Mission: to prevent and end homelessness by serving as the legal arm of the nationwide movement to end homelessness.

Three main strategies:

• impact litigation
• policy advocacy
• public education
Homelessness: A Human Rights Crisis

Each year, 2.5 to 3.5 m. Americans living in:

- Shelters
- Streets, parks, abandoned buildings, caves, cars and vans

6.8 m. doubled-up due to economic hardship

Housing AND health crisis

National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty
www.nlchnp.org
Housing and health are interdependent human rights

• Each is a human right, and defined as linked in human rights law. For example, RTH means:

  – Housing must be affordable. No one should have to choose between paying the rent and paying for medical care.

  – Housing must be accessible housing, including a requirement to address the needs of HIV-positive individuals.
So What? Using Human Rights in Advocacy

- International mechanisms: UN Special Rapporteurs, UN committees and treaty monitoring bodies
- Bringing to bear in federal, state and local advocacy
- Examples
Federal Advocacy Using Human Rights

- Fighting the criminalization of homelessness
- USICH Report
  - Not good policy
  - May violate US constitution
  - May violate human rights obligations
  - ICCPR & CAT (US ratified)
Federal Advocacy Using Human Rights

ICCPR Review: Question to the US

Human Rights Committee

List of issues to be taken up in connection with the consideration of the fourth periodic report of the United States of America (CCPR/C/USA/4), adopted by the committee at its 107th session, 11 – 28 March 2013

6. Please provide information on the imposition of criminal penalties on people living on the streets. Please also provide information on the implementation of the 2009 Helping Families Save Their Home Act and the creation of durable alternatives to criminalization measures to address homelessness.

7. Please provide information on obstacles to access of undocumented migrants to health services and higher education institutions, and to federal and state programs addressing such obstacles.

Right to life (art. 6)

8. Please provide information on:
Federal Advocacy Using Human Rights

- Working with USICH on response by agencies to

United States Interagency Council on Homelessness

No one should experience homelessness. No one should be without a safe, stable place to call home.

USICH Blog

07/17/2013 - Reducing the Criminalization of Homelessness

Today, USICH and the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty met with agency partners to discuss new strategies to reduce criminalization of homelessness. Implementing alternatives to criminalization of homelessness requires interagency collaboration. The Department of State’s “U.S. Report Concerning the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to the United Nations” was just the catalyst needed to bring Federal agencies and national partners together around this topic. Today’s meeting will inform the Department of State’s oral argument on criminalization of homelessness, which will presented to the UN in Geneva, Switzerland in November.

Across the United States, communities continue to criminalize homelessness by implementing ordinances that prohibit actions commonly associated with homelessness such as sleeping, eating, sitting, lying down, or panhandling in

National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty

www.nlchp.org
National Advocacy Using Human Rights
“Shadow” Report to Committee

CRUEL, INHUMAN, AND DEGRADING:
Homelessness in the United States under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

Submitted to the U.N. Human Rights Committee
August 23, 2013

Prepared by
NATIONAL LAW CENTER ON HOMELESSNESS & POVERTY
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National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty
www.nlchp.org
U.N. investigator urges Sacramento to provide water, sanitation for homeless
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PUBLISHED SATURDAY, FEB. 04, 2012

In 2009, they caught Oprah Winfrey’s attention.

Last year, they were featured in a lengthy article in Harper’s magazine.

Now a small but vocal band of homeless people fighting for the right for a legal campground in Sacramento has scored an international coup. A special investigator for the United Nations, following a visit last year with Sacramento’s homeless campers, is appealing to Mayor Kevin Johnson to provide them with proper sanitation and drinking water.

Johnson had yet to formally reply to the investigator’s letter as of late Friday.

"Sacramento is now being judged by the entire community of nations as having failed its human rights obligations to its own citizens," said Colin Bailey, staff attorney at Legal Services of Northern California, which has represented the campers in court.
Human Rights in State Advocacy
Human Right to Water

Assembly Bill No. 685
CHAPTER 524

An act to add Section 106.3 to the Water Code, relating to water.

[Approved by Governor September 25, 2012. Filed with Secretary of State September 25, 2012.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 685, Eng. State water policy.
Existing law establishes various state water policies, including the policy that the use of water for domestic purposes is the highest use of water.
This bill would declare that it is the established policy of the state that every human being has the right to safe, clean, affordable, and accessible water adequate for human consumption, cooking, and sanitary purposes. The bill would require all relevant state agencies, including the Department of Water Resources, the State Water Resources Control Board, and the State Department of Public Health, to consider this state policy when revising, adopting, or establishing policies, regulations, and grant criteria when those policies, regulations, and grant criteria are pertinent to the uses of water described above.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 106.3 is added to the Water Code, to read:
Human Rights in Local Advocacy

- New York City AIDS Housing Network
- House everyone campaign
The right to housing is the right to health!

National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty
www.nlchp.org
Discussion & Questions

NATIONAL LAW CENTER ON HOMELESSNESS & POVERTY

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