OUR CORE PILLARS

HEALISTIC DIRECT SERVICES
DIRECT REPRESENTATION
SOCIAL WORK
SYSTEMIC LITIGATION
CIVIL RIGHTS LITIGATION
SPECIAL PROJECTS
MEDIA & POLICY ADVOCACY
COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

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supplies, fought to stop the displacement of unhoused to more than 700 households, distributed essential materials. This work has helped to keep hundreds, if not thousands, of individuals and families in their homes. Even though we could not be in-person for most of the year, our team has remained a constant presence in the community. While we have continued to demand an end to mass caging through the Close the Workhouse campaign, we have also launched new collaborative, people-powered projects and campaigns, including the Defund.Re-envision. campaign—calling for shifting funds away from policing and into community-based services and projects, and the Transform. campaign—calling for shifting funds away from policing and into community-based services and interventions. ACD also helped to launch the People’s Plan at the start of 2021, joining with more than 40 organizations in the region to set forth a vision for people throughout the St. Louis region and beyond. The impacts of COVID-19 have been extensive and devastating, particularly for the communities that we serve at ArchCity Defenders (ACD). Early on, we joined with many others in highlighting the populations that would be hardest hit by this pandemic: the working poor, the uninsured, immigrant populations, those who are incarcerated, seniors and people with disabilities, and Black residents, in particular. To combat the harms, we have delivered critical resources and information to more than 700 households, distributed essential supplies, fought to stop the displacement of unhoused to more than 700 households, distributed essential materials. This work has helped to keep hundreds, if not thousands, of individuals and families in their homes. Even though we could not be in-person for most of the year, our team has remained a constant presence in the community. While we have continued to demand an end to mass caging through the Close the Workhouse campaign, we have also launched new collaborative, people-powered projects and campaigns, including the Defund.Re-envision. campaign—calling for shifting funds away from policing and into community-based services and projects, and the Transform. campaign—calling for shifting funds away from policing and into community-based services and interventions. ACD also helped to launch the People’s Plan at the start of 2021, joining with more than 40 organizations in the region to set forth a vision built around pillars of Making St. Louis Home, Funding our Future, Building Inclusive Democracy, and Re-envisioning Public Safety. The growth of this work has been made possible by the continued growth of our team. In the past year alone, we have added new talent to our legal team; established a broad new social work team; launched new projects under the leadership of our first Fellow and third Skadden Fellow in five years; and grew and strengthened our operations and development teams with key additions. We may be biased, but we’re pretty sure we have the level and most dedicated team of advocates anywhere!

And now of it would be possible without the incredible community of clients, partners, donors, friends, and supporters that take this work seriously. You continue to show up and join us in monthly movement meetings, ACD trivia nights (two in the past year!), client holiday parties, and so much more! Your support and generosity have left us in a strong position as we look forward to the next phase of ACD. Thank you, and we cannot wait to connect with you again soon.

Looking forward,

Blake Strode Executive Director Stephanie Grise Board Chair
ACD AT A GLANCE

A quick glance at what ACD has accomplished with our clients and partners over the past year.

SYSTEMIC LITIGATION

- Filed more than 250 suits on jail hotline involving correctional issues in St. Louis City jails.
- Recommended over 300 transcripts at bail hearings in St. Louis City Circuit Court.
- Argued and briefed two class certifications motions in support of newly incarcerated tenants, seeking the court to certify all people who were incarcerated in 2011 as a similarly situated class.

MEDI A & POLICY ADVOCACY

-Launched a virtual community-wide effort called #ACDLive covering the stories, issues, and impacts of our holistic legal advocacy.
-Engaged in extensive advocacy around eviction reform during the COVID-19 crisis, including multiple weekly meetings with local tenant advocates, courts, and elected officials. As a result, we were able to increase tenant protections during the COVID-19 pandemic.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

- Hosted 5 virtual conversations called #ACDLive covering the stories, issues, and impacts of our holistic legal advocacy. To catch a highlight reel of clips and to view the individual #ACDLive webinars, visit our YouTube channel.
- Co-hosted a virtual webinar series to highlight the environmental justice facing marginalized communities and talk through community-based approaches to working on solutions.

ACD AT A GLANCE

HOLISTIC DIRECT SERVICES

- Provided over $270,000 in rent, evictions, and utility assistance for over 1,100 people impacted by the COVID-19 public health crisis across six counties in the St. Louis Metropolitan Area.
- Supported 124 people in avoiding or ending homelessness and helped them move into permanent housing.

- 100+ municipal, criminal, and housing cases resolved, often by dismissal, despite court closures, the inability to appear in court in person, and many municipalities still not holding dockets at all.

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CLOSE THE WORKHOUSE

- Observed, attended, or testified at over 2 dozen Board of Alderman meetings as part of the campaign to Close the Workhouse.
- Created a collaborative multi-agency legal advocacy group called the Eviction Defense Collaborative that aims to ensure all tenants facing eviction in the St. Louis region have access to legal representation.

- Engaged in extensive advocacy around tenant reform during the COVID-19 crisis, including multiple weekly meetings with local tenant advocates, courts, and elected officials. As a result, we were able to increase tenant protections during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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MEDIA & POLICY ADVOCACY

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- Engaged in extensive advocacy around eviction reform during the COVID-19 crisis, including multiple weekly meetings with local tenant advocates, courts, and elected officials. As a result, we were able to increase tenant protections during the COVID-19 pandemic.
I consider ArchCity as life savers—they have helped me get my license back and so many other things over the years. They’re life savers.

When we met Eli Murphy in 2018, he shared stories of regular contact with the St. Louis region’s predatory policing, courts, and jails. We worked with him for three years to resolve warrants and traffic tickets that compounded Mr. Murphy’s poverty and stress. Our legal representation in municipal court and correspondence with Missouri’s Department of Revenue helped Mr. Murphy to reinstate his driver’s license after he’d been without it for 20 years.

At the same time, our social work interns and new social work staff worked with Mr. Murphy to maintain his housing security by facilitating rental assistance. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the team made sure he had PPE when necessary and household supplies when they were not available in the community. Most recently, we worked closely with Mr. Murphy to locate no or extremely low cost dentistry through the VA and elsewhere.

Eli Murphy, a Black man and veteran, had been unjustly targeted by local police and courts for decades. It took a couple years to detangle the knotted mess of warrants and points against his license.

Fatal State Violence (FSV) refers to the instances in which state-sanctioned institutions and their respective actors such as police officers and jail guards become deadly. FSV is contextualized within a broader culture of prejudice, brutality, and injustice that disproportionately impacts Black people, people of color, and poor people.

In January, we released “Death by the State: Police Killings and Jail Deaths in St. Louis from 2009-2019.” To read and download the policy report and learn more about this initiative, visit: archcitydefenders.org/fatalstateviolence

The Re-Envisioning Public Safety as Community Wellbeing Social Work Pilot Project is moving from the design stage to taking on clients later this year. The project will demonstrate a holistic reimagining of public safety that provides supportive wraparound services to individuals involved with the criminal legal system. Increased client stability in housing, employment, and finances and access to necessary care and social networks will reduce the impact of incarceration and the collateral damage it has on individuals, families, and communities.

The People’s Plan is a comprehensive policy agenda and organizing strategy that has united over 40 local organizations to build local power and transform policies across the St. Louis region. Rooted in self-determination, love, and liberation, the Plan builds upon years of research, reports, shared struggle, campaign successes and setbacks, and shared visions from community members. The Plan is a multi-issue, multi-year strategy shaping the course for how we can collectively realize an equitable, sustainable, and inclusive place to call home.
HOLISTIC DIRECT SERVICES: DIRECT REPRESENTATION

We mitigate the harm caused by the systemic criminalization of marginalized groups by providing holistic representation to individuals.

CLIENT SUPPORT

Helped a father reunite with his son after fighting for years to regain custody.

Helped a single mother and lifelong St. Louisan regain her license and close out her last pending case after years fighting municipal and state criminal charges.

COVID-19 ADVOCACY

Monitored municipal courts across St. Louis County during the COVID-19 pandemic and advocated with the county’s presiding judge regarding issues like warrant forgiveness, equitable remote court practices, and transparency in reopening plans.

UNLAWFUL ARRESTS

Used legal and media advocacy to support a couple unlawfully arrested on bogus “wanteds,” that were issued in retaliation for attending a protest with their children. We obtained a dismissal of their cases and then DNA expungements for DNA samples taken after the arrest.

PARTNER LITIGATION

Worked with aligned groups and litigated in individual cases to fight the orchestrated denial of preliminary hearings in felony cases (often leading to unnecessary prolonged incarceration) by prosecutors and courts in the region.

WHAT WE DO

- Housing/eviction defense
- Tenant’s rights
- Homelessness/unhoused community
- Municipal defense
- Protester representation
- Family law
- Criminal defense

PROTESTER REPRESENTATION

Provided representation of 18 different individuals charged with misdemeanors or felonies related to major anti-police brutality protests in 2020 in Jefferson City, St. Charles, St. Louis City, and Ferguson. We obtained dismissals in about a third of those cases to date, with a majority of the remaining cases now set for jury trial. Our team also provided jail support and bail hearing representation to protesters following arrests at some of the other protest actions. In most of those cases, charges were never filed.

BEGIN EXPUNGEMENT PROJECT

Begun Expungement Project to provide outreach, education, and representation to individuals seeking to remove past convictions or arrests from their records.
HOLISTIC DIRECT SERVICES: SOCIAL WORK

Taking a client-led approach, we support and advocate for peoples’ right to self-determination and help them counter setbacks caused by limited resources and discriminatory practices.

OUR STAFF
Since October 2020, ACD’s team includes three full-time master-level social workers working to design a social work program that enhances our holistic representation model.

HOME SWEET HOME
Through our partnership with Home Sweet Home, they have supported 10 client households in fully furnishing or obtaining necessary household items for their homes since November 2020.

CLIENT SUPPORT
Many clients receive regular food access, household, and personal product support through direct food delivery, assistance obtaining food stamp benefits, or the facilitation of donations and other community support.

WHAT WE DO
• Trauma-informed case management
• Access to technology
• Public benefits assistance
• Jobs, housing, and education support
• Transportation
• Outside referrals

ARCHCITY DEFENDERS
injunction and the jail was forced to provide him with showers.

The civil litigation team also had a busy year representing individual plaintiffs who suffered police abuses at both the trial and appellate level. In four separate cases, federal district courts have ruled in ACD’s favor and denied motions to apply qualified immunity, which gives government officials immunity even when their actions violate the Constitution. In each case, the defendants have prolonged the cases by appealing the decision to the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals.

**SYSTEMIC LITIGATION:**

**CIVIL RIGHTS LITIGATION**

We challenge the systemic harms (i.e. criminalization of poverty and state violence) caused by policing, courts, and jails that deny our clients’ rights to self-determination.

**UPRISINGS IN CITY JAILS**

In late December 2020, detainees inside the City Justice Center began protesting their treatment by jail employees and we began investigating the conditions through detainee interviews, our jail hotline, and public record requests. In February 2021, the issues inside CJC exploded onto the national news when there was an uprising in which detainees broke out a window to yell for help to the streets.

In late February 2021, ACD and partners also filed a lawsuit on behalf of a paraplegic man who had been denied a shower and adequate hygiene care for months by the City jails and the medical staff. ArchCity Defenders argued and won a preliminary injunction and the jail was forced to provide him with showers.

**COMBATTING POLICE ABUSE**

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**FATAL STATE VIOLENCE PROJECT**

In January 2021, ArchCity Defenders formally launched the Fatal State Violence Project, an initiative focused on providing holistic legal advocacy for families who have lost loved ones to state violence. In June, we filed a civil rights lawsuit in federal court on behalf of the family of a disabled, elderly, Black veteran killed by SWAT officers with the City of St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department (SLMPD) during the execution of a no-knock warrant in 2017. The case seeks to hold the individual officers and the City of St. Louis accountable for falsifying information to secure the no-knock warrant, the excessive force used against Mr. Clark, and the City’s practices allowing for the indiscriminate use of no-knock warrants and SWAT teams, which too often lead to violence and harm.

**DEBTORS’ PRISONS**

Our fight also continues against the unlawful and inhumane debtors’ prisons operated by area municipalities in the past decade. In the past year, we filed for class certification against two municipalities and finished the years-long discovery process in several of the cases. Collectively, the cases seek to represent tens of thousands of people who were unlawfully jailed by these municipalities.

**CLOSING THE WORKHOUSE**

The City of St. Louis temporarily emptied the Workhouse in June 2021 and committed to its closure. It remains an “annex” for use as an overflow for the City Justice Center and we continue to advocate for full closure. We recently completed discovery and have moved for class certification, seeking to recover damages for people jailed in unconstitutional conditions at the Workhouse. ACD also gained pro-bono co-counsel on the case, DLA Piper, a national law firm that has quickly become an essential partner in our work.
We focus a portion of our work to serve Missouri’s rural communities by challenging inhumane jail conditions and the criminalization of poverty with the goal of expanding the geographical impact of our litigation.

- St. Francois County jail
- Rural debtors’ prisons
- Electronic monitoring
- Inhumane jail conditions

Filed a federal class action lawsuit on behalf of three previously-incarcerated individuals in the St. Francois County Jail alleging deplorable and inhumane conditions at the jail, lack of adequate medical treatment to those incarcerated, and a failure to accommodate detainees with disabilities. The lawsuit alleges multiple parties are responsible for the conditions, including St. Francois County, Missouri’s government and elected officials along with the jail’s contracted medical services provider.

 Filed a federal civil rights lawsuit on behalf of George Richey, an Army veteran who has been repeatedly incarcerated in St. Clair County, Missouri for his inability to pay for his jail board bill. The lawsuit challenges the abusive and unscrupulous debt collection practices used against him to collect the costs he incurred just for being detained at the St. Clair County Jail. The lawsuit alleges the county, the county sheriff, the county court clerk, and a Texas-based debt collection company all violated Mr. Richey’s constitutional and federal rights by attempting to collect these debts from his sole source of income—Social Security Disability Income.

Represented a disabled veteran with a heightened risk of COVID-19 in challenging the legality of an eviction judgment issued against him in a telephonic eviction trial. After the case worked its way to the Missouri Supreme Court, the trial court set aside the judgment and our client avoided both a money judgment and an eviction on his record. This case led to significant changes in the way eviction cases were handled through the pendency of COVID-19 in the City of St. Louis.

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Represented several tenants living at the Southwest Crossing Apartments in South St. Louis City. We supported the work of organizing partners at the site as well. Together, we secured substantial repairs to over 20 different tenants’ units at the property. We also assisted the tenants and management with setting up a system to access emergency rental assistance to ensure the tenants’ housing stability moving forward.

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MEDIA & POLICY ADVOCACY

We combat the misrepresentation in the news media that upholds racist ideology and systems by centering client voices and uplifting their stories.

WHAT WE DO
- Share public information via digital campaigns
- Produce local news podcast with partner organization
- Host in-person and virtual media events
- Publish reports with original data
- Share news clips & press releases
- Present findings and insights from staff through virtual presentations

SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYTICS
- FACEBOOK FOLLOWERS: 16.8K
- TWITTER FOLLOWERS: 9.4K
- INSTAGRAM FOLLOWERS: 7.7K
- YOUTUBE CHANNEL VIEWS: 7.8K
- PODCAST DOWNLOADS: 12.6K

COVID-19 ADVOCACY
Since the rise of the COVID-19 pandemic, ArchCity Defenders raised awareness of the crises and inhumane conditions in regional jails through first-hand audio recordings of people detained and their loved ones on the outside. The playlists are organized by series: #DecarcerateSTL #STLJailsCrisis #SFCJail

210 TOTAL NEWS CLIPS
LOCAL: 158  NATIONAL: 52

PRESS STATEMENTS/RELEASES
Published 18 press releases covering a variety of issues, events, and litigation, that relate to homelessness, housing, jail conditions, Fatal State Violence, police misconduct, rural debtors’ prisons, and disability claims.

FACEBOOK VIRTUAL SERIES
In 2021, ArchCity Defenders held a series of virtual conversations about the stories, issues, and impact of our holistic legal advocacy. To catch a highlight reel of clips and to view the individual #ACDLive webinars, visit our YouTube channel.

FATAL STATE VIOLENCE PROJECT
We hosted a launch event with staff, project collaborators, and family members of victims profiled in the report. View the recorded livestream and our social media campaign highlights on our website at archcitydefenders.org/fatalstateviolence.

SUBSCRIBE TO OUR E-NEWSLETTER
Would you like to receive our monthly e-newsletter? To subscribe, visit archcitydefenders.org and enter your email at the bottom of the webpage.

FY 21 ANNUAL REPORT

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COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

We address the profound history of systemic injustice by partnering with organizations, activists, and community members on events, campaigns, and initiatives in order to build community power.

CLOSE THE WORKHOUSE

The Close the Workhouse campaign organized impacted folks and community members throughout the pandemic - hosting car caravan protests around the city, packing virtual Board of Aldermen meetings, and utilizing social media/Zoom as a primary organizing space - leading to the emptying of the Workhouse in June 2021, with its full closure in sight.

HOUSING ORGANIZING

Alongside Action St. Louis and other community partners, we have worked to increase community education around housing needs and tenants’ rights advocacy. We hosted webinars focused on the current eviction crisis and the need for a Tenant’s Bill of Rights and provided rapid response support to help deliver CDC moratorium information to those at imminent risk of eviction.

DEFUND, RE-ENVISION, TRANSFORM

Formed a coalition with Forward through Ferguson, CAPCR, and Action St. Louis to create the Defund, Re-envision, Transform campaign that focuses on divesting from the police department and redirecting that money to the people and neighborhoods that have been historically neglected, developing and implementing programs that actually increase public safety, all while shrinking the size, scope, and power of the police. Through political education, organizing, and direct action, the coalition has already secured $4 million in divestment from the SLMPD.

WHAT WE DO

- Housing Organizing
- Fatal State Violence Response Program
- Close the Workhouse
- Environmental Racism
- Participatory Defense
- Expungement Clinic
- Defund, Re-envision, Transform
- Partiicipatory Defense
- Expungement Clinic
- Defund, Re-envision, Transform
- Participatory Defense
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- Participatory Defense
- Expungement Clinic
- Defund, Re-envision, Transform

ARCHCITY DEFENDERS

FY 21 ANNUAL REPORT

In efforts to provide community education through a virtual event series focusing on the most pressing issues raised in our joint report, Environmental Racism in St. Louis.

PARTICIPATORY DEFENSE

In partnership with Metropolitan Congregations United, we anchored the adult hub of the only Participatory Defense program in the region. The program allows individuals facing criminal charges, their families, and our communities to have a direct impact on the criminal legal system by using collective experience and subject matter expertise to help assist and guide people through the system toward greater positive outcomes in their criminal legal cases.
A snapshot of income and expenditures for ACD’s Fiscal Year 2021.

ANNUAL REVENUE

TOTAL: $3,400,397

ATTORNEY FEES

CONTRIBUTIONS (INDIVIDUALS & FAMILIES)

PRIVATE FOUNDATIONS

GOVERNMENT

ANNUAL EXPENSES

TOTAL: $2,964,503

PERSONNEL

$425,6K

PROGRAM & LITIGATION EXPENSES

$59,2K

FUNDRAISING & COMMUNICATION

$239,8K

GENERAL & ADMINISTRATIVE

$2.15M

PERCENTAGE

45%

44%

8%

3%

1 In addition to individual and family donations, contributions also include event sponsorships.

2 As we have continued to raise more in flexible, general operating funds, the share of government funding has reduced significantly.

3 FY21 Total Expenses figure represents nearly 26% growth over previous fiscal year.