



**LEGAL
DEFENSE
CLINICS**

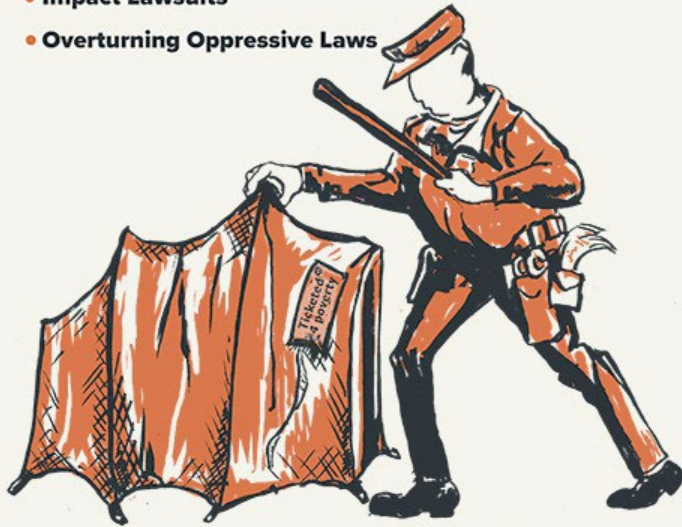
House Keys Not Sweeps

HOUSE KEYS NOT SWEEPS

LEGAL DEFENSE CLINICS



- Individual Representation
- Impact Lawsuits
- Overturning Oppressive Laws



**LAWYERS, ORGANIZERS & POOR PEOPLE WORKING
TOGETHER TO CONFRONT AND DISMANTLE THE
CRIMINALIZATION OF HOMELESSNESS**



UNITE THE FIGHT



Overview

Intros

What the LDCs are / why we need them

LDC Gen Ops manual

Contact info

What are the LDCs?

- **Mission:** The LDC project aims to create **national network of movement-driven** legal clinics dedicated to dismantling the carceral complex of laws and policies that target unhoused communities.
- **The goal:** to strengthen and support the growing movement to decriminalize homelessness by reimagining the relationship of legal work to organizing.
- **How?** By increasing front-line legal support to unhoused communities while fully integrating that legal support into organizing campaigns working to build the power of poor and unhoused people.

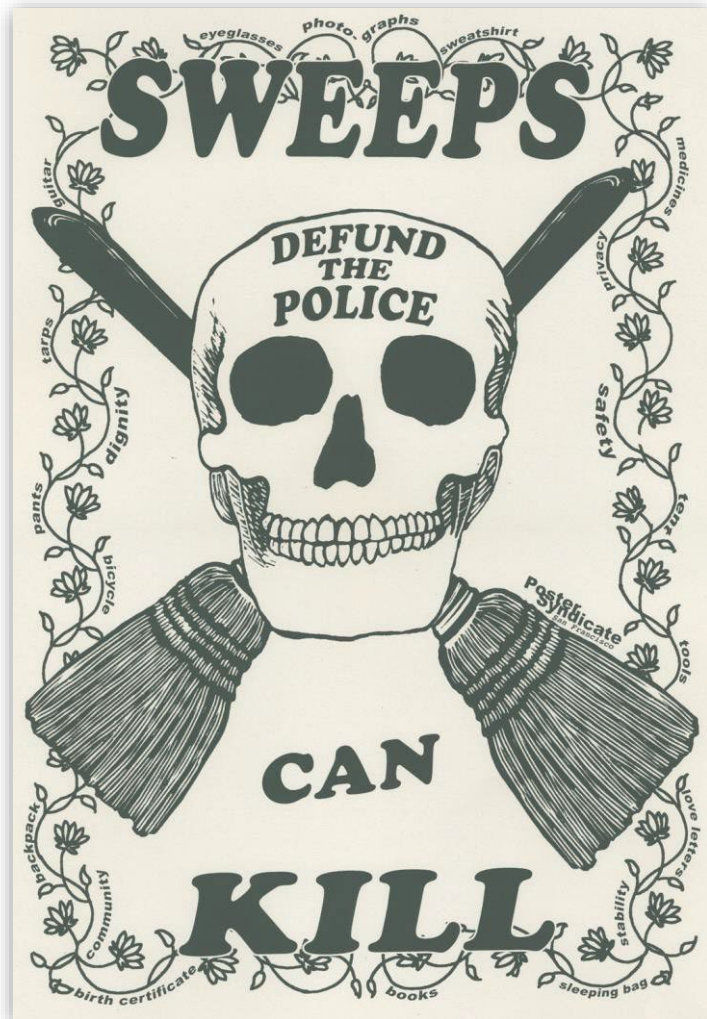


Why the LDCs?



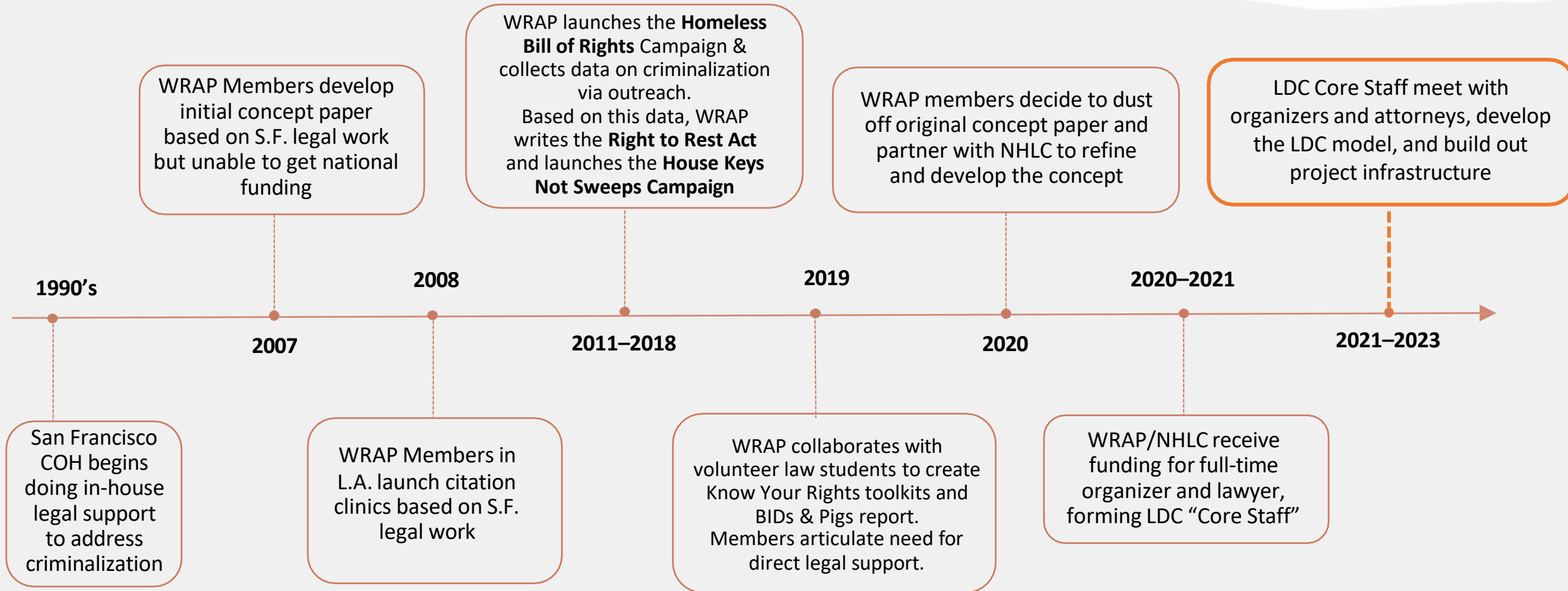
- Criminalization has always been the go-to “solution” for cities/states to address homelessness
- WRAP surveyed ~1700 unhoused people across eight states:
 - 82% harassed by police for sitting
 - 77% harassed for lying down
 - 75% harassed for loitering
 - Only 26% knew safe / legal place to sleep
- **70%** of all US cities currently have anti-homeless laws on the books
 - includes all 60 largest cities
- It's getting much more violent / prevalent
 - growing private industry of policing and warehousing / disappearing unhoused people

Why the LDCs?

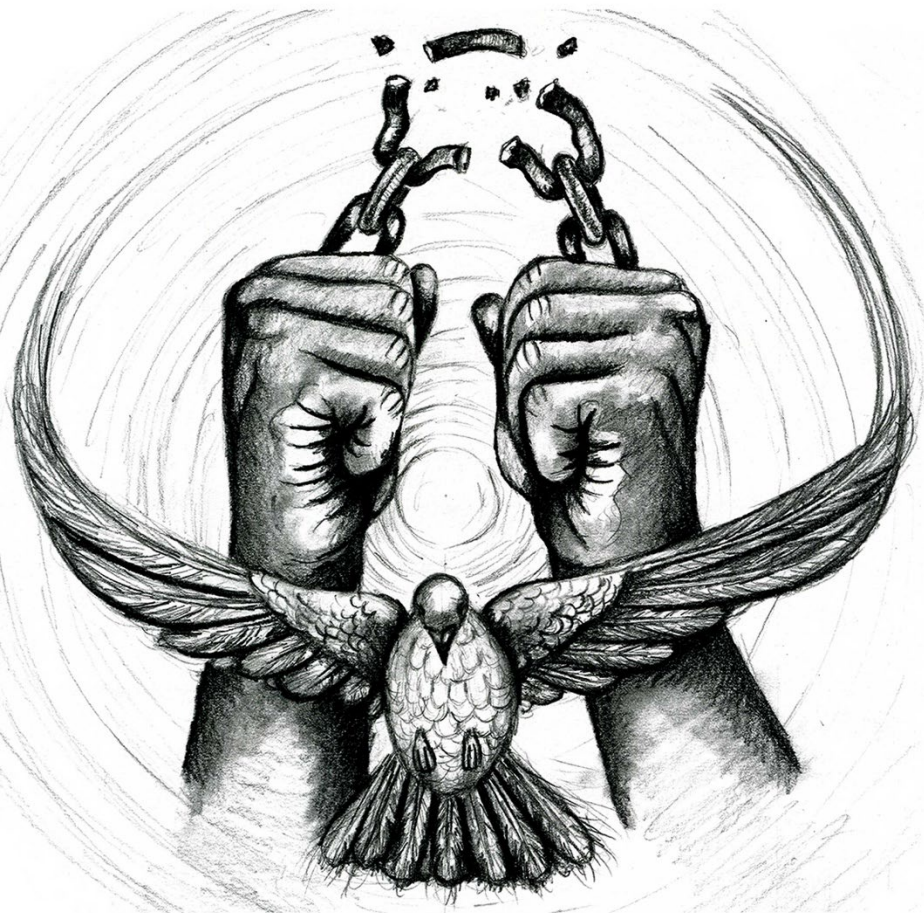


- Current legal support is not working the way communities / organizers need it to (though it's working exactly the way it's designed to).
- Organizers and radical lawyers have attempted different kinds of partnerships over decades, leading to important wins and harm reduction.
BUT...
- Legal support is hard to sustain
- Big resource drain on organizations
- Has not addressed the structural roots of homelessness
- Often perpetuates power imbalances between lawyers and unhoused communities / organizers (e.g., "plaintiff shopping")

History of the LDC Project

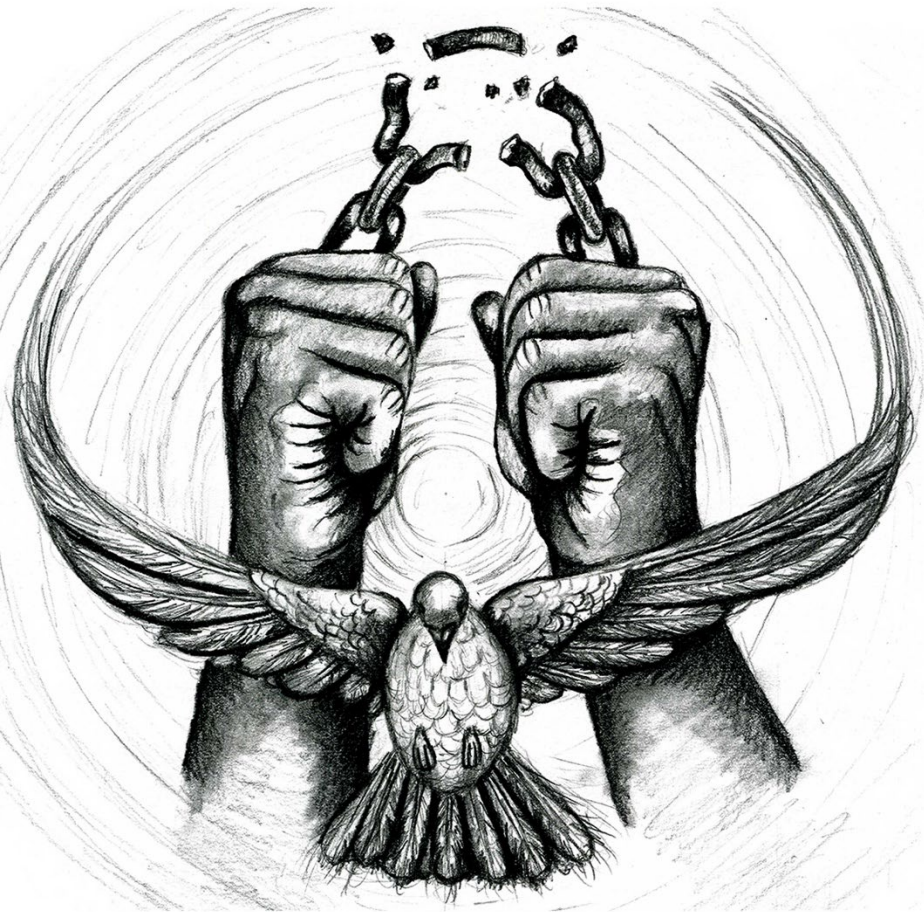


So...what are the LDCs?



1. A **model** and a **process** for providing legal support in a way that helps build power in unhoused communities.
 - **Model** based on decades of collective knowledge
 - **Process** designed to effectuate the goals and values of the model.
 - Core concepts can be applied in other contexts:
 - directed by street outreach
 - flexible and adaptable
 - “owned” by organizers + connected to larger campaigns
 - LDC materials are available to anyone.

So...what are the LDCs?



2. The LDCs *are also* **a network of local clinics** that agree to:

- use this model and process
- share information and resources.
- collaborate strategically across three levels:
 - Local sites
 - National Core Staff
 - LDC Working Group

Core Concepts of the LDC Model

- Directed by street outreach
- Flexible and adaptable
- “Owned” by accountable community organizers and connected to larger campaigns



Role of street outreach

- Heart and foundation of LDC model
- In the LDC model, street outreach:
 - determines the focus and structure of each local LDC
 - mechanism for evaluating how (and if) the LDCs are meeting community needs & what may need to change
 - gets people into the clinics AND into the bigger organizing work in their communities

LDC Example Initial Outreach Questions

Hi, my name is _____ and I organize with _____. We are conducting a survey to learn about the tools and tactics that our local government is using to harass poor people and people without housing. This will help us set our priorities for a project that we are currently working on where we hope to offer free legal support and advice to people affected by the criminalization of poverty and homelessness. The survey will last about ___ minutes. Would you be willing to participate?

Section 1: Experiences with Criminalization

1. Have you been targeted by law enforcement, private security, sanitation etc. for "crimes" related to being unhoused (such as sitting or sleeping, or possessing a tent)?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Unsure

2. (If Yes or Unsure) Can you describe some of the activities you have been targeted for, and who specifically was targeting you?

* Where targeting equals citations, arrests, searches, move-along orders, physical violence, towed vehicles, "sweeps" generally, etc.

What / Who	Law Enforcement (cops, fire, park rangers, etc)	Private Security (includes "community ambassadors")	City Employees (such as sanitation workers)	Other Please describe below:
Sitting				
Sleeping or Lying down				
"Loitering"				
Trespassing				
Possessing property				
Parking or living in a vehicle				
Panhandling				
Other:				

** For the interviewer: Follow up on what the end result was for each section in the chart (e.g., I was swept, I received a citation, I was arrested, etc.)**

LDC scope a result of outreach



- WRAP's criminalization outreach →
- **Seven LDC issue areas:**
 - Anti-homeless tickets and arrests
 - Parking citations / vehicle tows
 - Stay-away and trespass orders
 - Food sharing bans
 - Harassment by police and private security
 - Property confiscation / destruction
 - Warrants for all of the above
- Can be adapted over time, based on local outreach

Flexible & adaptable

- LDCs are not traditional legal “clinics”
- **“Configurations of legal support”**
 - any legal tool + partnership
- **Benefits:**
 - responsive to community needs
 - can shift over time
 - as simple or complex as needed
 - doesn't rely on any single attorney, org, or funding source

Primer on LDC Legal Configurations

In the LDC model, legal support is not offered in any one static form. Rather, LDC organizers build out a variety of different **legal tools** and **partnerships** with legal workers to meet evolving movement goals and urgent community needs. In this sense, each local LDC functions less like a traditional “legal clinic” and more like a workbench from which local site staff utilize a carefully crafted legal toolbox to address criminalization.

In this toolbox, each possible tool and partnership has its own specialized use and are combined in various **configurations** of legal support to meet discrete goals.

What do we mean by “configurations of legal support”?

We use the term “configuration” to describe any setup through which a legal tactic is used by LDC site staff to meet a legal need. Thinking of the toolbox example again, the term refers both to the specific tools organizers use (i.e., certain tactics or resources) as well as who will use the tool and how they will use it. One of the key features of the LDC model is that local sites have the flexibility and support to pivot between or combine different configurations as needed to meet community and organizing needs.

Directed by Organizing

- Organizers use legal support strategically to advance bigger goals
- The form / focus of legal work is shaped by outreach and organizing strategy.
- Legal workers agree to follow shared **points of unity** and **points of praxis**:
 - lawyers will never, alone, transform the systems that create mass homelessness
 - poor/unhoused people must lead a deeper political transformation
 - role of lawyers is to help build the organizing power of poor/unhoused people

Points of Unity

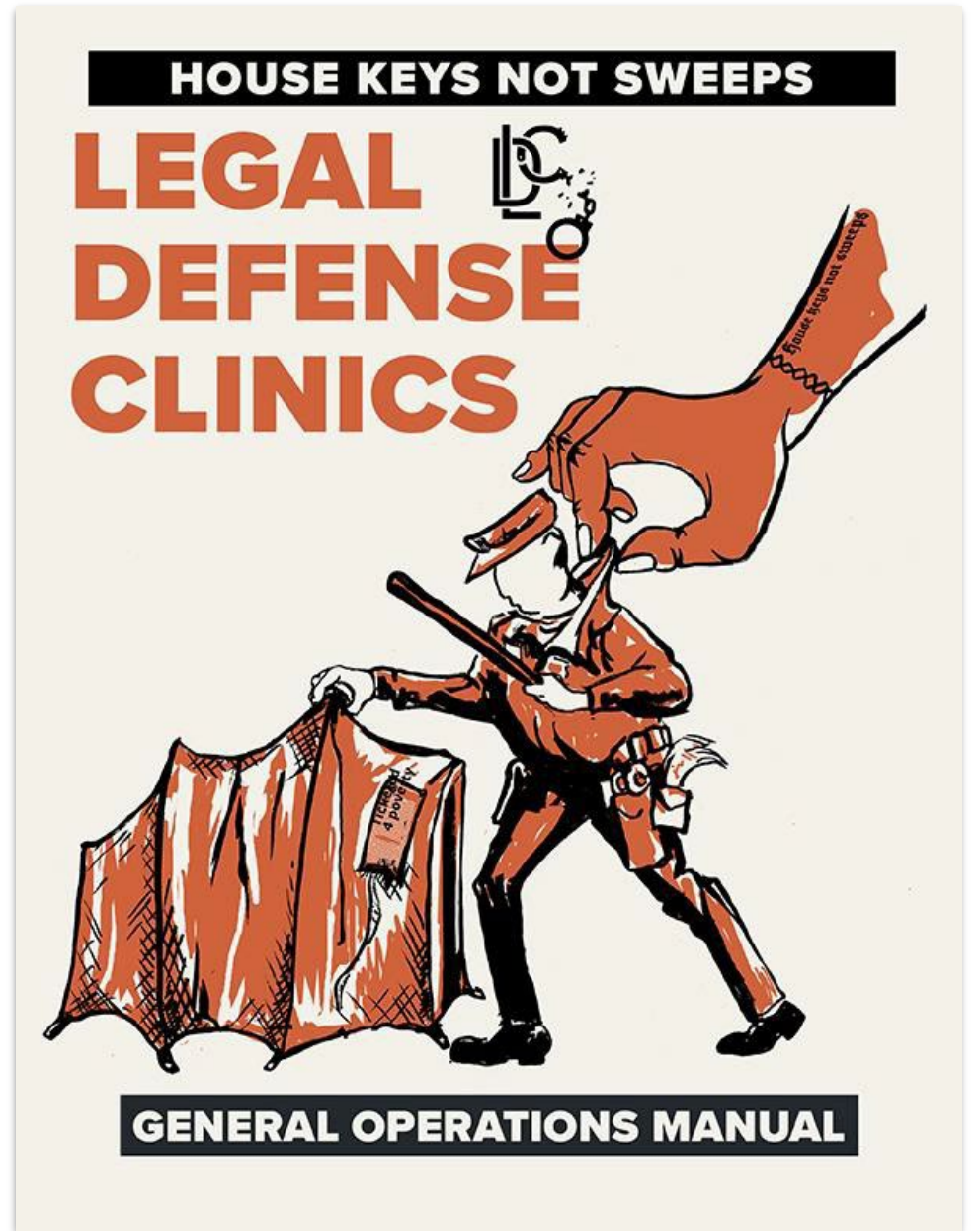
All lawyers who are part of coordinating the LDC Project—at either the local or national level—agree to the following points of unity:

- 1. By default, lawyers are positioned to uphold systems of oppression that drive mass homelessness and the criminalization of poor and unhoused people.**

 - Legal institutions have been developed as tools for advancing and legitimizing racial capitalism and settler colonialism.
 - As a result, all lawyers are positioned to perpetuate that systemic violence simply because we are trained through and work within these institutions.
 - Lawyers who seek to disrupt these projects must engage in an ongoing, intentional practice of reflection-driven action (praxis) that aims to minimize the power of these legal institutions to cause harm.
- 2. Lawyers seeking to end the criminalization of homelessness must work to leverage power to organizing that builds the power of unhoused people to fight for their own liberation.**

 - Based on the above understanding, lawyers alone cannot affect the level of systemic change needed to address the root causes of, and carceral responses to, mass homelessness and poverty.
 - This level of change can only come from movement work which builds the power of poor and unhoused people to meaningfully shape the conditions in their own lives and communities.
 - Lawyers aiming to support this power-building must find ways to leverage their specialized skills and access toward organizing campaigns and strategies.

LDC General Operations Manual



A look inside the manual

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- Movement Lawyering Model
- Primer on Configurations of Legal Support
- Template decision-making chart
- Primer on Legal Rules and the LDC Model



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- STEP 2: Establish Structures For Collaboration.....
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- STEP 4: Strategic Planning Based on Previous Steps.....
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SWEEPS	
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"Push Back" by Art Hazelwood

**IF EVERYONE CAN'T
AFFORD THE RENT**



**THEY SHOULDN'T
FUCKING TAKE
OUR TENT**

Poster
Syndicate



About WRAP



WWW.WRAPHOME.ORG

- Founded in 2005 with the mission to expose and eliminate the root causes of homelessness
- Made up of community organizing groups, all directly accountable to unhoused people in their communities
- *Without Housing Report (2006)*
- Pulling together common threads to build momentum locally and nationally
- Fighting the criminalization of homelessness



NATIONAL
HOMELESSNESS
LAW CENTER

NHLC is a national organization dedicated to fearlessly advancing federal, state and local policies to prevent and end homelessness while fiercely defending the rights of all unhoused persons.

Our team includes attorneys with lived expertise of homelessness, poverty, racism, and other forms of discrimination.



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