



CARPLS RECEIVES CANNABIS EXPUNGEMENT GRANT FROM THE ILLINOIS EQUAL JUSTICE FOUNDATION

For Immediate Release

July 14, 2020 - Chicago, Ill. - CARPLS, Chicago's largest provider of free legal aid, received a \$400,000 grant from the Illinois Equal Justice Foundation (IEJF) for their Cannabis Expungement Grant program.

Funding for the Cannabis Expungement Grant program was made possible by the passage of the historic Cannabis Regulation & Tax Act in 2019 by the Illinois General Assembly. "The Act was a national model for its focus on addressing the past effects of the war on drugs and the communities most impacted by these failed policies," said the IEJF in a statement.

CARPLS will develop and staff a multi-channel entry point for Illinoisans seeking relief for cannabis convictions. CARPLS will determine eligibility for conviction relief, refer eligible individuals to network members, and provide guidance for those seeking to represent themselves. The online portal of network members will ensure a streamlined experience for those seeking assistance for cannabis convictions.

On the day before recreational cannabis became legal in Illinois, Gov. J.B. Pritzker announced he was pardoning more than 11,000 people who had been convicted of low-level marijuana crimes. Pritzker touted the social equity elements and said the purpose of the new legislation was to "maximize equity for generations to come."

"With CARPLS' portal, we have the opportunity to fill a massive need in our community and to begin to right systemic wrongs our country is facing," said Allen Schwartz, CARPLS Executive Director. "Communities of color have been disproportionately affected by cannabis laws. We know this project will have a sweeping impact on our existing and future clients, and that this portal will empower people affected by cannabis convictions to move forward in their lives."

The IEJF awarded \$1.46 million in grants to 22 organizations across Illinois. View the full list of grantees here: <https://iejf.org/press-room/newsletters/>.

About CARPLS

Serving 1 out of 4 legal aid cases in Cook County, CARPLS provides the greatest number of people with direct access to a free or low-cost attorney consultation. CARPLS delivered more than 55,000 free legal consultations this past fiscal year via our legal aid hotlines and four court-based advice desks, resolving 85% of cases in-house and referring 15% of cases to 40 legal service partners. CARPLS also operates a statewide hotline providing legal services to thousands of veterans, service members, and their families as part of the Illinois Armed Forces Legal Aid Network (IL-AFLAN).

To make a donation, visit carpls.org/general-donation/.

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