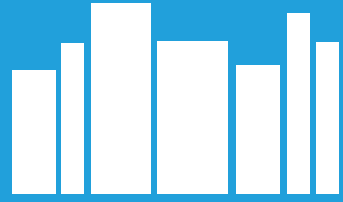


VOCAL

2023



Annual Report

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Letter from Co-Executive Directors

Dear Friends,

Throughout 2023, we continued to build ...

... our movement of low-income people dedicated to ending the HIV/AIDS epidemic, the war on drugs, mass incarceration, and homelessness.

... our services program, with the opening of our drop-in center at our location in the Gowanus neighborhood of Brooklyn.

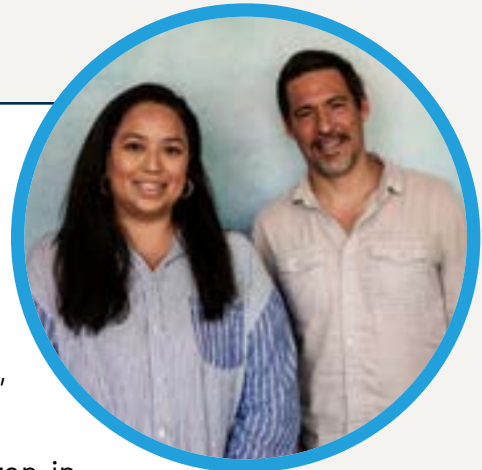
... our organization, as we launched VOCAL-TX.

We are building on the legacy our community has created together since 1999. Our campaigns have been and always will be rooted in justice, compassion, love, and the leadership and needs of people who are directly impacted by our core issues.

As we prepare to celebrate our 25th anniversary, we invite you to build with us and fight for systemic change to save and improve lives of New Yorkers and our neighbors across the country.

In Solidarity,

Alyssa Aguilera & Jeremy Saunders
Co-Executive Directors, VOCAL-NY



2023 BY THE NUMBERS

Organizing & Campaigns Data

3,602 new contacts

3,425 people mobilized

544 new members

65 direct actions

213 member meetings





Services Data

342,128 sterile syringes

5,484 fentanyl test strips

633 Narcan kits

2,463 fit packs, containers that can safely store both new and used syringes

2,787 kits with sterile smoking supplies

3,075 safer sex kits to help prevent the spread of STIs

2,907 personal protective equipment kits

1,841 hygiene kits that include body wipes, soap, and shampoo

10,804 total participant encounters

609 referrals made for other services, often including escorts

132 people tested for hepatitis C, identified 29% as detectable, moved 7 into care, currently treating 1

342 new syringe exchange participants

278 street sessions



STATE OF THE ORGANIZATION

VOCAL-NY is dedicated to ending the HIV/AIDS epidemic, the war on drugs, mass incarceration, and homelessness.

We are proud to be led by low-income people directly impacted by these issues through our four unions and six chapters across New York State. The intersectionality of these issues shows the importance of solidarity between movements and peoples.

Our home for Justice, Compassion, and Love is located in Gowanus, Brooklyn. We offer comprehensive, life-saving harm reduction services to low-income people who use drugs. Our peer and mobile outreach services operate in Brownsville, Coney Island, East New York, Red Hook, and Sunset Park. In partnership with Mount Sinai, our health clinic offers wound care, buprenorphine, and Hepatitis C testing and treatment.

Accomplishments & Highlights

- VOCAL-NY officially opened our harm reduction centered **Drop-in Center** to support our low-income community members who use drugs
- Our Civil Rights Union held a **24-hour Vigil** to commemorate the lives lost on Rikers Island, and demand its closure
- Our Homelessness Union supported 4 crucial improvements to the **CityFHEPS Program in New York City**
- Our Homelessness Union helped pass the **Homeless Sweeps**

Reporting Bill and the **Public Bathrooms Reporting Bill**

- The Positive Leaders Union pushed the **Rest of State AIDS Housing** campaign and it was listed as a priority in both the New York State Senate and New York State Assembly's One-House Budgets
- The Users Union helped double the allocated amount of **Opioid Settlement Funds** to harm reduction services throughout New York State
- VOCAL-NY Rochester supported and helped pass the expanded **Code Blue Package** to save lives
- It was a powerful year in the press with **612 unique media hits overall**
- **VOCAL-TX** launched in September 2023 to support organizing efforts in Texas

Highlights of Leaders in the Press

James Hill

[Another Voice: Harm reduction programs and overdose prevention centers save lives](#)

Roger Clark

[Challenging Wrongful Convictions Act takes next step after passing in State Assembly](#)

Marilyn Reyes

[Cautious policies for opioid crisis miss the mark, advocates say](#)

Terrell Jones

[VOCAL-NY Rallies for International Overdose Awareness Day](#)

Neil Berry

[Opinion: I've been homeless and incarcerated. Eric Adams wants to cut services that help people like me.](#)

Tracie Adams

[Lawmakers push back on Hochul's reluctance to end qualified immunity](#)

Milton Perez

[Jordan Neely's Killing Turns Spotlight On New York's Crisis Of Homelessness](#)

ORGANIZING & CAMPAIGNS





VOCAL-NY's Civil Rights Union (CRU)

is made up of justice-impacted people fighting for the end of mass incarceration.

The CRU's biggest success this year was passing the **Challenging Wrongful Convictions Act** in both the New York State Senate and Assembly. This legislation would provide individuals convicted of crimes with the opportunity for meaningful review to ensure redress for wrongful convictions, including in cases where the individual has pleaded guilty. This was a major priority for our membership base, as many had been coerced into plea deals. While ultimately, this bill was vetoed in late 2023, we are particularly proud of the work done because VOCAL-NY members drafted this legislation alongside legal allies, and we led this campaign every step of the way. We used the campaign to recruit new members, develop leaders, and build out our statewide presence in the Hudson Valley and Western New York.





The CRU is proud of their work leading **Daniel's Law Coalition**. The coalition is working to pass Daniel's Law, which will remove police as first responders in mental health crises in response to the police killing of Daniel Prude in Rochester. Through this coalition, the CRU organized two statewide advocacy days in Albany, a statewide day of action in several cities across the state, and uplifted the connection between policing and mental health. The CRU also fought for justice for Kawaski Trawick, a young man who lost his life to a deadly police encounter.

The CRU serves on the steering committee of the **People's Campaign for Parole Justice**, organizing and advocating for bills on Elder Parole and Fair and Timely Parole to be passed. Unfortunately, our bills did not get over the finish line again this session. Still, we moved the issue forward and are hopeful for future years.

In New York City, the CRU is active in the **People's Budget Campaign** and in **Communities United for Police Reform**, where we worked to organize grassroots pressure against budget cuts to social services and instead call for cuts to the NYPD budget. We also used the budget to advocate for eliminating sweeps of homeless encampments and removing all uniquely vulnerable people from Rikers, such as pregnant people and people with severe mental illness.

We also continued our work to **close Rikers**, with rapid response actions in response to deaths at the notoriously dangerous jail complex. We held a 24-hour vigil outside of City Hall to draw attention to the issue. Our CRU welcomed Hassen Bashir as the new Civil Rights Campaign Coordinator. VOCAL-NY is excited about the momentum the Civil Rights Union has been building and what it will bring to 2024.



VOCAL-NY's Homelessness Union (HU)

had a powerful year of passing legislation and shifting the narrative to save and improve the lives of New Yorkers experiencing homelessness.

Back in December 2022, Governor Hochul claimed that in 2023, Albany would prioritize taking action on the ever-worsening housing and homelessness crisis. Governor Hochul proposed her Housing Compact, a plan to create 800,000 housing units throughout New York State within a 10-year period, focusing on facilitating housing construction in areas that have long resisted new housing units. Our HU, alongside our partners in the Housing Justice for All Coalition, critiqued the Governor for her failure to include solutions in her housing plan that would benefit homeless New Yorkers and those at risk of eviction. Through our organizing efforts, the New York State legislature negotiated the following stance with the Governor: **for any housing plan to succeed, there must be strong tenant protections and pathways for people to secure permanent housing.** Unfortunately, the Governor and New York State Legislature failed to compromise on a housing package, leading to a late budget and no legislative action on housing. The Housing Access Voucher Program, a longtime priority of the HU, is a solution championed by the legislature and has broad support from various organizations. We're continuing our efforts to apply pressure on Governor Hochul, who claims that a new statewide voucher for homeless families and individuals is too expensive while simultaneously funding projects such as a new Buffalo Bills Stadium.



On May 1, 2023, **Jordan Neely** lost his life at the hands of an individual emboldened by fear-mongering and criminalization of street homelessness stirred by Governor Hochul and Mayor Adams. As both leaders ran for election and reelection, they recycled failed talking points from the 1990s of a New York ridden with lawlessness and rampant violence. To justify the massive investment in the same failed policing tactics, both leaders justified budget cuts to vital social safety net programs. The same programs that have experienced a reduction in funding could have saved Jordan Neely's life. Since entering office, Governor Hochul and Mayor Adams have directed millions of dollars to a failed subway safety plan that doesn't connect street homeless New Yorkers with the services and care that they truly need. VOCAL-NY leaders led a vigil to honor Jordan Neely's life and shine a light on the fact that 815 New Yorkers experiencing homelessness died in public spaces, shelters, and hospitals the prior year. VOCAL-NY leaders strengthened their commitment to fighting for caring and compassionate policies and budgets that will continue to save lives and hopefully prevent more tragedies like this one.

The HU, alongside our partners in the Legal Aid Society, Neighbors Together, Community Service Society, and Make the Road New York, worked on improvements to **CityFHEPS**. A vital tool in New York City's fight to end homelessness, CityFHEPS has allowed thousands of New Yorkers to exit the shelter system and secure permanent housing. In 2021, we successfully raised the maximum payment standard (the rental amount the voucher covers) to market levels. Voucher holders were no longer priced out of apartments due to this victory, but we knew additional fixes were needed for the program. We worked



closely with the New York City Council to compile a package of four CityFHEPS reform bills that would eliminate the cruel 90-day shelter stay requirement for CityFHEPS eligibility, remove work requirements, adjust income eligibility, eliminate the utility allowance deduction, and expand CityFHEPS to individuals and families at risk of homelessness. In May 2023, the New York City Council passed all 4 of these bills with a veto-proof majority. New York City Mayor Eric Adams led a misinformation campaign on these reforms. The Mayor vetoed the bills after choosing to eliminate the 90-day requirement via executive order. Working alongside the New York City Council, we pushed against the Mayor’s misinformation campaign and overrode the Mayoral veto in July 2023.

In New York City, 2023 was a successful year for our HU, as we won 7 pieces of legislation, including the CityFHEPS package. Most of these bills our leaders supported with bill drafting and revising bill language. In October 2023, the New York City Council passed the **Public Bathrooms Reporting Bill**, requiring the Department of Parks and Recreation to report on the conditions and functionality of NYC’s public restrooms under its jurisdiction and publicize this data via an online portal. This reporting bill is connected to our Free to Pee Campaign, started and championed by long-time members and leaders from Picture the





Homeless. This reporting bill, along with a reporting bill passed in 2022, will strengthen our efforts and arguments for the City to invest heavily in creating a public bathroom infrastructure. The lack of public bathrooms is an issue felt by a majority of New Yorkers and disproportionately impacts people experiencing street homelessness who are met with over-policing and a lack of compassion.

In December 2023, the New York City Council passed the **Homeless Sweeps Reporting Bill** and the **Fair Chance for Housing Act** with overwhelming support from the Council. The Homeless Sweeps Reporting Bill is tied to our overall demand to end homeless encampment sweeps and removals, a shamefully longstanding practice in our city. The HU stood with Comptroller Brad Lander in July 2023 at the release of his audit of encampment sweeps that showed that a total of 3 people out of the more than 2,000 people impacted by sweeps were provided with an apartment. This bill will require the City to report on the frequency of sweeps, how and when the sweeps occurred, and the estimated cost of the sweeps, among other factors. VOCAL-NY is proud of the work the HU has been able to accomplish this year.



VOCAL-NY's Positive Leaders Union (PLU)

has fought for the last five years to fix failed language in the New York State budget in order to replicate the services and care provided to eligible HIV-positive people in New York City to impacted people throughout the entire state.

Due to our organizing alongside partners such as the End the Epidemic Coalition, New York City's HIV/AIDS Service Administration has assisted eligible HIV-positive New Yorkers in applying for public assistance benefits since 2016. They provide care coordination, nutritional and transportation assistance, and access to the 30% of income rent cap. This infrastructure of care only exists in the five boroughs, with our state failing to assist HIV-positive New Yorkers living in Long Island and upstate.

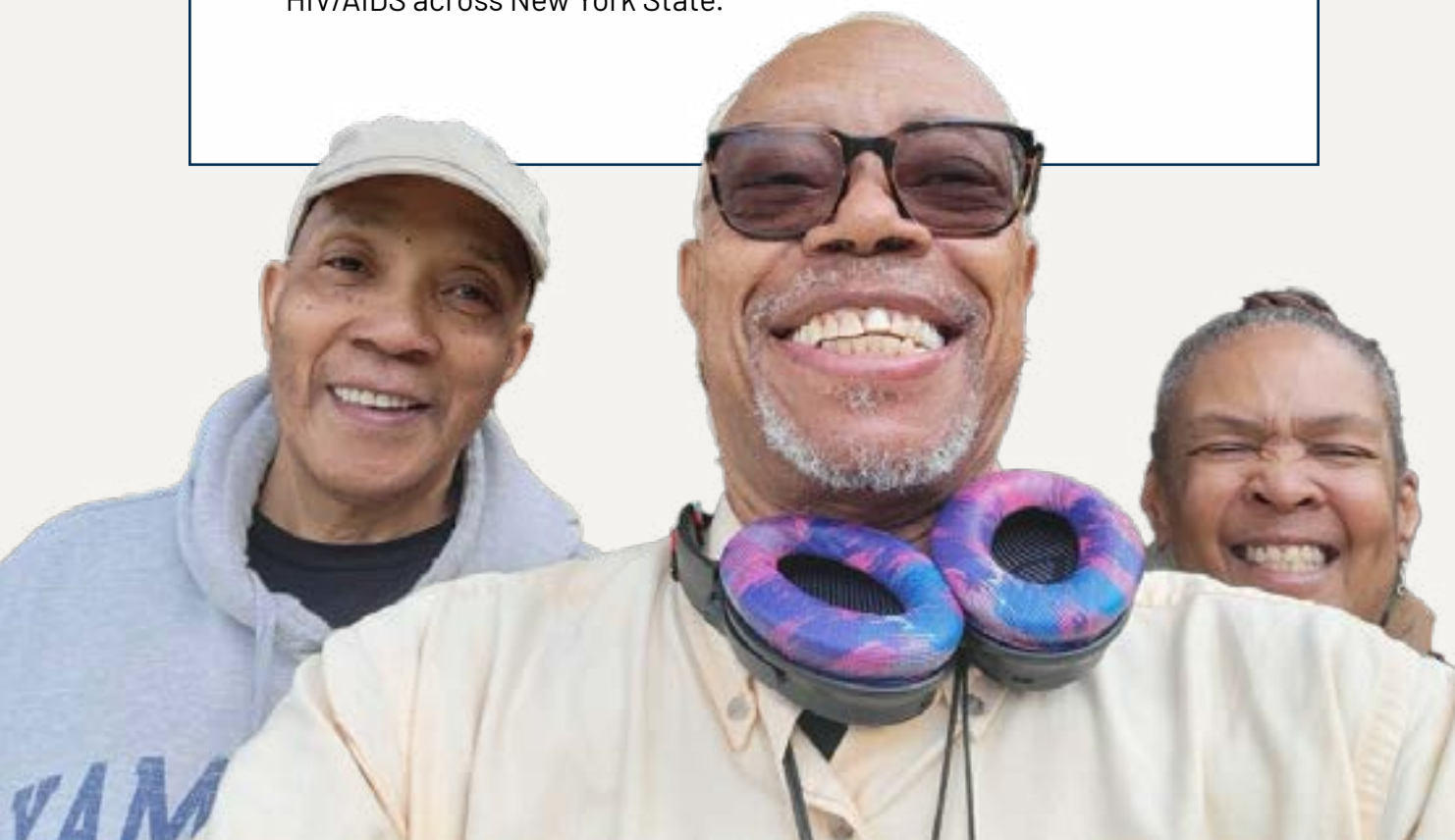


In 2023, for the first time, our **Rest of State AIDS Housing campaign** was listed as a priority in both the New York State Senate and New York State Assembly's One-House Budgets. Our leaders felt optimistic about our chances leading up to the final days of negotiations despite some minor flaws in the overall language. However, as with other issues and campaigns, the gridlock in budget negotiations led to the



State budget being a month late, and many policy issues were pushed aside. Our PLU leaders pivoted their strategy by educating legislators on the necessary budget fixes that could extend this life-saving infrastructure. Due to their efforts, we secured more legislative sponsors on the legislative component of this fight and raised awareness on this issue in both houses.

As reported by Gilead and others, by 2030, up to 70% of people living with HIV in the United States will be over 50. We're still reeling from the families and friends we lost since the beginning of the AIDS epidemic and must continue to honor them by fighting for those who have survived. For the first time in November 2023, the New York City Council held a **Joint Oversight Hearing on Older Adults Living with HIV**. The goal was to identify investments that New York City needs to make to allow our elders living with HIV to live longer and more dignified lives. Our PLU leaders, alongside our partners in Housing Works and SAGE USA, organized a press conference with Council Member Crystal Hudson, laying out a vision of care and compassion for our elders aging with HIV. Afterward, PLU leaders testified inside the City Council chambers alongside other HIV-positive New Yorkers on their lived experiences and their demands to the Council. The fight will continue in the 2024 budget, and we are proud of the relentless work of our PLU to bring services and support to people living with HIV/AIDS across New York State.





VOCAL-NY's Users Union (UU)

is made up of people impacted by the drug war and people who currently use or formerly used drugs.

We are proud to love and value people who use drugs and champion a harm reduction model of care to support them. This year has been uplifting as well as challenging in our journey to end the drug war and open more overdose prevention centers (OPCs) around New York.

OnPoint NYC successfully launched New York City's first sanctioned OPC in 2021, and has since saved over 1,000 lives. The organizing around expanding OPCs has helped lead to New York City Mayor Eric Adams committing to add three more OPCs in New York City by 2025, and the Opioid Settlement Fund Advisory Board recommending to fund and expand OPCs for the second year in a row.

Although the **Safer Consumption Services Act (SCSA)** – the bill to authorize OPCs statewide – did not pass either house this session, The UU has built a large momentum around support for OPCs. We gained nearly 40 co-sponsors on the SCSA bill, passed the bill out of the Assembly and Senate Health Committee for the first time since the bill was introduced in 2017, and built deeper relationships

with lawmakers. We strengthened the depth and power of our UU's statewide leadership and helped organize tours to the OPCs.

VOCAL-NY's UU helped change the narrative on OPCs with over 60 press hits from January to June,





contributing to fighting back against harmful narratives.

In New York City, we are fortunate to have access to harm-reduction services not offered outside the city. Syringe services programs, drug user health hubs, and a peer workforce are critical pathways toward health and recovery for people who use drugs. However, these services have been underfunded for over a decade. The UU fought for opioid settlement funds to be allocated to the Department of Health to **triple their budget to increase the capacity of harm reduction** throughout New York State. Although we were not able to triple the Department of Health's budget, we were able to double the allocated funds for harm reduction services.

We have found there is more support for harm reduction and OPCs than is reported in the press or voiced over social media – even seemingly oppositional legislators are quietly supportive behind closed doors. With this, it is increasingly evident that organizing is incredibly critical in breaking down stigma. Drug use is deeply stigmatized, and changing the narrative around it will save lives. This is especially true as we head into an election year.





Upstate New York

leaders and members spent much of 2023 mobilizing for statewide actions and being the collective voice of how the overdose crisis, homelessness, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and mass incarceration have impacted upstate communities.

In late December 2022, Buffalo announced that 39 people died as a result of a violent winter storm. In Rochester, the sister city to Buffalo, organizers moved to action to prevent the same from happening in their city. VOCAL-NY Rochester helped form the **Rochester Alliance for Housing Accountability (RAHA)**. The Buffalo fatalities were due to ineffective Code Blue policies and practices to prevent serious harm or death due to hypothermia. Considering the challenges the Rochester homeless community faces during inclement weather, RAHA called on elected officials to create an expanded **Code Blue Package**. The expanded package included



opening 24-hour warming stations and emergency shelters within each quadrant of the city. It also expanded outreach hours to identify people needing emergency shelter and free transportation after hours to escort those on the streets to a safe, warming place.

As RAHA worked on the demands, they held community housing forums to discuss the issue and invited elected



officials. Additionally, the **Rochester VOCAL-NY office** held 12-hour meetings (7 PM-7 AM) for the homeless community, providing food and after-hours outreach (10 PM-2 AM) to drive those currently experiencing street homelessness to the meetings. Over the course of several meetings, at least a dozen individuals had to be escorted to emergency centers via ambulance due to severe frostbite. A summary of the meetings was provided to elected officials. In the fall of 2023, Rochester (Monroe County) announced it was expanding its Code Blue package. The new Code Blue package included at least 80% of what RAHA proposed. We are proud of our Rochester community for building coalitions and coming together to make a change in New York State.

DIRECT SERVICES

VOCAL-NY recognizes that in order to build a movement, the basic needs of our community must be met. VOCAL-NY offers direct services for our most vulnerable community members, low-income and unhoused community members who use drugs. VOCAL-NY is a state-recognized syringe exchange program, and we offer harm-reduction supplies at our headquarters in Gowanus.

Our **Peer-Delivery Syringe Exchange (PDSE) Program** offers mobile services to Brownsville, Coney Island, East New York, Red Hook, and Sunset Park.

Our PDSE team is staffed by peers who have lived experience with drug use and offer stigma-free care and understanding. As a syringe exchange, we offer harm-reduction supplies to keep people who inject drugs safe such as sterile injecting equipment (syringes, cookers, cotton filters, water ampules) and other supplies (bandages, antibiotic ointment, gauze, alcohol pads) for safer injection. For people who smoke or sniff drugs, we offer stem tips, chore-boy copper filters, and multicolored straws to reduce the risk of sharing. We also provide fentanyl testing strips to our participants, as well as hygiene supplies like socks, hand sanitizer.





In April 2023, our **Drop-In Center** officially opened. Open weekdays from 10:30 AM-5:30 PM, our services are available to low-income people who use drugs. Our Drop-In Center is focused on providing a safe and comforting space, free of stigma and full of dignity and compassion. Harm reduction is at the core of our services, and we aim to take care of our participants' physical needs and mental wellness.

We are excited to be able to offer a range of life-saving services, including:

- Harm Reduction Supplies
- Wellness Groups (for example, poetry, yoga, gardening)
- Laundry Services
- Food Pantry
- Care Coordination
- Computer and Phones
- Safer-Use Bathroom and Shower

In partnership with Mount Sinai, our health clinic offers wound care, buprenorphine, and Hepatitis C testing and treatment.



SPOTLIGHTS



Laura Levine is VOCAL-NY's Care Coordinator. Working in the Drop-In Center for VOCAL-NY has led Laura to family, community, and empowerment. In 2013, Laura came to VOCAL-NY as a member and participant. After experiencing incarceration and chaotic drug use, she found VOCAL-NY through her husband. They both found VOCAL-NY to be a stigma-free place of individualized care and love. Within six months of finding VOCAL-NY, Laura became a part of our Peer Delivery Syringe Exchange program; her outreach work focused on helping people under 30 access harm reduction services and techniques. After six months of outreach work, she became our front desk associate. In 2019, she stepped up to fill in gaps in care coordination. She became a full-time care coordinator, where she has been able to use her background as a medical assistant to help her community and people who use drugs understand safe injection education and risk reduction.

Laura has found a family in VOCAL-NY. She is thankful to our Co-Executive Directors, Alyssa and Jeremy for welcoming and supporting her since the very start of her time with VOCAL-NY. Being a Care Coordinator has empowered her to speak at conferences, hold naloxone/Narcan training, and advocate for women's health nationwide. Laura's Narcan training can be seen in the documentary *Beauty and Bloodshed*. Laura received recognition for her work in training over 800 people to use Narcan through Mayor DeBlasio's Life Saver Award program, and she is extremely proud of the positive impact she has had in the harm reduction community.

Laura knows the importance of sharing her story; she has found self-love, recovery, and empowerment in advocating for VOCAL-NY participants. Her advice for anyone looking to be involved in a movement is to choose something you are passionate about. If you do, even when you feel burnt out, you will always feel pride in your work



and community. Laura has helped over 80 participants in the past year find housing, ID documents, medical care, and more since our Drop-In Center reopened in 2023.



Pedro Benitez joined VOCAL-NY in 2011 when he learned of the group through a day of action in Albany. Along with VOCAL-NY's Political Director, Kim Smith, Pedro pioneered VOCAL-NY's first upstate chapter in Rochester.

Having experienced homelessness himself, Pedro has championed being an "Advocate for people who can't advocate for themselves." He has been a leader in developing and implementing events to educate and support his peers, such as HIV testing events and educational events to end the stigma.

Pedro is a prominent figure in the HIV community, championing the rights and welfare of all individuals living with HIV. He has held key leadership positions, serving as the Chair of the COMMITTED, Chair of the Latino Consumer Council of Rochester Area Task Force on AIDS (RATFA), and a member of the RATFA Executive Board. Pedro is actively involved in various initiatives, including the Global CAB Representative (Actg) AIDS Clinical Group, Rochester Area Poverty Task Force, Latino Health Coalition, Monroe County Partnership to End the Epidemic Consumer Leader Team, and ABC's Heart 2 Heart AIDS Leadership Coalition. He is a graduate of the New York State Peer Worker Certification Program, a Trainer at the National Quality Center (NQC), and a Senior Health Advocate at ABC.

Pedro's contributions to the HIV community are marked by his wealth of knowledge, experience, and unwavering passion. He has been generous in sharing these with his peers and in any setting that can benefit from his expertise. Pedro's advocacy extends to the most vulnerable and marginalized, speaking up for those who cannot advocate for themselves. His tireless efforts on the Rest of State AIDS Housing laws, aiming to provide rent-controlled housing statewide to all New Yorkers living with HIV/AIDS, are a testament to his commitment.

VOCAL-KY

VOCAL-KY was our first chapter to launch outside of New York, with an office in Louisville and work around the state.

Our first full year as VOCAL-KY has been inspiring, challenging, and impactful – and we are so excited to continue building our organization. We spent the bulk of our first year deeply invested in base-building. Our canvass team conducted over **500 surveys** in Louisville to find out the needs of directly impacted folks in Kentucky. Through the survey, we learned that more than half of our contacts are justice-involved and that the issues of housing, job access, and transportation are most important to them. Many also reported housing and job discrimination because of their conviction histories, as well as the desire for wraparound services to support them upon re-entry. After the survey, participants were invited to VOCAL-KY membership meetings and to get involved in future campaigns tied directly to the issues they care about most.

Overall, VOCAL-KY organizers made over **1,700 new contacts** over the last year and mobilized more than **341 people** to VOCAL-KY events, including **27 membership meetings, 25 mobilizations or actions**, and **10 political education/skills trainings**. We far exceeded our goal of mobilizing 150 new contacts to a VOCAL-KY

event in our first year. Our active and engaged membership base has shown us that there is fertile soil in Kentucky for community organizing and power building.



In addition to base building for VOCAL-KY, we spent a lot of time in 2023 making connections with other organizations in Kentucky and helping to cultivate a movement infrastructure across the state. We were an anchor partner of the Kentucky Movement Assembly, a conference that gathered over 300 progressive organizers and activists. This conference grounded us in the connections between our shared struggles in rural, suburban, and urban communities. It fostered relationships for our members and allowed us to make connections in more remote counties. Building community through social justice work throughout Kentucky has been a key goal for our organization, and the assembly was an inspiring moment for our leaders as we strive to make connections in all 35 counties. We currently have connections in **28 counties**.



VOCAL-TX

VOCAL-TX, the second chapter to launch in the national expansion of VOCAL-US, was formed by spinning off the community organizing program of the Texas Harm Reduction Alliance (THRA), which launched in March 2022

THRA emerged in early 2019 in response to unprecedented opioid overdose rates and the obvious statewide need for harm reduction policy advocacy, education, and capacity building for direct services. In August 2023, the organizing arm at THRA officially became VOCAL-TX. We are dedicated to building power with people impacted by HIV/AIDS, the war on drugs, homelessness, and mass incarceration.

In the first few months of VOCAL-TX, after months of applying pressure to the Austin City Council through meetings and mobilization, we pushed the City Council to pass a budget that included **funds for harm reduction and housing services.**





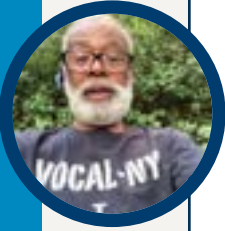
For International Overdose Awareness Day, we mobilized dozens of people to a rally at the Governor’s Mansion and for the official launch of VOCAL-TX.

In October 2023, VOCAL-TX joined 130 organizations from across the country to release the report **“A Roadmap for Opioid Settlement Funds: Supporting Communities and Ending the Overdose Crisis.”** The report details strategies cities, counties, and states must adopt to save lives. We were quoted in The Austin Chronicle and The Dallas Morning News. We cannot wait to see what VOCAL-TX brings to 2024.



IN MEMORIAM

This year, VOCAL-NY lost many community members, from leaders in our unions to our Drop-In Center participants. We are honored to have shared community and power with people fighting for a more healthy and equitable New York. We have included a few biographies of some of our dearest friends, who we lost this past year.



CARL STUBBS, a guiding light within VOCAL-NY, leaves behind a legacy of unwavering dedication to justice, compassion, and democracy. From leading campaigns to end AIDS and hepatitis C to advocating for marijuana legalization and criminal justice reform, Carl's spirit of activism knew no bounds. Carl was our most active VOCAL-NY member of all time, and he fostered community with his warmth, humor, and boundless generosity. Though he may have left us physically, his passion for justice and love for others will continue to inspire us as we carry his torch forward.



LINDA BEAL, a cherished member of our VOCAL-NY family, embodied resilience and compassion in her unwavering efforts to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic. As a founding member of our Westchester chapter, Linda's advocacy extended far beyond city limits, advocating for statewide HIV housing and tirelessly working to ensure that no community was left behind. She also served faithfully on VOCAL-NY's board for the past 3 years, even sometimes calling in from her hospital bed. Her dedication to building a more equitable future for all will forever be remembered and cherished.



WILLIAM ROBERTSON, a true warrior for harm reduction and social justice, leaves behind a profound impact on the communities he served. From his work with the Peer Network of New York to his advocacy with VOCAL-NY's Users Union, Will's commitment to uplifting others was unwavering. His legacy of compassion, respect, and advocacy will continue to resonate, inspiring us to honor his memory by carrying on the fight for a more just and compassionate world.



FINANCIALS

VOCAL-NY relies on the generous support of individuals like you, our neighbors, community and government partners, and foundations to fulfill our mission and create healthy and just communities. We are so grateful for your support and partnership that funds our operating budget, totalling \$6,677,604.88 in 2023.

EXPENSES: How your contributions were spent:



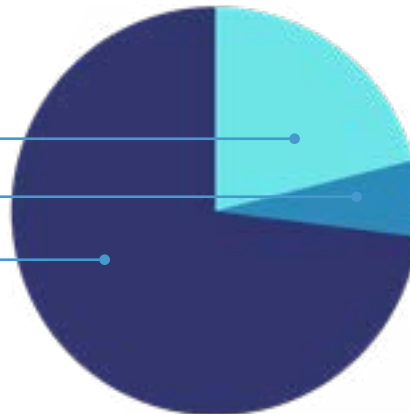
REVENUE

21% Government Grants

6% Individual Donors

73% Foundation Support

View a list of our 2023 donors on our [website](#).



You can support our work and build our movement together by making a contribution today, becoming a monthly donor, volunteering your time, joining us in advocacy or at an event, spreading the word among your neighbors and networks, and more.

Connect with us online at linktr.ee/vocalny. For more information on making a financial contribution, visit our website or email donations@vocal-ny.org.

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Al Ostapeck
SEP Manager

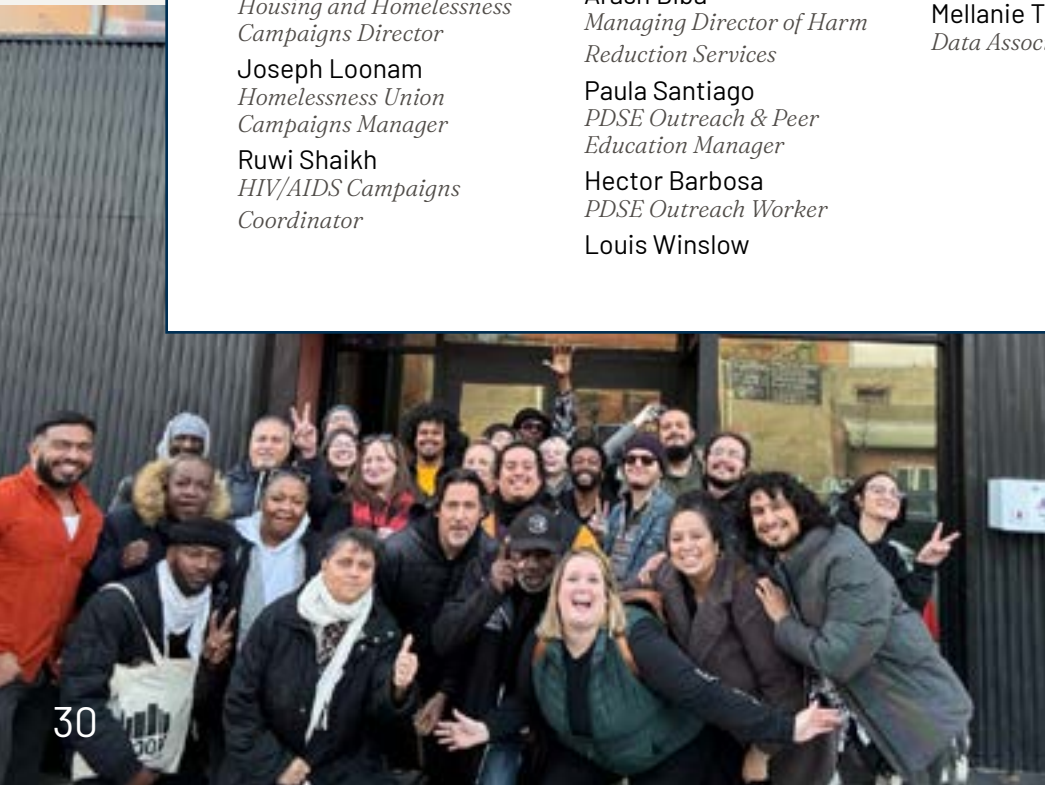
Laura Levine
SEP Care Coordinator

Charlotte Graham
Drop-in Center Associate

Shantae Owens
Syringe Exchange Peer Educator

Alfredo Padilla
Syringe Exchange Worker

Mellanie Thomas
Data Associate





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Brittany Morris
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