# OUR PROGRAMS

From our newsroom in Chicago's Woodlawn community we offer three ongoing programs:

1. **The Reporting Fellowship**, where emerging reporters and veteran journalists work together in teams to pursue big-picture stories that affect the daily lives of our neighbors on the South and West Sides.
2. **The Public Newsroom**, a free weekly public workshop focused on community-building.
3. **The Documenters**, where anybody can sign up to get free trainings and paid assignments to attend and document public governance meetings.

This innovative approach to local journalism has led to projects that range from award-winning investigations to community events where participants can shape the public discourse around critical issues.







# BETTINA CHANG

Editorial Director



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Chicago's media landscape is changing at such a rapid rate, it's hard to keep track. This year saw several major publications change ownership and leadership, the launch of at least two new nonprofit newsrooms and even the unionization of the city's largest newspaper.

City Bureau is in the unique position, as the most collaborative and inclusive newsroom in the city, to watch the field evolve as we continue working toward a more robust and community-centered news ecosystem. This year, we published stories with a dozen different partners and co-hosted Public Newsrooms with five news outlets in our mission to reimagine local journalism. We grew the capacity of our fellowship and trained 34 fellows of all different skill levels and backgrounds. Our work has touched the lives of thousands of Chicagoans—not just informing them about the news of the day, but exposing the structural and historical roots of injustice and helping to harness the power they need to fight back.

But we believe City Bureau plays an even larger role in the news industry. We think journalists should be more transparent in how our work is done—that's why I've started hosting Editor Office Hours, when anyone can come ask questions about City Bureau, the journalism industry or just get some help editing a cover letter or resume. (Come through! I'm at Build Coffee every Tuesday from 3 to 5:30 p.m.) Our former fellows are now

working journalists at WBEZ, the Chicago Sun-Times, the Chicago Defender, Block Club Chicago and beyond. They are working hard, not just to make better media, but to make media companies better, from within. Their experiences at City Bureau have taught them the frameworks they need to shape future newsroom decisions and start to repair the harm perpetuated by decades of inequitable practices.

It's this structural change, changing the way people think about journalism, that drives our work every day.

That won't be easy. This year, we grew the editorial team by bringing in experienced reporters to lead a full year's worth of fellowship cycles. These Civic Reporting Residents will have the guidance and support to build an audience, mentor emerging reporters and, most importantly, create a community of constituents around essential topics on Chicago's South and West Sides.

On a personal note, this year I transitioned from my previous position as Executive Digital Editor at Chicago magazine to become the full-time Editorial Director at City Bureau. With the rest of the media world in flux, I feel indescribably lucky to have the freedom to experiment and test new ways of serving our community and creating much-needed change in an institution in which I believe so deeply. I'm not deluded; I know it will take years to create the long-lasting change that we want—and we need—to see in journalism. But I take solace in the conversations I have with our reporting fellows and residents, the next generation of newsroom leaders, who are ready to challenge the conventions of the industry and build a new, brighter way forward.

# HOPE COURT INVESTIGATION

A months-long investigation finally came to fruition this October. As part of our Summer 2018 fellowship team project on alternative courts, City Bureau teamed up with Injustice Watch to publish an investigation into alleged mishandling of cases and harassment of participants in HOPE court. The story also appeared in the Chicago Sun-Times, along with a column from the newspaper's editorial board. The story details the deeply troubled court, which was based on a successful model in Hawaii, but was shuttered after years of auditors saying that the court did not serve the correct population and that the judge would bully and mistreat court workers and defendants.

## **No more HOPE: Cook County court program halted after years of problems**

Injustice Watch - October 26, 2018

By Emily Hoerner and Sarah Conway

Excerpt:

**W**riting from behind the prison walls of the Logan Correctional Center this August,

27-year-old Chanell Polk wondered, after all this, whether going through the HOPE court had really helped her at all.

She had been charged with felony possession of heroin with the intent to sell the drug. By agreeing to probation, she thought she had signed on to be aided in her attempts to stay drug free and out of prison. And in HOPE court judge Jackie Portman-Brown's intensive probation program, she asked for anger management and more treatment, she said. That help never came.

Instead, Polk would spend 162 days, nearly six months, in Cook County Jail after testing positive for marijuana and leaving home while on court-ordered home confinement.

In July, Polk was dropped from the HOPE court, and the mother of three was sent to a prison downstate to serve out the rest of her



three-year sentence. All for a crime that she had committed when she was 21.

The HOPE court was designed to keep defendants like Polk out of the state's prisons. It is modeled on a successful Hawaiian program from which its name derives:

Hawaii's Opportunity Probation with Enforcement program.

The program employs both carrot and stick. When probationers break the rules, they can expect swift and certain punishment like community service hours and jail stays. But, they also get a plethora of second chances, and are provided with therapy, drug treatment and other services.

Retired circuit court judge Steven S. Alm, who created the Hawaii program, described how a judge succeeds in HOPE court: "You've got to be consistent," Alm said. "That's the key to this."

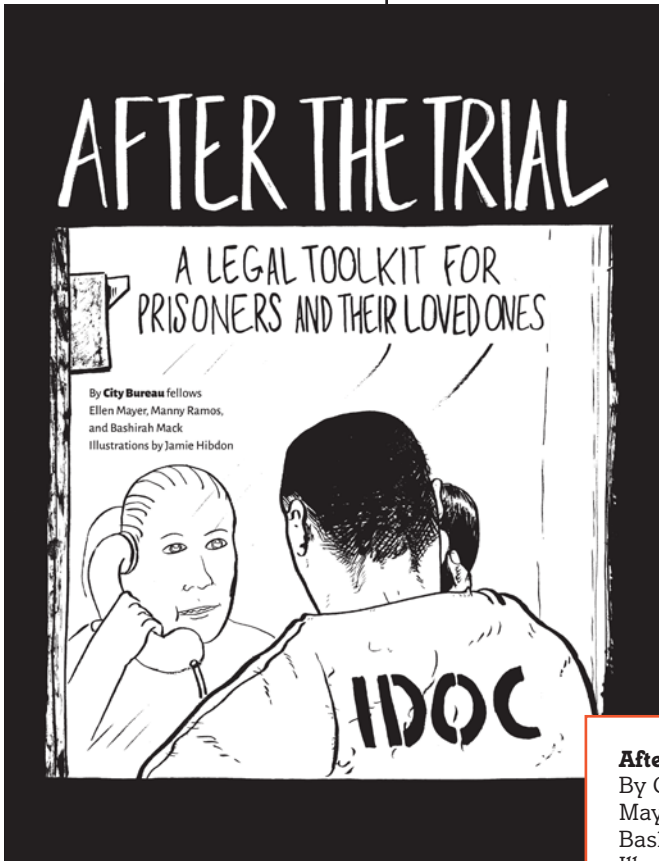
Alm's program set specific and predictable sanctions for mistakes the probationers often made: Show up late to Alm's court, expect to spend the next few hours in a cell in the courthouse with no reading materials or a cell phone; Fail a drug test and take responsibility, spend two days in jail; Fail a drug test, get lab confirmation, but deny using drugs, spend 15 days in lockup; Skip out on drug testing altogether, get a warrant issued for your arrest, and spend 30 days in custody.

Judges need to apply those sanctions uniformly and work well with the rest of the court team, Alm said. "If the judge is not on board," he said, "it's not going to work." ■

# AFTER THE TRIAL

The journalism we make is a lot more than just storytelling. We are creating tools and accessible information for folks who are directly affected by the issues that we cover. There's no better example than the After the Trial zine, a 32-page free publication that demystifies the complicated process of appealing a conviction in Illinois' court system—inspired by a young man (and his family) who's been fighting his

case from prison for years. To request a free copy of the zine, which includes much more information for prisoners and their loved ones, visit [citybureau.org/afterthetrial](http://citybureau.org/afterthetrial).



## **After the Trial**

By City Bureau fellows Ellen Mayer, Manny Ramos, and Bashirah Mack  
Illustrations by Jamie Hibdon  
Print Design by Bea Malsky

THERE IS NO FORM THAT YOU'RE GIVEN COMING INTO PRISON THAT SAYS, "HEY, HERE'S HOW YOU GO THROUGH THIS PROCESS OF FILING AND TIMELINESS." YOU USUALLY LEARN THINGS WHEN YOU FAIL AT THEM.

SO, IT'S KIND OF A PROCESS OF OF TR EXTRE

ABSOLU LIFE

LEGAL LITERACY IS IMPORTANT.

pay court costs also make an c trial or hearing

**Perjury:** The c lying to the co to tell the truth or other offic perjury during hearings or ev affidavits. The you to time in perjury.

**Prose:** A pers themselves in pursuing legal lawyer.

**Relief:** The br of benefit that you if you win of post-convic could be a revers even a revers



#### Learn the rulebook

Monica recommends many of the books included in our reading list on page 25. She also believes it's important to know both the state and federal constitutions backward and forward. "That's part of legal literacy," she says. Both of these documents are available online so if you can't access them in the prison law library, you can ask a family member or loved one to print and send you copies. Monica also recommends reading the Illinois Supreme Court rules.

## Legal and v

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KNOWLEDGE IS POWER.

IT'S NOT MUCH BUT IT GIVES YOU SOME BIT OF HOPE.



## Introduction

The judicial system is a complicated maze. It has its own rules and its own special language that the rest of us don't speak. If you haven't been to law school, navigating the judicial maze can seem impossible. But your life, or the life of someone you love, might depend on it.

That's why we made this zine.

#### Who is it for?

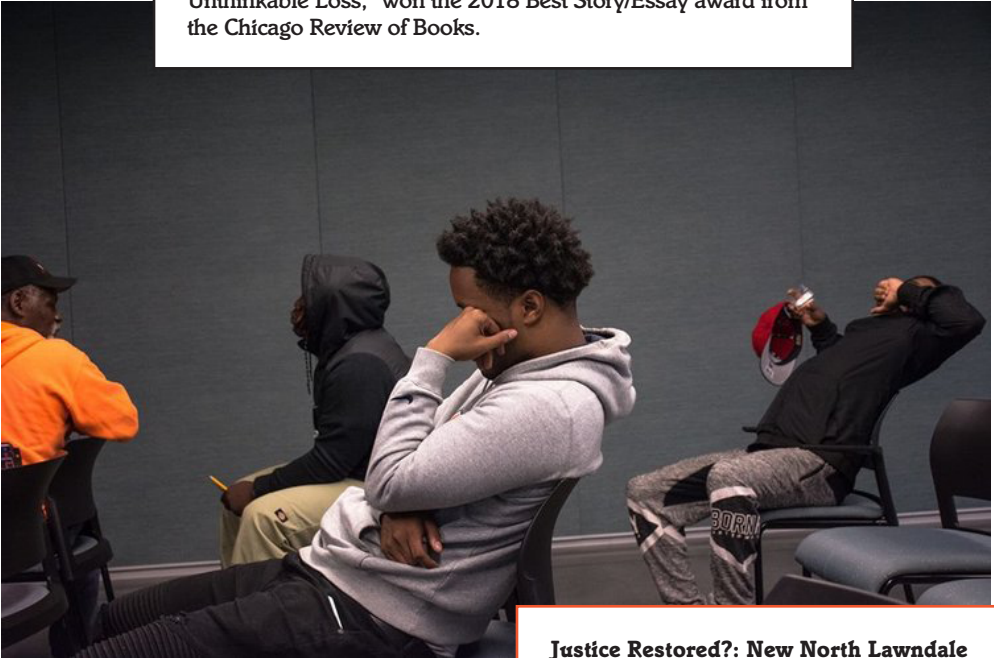
This zine is for Illinoisans who are trying to navigate the legal system while incarcerated. If the courts handed you a wrongful conviction or an unfair sentence or otherwise violated your constitutional rights, you should be able to access what we call "relief." That could mean a new sentence, a retrial or even a reversal of your conviction. But the lawyers we spoke to for this zine told us that once you're incarcerated, the courts make it incredibly difficult for you to actually pursue relief, especially if you can't afford a lawyer.

If you're seeking legal relief, you'll need to learn a lot in a short time about court rules and procedures as well as state



# RESTORATIVE JUSTICE COURT

City Bureau reporting fellows wrapped a year covering the nation's first-ever Restorative Justice Community Court in North Lawndale. The group spoke with dozens of people affected by the court or by other programs in the neighborhood that heal harm by facilitating conversation. One part of the project, "After Unthinkable Loss," won the 2018 Best Story/Essay award from the Chicago Review of Books.



**Justice Restored?: New North Lawndale Court Aims to Change Punitive System**

Chicago Defender. September 21, 2017  
By Jenny Simeone-Casas, Sarah Conway  
and Resita Cox. Excerpt:



**“W**e’re trying to do something very different. You can’t just jump from doing same-old, same-old to something completely different,” said presiding Judge Colleen Sheehan on the anticlimactic opening after three years of planning.

What’s so different? The court will hear cases for low-level crimes (non-violent misdemeanors and felonies) for defendants ages 18 to 26 from the neighborhood. Instead of facing a trial and a prison sentence, they sit through a peace circle with a facilitator, the victim of the crime and other North Lawndale residents, to talk about what happened and why. Together they decide how the defendant can remedy the harm he or she has caused in the community—for example, through a drug rehabilitation program, a GED program, or job training. People who successfully navigate this court will have the charges wiped clean.

In the court’s second week, Sheehan heard two drug possession cases. Both defendants agreed to participate in the court and will be entering the private peace circle process in the coming weeks. On week three, Sheehan dropped both defendants’ electronic monitoring and invited them to join a court alumni board. There they could offer guidance to newer defendants. “I’m really interested in what you think,” said Sheehan.

Now open every Thursday, the court was designed so there’d be no separation between judge, court personnel and defendants—everyone sits around the same table. There are no jail cells where people await judgment, no one arrives in handcuffs, and everyone at the table introduces themselves before proceedings begin. Defendants are given time to ask questions and meet with their lawyers for legal counsel. There is no physical barrier blocking defendants from their family members and loved ones. ■





City Bureau provided for me a vast network to meet new people, editors, etc. Coming into journalism I had no connections at all, so having that first contact was really helpful and useful for me. [City Bureau] gave me the opportunity to engage directly with the community I was reporting in and it challenged me to rethink how I look at those communities, and how it's important to portray those people in different ways than mainstream media.

— Manny Ramos, former City Bureau Fellowship reporter & team leader





# ANDREA HART

Community Engagement Director



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Each year we seek to strengthen our existing community partnerships as well as forge new collaborations to ensure our pursuit to reimagine local news is equitable.

In 2018 we had the privilege of working with co-conspirators at home, around the country and even across the pond. We learned a lot from everyone and some of our biggest lessons came from co-designing a survey to understand how Chicagoans feel about news, co-creating media with a youth art nonprofit that's been keeping it weird since 1997 and co-testing some of our programming in Detroit.

On January 18 we hosted our 47th Public Newsroom to release the "Chicago News Landscape," a survey we co-designed with University of Texas at Austin's Center for Media Engagement. It is one of the few scientific studies that measures how city residents feel about news media coverage of their neighborhoods. As an unapologetically local organization we believe this specificity was critical. One of the biggest findings for us was that while respondents from the South and West Sides felt the most misrepresented by media, they were also the most interested in getting involved with Chicago news organizations. We continue to reflect on this survey both in the Public Newsrooms we host, like our 69th workshop on reimagining crime reporting and in finding ways to ensure we are listening to all Chicagoans in our work.



In June we introduced a new youth media partnership with Yollocalli Arts Reach. Founded in 1997, Yollocalli is an arts nonprofit that provides “equal access to communal, artistic and cultural resources that allow youth to become creative and engaged community members.” Over the summer our reporting fellows have helped the emerging media makers of their radio program Your Story, Your Way produce nearly a dozen written articles for the Little Village Portal neighborhood site. We renewed our partnership through the end of the year because our Saturday sessions together have been a testament to the generative power that comes from messing around and geeking out on making media for the sake of joy. These youth media makers at Yollocalli have helped us build deeper relationships in Little Village and build up our radio skills, even guesting on some of the live shows that air Saturday afternoons on Lumpen Radio 105.5 FM.

In addition to digging deeper at home, we identified collaborators in Detroit to help further the movement to make news and information systems more equitable across the region. We teamed up with public radio station WDET and civic engagement nonprofit CitizenDetroit to test our first Detroit Documenters pilot. Like at home, the 60 Detroiters we trained and onboarded into Documenters distrusted local news and politics but still deeply cared about their city and wanted to find ways to improve it. We focused on education meetings—working with volunteer coders to scrape and centralize that information. This process not only helped us learn more about our sister city, it also helped us better understand how to talk about the impact on civic literacy we are having at home.

Thank you to everyone who dreamed with us this year—and here’s to building better in 2019.

# ON CRIME REPORTING

How should we report on crime in Chicago? We tackled this question and others during our 69th Public Newsroom, which was co-hosted by Block Club Chicago and the Journalism + Design of the New School. More than 60 local reporters, organizers and concerned residents attended the workshop to help generate new guidelines for covering this topic. We'll be sharing more frameworks generated from our Public Newsroom in 2019.



# GUEST CURATORS

This November we featured our first guest curators for the Public Newsroom. Local authors Rayshauna Gray and Daniel Kay Hertz addressed the theme, “How Do We Memorialize Chicago?” Guests included Young Lords’ founder José Cha-Cha Jiménez, Black Owned Chicago founder Tanikía Carpenter, Mikva Challenge students Ava Johnson and James Artega as well as Cause the Effect’s Kanyinsola Anifowoshe.

More about our first-ever guest curators **Rayshauna Gray** and **Daniel Kay Hertz**: Born and raised in Roseland, Gray is currently living in Cambridge where she’s completing a book about the “last 200 years of U.S. history through seven generations of women in her family” to be out on Belt Publishing in Fall 2019. Hertz, who grew up in Chicago, Madison and Evanston, released his book “The Battle of Lincoln Park” in 2018. For their curated workshops, Gray and Hertz wanted to discuss the theme “How Do We Memorialize Chicago?”

Together they examined what, how and why we think about the city’s past, present and future. Presenters selected by Gray and Hertz explored the ways we build narratives and monuments—physical or otherwise—out of people, events and memories.









Having the City Bureau fellows join us every Saturday at Yollocalli has only added to the great success of our Your Story, Your Way program. Our young journalists are able to get support with their stories, receive exposure to new career opportunities and build a relationship with other Chicago neighbors who are interested in telling unique stories about Chicago. In return, we are always excited that we have an audience to experience, enjoy and often be a part of our Wattz Up! youth produced live radio show.

— Vanessa Sanchez, Executive Director  
of Yollocalli Arts Reach



# DARRYL HOLLIDAY

News Lab Director



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We're wrapping up the biggest year on record for the Documenters program, and I couldn't be more pleased with the results. Over the course of 2018 we hosted our inaugural Documenters Summit, convened a community civic coders to help us scrape thousands of details on local public meetings and ended the year gearing up for the launch of our most comprehensive public tool to date, Documenters.org, a searchable database of

the locations, times, dates and official records for Chicago's local government's public meetings and a hub for Documenters to investigate governmental records, claim paid assignments and publish their work—all in one central location.

In short, this year was geared toward building infrastructure that will allow City Bureau to grow enrollment in its Documenters by engaging Chicago's communities through free trainings, paid assignments and civic technology designed with civic education front and center.

The development process for Documenters.org unfolded over a year beginning with coordination of our City Scrapers project, an open-source community convened at our South Side newsroom once a week from August 2017-August 2018 to scrape, standardize and share information on Chicago's governmental agencies that would otherwise be spread across dozens of websites, creating barriers to transparency and access for the public. In October 2018, City Bureau published a City Scrapers toolkit ([cityscrapers.org](http://cityscrapers.org)) to help replicate our code in other towns and cities. The result was an outpouring of interest from tech, community and media organizations across the country—including press for our innovative approach to open government.

In addition to educational opportunities provided through our City Scrapers project, City Bureau continued to host Documenters

trainings throughout 2018 to democratize and distribute journalistic skills across Chicago's neighborhoods. As of December 2018, Documenters are based in 55 of Chicago's 77 Community Areas and range from age 16 to 73; 61 percent identify as female, 33 percent identify as Black/African-American and a majority cite "I want to be more involved in my community" as a reason for joining the program.

When asked what being a Documenter has taught our members at our 2018 Documenters Summit, held at DePaul University, the most common answers were revealing:

- **Everyone can promote [and] create change**
- **That a lot of people care about justice/truth**
- **How to research facts and question what I know**
- **There are important stories that never make it into the news. Ordinary people have important stories to tell that few of us ever hear.**

As of December 2018, 285 Documenters have enrolled in our fastest-growing program to produce a range of public information on Tax Increment Financing, public governance meetings, the upcoming election and more. To date, more than \$16,000 dollars have been paid directly out to Chicagoans through the Documenters program to create new avenues for local accountability and transparency through 273 assignments completed in the public interest.

In 2019, we'll work to increase Documenters enrollment in Chicago while finding new ways to make Documenters content more accessible to the public—and we'll seek out organic ways to expand our Documenters.org model beyond our home city, starting with Detroit.

No matter where you live, your local government likely hosts dozens to hundreds of public meetings every month—but the vast majority receive no media coverage and produce minimal records. Our mission for the Documenters program is to train and pay people to attend these meetings and publish the results in collaboration with local journalists.

Judging by the positive responses from our community and interest we've received through direct appeals from our peers—our work is just beginning.

# DOCUMENTERS SUMMIT

In March we hosted our first-ever Documenters Summit, designed as celebration of our Documenters community and as a way to share ownership of the program's future. Documenters delivered valuable feedback, not just about the program and how it's managed, but why they participate. Most importantly, it was a place for everyone to meet each other and see the connections within the group.

**Community-Building  
with a Purpose: Our First  
Documenters Summit**

March 14, 2018

By Darryl Holliday

Excerpt:

The original idea for the Documenters Summit, like many of our best laid plans, started with a simple question: How do we create a space where our 300+ Documenters (some of the most civically engaged people in the city) can connect, collaborate and have a hand in designing our collective work?

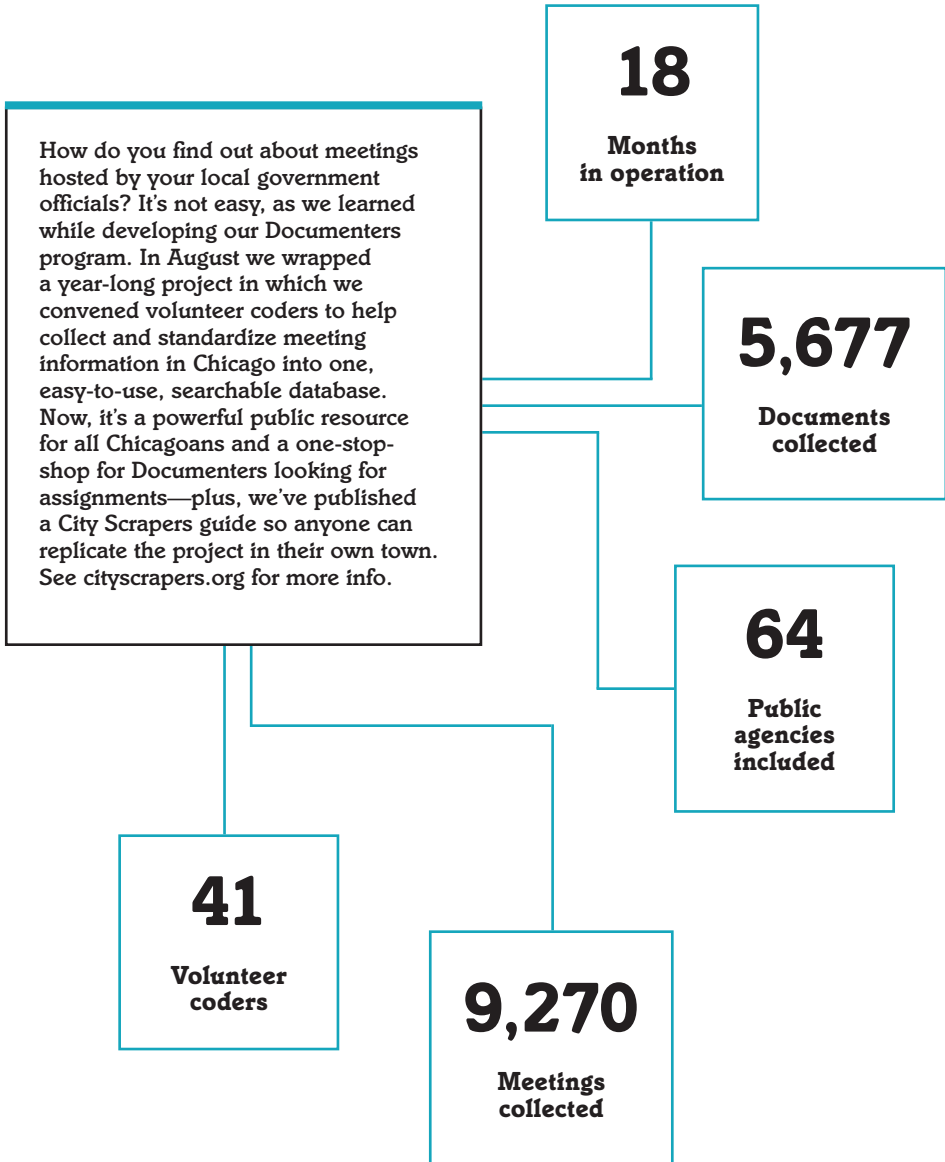
(For those who are new to this: Our Documenters program trains and pays people to document local public meetings and engage in the production of journalism through our media lab. City Bureau hosts regular trainings for Documenters and the general public on a journalistic skills like interviewing, note-taking, mobile photography and FOIA.)

Our solution was to design a Summit focused on building community, not the hard skills we usually teach. We wanted to share our lingering questions about

the program and open our decision-making process to the very people who work within it. To do that, we knew we needed to create a “brave space,” as City Bureau’s Director of Community Engagement, Andrea Faye Hart, called it—where people feel comfortable weighing in, recognizing that feedback is an active, not-always-easy process. ■



# CITY SCRAPERS



# HARRY BACKLUND

Operations Director



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To say that 2018 was a year of growth for City Bureau sells it short. In January of 2018, we still ran more like a campaign than an organization. Although our programs paid over a hundred people a year, we had just two employees. Our operating budget was just over \$300,000, and we worked out of a shared single room office. Myself and City Bureau co-founder Bettina Chang still had other jobs, fitting our City Bureau responsibilities in around work. My

role as Operations Director meant staying one step ahead of the emerging potential of our work, finding just enough cushion to take another next leap.

When the shift came it happened quickly. In April the IRS formally acknowledged our tax-exempt status, allowing us to accept grants and donations as an independent entity. We changed our fiscal year to be better suited to the timing of our work, and wrote a new, much larger operating budget to reflect the growth of our programs. That spring the Joyce Foundation and the Field Foundation made project grants for our Fellowship and Documenters programs, respectively, and in June the MacArthur Foundation made a \$1,000,000 three-year commitment for general operating support—a game-changing investment that allowed us to think about our work in new ways. The Reva and David Logan Foundation made a one-year commitment of \$100,000 of general operating support, and the Democracy Fund granted \$200,000 for 18 months of general support. In a few months, the new, forward-looking operating budget we wrote was fully funded.

The grants we received made many changes, but only one was truly critical: We can now pay people on a full-time professional

basis to support our programs and carry the mission forward. Ellie Mejía joined us early this year as Program Support Coordinator, and Bettina and I became employees shortly after. Pat Sier, who worked with us on the development of the Documenters Web App. Kamilah Rashied joined us from the Art Institute of Chicago as our first Donor Community Manager. And India Daniels became our first Documenters Field Coordinator. The team we've grown has been the highlight of the year.

Growing up also means growing sideways, and as City Bureau has expanded we've laid a new foundation for our work internally. We wrote an employee handbook—including transparent compensation and benefits policies—that operationalize our values. Our board of directors added new members and created committees to provide long-term support to these new aspects of our organization.

It's nice not to be juggling anymore, and it's nice to have a job, but looking back on the year I realize that the most exciting part about our growth is just how much hasn't changed. Our crew has grown, but we're still a small group of committed people excited about what a new approach to media can do for our communities and our city. Our budget gained a digit, but we're still a lean organization, justifying every dollar against the change it will effect or the relationships it will build. There are doors in our office, and we have stationary now, but our message is pretty much the same as when we were writing it on napkins in a bar three years ago.

The truth is that, while funding may have come all at once, the support we received from foundations was a direct extension of the trust and support we've been growing very gradually in communities across Chicago. We owe our growth to those relationships. The MacArthur Foundation acknowledged this when they announced the grant to City Bureau: "All around the edges of Chicago's journalism and media landscape, we see tremendous creativity and a sense of urgency around how news and narratives need to better represent a wider array of perspectives and voices." We owe our growth to those conversations at the edges, and they continue to be at the center of our work.

In 2019 we'll honor them by continuing to build on our programs, invest in the effectiveness of our staff and grow the network of participation around City Bureau. We're also just starting to look ahead to a future where community-driven media practices are standard across journalism and media. How do we get to a world where our work is boring? What kind of institutions will that future require, and how can we build them?

Thank you for helping us build the community that will answer these questions.



# A GROWING TEAM

One of our biggest and most important projects this year was bringing more staff members into our work to effect greater change on the local civic media landscape. Not only did we hire new full-time and part-time staff, we brought on three year-long Civic Reporting Residents and welcomed three new board members. This required a major human-resources overhaul, and we are proud to have built an internal system that prioritizes inclusion and respect for each and every employee.



**Sarah Conway** is a journalist in Chicago where she covers politics, power, immigration and labor. Currently, she is a Civic Reporting Resident at City Bureau. Sarah also serves as the editorial director at 90 Days, 90 Voices, a journalism nonprofit covering the refugee and immigration crisis.

**India Daniels** is City Bureau's Documenters Field Coordinator. India grew up in Kenwood and studied history and literature at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Mich. She served the past year as an AmeriCorps VISTA in Chicago Public Schools in North Lawndale, supporting literacy and parent engagement workshops.



**Pat Sier** joined our team full-time after several months helping to build our Documenters platform. Pat is a web developer with a degree in public policy. In the past he's worked on building tools for research centers that make data easier to understand. He's also the webmaster for the South Side Weekly, and has worked on civic tech projects involving tenants' rights and the justice system.



**Danielle A. Scruggs** is a photographer, photo editor and writer based in Chicago, where she is currently a Civic Reporting Resident at City Bureau. She is also the Visuals Editor of Gravy, a quarterly publication by the Southern Foodways Alliance that explores the culture and foodways of the American South.



**Ellie Mejía** is City Bureau's Program Support Coordinator, the South Side Weekly's first Visuals Editor, and formerly a student of geography at the University of Chicago.

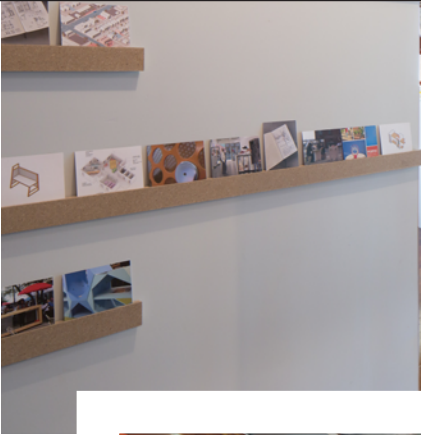
**Kamīlah Rashied** is our Donor Community Manager. Kamīlah is a producer, administrator, educator and interdisciplinary artist. She has worked from every angle of cultural production as an arts administrator, with 17 years of experience in new program development, community-based programming and civic-minded audience engagement, contributing to many venerable arts and culture organizations in Chicago.



**Kim Bellware** is a Civic Reporting Resident at City Bureau and former City Bureau Reporting Fellowship team leader. Her freelance reporting has appeared in the New York Times, Rolling Stone, Chicago Magazine and she has researched news documentary projects for CNN, Kartemquin Films and The Marshall Project.

# NEW DIGS

Our small-but-mighty team moved into new offices at our longtime home, the Experimental Station. We are thrilled to share this beautiful space with the visionary folks at Civic Projects, a hybrid architecture practice doing important community development work around Chicago.



# OUR IMPACT

City Bureau is, essentially, a community of people who truly believe in the power of civic engagement and journalism. That's why we're always glad to see when projects incubated in the City Bureau network find new life beyond our programs.



Three former City Bureau fellows (Alex Hernandez, Nissa Rhee and Sarah Conway) created the 90 Days, 90 Voices storytelling project that centers the experiences of people entering the country as immigrants, asylees and refugees. They hosted a Public Newsroom this year on "La Vida de La Villita," and also launched a successful Kickstarter campaign for a new project, "Asylum City."

Last year, photographer Tonika Johnson brought her idea for the Folded Map project to the City Bureau fellowship. She solidified her work by reporting all over the city, interviewing people living on opposite ends of Chicago's longest streets, called "address twins." The final product was the Folded Map Exhibit at the Loyola University Museum of Art, which opened in 2018 and received acclaim from all over the country.



# ON THE ROAD

## MISSISSIPPI



In 2018 we saw one of our most exciting replications of the Public Newsroom take place in a place with deep historical connections to Chicago—the Mississippi Delta. We collaborated with reporters Aallyah Wright and Kelsey Davis of Mississippi Today, a non-profit statewide news outlet, to host two workshops around local education reporting. It was a big year for schools in the region—with one town's high schools (Cleveland) integrating for the first time and another town (Clarksdale) getting the state's first rural charter school. "I wanted to do this so we can form stronger relationships with folks in the community," Wright told City Bureau back in June. Stay tuned for lessons learned as we host more Delta Public Newsrooms in 2019.





## DETROIT

Nowhere has the organization grown more than in the Documenters program: In December, we wrapped our pilot program in Detroit, in partnership with WDET and Citizen Detroit, where folks documented education meetings. Thanks to funding from the Knight Foundation, we're approved to continue the program into 2019.



## AROUND THE WORLD

People around the world are taking note of City Bureau's programs and philosophies. This year, our founders presented at the International Journalism Festival in Perugia, Italy; the International Symposium for Online Journalists in Austin, Texas; and the News Impact Summit in Cardiff, Wales.

Plus, thanks to the International Center for Journalists, we hosted Brazilian journalist Nina Weingrill in Chicago for a month. She plans to take lessons learned at City Bureau back to her organization, Énois, which is working to advance racial equity in journalism in Sao Paulo.



# DANIEL X. O'NEIL

Board Chair



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My own work with City Bureau began in April 2016, as the report of the Police Accountability Task Force was set to be published. I had served on a working group of the task force. In my capacity as executive director of the Smart Chicago Collaborative, my colleague Kyla Williams and I searched for a partner to help make certain that the recommendations received the proper attention.

We funded City Bureau to execute the Task Force Tracker project—an annotated, updated and independent hub for public use that measures recommendations against existing contracts, policies, potential conflicts and public discourse.

Joining the board and serving as chair was a natural extension of the work I did with Kyla in inventing the Documenters program. I am so impressed with what City Bureau does to recruit, train and pay highly engaged citizens to participate in the newsgathering process and contribute to a communal pool of knowledge.

I deeply believe in supporting this work by volunteering with fellow board members to help guide the efforts of City Bureau, which has fast become part of the fabric of Chicago. They do the work, with the people, in communities, that I believe can lead to a renewal of democracy and show how journalism can lead the way.

# 2018 FINANCIAL ACTIVITY

2018 was a year of expansion across the organization, and our budget grew accordingly. Our goal in the year ahead is to sustain that growth, grow a strong base of support from individual donors and members and build an operating reserve to ensure our sustainability for years to come.

The information below is based on a preliminary analysis of last year's financial activity, and may be updated based on our annual audit process. Visit [citybureau.org/finances](http://citybureau.org/finances) for updated information about our finances, or check our profile on [Guidestar.org](http://Guidestar.org).

	2018	2019 budgeted
<b>REVENUE</b>		
MacArthur Foundation	\$400,000	-
Democracy Fund	\$200,000	-
McCormick Foundation	\$100,000	-
Reva and David Logan Foundation	\$100,000	-
Joyce Foundation	\$75,000	-
Voqal Fund	\$60,000	-
National Newsmatch Program	\$25,127	-
Field Foundation	\$25,000	-
Conant Foundation	\$15,000	-
<b>Total foundation support</b>	<b>\$1,000,127</b>	<b>\$1,015,000</b>
Individual donors and fundraising events	\$57,572	\$75,000
Corporate sponsorship and gifts	\$4,031	\$10,000
Publication fees	\$8,565	\$12,500
Consulting and production fees	\$54,608	\$85,000
Merchandise sales	-	\$2,500
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$1,124,903</b>	<b>\$1,200,000</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Payroll and payroll tax	\$357,829	\$692,500
Employee benefits	\$14,387	\$55,000
Fellowship stipends	\$82,800	\$75,000
Documenters stipends	\$9,298	\$30,000
Other journalists fees	\$6,268	\$22,500
Freelance creative services	\$15,274	\$30,000
Contract administrative services	\$23,838	\$0
Web development and design	\$17,913	\$20,000
Professional services	\$18,976	\$20,000
Media equipment	\$5,697	\$7,500
Office expenses	\$25,932	\$22,500
Rent	\$8,150	\$20,000
Food and travel	\$26,002	\$60,000
Advertising and promotion	\$8,768	\$12,500
Insurance	\$1,380	\$15,000
Fundraising event costs	\$11,917	\$17,500
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>\$634,428</b>	<b>\$1,100,000</b>
<b>Total revenue</b>	<b>\$1,124,903</b>	<b>\$1,200,000</b>
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>\$634,428</b>	<b>\$1,100,000</b>
<b>Contribution to operating reserves</b>	<b>\$490,475</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>
<b>Retained earnings from prior year</b>	<b>\$70,810</b>	<b>\$561,284</b>
<b>Estimated EOY balance (with reserve)</b>	<b>\$561,284</b>	<b>\$661,284</b>

2018 was a huge year for City Bureau in foundation fundraising. We hope to sustain this level of support while building our membership program and base of individual donors.

City Bureau earns program revenue through research and consulting to share our practices with other outlets and fields.

We added six staff members in 2018 and expect to make several new hires in 2019.

The Documenters program is expected to grow significantly after the launch of Documenters.org, which makes it easier than ever to coordinate assignments.

In 2019 we'll be making new investments in design to make our work more accessible and engaging.

New digs! In 2018 City Bureau moved into new offices in the Experimental Station. In 2019 we also plan to rent shared satellite offices across the city.

We plan to continue to build our operating reserve to ensure the stability of our programs and anchor our future growth.

# SOAP BOX BALL

It certainly wasn't an "all work and no play" year. In October we hosted our 2nd annual Soap Box Ball, a celebration of the amazing, thoughtful and passionate community that makes City Bureau possible. A huge thanks to our wonderful special guests Ricardo Gamboa, Jane Beachy, Kristiana Rae Colón and Anton Seals, plus the 350+ people who attended!







It was a pleasure to work with City Bureau to field a survey of Chicago residents and to discuss the findings with the community. It is clear that they know their community well, that they deeply care about their community and that they are committed to inventive journalism. I'm excited to see what they do next!

— Talia Stroud, Director of the Center for Media Engagement







Collaborating with City Bureau was not only wonderful in their like-minded approach to citizen documenting of boards and authorities but their app and web technology will really lower the bureaucratic barriers to democratic engagement for people.

— Vassilis Jacobs, Senior Policy Associate at CitizenDetroit



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Spring 2018 Fellowship  
Team Leaders

**Jeremy Borden**  
**Hannah Hayes**  
**Alex Hernandez**  
**Manny Ramos**

Reporters

**Christian Belanger**  
**Emmanuel Camarillo**  
**Olivia Cunningham**  
**Alex Y. Ding**  
**Pascal Fernandes**  
**Bashirah Mack**  
**Ellen Mayer**  
**F. Amanda Tugade**

Photojournalist

**Pat Nabong**

Youth Media Partner

**Free Spirit Media**

Summer 2018 Fellowship  
Team Leaders

**Erisa Apantaku**  
**Kim Bellware**  
**Sarah Conway**

Reporters

**Sajedah Al-khazleh**  
**Marley Arechiga**  
**Arabella Breck**  
**Olivia Cunningham**  
**Tonia Hill**  
**Lynda Lopez**  
**Bia Medious**  
**Annie Nguyen**  
**Samantha Smylie**

Photojournalist

**Davon Clark**

Youth Media Partner

**Yollocalli Arts Reach**

Fall 2018 Fellowship  
Team Leaders

**Sarah Conway**  
**Michael Romain**  
**Nissa Rhee**  
**Danielle Scruggs**

Reporters

**Aaron Allen**  
**Alma Campos**  
**Mari Cohen**  
**Yazmin Emilia**  
**Dominguez**  
**Annie Nguyen**  
**Maggie Sivit**

Photojournalist

**Davon Clark**

Youth Media Partner

**Yollocalli Arts Reach**

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## OUR BOARD



**Daniel X. O'Neil** is founder of Civic Operator, where he's developing a practice in ethnographic management consulting. He melds design thinking, group ideation, photography, and other forms of documentation & listening to help organizations form and execute on strategy, build the best

teams, and make things better in the world. O'Neil has been a leading writer, convener, and practitioner in the American open data, open government, and civic tech fields. He's written widely on community-based user testing and commissioned & edited books on civic tech and community technology design modes. He's been named to Crain's Chicago Business' Tech 50, served as a member of the Chicago Police Accountability Task Force, and was a White House Champion of Change for Technology and Innovation.



**Joe Germuska** is the Executive Director at Northwestern University Knight Lab, a community of designers, developers, students, and educators working on experiments designed to push journalism into new spaces.

He is also the project lead on Census Reporter, a Knight News Challenge project to make U.S. Census data easy for journalists to use. Before joining the Knight Lab, Joe was a founding member of the news application team at the Chicago Tribune and a project board member for the PANDA project, another Knight News Challenge winner.

## OUR BOARD



**Tiana Epps-Johnson** is the Founder and Executive Director of the Center for Technology and Civic Life. Prior to CTCL, she was the New Organizing Institute's Election Administration Director. She and her team provide resources and training to support local election administrators in

modernizing the ways they communicate with voters. They also publish free, open-source civic datasets that have been accessed over 200 million times through some of the most powerful tools that drive civic participation. Tiana earned a MSc in Politics and Communication from the London School of Economics and a BA in Political Science from Stanford University. In 2015 Tiana joined the inaugural class of Technology and Democracy Fellow at the Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation at the Harvard Kennedy School. And in 2018 Tiana was selected to join the inaugural class of Obama Foundation Fellows.



**Akili Lee** is a social entrepreneur who has spent 15 years creating human-centered and technology empowered systems that provide equitable access to opportunity. Akili is currently Vice President of Product Management at ThinkCERCA. He is the co-founder of the Digital Youth Network (DYN),

an organization that addresses the urgent need to redesign learning by cultivating equity in our systems and agency in the lives of young people. Akili has been critical in defining DYN's model of leveraging school, community, and online spaces to create new pathways to success for young people. Within DYN, Akili co-directed the Chicago City of Learning, a first of its kind citywide initiative that connects youth to thousands of local and online learning opportunities and supports them to develop rich portfolios along the way.



**Adriana Díaz** is Senior Director of Marketing and Communications at Peer Health Exchange. A communications professional and new media strategist deeply committed to promoting the intersection of civic engagement and social justice; she has roots in radio, community journalism,

youth advocacy and nonprofit communications. A Southwesterner by birth, she claimed Chicago as her soul city in 2003. She is passionate about bridging communities and believes in the power of storytelling for social change.



**Sheila Solomon** is an award-winning former newspaper reporter and editor and has worked for the Hampton Monitor, Daily Press, Newsday, The Charlotte Observer and Chicago Tribune. Currently she's a senior consultant in Chicago for the Democracy Fund (based

in Washington, D.C.) and the manager of recruiting and internships at Rivet Radio (based in Chicago). Among her honors is being inducted into the Scripps Howard School of Journalism and Communications Hall of Fame at Hampton University (Hampton, Va.) and the Ida B. Wells award, given by Medill and the National Association of Black Journalists. She just completed her fifth year as a judge for the National Headliner Awards, has been a lecturer and adjunct professor and serves on numerous journalism-related boards and advisory committees.



**Michelle Morales** is the Executive Director of Mikva Challenge. Prior to Mikva, she worked predominately in the field of alternative education, as a teacher at an alternative high school in Humboldt Park and then as a Program Manager and Associate Director at the Alternative Schools Network.



**Dr. Kathleen Yang-Clayton** was Deputy Director at Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Chicago and brings extensive legislative, advocacy, organizing and applied research experience to her clinical professor position in the Department of Public

Administration, College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs at the University of Illinois-Chicago. She is also Director of Public Policy Programs and Civic Partnerships for the Department, ensuring the growth and expansion of the bachelor's degree program in public policy. Her experience in social justice and racial equity campaigns includes immigrant rights and voting rights issues. Her cross-movement work on voting rights resulted in the passage of landmark legislation in Illinois that expanded access to underserved communities through Same Day Registration.



**Thank you  
for your  
continued  
support.**

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- Stephanie Jensen**
- Michelle Litvin**
- Pat Nabong**
- Danielle A. Scruggs**

- pages: 12, 13, 14, 19, 36, 37
- page: 3
- page: 40
- page: 7
- pages: 10, 11
- pages: 34, 35
- page: 28
- pages: 2, 12, 16, 18
- pages: 19, 37

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**DOCUMENTERS**