



East Chicago Housing Authority Awarded \$100K Federal Grant

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Partners with Indiana Legal Services to Help City Youth

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Contact: Ron Gyure, (317) 829-3082

The East Chicago Housing Authority (ECHA) has received a \$100,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to partner with Indiana Legal Services, Inc. (ILS) to help young people reduce the bad effects of a juvenile or criminal record. A criminal record, whether as a juvenile or an adult, often creates a major obstacle in obtaining an academic degree, finding work and securing affordable housing.

ECHA was one of 18 recipients across the country to receive a Juvenile Reentry Assistance Program (JRAP) grant from HUD.

“This program will provide new hope to youth in East Chicago and will remove major obstacles that may prevent them from becoming productive members in our community,” said Tia Cauley, the ECHA’s Executive Director. “We are excited to partner with Indiana Legal Services.”

Through this program, eligible youth can receive legal help to expunge, seal or correct their juvenile or adult criminal arrest or conviction records when permitted under Indiana state law. They also can get legal help:

- to obtain a special driver’s license needed for a job,
- to get an occupational license (i.e. barber or beautician license),
- relating to employment,
- modifying child support orders and for other family law needs.

The program will focus on youth, 24 years old or younger, who have a criminal record and 1) are currently living in public housing or 2) who are former public housing residents but still have family living in public housing. The program will begin on July 1 and run through December 31,

2017.

“Our partnership with ECHA will offer young people in East Chicago who have paid their debt to society a second chance to move on with their lives,” said Jon Laramore, ILS’s Executive Director. “This project also represents a good investment for the community in reducing the chances that these individuals will commit crimes in the future.”

The East Chicago Housing Authority (ECHA) is a semi-independent public agency that provides eligible city residents with affordable housing and assistance in reaching self-sufficiency goals. ECHA operates public housing units and offers Section 8 vouchers.

An eight-office not-for-profit law firm, including Merrillville and a satellite office East Chicago, Indiana Legal Services provides free legal representation to low-income persons on civil legal matters, focusing on basic needs like habitable housing, quality health care, income security, and protection from domestic abuse.

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<http://www.indianalegalservices.org/node/885/east-chicago-housing-authority-awarded-100k-federal-grant>

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