

© The Bail Project 2024

Freedom should be free.

THE BAIL PROJECT

Our vision is to create a fairer system, one that truly treats people as innocent until proven otherwise. Rich or poor, we are entitled to equal justice. But cash bail creates a two-tiered system: one for people with money, and one for everyone else. The Bail Project pays bail for those in need – for free. At the same time, we are working to take money out of justice.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Message from the Chief Executive Officer	4
Phase Two Strategy	6
The Difference One Bail Can Make	8
The Clients We Serve	12
How We Support and Transform Lives	14
Locations	16
Client Stories	18
The Path to Systemic Change	30
Policy Campaigns	32
Generating Evidence in Tulsa	36
Shaping the Narrative for Lasting Change	38
Elevating Voices, Building Influence	40
Ad Council Public Service Announcements	42
Supporter Spotlight	44
Our Team	46
Revolving Bail Fund	50
Financials	51

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Dear Friends and Supporters,

As I step into my second year as CEO, I remain deeply humbled and passionately committed to driving meaningful and sustainable improvements in our justice system. It's been an honor to work alongside such dedicated and inspiring individuals – from our staff to our many supporters like you – who share this vision. Money should never have a role in justice and we are proving every day that a better world without cash bail is possible.

This moment also prompts me to reflect on my personal journey, recognizing that I didn't reach this point alone. My experience with incarceration was one of the most challenging times of my life, leaving me feeling lost and destabilized. Most people don't understand what it's like to be released with no home, no job, no identification, and only the clothes on your back – but I do. What made all the difference were the people who extended genuine compassion and unwavering support when I needed it most. My story is just one of countless that illustrate the incredible impact we can have when we step up for others in

their most critical moments. At The Bail Project, I get to see that impact at scale. This year, we celebrated serving 35,000 individuals since we launched our project. Each time we bail out a client, we are supporting their ability to return to work, to keep their homes, to care for their children, and be there for their loved ones. Each person also becomes part of the data and stories we are collecting to demonstrate the efficacy of an alternative model of pretrial support. In this way, each bailout is directly contributing to the movement for a better justice system.

While I am inspired everyday by the work our team is doing, I know we can't do it alone. Real, meaningful change requires broad support. At The Bail Project, we have always focused on building a diverse but unified coalition of changemakers, from grassroots advocates to public defenders to conservative lawmakers. We believe that equal justice and the presumption of innocence are values that every American can rally behind. And we are proud to be leading bipartisan advocacy efforts in red, blue, and purple states that seek to build a fairer pretrial system for all.

As we reflect on our collective achievements in the pages ahead, let's commit to continuing to drive progress forward. Each act of support, whether securing freedom or educating the public about cash bail, helps us get closer to our shared vision of freedom and justice for all. Join us in this transformative endeavor. Together, we are unstoppable.

With hope and determination,

Intop

David Gaspar, Chief Executive Officer

PHASE TWO STRATEGY

Each day, nearly 500,000 people are detained in our nation's jails because they cannot afford the price of their freedom. Cash bail creates this two-tiered system of justice: one for people with money and another for everyone else. It corrupts the fundamental promise of our justice system that all people are presumed innocent until proven otherwise.

At The Bail Project, we know a better pretrial system that lives up to our promises of due process and equal justice is possible. Our vision is propelled by three key strategies:

- 1. Ensure pretrial freedom is free by paying bail for thousands of clients each year and connecting them to high-quality supportive services such as court notifications, transportation assistance, and voluntary referrals to community-based programs.
- 2. Launch innovative pilot programs that model a world without cash bail where local jurisdictions release people pretrial and connect them to supportive services instead of relying on incarceration.
- 3. Advocate for changes to state and federal laws that will take money out of the pretrial system entirely and dramatically reduce pretrial jail populations.



THE DIFFERENCE ONE BAIL CAN MAKE

At The Bail Project, we know that paying just one bail can be transformative. **But did you know that paying one bail can have a ripple effect on families, communities, and the pretrial system in the United States?**

Take Antoine, 45, the "go-to" artist for local businesses on the Flathead Indian Reservation in Montana. When Antoine was arrested for using alcohol in violation of his probation, he faced a \$5,000 bail. Unable to afford this amount, Antoine was sent to jail, where he was separated from his five children and family.

To Antoine, "it felt like a miracle" that The Bail Project was able to secure his freedom. At home, Antoine could help his family prepare for his potential incarceration. He took on as much work as possible to get ahead on rent and provide financial stability for his children. Most importantly, Antoine was able to explain to his youngest son what was happening and assure him that things would be alright until he returned.

Antoine was committed to getting his life on track and made sure to attend all of his court dates. Because Antoine had done so well, the sentence for his violation was reduced to 54 days. He served half of the time in jail and the other half in a treatment program that addressed the underlying issue of his alcohol misuse. He learned strategies to keep his alcohol cravings at bay and, unlike in jail, he was able to access his art supplies, which have been critical tools in his recovery.

Antoine's freedom set him on a path to overcome his substance misuse. It also directly impacted the emotional, physical, and financial stability of his children and family. The Salish and Kootenai people of the Flathead tribal community welcomed back a beloved member and small business owner who made notable contributions to the local economy.

When people on the reservation need new logos, signs, posters, or T-shirts, they always come to Antoine. Antoine's story is replicated thousands of times each year in communities across America because of The Bail Project. These impacts add up and with each person we serve, we can:

- **Build Evidence**: Grow our comprehensive dataset of client outcomes to further demonstrate the efficacy of our model as an alternative to cash bail.
- Shift Narratives: Deepen understanding of cash bail and mobilize public support by sharing stories and educational resources.
- Improve Pretrial Systems: Advocate for pretrial practices and laws that would reduce unnecessary incarceration and benefit hundreds of thousands across the United States each year.

In this way, just one bail can build a world where justice is equal and everyone is truly free. Join us in making this vision a reality.





When we reached out to
Antoine to commission
artwork for this report, he
responded, "I have this idea
of the anthropomorphic
animals preparing for a
sweat ceremony. Porcupine
bringing wood, grizzly fixing
the lodge skins, coyote and
fox smudging. This was the
very first idea that came to
mind – a personal aspect
of my life and healing."

THE CLIENTS WE SERVE

The typical pretrial journey for a Bail Project client.

\$3,000 CASH BAIL

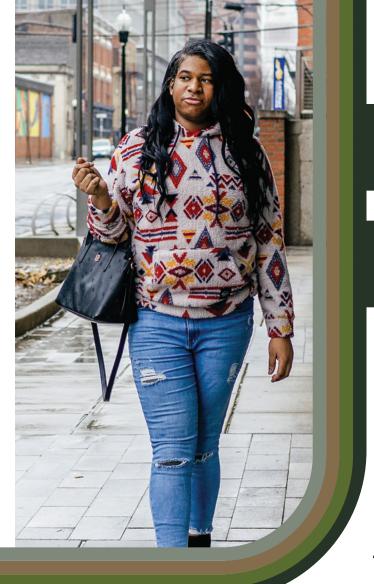
The average bail assistance required to support the release of Bail Project clients. The price for freedom is three times higher than the amount most Americans have saved for an emergency.

3 COURT APPEARANCES

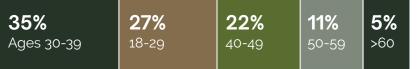
The average number of times that our clients must ask off work, find childcare, and get a ride to appear in court. Research shows that basic supports like those provided by The Bail Project are effective for court return.

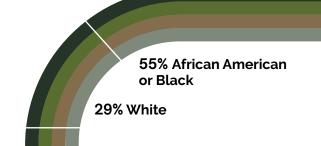
6 MONTHS TO RESOLVE THE CASE

The median amount of time for our clients' cases to be resolved. The Bail Project stays connected with clients until their cases close.









10% Hispanic

4% Native American /Alaska Native

2% Other Race

1% Asian American or Pacific Islander

HOW WE SUPPORT AND TRANSFORM LIVES

Our stories and data, gathered from thousands of bailouts across the country, tell an indisputable and positive story: Bail is not what makes people return to court.

34,525

clients served

138,827

court appearances supported

93%

court appearance rate

12,242

rides provided

31%

clients cases are dissmissed



\$91M

bail assistance provided

90%

bail capital revolved

1,299,438

days of pretrial incarceration prevented

\$101M

taxpayer dollars saved

14

pieces of legislation drafted/ introduced in FY24

LOCATIONS

This map highlights the frontlines of our bail assistance work, but our reach extends far beyond these locations. As the only national organization dedicated solely to bail reform, we advocate for systemic change across the United States.

*Designates partnership site

- AR Fayetteville*
- AZ Phoenix
- FL Jacksonville
- FL Orlando
- FL Pensacola
- GA Atlanta
- KY Louisville
- LA New Orleans*
- MO St. Louis*
- MT Flathead Reservation
- NC New Bern*
- OH Cincinnati
- OH Cleveland
- OK Oklahoma City
- OK Tulsa
- TX Houston
- TX San Marcos



CLIENT STORIES

Take a moment to hear directly from those whose lives and families have been affected by the cash bail system. Wealth-based detention impacts millions of Americans. Whether you're a client, supporter, or advocate, it's likely that you or someone close to you has felt its effects.

The narratives we collect from everyday people we've helped along the way add depth and dimension to our collective mission. They remind us that we are all connected in the fight for a more just and equitable future, even though our roles and experiences may differ. Together, we are The Bail Project, and together we make change possible.



SAMUEL

Samuel, a 29-year-old father of two, and his partner Stephanie had been together for ten years. They were inseparable. When Samuel was sent to jail because he couldn't afford a \$2,050 bail, knowing his kids were home with Stephanie put him at ease.

While Samuel was incarcerated, Stephanie was attending a birthday party where she was struck by a stray bullet that killed her instantly. In the months following Stephanie's death, Samuel, still unable to pay bail, was forced to mourn behind bars. "She was my everything," Samuel said.

Each day, an unknown number of people lose a loved one while they're incarcerated and access to grief counseling is often limited. After three months in jail, still devastated by the loss, Samuel was connected to The Bail Project's team in Arizona. We quickly paid his bail so he could return to his family.

For Samuel, some days are still challenging. It's difficult for him not to think of Stephanie and the future they were building. He wishes she were still alive to see how much their children have grown and how well he is doing. But he is confident that her legacy will live on in their kids.





Floyd, a 51-year-old veteran from Detroit, served in the United States Army for ten years. He deployed to Somalia, built refugee camps in Panama, fortified military facilities in Hawai'i after 9/11, helped with clean-up efforts after Hurricane Floyd, and supported planning exercises to address a hostage crisis in Peru.

There wasn't much Floyd couldn't handle. However, a short brush with the pretrial justice system changed that. In March 2019, Floyd was involved in an unprovoked altercation. He called 911 for help, but when police arrived, Floyd was the one arrested. "The whole situation – it just should have never happened," Floyd said.

Suddenly, Floyd's life changed. Unable to afford a \$350 bail, he was stuck behind bars until his trial. He knew he was innocent, but had no other option.

"I walked out of the courthouse alone and it was a marvelous feeling," Floyd said. "I appreciate The Bail Project because without the organization I would have lost literally two months of my life."

More than 181,000 veterans are estimated to be incarcerated in jails and prisons nationwide each year. After two weeks in jail, The Bail Project paid Floyd's bail and a few weeks later Floyd was found not guilty.





MARTINO

Martino, a 21-year-old Black transgender woman, spent two weeks in jail because she could not afford the \$200 bail amount the judge had set against her for two nonviolent misdemeanors that were eventually dropped.

At the all-male section of the Hamilton County Jail, Martino feared for her life. She overheard sexual threats and experienced isolation as others refused to sit next to her. Martino tried to remain invisible. She skipped mealtime and didn't take showers. Unless she found a way to pay bail, Martino would continue living in fear of being physically or sexually assaulted.

Martino said her experience in jail has motivated her to start fresh. "I want my time to matter. And I've remembered that I love myself," she said.

These fears were substantiated. According to a study published by the National Institute of Corrections, transgender women who are placed behind bars with men are 13

times more likely to be sexually assaulted than cisgender men.

After two weeks in jail, The Bail Project team in Cincinnati paid her bail and connected her to supportive services. Martino made it to all of her court dates and her charges were dropped a month after we secured her release.





LEAH

Growing up, Leah, 25, was determined to never allow her mental health conditions to stand in the way of her dreams. But when Leah was arrested as a consequence of a mental health emergency, she worried her goals were no longer possible.

Leah was soon swept into a complex and confusing legal system consisting of jails, mental health diversion programs, and court appearances. She is not alone. Each year, up to two million people experiencing a mental health crisis are booked into jails and prisons.

"I was told I would get mental health help at the jail, but I didn't," Leah said. "Instead, I was put in an anti-suicide jacket and kept alone in a cell."

Thankfully, Leah's public defender connected her with The Bail Project. Our team provided her with court notifications

and free transportation to court. As a result, Leah was able to put her case behind her.

Now, as a licensed nursing assistant, Leah is determined to help others who struggle with their mental health. "I want to help change things around for people like me," she said.





Opening its doors in 2019, The Bail Project's site in Chicago provided free bail assistance and pretrial support to nearly 1,500 people. Our work, which produced essential data on a freedom-based pretrial model, played a key role in the broader movement, driven by local stakeholders and grassroots organizations, to eliminate cash bail in the state. In September 2023, we were proud to "put ourselves out of business" when Illinois made history by becoming the first state in the country to completely eliminate cash bail by enacting the Pretrial Fairness Act into law.

As powerful as this legislation is, we know that the long-term success and sustainability of bail reform requires developing systems that support people when they are released from jail. In partnership with the Lawndale Christian Legal Center in Chicago, The Bail Project **invested \$2.5 million** to establish a pilot project for Chicagoans released pretrial. This pilot has served **3,000 people with outstanding results:** clients have returned to over 95% of court appearances and 64% had their cases dismissed. We believe that our Chicago pilot and the Pretrial Fairness Act can be a blueprint for the nation on how to pass thoughtful legislation to eliminate wealth-based detention while also building supportive services that help people successfully navigate the pretrial system.

CHALLENGE MET: RESPONSE TO GEORGIA SB 63

While there is plenty to celebrate, significant challenges to ending wealth-based detention remain. In 2024, Georgia doubled-down on the harmful use of cash bail by enacting SB 63. This law sets a dangerous precedent that significantly expands wealth-based detention by requiring judges to set cash bail for over thirty new offenses – including nonviolent misdemeanors – while severely restricting the activity of charitable bail organizations like The Bail Project. State lawmakers have all-but-guaranteed that more Georgians will be incarcerated simply because they cannot afford bail.

The Bail Project worked closely with state partners to oppose these regressive changes, provide data, and educate the public through media and advocacy. Thanks to our collective efforts, there has been a partial victory: a preliminary injunction in a lawsuit brought by the ACLU of Georgia allowed The Bail Project to temporarily resume charitable bail operations pending a final decision by the court. With the help of our partners, we will continue to fight against this and other regressive pretrial legislation across the country.



POLICY CAMPAIGNS

Guarding Rights and Advancing Equity

In 2024, The Bail Project centered its efforts on several policy campaigns to advance pretrial justice and defend against regressive efforts that would increase the use of cash bail and wealth-based detention. Here are some highlights:

Federal: We developed a comprehensive federal grant guide to help local governments and nonprofit organizations improve community-based pretrial services by accessing funding opportunities for transportation assistance, mental health services, housing assistance, and more.

Texas: The Bail Project educated lawmakers and the public on the success of local bail reforms in Harris County (home to Houston), testified in opposition to restrictions of charitable bail organizations, and advocated for the improvement of statewide pretrial data collection and reporting.

Michigan: The Bail Project co-led a bipartisan coalition that drafted, introduced, and championed eight bills to vastly improve Michigan's pretrial system. We also organized a public education campaign to highlight the need for statewide reform and amplify the success of Detroit's bail reforms.

Florida: Florida is the only state that requires the automatic deduction of fines and fees from bail payments. The Bail Project worked with lawmakers and partners to introduce a bill to ensure third-parties like family members and charitable bail organizations get their full bail payment back when a person returns to court.

TX MI



GENERATING EVIDENCE IN TULSA

Researchers at The Bail Project set out to challenge the belief that money is a necessary component of our pretrial system. Drawing on public data, we retrospectively studied more than 3,000 people arrested and booked into Tulsa County's jail over one year.

Our analysis, which adds to a growing body of research, found that **pretrial support more effectively ensures a person's return to court than paying a cash bond.** Other highlights from this research include:

- People released without any of their own money on the line do just as well as others. Court outcomes for people released by bail bond agents are no better than those for people who are supported by The Bail Project or those who pay bail themselves.
- People released pretrial take fewer guilty pleas. We now have more evidence that pretrial freedom leads to better court outcomes, among many other benefits. In contrast, being incarcerated pretrial inside dangerous, inhumane jails only increases the pressure to plead guilty.
- Judges treat those who don't use their own cash more harshly. When it comes to missed court
 dates, those released by bail bond agents are often spared from bench warrants, while those
 who pay bail themselves or are supported by The Bail Project face stricter penalties. This unequal
 treatment can mean legally innocent people are exposed to unnecessary incarceration and
 expensive court fines and fees.

Money bail is neither necessary nor effective in incentivizing people to return to court.

Percentage of individuals in Tulsa that attended **all** required court dates by release type

Financial Obligation for Release

43%

Individual Paid Bail Bond Agent to Post Bail for Release

29%

Individual Paid Cash Bail for Release

No Financial Obligation for Release

58%

Individual Released through The Bail Project's Support

45%

Individual Released on Recognizance

41%

Individual Released on Pretrial Supervision

SHAPING THE NARRATIVE FOR LASTING CHANGE

To make strides in the battle for hearts and minds, we need to leverage the powerful influence of the media. When our ideas are consistently shared through the press, radio, and TV, we can shape public opinion and drive pretrial justice forward.

Through our media relations and publications, we are mainstreaming a compelling narrative about the harms of wealth-based detention and leading the way toward a fairer, safer, and more just pretrial system. This year alone, we raised our voices and amplified The Bail Project's work through 55 pieces of print journalism and 12 op-eds and letters – an impact that will only continue to grow in the years to come. This work highlights our expertise and common-sense policy proposals, and connects us with you – the people who hold the power to enact real change. By building broad support for our solutions, we are paving the way for policy and practice reforms that can meaningfully improve the lives of the tens of thousands of people incarcerated daily simply because they cannot afford bail.

As our voices grow louder, calls for a future where no one is incarcerated simply because of the size of their bank account will become increasingly difficult to ignore.



ELEVATING VOICES, BUILDING INFLUENCE

The Bail Project is dedicated to elevating the voices of those impacted by cash bail and leveraging the influence of well-known figures to amplify our mission.

Our collaboration with Big Hit and Grammy award-winning producer Hit-Boy illustrates this approach. In the video, "Big Hit: Reuniting with Hit-Boy & Surviving Brutality in L.A. County Jail," we highlighted the personal toll of cash bail through the story of Hit-Boy's reunion with his father after years of separation. As Big Hit powerfully states, "Cash bail is extortion...You're supposed to be innocent until proven guilty. If it was that way, why isn't it free?"

Similarly, Steven Donziger, a renowned human and environmental rights advocate, described his experience receiving the highest bail ever imposed for a misdemeanor. Donziger remarked, "Cash bail is inherently discriminatory and unfair...Everyone should be treated equally regardless of money."

Through these efforts, we're creating a collective force for change, raising awareness, and building a powerful, united movement.







lydiawademanuel Thank You Mel awesome you understand and support this

▼



AD COUNCIL PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Bail Project is proud to announce a partnership with the Ad Council to launch a national campaign of print and TV public service announcements. This collaboration features NBA star Carmelo Anthony, academic and activist Michael Eric Dyson, and actress and LGBTQ+ advocate Leyna Bloom, who will lend their voices to elevate our mission.

This campaign is not just a series of advertisements but a strategic effort to expand our reach and engage new supporters in the fight to end wealth-based detention. Working with these respected figures and leveraging the Ad Council's platform, we have an unprecedented opportunity to grow our movement and create change on a scale we haven't seen before.

SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT

Michael's love for his hometown inspired his support for The Bail Project. When Michael, a retired lawyer, and his husband Chad moved back to Jacksonville, Florida, to raise their two children, he recognized many of the same problems he had seen growing up were still prevalent. One glaring issue was Florida's incarceration problem. "The pretrial incarceration rate in Jacksonville is the highest in Florida," Michael said. "We're one of the top places for incarceration and we wanted to see what we could do about that."

Michael has championed bail reform in Florida through his work as a trustee of The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida and by working alongside local leaders, including the State's Attorney, to impact change. Michael and Chad have prioritized philanthropy as a common practice in their house. Every year, their children are given money to donate to a cause of their choice. This year, both teens chose to support The Bail Project.

"The Community Foundation teaches people about philanthropy and the importance of modeling it. Getting our children involved is a way to help them understand how the world works and how they can make a difference. We visited The Bail Project team in Jacksonville with the kids to see firsthand how the bail process works. It was very eye-opening for them. So, they both wanted to make their charitable contribution to The Bail Project."

Michael pursues positive change in Florida by remaining committed to improving his community and leading by example as he did for his children. There is talk of building a new, even bigger jail in Jacksonville."I am hopeful that we'll have more dialogue about it now," Michael said. "We have a lot of work to do, but I'm glad we're starting someplace."





OUR TEAM

The Bail Project's success would not be possible without the dedication of our staff. Our team, which includes Bail Disruptors, client advocates, policy experts, researchers, and storytellers, embodies a commitment to justice that is both personal and profound. With 66% of our staff identifying as people of color and 64% as women, we bring a wide range of experiences and perspectives, many shaped by personal encounters with the criminal justice system.

Mercy, a Client Support Specialist, exemplifies this commitment. In Tulsa, when a deaf client struggled to understand court proceedings, Mercy stepped in, typing out every detail so our client could actively participate in his defense. Mercy's unwavering support – which showcases our dedication to services beyond bail assistance – was crucial in securing the dismissal of her client's case.

William, our Operations Manager in St. Louis, represents the transformative impact of our work. William was once unable to afford his own bail after being sentenced in the same courthouse where he now advocates for others. His journey from incarceration to leadership within The Bail Project highlights the unity and purpose that drive our mission.

Our staff is the foundation of The Bail Project, working together to create a more just and equitable system. We form a vibrant team of talent and experience, unified in our dedication to ensuring that every person we support has the opportunity to fight their case from a position of freedom. Together, we are moving toward a brighter, more equitable future for all.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

A story of resilience, determination, and coming full circle

As a Bail Disruptor for The Bail Project, Priscilia worked tirelessly in courthouses and jails, advocating for the release of individuals held on bail they couldn't afford. Her incredible work ethic, as well as her ability to relate, afforded Priscilia the deep trust and respect she earned from many of her clients. "When I was working in Compton, I was never confused for an attorney – except by my clients," Priscilia said. "They saw something in me before I saw it in myself."

Priscilia's journey to employment at The Bail Project started with a bold email that read, "Hey, I went through the bail experience myself." Priscilia's connection to the work fueled her passion and commitment to helping others navigate the same system that had once held her back. "It's the clients that really motivate me," Priscilia said. "That's when I feel the most loved and appreciated." One of Priscilia's most memorable experiences as a Bail Disruptor was with Vanessa, a client facing a tough situation. In the midst of a jail interview, Priscilia did something unexpected – she led Vanessa through yoga poses to help calm her nerves. This moment wasn't just about securing Vanessa's release; it was about offering her dignity and connection in a crisis. Today, Priscilia follows Vanessa on TikTok, where she sees her "living her best life."

With the unwavering support of her mentors at The Bail Project, Priscilia took on a new challenge: law school in New York. Latinas make up less than 3% of all lawyers in the United States, so Priscilia knew the path ahead would be challenging. Nonetheless, driven by her dedication to social impact, she persevered.

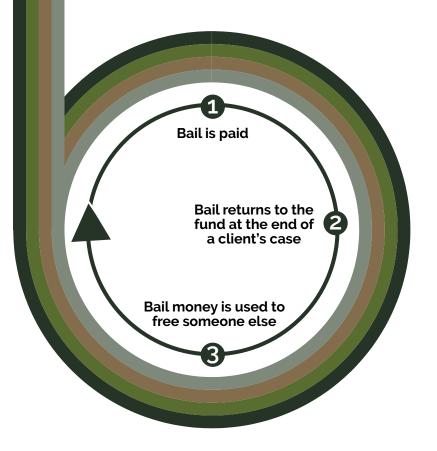


Now, having recently graduated from the CUNY School of Law. Priscilia is starting her career with The Bronx Defenders, a renowned public defense organization also founded by The Bail Project's Robin Steinberg. "I really want to live a meaningful life, being a defender and fighting the good fight," she said. Priscilia's journey from Bail Disruptor to attorney is not just dream fulfillment - it's a testament to what can happen when you believe in yourself and find connections with those who lift you up.

REVOLVING BAIL FUND

50

The Bail Project's revolving bail fund provides immediate relief to thousands of people in need each year. Since 2018, we've paid over \$91 million of bail to help more than 31,000 people. Of closed cases, 93% of bail capital has returned to the revolving bail fund and been used to pay bail for someone else. Our funds revolve at a high rate for a simple reason: bail isn't what makes people return to court – support does!



FINANCIALS

REVENUE

Individual Contributions	4,402,686
Foundation Grants	3,821,302
Corporate Contributions	129,850
Investment Income	1,843,633
Other Income	165,281
= Total Revenue	10,362,752
EXPENSES	
Program	
Bail Assistance & Client Support	6,499,138
Policy Advocacy	1,204,975
Public Education	1,433,268
Research & Evaluation	1,323,215
Total Program Expenses	10,460,596
Administrative	
Management & General	3,219,744
Fundraising	784,313
Total Administrative Expenses	4,004,057
= Total Expenses	14,464,653
Excess of Operating Revenues Over Operating Expenses	-4,101,901
Net Assets at Beginning of Year	71,832,492
NET ASSETS AT END OF YEAR	67,730,591

Financials are pre-audit.

