



# Prisoners' Have Rights



For over 35 years, Uptown People's Law Center has fought on behalf of tenants facing eviction or an unjust landlord, individuals seeking Social Security disability, and prisoners denied their basic human rights.

We are lawyers and community advocates providing brief service, legal representation, and trainings to the community.

## Who We Are



UPLC is the **only organization** changing Illinois' prison system through class action lawsuits.

We receive and respond to **125+ letters a week** from prisoners. We track these letters and they inform our lawsuits.

We currently have **seven class action lawsuits** against the state of Illinois, listed below. Our lawsuits will ultimately change the Illinois prison system for the better.

## Prisoners' Rights



UPLC **does not practice criminal law**, criminal appeals, post-convictions, or habeas corpus petitions.

We can't speak to family about any mail or conversations that we have with prisoners, unless we receive **permission in writing** from the prisoner directly.

We respect individual privacy and as legal professionals, anything we are told by prisoners is confidential unless they tell us otherwise. The only way for an individual in prison to contact UPLC is to write us a letter explaining the situation.

## You Should Know



**UPLC**

UPTOWN PEOPLE'S LAW CENTER

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## Mental Health Reform in Illinois Prisons:

There are 11,000 prisoners in Illinois with a mental illness. These individuals are often “treated” by being placed in a solitary confinement cell until they tell prison staff that they feel better.

In 2016, UPLC settled a lawsuit with the Illinois Department of Corrections to **completely reform the treatment of prisoners with mental illness.**

These reforms will include:

- Two hospital-level mental health facilities for mentally ill prisoners
- A significant increase in trained mental health staff
- A thorough intake process to determine past medical history and medication needs.
- Prisoner visits with a mental health professional at least every 90 days.

UPLC's staff is monitoring the implementation of these reforms. Last year, our staff and attorneys visited and heard the stories of hundreds of prisoners. Progress is slow, but we are **already seeing changes** to this system. We will continue to ensure that prisoners' voices are heard.

## Beyond the Law:

An important part of the UPLC mission is to **reeducate the public** about prisons.

We work with groups such as United Voices for Prisoners, Black and Pink, and Communities and Relatives of Illinois Incarcerated Children to increase our impact and better understand what the community needs.

## How to Help:

1. Donate to **fund our work** by sending us a check or visiting [uplcchicago.org](http://uplcchicago.org).
2. Join **United Voices for Prisoners**, an organization committed to ending solitary confinement, by calling 773-362-4608.
3. Donate books to **Chicago Books to Women in Prison** by visiting their website: [chicagobwp.org](http://chicagobwp.org).
4. Get an **LGBTQ pen pal** at [blackandpink.org/pen-pals](http://blackandpink.org/pen-pals).
5. Encourage prisoners you know to write us to share information about what is happening in

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