

# **Community Family Life Services**

**2018 Annual Report**



**Changing the way  
justice-affected women &  
families receive services in  
the District of Columbia**

# Letter from the Director

At Community Family Life Services, we have always put community first – from our name, to our mission, to the way and the why we do what we do. And as executive director at CFLS, my approach has always been to not just be in the community, but to be *of* the community.

To truly serve, and to create the kind of lasting change that helps women and families achieve long-term success, we recognize the importance of meeting people where they are. We recognize the importance of building relationships. We appreciate the need for nuance and value the essence of trust. We provide sustenance and support, and we understand the power of connection. Some say it takes a village. That is what we are building at CFLS, and we are so honored and grateful that you are a part of it.

With your help in 2018, CFLS provided critical services to hundreds of clients facing homelessness, domestic violence, HIV, and the many barriers associated with having a criminal record. You will read some statistics about our work on the next page, but it is the narratives behind the numbers that truly illustrate our impact.

Too often we hear stories that begin like Taneka’s (next page) and Patricia’s (back cover), of women who have lost everything, trying to rebuild their lives while navigating a system filled with restrictions and contradictions. Each circumstance is plainly unique, yet painfully similar – and each need compounded by the next. The uncomfortable process of making personal and situational life changes requires the support of a reliable, compassionate community. Outcomes like Patricia’s are victories that transcend what report data can convey.

A child running to his mother’s arms, a formerly homeless woman unlocking the door to her new apartment, or the first paycheck of a returning citizen making her way back in the world – these are the moments that bring us to work every day. These are the markers of our success.

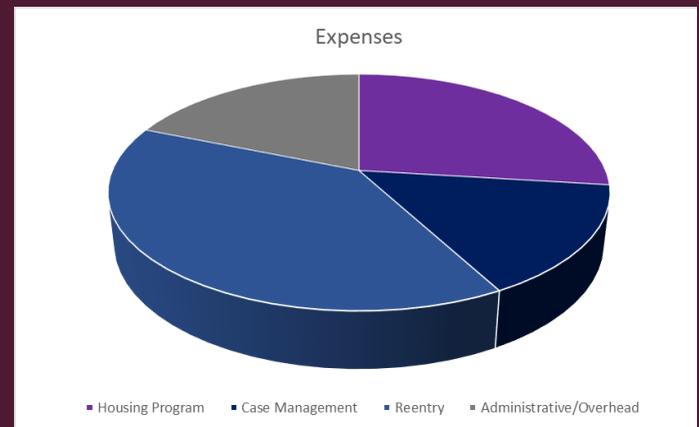
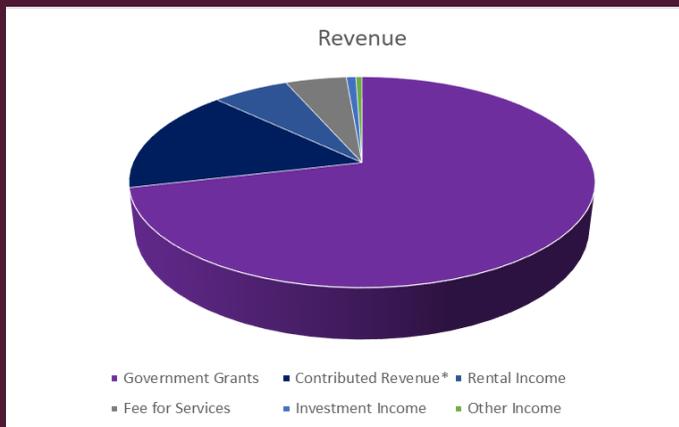
The persistence of our staff, our board members, our partners – and especially our clients – is crucial. So much so that we made it the theme of our signature Visible Voices event in 2018, “Nevertheless, She Persisted.” As we look ahead to our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration in 2019 (see our back cover to save the date), we do so with momentum and unwavering optimism bolstered by your support and belief that together, CFLS can, and will, make a difference for another fifty years to come.



Thank you,

Ashley McSwain, LGSW, MSOD  
Executive Director

## FY 2018 Financials



Government Grants	\$1,721,554
Contributed Revenue*	\$388,682
Rental Income	\$153,350
Fee for Services	\$122,275
Investment Income	\$19,118
Other Income	\$12,326

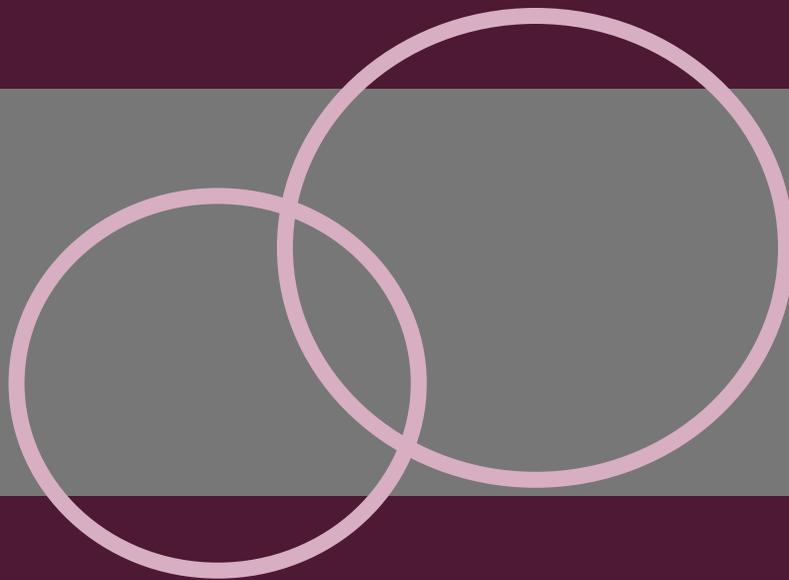
Reentry	\$889,252
Housing Program	\$613,277
Administrative/Overhead	\$427,870
Case Management	\$344,817

**Total** **\$2,275,216**

**Total** **\$2,417,305**

\*includes individual donors and foundations

# Nevertheless, She Persisted: Taneka's Story



It took Taneka a year and a half to find a job after she was released from jail. On top of it, she was racing against a looming court deadline to secure employment in order to get her children out of foster care. Taneka spent two years incarcerated and nearly twice that amount of time trying to regain custody of her children. The conditions of her status as a returning citizen made the process even more difficult.

Finding housing was proving to be impossible. She was ineligible for family housing at nonprofit organizations because she did not have custody of her children; however, she couldn't get custody of her children until she found housing. "The whole process was eating me up inside. I was so stressed out, I didn't know what to do."

Meanwhile, her job search was equally challenging and disheartening. She interviewed with dozens of employers and each time was turned away – that is, once they conducted a background check.

"I was discouraged at first," she explained. "Eighty percent of my interviews were perfect. They liked me; right off the bat, we hit it off. But once they do the background check..." She shrugged. "I think I went on six or seven interviews in one month, and all of them turned me down."

Then Taneka learned about CFLS, and the tide began to turn. "Here, they literally helped me every step of the way," Taneka said. CFLS accepted Taneka into Trinity Arms housing while she worked to get custody back. "No matter what I

asked for, or what was going on, they were literally right by my side the entire time."

CFLS matched Taneka with a reentry case manager, employment specialist, and mental health therapist, and enrolled her in our parenting program. Her case manager accompanied her to court and wrote multiple letters of support to help reunify her family. Working with the therapist, Taneka finally felt she could process all the trauma and pain she had experienced throughout her life.

The supportive environment and empathy of CFLS service providers fueled Taneka's transformation. When other people showed her they cared about her success, she began thinking differently about her self-worth. "It made me step back and reevaluate myself."

Taneka successfully completed the parenting program curriculum, learning a lot about herself in the process.

"The one-on-one [parenting sessions] with Miss Maesha, I really miss those. She would bring stuff out of me that I didn't even know I was harboring inside. She helped me understand my kids."

It has been a full year since Taneka reunited with her children, now ages 10 and 11. "Everything came back so naturally. It was like we were never apart." Taneka still works full time and has recently decided to go back to school.

"I have been shown I am worth more than what I was doing [before]. My life is stress-free, and I can enjoy being a mother."



# Quick Look: Our 2018 Events



First annual Kids' Book Bash



Second annual Visible Voices fundraiser with our keynote speaker, The Honorable Donna F. Edwards



Family2Family waterpark outing



Our Mother's Day self-care event with a motivational talk from Gem4Life



Annual holiday gifts program

## Board of Directors

Gary Randolph, Chair  
Mannone Butler, Vice Chair  
Derek Ford, Treasurer  
Jacquelyn Bengfort, Secretary  
Jim Hines  
Ronald Morgan (Immediate Past Chair)  
Wolfgang Schaefer

# The Need

832%



Nationally, the female prison population has increased 832% over the last 30 years.

2,500



2,500 women are processed through the D.C. Department of Corrections each year, which is 8-10% of the D.C. Jail population.

77% 

Seventy-seven percent of incarcerated mothers say they provided most of the day-to-day care for their children prior to incarceration.

When women return home after incarceration, they often do not have the same supports that men do. They need safe housing as an alternative to returning to unstable or abusive situations. They need to address trauma that led to or occurred during their incarceration. And they need assistance reuniting with their children. Our work starts inside the D.C. jail, halfway house, and federal prison facilities to develop relationships and connect women to critical resources.

## Summary: Our Work in 2018

450

women participated in our workshops directly in Bureau of Prison facilities, the Fairview halfway house, and the Correctional Treatment Facility.

They learned employment skills, HIV prevention, and about the dynamics of abuse, power and control in domestic violence situations.

151

reentry women received meaningful case management to make more informed choices, plan their success, and think more deeply about their circumstances.

Recidivism rate for CFLS clients: **19%**

500

community members in need accessed clothing, hygiene items, food, referrals, and baby diapers.

**13%** were reentry women.



86

families received support from our home visitors' program and parenting group sessions.

30

children in our program had an incarcerated parent at some point.

6

parents were reunited with their children.

171

children received backpacks and school supplies.



207

people received one-on-one resume assistance, job readiness coaching, and connections to available jobs.

**81%** were reentry clients.

**88%** of those placed in jobs retained their position at least 30+ days.



174

people were provided HIV tests.

53

clients were provided medical case management to improve their access to healthcare.

# Together at Last

In December 2018, Patricia boarded a plane for Utah to see her daughters for the first time in ten years. She was elated to wrap them in her arms, but she was also scared. Would they forgive her? Should she hope for their acceptance and understanding? How could she express her love for them and her own sense of loss?

“You can’t make up for time lost,” said Patricia, who spent 14 months incarcerated. “And you can’t pick up where you left off.”

Two decades ago, Patricia was the owner of a thriving small business, the proud mother of two beautiful girls, and had saved enough money to buy a house. At the same time, she was suffering emotional abuse from her husband.

“I didn’t have a loving family growing up,” she shared. “So I didn’t know what it meant to be treated right.” After seventeen years of marriage, Patricia had a “moment of clarity” and left her abusive spouse.

In retaliation, her husband took her youngest daughter from her and cut off all contact. Patricia was devastated. She did not have the support system or tools to cope with the trauma she experienced in childhood and the added stress of her divorce, so she turned to drugs and alcohol to ease her pain. The resulting downward spiral led to the loss of her business, homelessness, and incarceration.

When Patricia was released, she could not turn to her family for support and had become socially isolated. She first came to Community Family Life Services seeking hygiene

products and clothing from our Drop-In Center. CFLS connected Patricia with our reentry case manager, who helped her complete emergency housing forms, get a cell phone, and apply for her birth certificate. From there, Patricia moved into our Milestone transitional housing program and a CFLS employment specialist aided her job search. Last July, Patricia secured employment at a restaurant, and began working six days a week to save the money for a plane ticket to see her daughters.



Patricia spent three weeks reuniting and visiting with her daughters, now ages 28 and 20. Her eyes lit up when she spoke about the time they shared, which presented an opportunity for healing. When her youngest daughter assured her, “The past is in the past,” Patricia was finally able to release some of the guilt she had been holding for losing so much time.

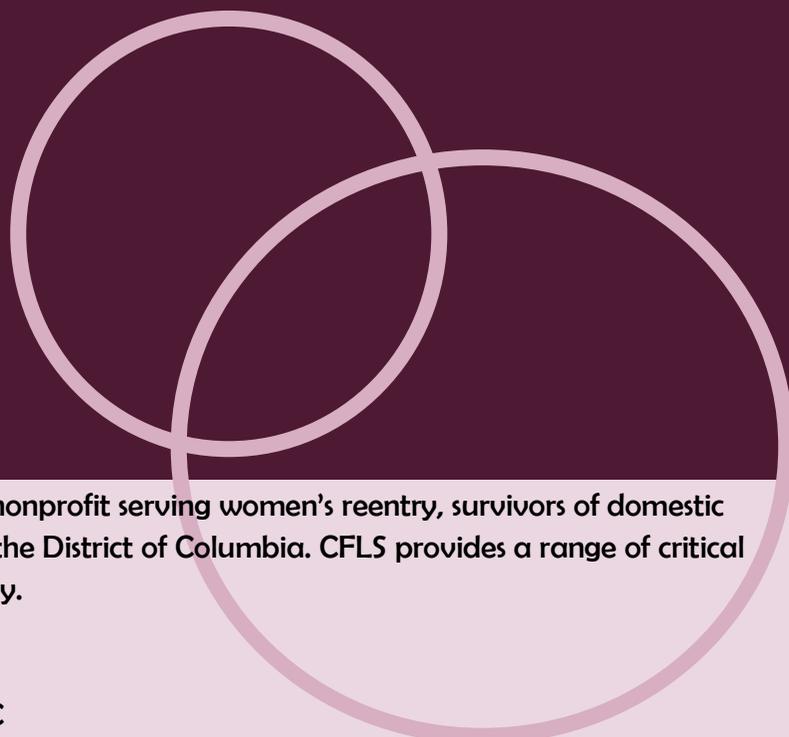
Now, in place of regret and loss, Patricia feels whole and hopeful. She hopes to eventually start a family business with her daughters. As she works toward her goal, CFLS will continue to champion her success.

## Save the Date!

Our 50th Anniversary Visible Voices event is happening on:

Wednesday, September 25, 2019

Time: 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM



Community Family Life Services is a registered 501(c)3 nonprofit serving women’s reentry, survivors of domestic violence, and individuals & families living in poverty in the District of Columbia. CFLS provides a range of critical services to move residents into permanent self-sufficiency.

Donate at [www.cflsdc.org/donate](http://www.cflsdc.org/donate)

Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, & Instagram! @CFLSDC