



Philadelphia Bail Fund

# 2018 Report to the Community

## Dear supporters,

Every day, hundreds of Philadelphians sit in jail awaiting trial, convicted of no crime other than an inability to pay the cash bail required for their freedom. In America's poorest big city and across the country, this system of wealth-based detention disproportionately impacts vulnerable communities and people of color, and ignores the promise of a presumption of innocence.

The Philadelphia Bail Fund is a revolving fund that posts bail for people who are indigent and cannot afford bail. Our goal is to keep families and communities together and vigorously advocate for the end to cash bail in Philadelphia.

When we paid our first bail in January 2018, it was for a mother eight months pregnant with her second child. The \$2,500 cash bail was unaffordable for this young mother. Without access to money, she would have been detained in jail for over 65 days, given birth to her child from jail, and be separated from her family all before ever being convicted of a crime. Instead, she returned home within 24 hours, returned to work, delivered her baby, and her case was later dismissed.

In 2018, the Philadelphia Bail Fund freed 69 of our neighbors. Yet, many more remained locked up because they could not afford bail. That is why beyond our work to free those we can, we continue to advocate for a world in which our fund doesn't need to exist. There is bubbling momentum for real reform in Philadelphia, but we must continue to hold the stakeholders of our legal system accountable. Despite a progressive District Attorney and local policymakers who decry the use of cash bail, roughly 40 percent of people arrested in Philadelphia still need to pay money for their freedom.

Our work proves that there is a better, more just, and far less costly way: Replace cash bail with simple court reminders and transportation support. Provide referrals to additional services and community support when needed. This approach has worked for us — over 90 percent of our clients show up to court with none of their own money on the line as “incentive” — and it can work for our city.

Thank you for your support.

**Maia Jachimowicz**  
Board President

**Malik Neal**  
Board Vice President

**Arjun Malik**  
Board Treasurer

**Ted Callon**  
Board Secretary

# #EndMoneyBail

## In 2018...

January 29  
1st bail paid!



February 21  
District Attorney Larry Krasner announces that his office will no longer pursue cash bail for 25 low-level offenses.

February 2  
Philadelphia City Council passes resolution to end cash bail, sending the message that local policymakers want real change. Cash bail decisions are made by the First Judicial District with input from the District Attorney's Office and Public Defender's Office.

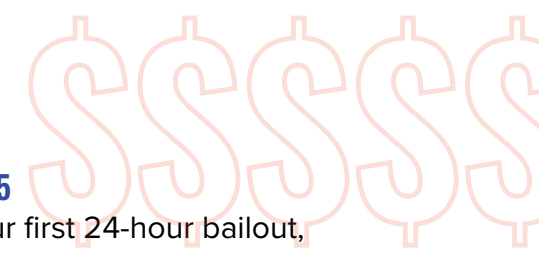
April 21  
We launch Philadelphia Bail Watch in partnership with Pennsylvanians for Modern Courts. This court watch program encourages members of the public to observe bail hearings, and provide their perceptions of the process to advocate for reform.



October 10  
The courts do away with the 30 percent fee kept on most bail deposits. Previously, the courts would keep a fraction of bail money regardless of case outcome. The elimination of this practice for those who meet all their court obligations means there is no more "arrest tax" and the Bail Fund's dollars are truly revolving.



December 15  
We hold our first 24-hour bailout, using volunteer support to be present during all hearings from 8:00am on December 15 through 8:00am on December 16. We observe 97 hearings and free 15 of our neighbors who needed our support.



The progress that took place in 2018 would not have been possible without the tireless work of numerous local community groups and individual organizers who are united in advocating for an end to cash bail.

October 16  
After more than 75 volunteers observed more than 600 bail hearings, we release the Philadelphia Bail Watch report, detailing the perceptions of volunteers and clients. There is consensus that the cash bail system in Philadelphia is unjust and in need of a major overhaul.

# #FreeThemAll

## how we work

### --- identify people who need our support ---

Through Philadelphia Bail Watch, we observe bail hearings at the Criminal Justice Center. Philly Bail Watch is intended to expose the public to the unjust bail practices in Philadelphia while holding court actors accountable, and also allows us to identify people who need our help. We look for individuals who are assigned a public defender as an indicator that bail is likely unaffordable.

### --- pay bail ---

By observing bail hearings, we are able to intervene at the earliest possible moment. Research shows that just a few days of pretrial detention can have detrimental effects on an individual, including the loss of a job, housing, or custody of children. By paying bail immediately after it is set, or through community referrals within 72 hours of arrest, we aim to mitigate these negative effects for our neighbors. Once bail is posted, volunteers travel to police precincts or jails to meet clients upon release.

### --- provide support & transportation ---

We stay in touch with people to provide support as they fight their cases from the outside, sending court reminders and transportation assistance to empower everyone to meet court obligations. When needs arise, we help connect clients to other social services in the Philadelphia area who can best serve them. At the conclusion of eligible cases, we refer clients to expungement clinics. When bail money is returned to the fund, we use it to free more people.

## our impact



over 90% of clients appear for their court dates

This debunks the argument that cash bail is needed as an incentive for people to show up for court.



95% of bails were paid in time to free people within 48 hours of arrest

This timeliness protects a person's ability to keep their job, home, and custody of their children.



nearly 7,000 days of pretrial detention are prevented

The average case in Philadelphia lasts 100 days, so the combined impact of bringing our clients home means nearly 19 years of unnecessary pretrial detention are avoided.

# What our clients say

**“Thank you for everything you have done and are doing to help me through this.** It was a really bad experience getting locked up for nothing, but not having to do it alone and deal with all of the repercussions of a screwed-up system is major.”

**“I am very grateful for your work.** This is a very difficult time for me and my family and your help really matters.”

“If it weren’t for you all, I’d still be locked up. **Instead, I’m working.**”

“I appreciate everything you guys have done from the beginning. **This is a very trying experience but your help makes it a little more bearable.**”

Thank you to the donors and volunteers who make this work possible and share our vision of a Philadelphia without money bail.

## Get Involved

### Observe with Philly Bail Watch

See upcoming Philadelphia Bail Watch training dates and stay up-to-date on our observations:

[phillybailfund.org/bailwatch](http://phillybailfund.org/bailwatch)

### Help with bailouts

Commit to helping free our neighbors on a monthly basis. Email:

[info@phillybailfund.org](mailto:info@phillybailfund.org)

## Donate

Help us pay bail for someone who could not otherwise afford it:

[phillybailfund.org/take-action](http://phillybailfund.org/take-action)

## Contact us

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