

TENNESSEE INNOCENCE PROJECT

2024 ANNUAL REPORT



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

3

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

17

2024 RULE OF LAW AWARD

4

ABOUT TENNESSEE INNOCENCE PROJECT

18

YOUR IMPACT & TIP FINANCIALS

5

STORIES OF JUSTICE

19

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2025

9

LIVES RESTORED BEYOND EXONERATION

20

2024 JOURNEY TO JUSTICE

11

OUR WORK AHEAD

21

OUR GENEROUS SUPPORTERS

14

OUR YEAR IN REVIEW

23

THE POWER OF PERSISTENCE

16

PRO BONO PARTNERS



Tennessee Innocence Project tninnocence.org

Nashville Office: 700 Craighead St, Ste 300 Nashville TN 37204
Memphis Office: 2029 Peabody Ave. Memphis TN 37104
Phone: 615-581-7230 Email: info@tninnocence.org

DIRECTOR'S NOTE



Justice is not an abstract concept that happens on its own. It requires dedicated effort, unwavering commitment, and the courage to challenge a system that often prioritizes finality over fairness. At the Tennessee Innocence Project, we've seen firsthand how justice can be restored when we refuse to accept wrongful convictions as final.

2024 was a landmark year for TIP, marked by profound victories and stark reminders of the work that lies ahead. We secured the exoneration of Ricky Lee Webb after 46 years of wrongful imprisonment—making him the fourth-longest serving exoneree in U.S. history. We also celebrated the exoneration of Artis Whitehead after 21 years. Together, these two men lost 67 years of their lives to wrongful convictions.

The landscape of justice in Tennessee is being transformed by our presence. Since 1989, there have only been 36 exonerations in Tennessee. Remarkably, nine of these were secured by TIP in the last five years. That is 25% of all known exonerations in Tennessee, all accomplished since our founding. This isn't just a statistic—it's a testament to what's possible when dedicated resources and expertise are applied to the fight for justice.

There is a direct correlation between boots on the ground and exonerations. There have always been innocent people in prison in Tennessee. There just were not enough people fighting on their behalf. The dramatic increase in exonerations over the last five years is because we now have a dedicated team working tirelessly to uncover and correct these injustices.

Our impact extends beyond the numbers. As we grow, we can represent more clients. That means we can fight to bring more innocent people home to their families. Critically, it also means these stories of innocence can lead to real change. There are lessons to learn from these tragic cases and opportunities to improve our system of justice, so no one ever spends time locked up for something they did not do. TIP is changing the landscape of justice in Tennessee, one case at a time, proving that many wrongful convictions have simply gone unexamined and unchallenged for far too long. Each exoneration represents not just a legal victory, but a life restored and hope renewed.

As we look to the future, our commitment remains unwavering. We will continue to fight for every innocent person behind bars, push for essential reforms, and work to prevent future wrongful convictions. We've accomplished a lot in the last few years, but there is still a lot of work to do. Thank you for being in this fight with us.



Jason Gichner
Executive Director



MISSION STATEMENT

To exonerate the wrongfully convicted in Tennessee through rigorous investigation and litigation, while building a more just legal system through education, advocacy, and reform.

VISION STATEMENT

A Tennessee where wrongful convictions are rare, swiftly corrected, and prevented through systemic reforms; where every innocent person has access to justice; and where public trust in the legal system is restored through transparency and accountability.

CORE VALUES

- Justice: We pursue truth and fairness relentlessly, believing that every innocent person deserves freedom
- Excellence: We maintain the highest standards of legal representation and investigative work
- Compassion: We recognize the humanity in every case and provide dignified support to our clients
- Innovation: We pioneer new approaches to identify and prevent wrongful convictions
- Integrity: We uphold the highest ethical standards in our pursuit of justice
- Education: We train the next generation of legal advocates and inform the public about wrongful convictions



STORIES OF JUSTICE RESTORED

RICKY LEE WEBB: 46 YEARS OF INJUSTICE OVERTURNED



On September 22, 1976, in rural Milan, Tennessee, a horrific crime shook the community—a young mother of two was sexually assaulted and murdered in her home. The investigation quickly focused on 17-year-old Carl Ray Webb, who was arrested near the crime scene with compelling evidence of his guilt. But what followed would lead to one of the longest wrongful imprisonments in American history.

Despite having no prior criminal record and no evidence linking him to the crime, Ricky Lee Webb's life changed forever when his nephew, Carl Ray, implicated him in the crime. Initially, police released Ricky due to a lack of evidence. However, eighteen months later, in exchange for a lenient sentence, Carl Ray agreed to testify against his uncle—testimony that would become the critical evidence presented at trial.

The jury disregarded the testimony of five alibi witnesses, including one who had seen Carl Ray acting suspiciously and walking alone toward the victim's house just before the murder. Ricky was convicted and sentenced to consecutive life sentences. He would spend the next 46 years, 8 months, and 23 days behind bars—making him the fourth-longest serving exoneree in United States history.

In 2021, Ricky reached out to the Tennessee Innocence Project. Our investigation uncovered devastating evidence of misconduct and racial discrimination that had remained hidden for decades. We discovered hundreds of pages of previously undisclosed evidence, including a detailed confession from Carl Ray given right before he led police to the murder weapon. Shockingly, we

RICKY LEE WEBB: 46 YEARS OF INJUSTICE OVERTURNED



uncovered evidence of explicit racial bias and coercion by law enforcement.

In August 2024, TIP presented this evidence to Senior Judge Roy Morgan, Jr., who immediately overturned Ricky's conviction, quoting Martin Luther King, Jr.: "an injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." **On October 31, 2024, Ricky Lee Webb was finally exonerated.**

Ricky's case exemplifies both the worst of our justice system and the critical importance of organizations like TIP. His wrongful conviction stemmed from a toxic combination of misconduct, racial discrimination, coerced testimony, and hidden evidence. Yet his exoneration proves that with dedicated resources, expertise, and determination, justice—though delayed—can finally be restored.

"TIP's investigation uncovered evidence of misconduct and racial discrimination that had remained hidden for nearly five decades. Each document we discovered revealed another layer of injustice that Mr. Webb endured. His case reminds us why we must never stop fighting for the wrongfully convicted."

Connor Webber
Staff Attorney

"Forty-six years is a long time to hold onto hope. I watched the world change through prison walls while maintaining my innocence. When the Tennessee Innocence Project took my case in 2021, they didn't just see a file number – they saw a human being who deserved to have the truth uncovered. Today, I want people to know that no matter how long injustice has stood, the truth can still come to light if someone is willing to fight for it."

Ricky Lee Webb
Exoneree



STORIES OF JUSTICE RESTORED

ARTIS WHITEHEAD: FREEDOM AFTER 21 YEARS



On May 9, 2002, a robbery occurred at B.B. King's Blues Club on Memphis's iconic Beale Street. For over an hour, victims were held at gunpoint in a basement office. Witnesses described the perpetrator as a black male between 5'4" and 5'8" tall with a slim build, weighing approximately 140 to 160 pounds. Despite creating multiple photo arrays, Memphis Police Department's initial attempts to identify the perpetrator were unsuccessful.

Eight months after the crime, a Crime Stoppers tip named Artis Whitehead as the suspect. Based on a photo lineup identification -- and despite glaring physical discrepancies -- Artis was arrested. A second witness also identified him later, stating they were "optimistic" after so much time had passed, that the police had finally caught the perpetrator. These two identifications, both made months after the crime, would become the only evidence linking Artis to the robbery.

"The justice system took 21 years of my life based on mistaken identity. But they couldn't take my spirit or my truth. Today, I want people to understand that a wrong identification can destroy someone's life. My freedom proves that we must never stop fighting for justice, no matter how long it takes."

Artis Whitehead
Exoneree

The stark contradictions in the case were overwhelming. Artis, an avid weightlifter standing over six feet tall and weighing more than 200 pounds, bore little resemblance to the original suspect description. Physical evidence from the scene, including fingerprints and palm prints, didn't match him. Most critically, Artis had an alibi that was never presented to the jury -- he was attending mandatory first-day work training when the robbery occurred.

ARTIS WHITEHEAD: FREEDOM AFTER 21 YEARS

"Artis Whitehead's case exemplifies how a single mistaken identification, combined with tunnel vision by law enforcement, can lead to a catastrophic miscarriage of justice. His 249-year sentence for a crime he didn't commit reflects the devastating intersection of wrongful conviction and excessive sentencing in our system. His exoneration reminds us why we must continue fighting to reform both."

Jessica Van Dyke
Legal Director



Nevertheless, in November 2003, a Shelby County jury convicted Artis of multiple counts of especially aggravated kidnapping, aggravated assault, especially aggravated robbery, aggravated robbery, and attempted robbery. The court imposed consecutive sentences totaling 249 years—effectively a death sentence by incarceration.

After years of maintaining his innocence, justice finally arrived. On December 15, 2023, Shelby County Criminal Court Judge Jennifer Fitzgerald issued a written order vacating Artis's wrongful conviction. **On January 31, 2024—exactly 21 years from his arrest date—Artis Whitehead was exonerated.**



LIVES RESTORED: BEYOND EXONERATION



Freedom is just the first step in restoring a life disrupted by wrongful conviction. When our clients walk out of prison, they face enormous challenges: securing housing, finding employment, accessing healthcare, rebuilding relationships, and navigating a world that has changed dramatically during their incarceration.

The trauma of wrongful conviction cannot be undone simply by opening a prison door. Our nine exonerees collectively lost 237 years to wrongful imprisonment—years of family milestones missed, careers unlived, and dreams deferred. At TIP, we recognize that our commitment to justice must extend beyond the courtroom.

In 2024, we reached a crucial milestone in our mission to provide comprehensive support to our clients. With newly secured funding, TIP will welcome our first full-time Client Services Coordinator in 2025. This position represents a significant expansion of our ability to provide 360-degree care to our clients, ensuring that freedom comes with the support needed to thrive.



Our client services program focuses on several critical areas:

1 Immediate Support

- Emergency housing assistance
- Basic necessities including clothing & food
- Transportation assistance
- Initial healthcare coordination
- Crisis intervention and support

2 Long-Term Stability

- Employment assistance and job training
- Educational opportunities
- Mental health services
- Financial literacy education
- Family reunification support

3 Legal and Administrative Support

- Assistance obtaining ID documents
- Support accessing government benefits
- Guidance through compensation processes
- Record expungement services
- Healthcare enrollment assistance

4 Community Integration

- Peer support connections
- Social service referrals
- Community resource navigation
- Life skills development
- Family support services



The addition of a dedicated client services staff marks a new chapter in TIP's evolution. **As we continue to fight for the wrongfully convicted in Tennessee's courts, we're equally committed to ensuring that exoneration leads to true restoration.** Freedom should mean more than just physical liberty—it should mean the opportunity to build a full and meaningful life.

"When you've lost decades to wrongful imprisonment, rebuilding your life requires more than just legal victory—it requires comprehensive support, understanding, and resources. Our enhanced client services program reflects our commitment to walking alongside our clients throughout their journey of restoration."

Becca Morris
Chief Operating Officer

OUR WORK **AHEAD**

RUSSELL MAZE: A TEST OF JUSTICE AND SCIENTIFIC EVOLUTION

The Tennessee Innocence Project's fight for Russell Maze's freedom exemplifies our unwavering commitment to correcting wrongful convictions. After 25 years of imprisonment, Maze's case continues to demonstrate the critical importance of persistent advocacy in challenging entrenched legal decisions and advancing justice.

Following the denial of post-conviction relief in May 2024, the Project's legal team has moved the fight

to the appellate level. The Tennessee Court of Criminal Appeals is scheduled to hear Maze's appeal in early 2025, marking another crucial step in our ongoing pursuit of justice. The Tennessee Innocence Project remains steadfast in our commitment to advocating for Maze's freedom and advancing the cause of justice through the appellate process.

Since 1992, at least 40 parents and caregivers in 20 states have been exonerated after being wrongfully convicted under the "Shaken Baby" hypothesis.

National Registry of Exonerations



OUR WORK AHEAD

TENNESSEE INNOCENCE PROJECT IN 2025 AND BEYOND

When we recognize the work of our past year, it's also a vivid reminder that there is so much more work that still needs to be accomplished. Going into 2025, we have 12 active cases and a growing waitlist of potential exonerees.

12

ACTIVE CASES IN 2025



Current TIP Client Greg Lance

THE JOURNEY IN 2025

Cases like Russell's, or the ongoing case to free Greg Lance, locked up for decades for a crime he did not commit, exemplify TIP's dual mission: **securing justice for wrongfully convicted** individuals and **promoting systemic reforms** to prevent future injustices. TIP's continued success in uncovering new evidence and challenging flawed convictions demonstrates the vital importance of post-conviction work and the need for persistent advocacy in the face of systemic resistance to change. And there's still more work to be done.

The Tennessee Innocence Project remains committed to its foundational principles: thorough investigation, relentless advocacy, and the pursuit of justice for the wrongfully convicted. As Executive Director Jason Gichner notes, "our work is dual-natured, it serves as both a celebration of newfound freedom for our exonerees while also calling to action our need for systemic change to prevent further injustices."

As these cases move forward, TIP continues to demonstrate that the path to justice often requires sustained effort, innovative legal strategies, and unwavering dedication to uncovering the truth. Through this work, TIP not only seeks to free the innocent but also to create lasting change in the criminal justice system.

TENNESSEE INNOCENCE PROJECT
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“

The way to right
wrongs

*is to turn the light
of truth upon them.*

IDA B. WELLS

MEMPHIS > FISK UNIVERSITY > NAACP CO-FOUNDER

”



YEAR IN REVIEW

OUR MISSION

2

EXONERATIONS IN 24

9

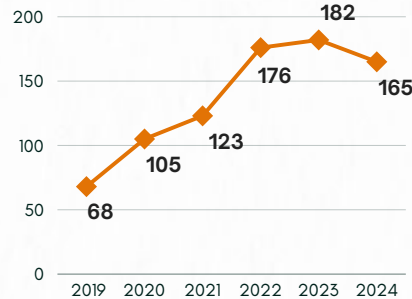
TOTAL TIP EXONERATIONS

13

ACTIVE CASES IN 24

OUR CLIENTS

ANNUAL TIP APPLICATIONS



819

TOTAL APPLICATIONS

165

APPLICATIONS IN 24



Client Demographics:

Male: 13 Female: 0
White: 3 Black: 10

Waitlist Demographics:

Male: 91 Female: 3
White: 35 Black: 59

94

WAITLIST THROUGH 24



2024 TIP Applicant Counties: Anderson, Bledsoe, Blount, Bradley, Chester, Cumberland, Davidson, Decatur, DeKalb, Dickson, Fayette, Gibson, Giles, Greene, Hamblen, Hamilton, Hardeman, Hardin, Henderson, Henry, Hickman, Houston, Johnson, Knox, Lauderdale, Lawrence, Lewis, Madison, Maury, Montgomery, Obion, Overton, Rhea, Rutherford, Shelby, Sevier, Sullivan, Tipton, Unicoi, Warren, Washington, Weakley, Williamson, Wilson

Top Counties 2024: Shelby, Davidson, Knox, Hamilton, Rutherford, Montgomery & Madison

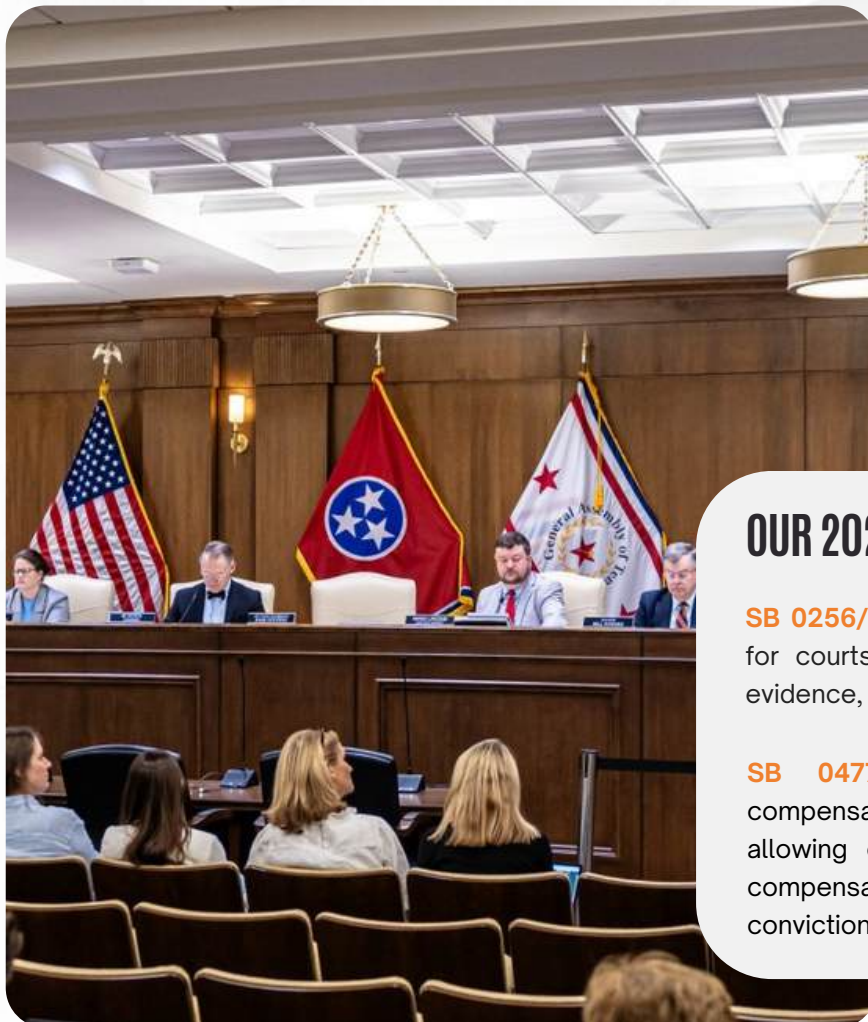


YEAR IN REVIEW

ADVOCACY AND POLICY WORK: ADVANCING JUSTICE THROUGH LEGISLATIVE REFORM

In 2024, the Tennessee Innocence Project championed two significant bipartisan reforms that are currently moving through the state legislature. Senate Bill 0256/House Bill 0601 aims to improve the process for both prosecutors and defendants to present new evidence of innocence following a conviction. It should not take 15 years for anyone to get back into court when they have evidence that they did not commit the crime. This reform would establish a stand-alone innocence petition for courts to consider new scientific and non-scientific evidence never heard before by a judge or jury.

Complementing this effort, Senate Bill 0477/House Bill 0592 creates a far more efficient process for exonerees to seek compensation from the Tennessee Board of Claims after their convictions are overturned and dismissed. Additionally, the legislation ensures that both adult and minor children can bring claims on behalf of their wrongfully convicted parent, in the event their parent passes away before they are compensated. This change in the law recognizes that wrongful convictions impact entire families across generations.



These reforms reflect TIP's dual commitment to both correcting wrongful convictions and supporting exonerees in rebuilding their lives. By advocating for these legislative changes, we work to create a more just and compassionate system that not only recognizes wrongful convictions but also provides meaningful support for those who have lost years of their lives to injustice.

OUR 2024 LEGISLATION

SB 0256/HB 0601 creates an improved process for courts to efficiently review new innocence evidence, reducing years-long waits for justice.

SB 0477/HB 0592 streamlines exoneree compensation via Tennessee Board of Claims, allowing children to claim if parents die pre-compensation, and recognizing wrongful convictions' cross-generational harm.

PRO BONO PARTNERS

CHAMPIONS OF JUSTICE

The fight for justice requires many hands. Our pro bono partners represent the legal community's finest, dedicating their time, expertise, and resources to the pursuit of justice for the wrongfully convicted. In 2024, these dedicated attorneys and law firms contributed **1169 hours of professional services**, representing a value of over **\$645,000 in legal services**.

This extraordinary commitment goes far beyond numbers. Our pro bono partners bring diverse expertise, fresh perspectives, and additional resources to our cases, multiplying our capacity to investigate claims of innocence and fight for justice. Their dedication enables TIP to review more cases,

conduct deeper investigations, and ultimately free more innocent individuals.

From reviewing case files and drafting legal documents to conducting interviews and representing clients in court, our pro bono partners are essential members of the TIP family. Their work exemplifies the highest ideals of the legal profession—using their skills and resources to serve justice and protect the innocent.

To each attorney and law firm who has joined us in this vital work: your commitment to justice makes our mission possible. Thank you for standing with us and our clients.



2024 PRO BONO PARTNERS

- Bass, Berry & Sims
- Bradley Arant Boult Cummings LLP
- Barnes & Thornburg LLP
- Sherrard Roe Voigt & Harbison, PLC
- Burr & Forman
- Kenneth R. Elliott
- Wyatt, Tarrant & Combs

"Pro bono partnership is more than just voluntary legal work—it's a commitment to justice and a recognition that we all have a role to play in correcting wrongful convictions. Our partners' dedication multiplies our impact and brings us closer to our goal of justice for all."

Jessica Van Dyke
Legal Director

RULE OF LAW AWARD

Established in 2019, the Tennessee Innocence Project Rule of Law Award celebrates individuals who demonstrate extraordinary commitment to upholding justice's most fundamental principles: equal treatment under the law and the promotion of a fair and impartial justice system. These champions of justice work tirelessly to ensure that the promise of equal justice is not merely words inscribed on courthouse walls, but a living reality for all citizens.

BRAD MACLEAN

2024 RULE OF LAW AWARD RECIPIENT

We are proud to present the 2024 TIP Rule of Law Award to Brad MacLean, whose distinguished career embodies the highest ideals of justice and public service. After 25 years of commercial litigation with the Nashville office of Stites & Harbison, PLLC, MacLean made the extraordinary decision in 2007 to dedicate himself fully to capital cases and criminal justice reform. His work with The Tennessee Justice Project and the Tennessee Office of the Post-Conviction Defender has been instrumental in ensuring that our state's most vulnerable defendants receive the vigorous representation they deserve.

As a founding board member of the Tennessee Innocence Project and Board President from 2022 to 2023, MacLean has been instrumental in establishing TIP as a powerful force for justice in Tennessee. His leadership extends beyond the courtroom through two decades of teaching at Vanderbilt Law School and the University of Tennessee College of Law, where he has helped shape the next generation of legal advocates. Through his unwavering dedication to equal justice under law, courage in challenging systemic inequities, and commitment to mentoring future advocates, MacLean exemplifies the essential qualities this award seeks to recognize.



YOUR IMPACT

Justice is not achieved alone. Every exoneration, every investigation, every life restored is made possible by people like you who believe in the power of truth and the importance of fighting for what's right.

In 2024, your support helped us reach historic milestones. **Together, we secured the exoneration of Ricky Lee Webb after 46 years of wrongful imprisonment**—the fourth-longest serving exoneree in U.S. history. Also in 2024, **we celebrated as Artis Whitehead walked free after 21 years**. These victories represent not just legal wins, but lives restored and families reunited.

Your generosity enabled us to:

- Review **165 new applications** in 2024 from individuals from 42 of Tennessee's 95 counties
- Launch a dedicated Client Services program to support clients and their families
- Provide comprehensive investigation and litigation services at no cost to our clients
- Train the next generation of advocates fighting against wrongful conviction

As we look to 2025, we remain committed to our mission of freeing the innocent and preventing future wrongful convictions. With your continued partnership, we can build a justice system that truly serves justice.

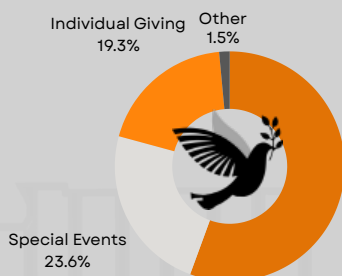
To all our supporters—donors, pro bono partners, volunteers, and advocates—thank you for standing with us in this vital work. Your belief in justice makes everything we do possible.

With profound appreciation,
The Tennessee Innocence Project

"I donate because I believe in the fundamental right to a fair trial and the importance of justice for those who have been wrongfully convicted. The idea that financial resources could be what stands between an innocent person and their freedom is devastating. Every person deserves to have their voice heard and their story acknowledged."

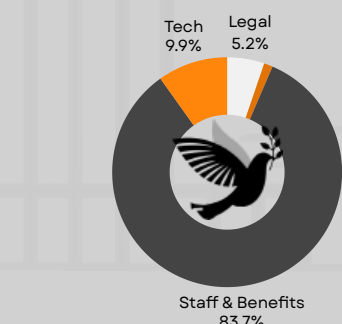
Megan Hawk

TIP FINANCIALS



2024 OPERATING REVENUE

- Grants: \$781,021
- Special Events: \$331,891
- Individual Giving: \$271,167
- Other Income: \$20,733



OPERATIONAL EXPENDITURES

Total expenses in 2024: **\$1,103,910**

Program Services

- Legal Services & Litigation: \$46,292
- Case-Related Travel: \$10,941

Operations & Administration

- Staff & Benefits: \$739,949
- Facilities & Technology: \$87,211



OUR COMMITMENT TO THE WORK

The Tennessee Innocence Project is profoundly committed to the responsible and thoughtful stewardship of your generous support. Fueled by the dedication of our board, donors, and advocates, we are able to relentlessly pursue our mission of exonerating the innocent and helping reform unjust systems in Tennessee.

As we celebrate the victories of 2024, we are laying the groundwork for an even more impactful future. The Tennessee Innocence Project stands at a pivotal moment in our evolution. With nine exonerations secured since our founding in 2019, we have proven that dedicated resources and expertise can transform the landscape of justice in Tennessee. But our work is far from complete.

2025: A YEAR OF STRATEGIC GROWTH

In 2025, we are embarking on several transformative initiatives:

Expanding Client Support

Emphasizing strong support networks for clients and families, TIP will be launching our first **full-time Client Services Coordinator** position, and developing **comprehensive reentry programming**.

Strengthening Our Foundation

Building for the future we're establishing a **Young Professionals Board** to engage the next generation of justice advocates and enhancing our legal team's **professional development and capabilities**.

Broadening Our Impact

Additionally, we'll be increasing our presence in **underserved regions of Tennessee**, **strengthening partnerships** with law schools and public defender offices, and advancing **new policy reforms**.

THE PATH FORWARD

As we prepare to develop our 2026-2030 strategic framework, we envision a Tennessee where wrongful convictions are prevented through systemic reforms, every innocent person has access to quality legal representation, exonerees receive comprehensive support to rebuild their lives, and communities trust in the fairness and integrity of our justice system.



JOIN US IN THIS CRITICAL WORK

The fight for justice requires many hands. Your support makes our work possible—and in 2025, we need you more than ever. Here's how you can help:

- ✓ **Make a financial contribution** - Your donation supports case investigations and client services; consider monthly giving or corporate matching.
- ✓ **Share your expertise** - Attorneys can join our pro bono network while professionals and community leaders volunteer expertise.
- ✓ **Amplify our message** - Share our social content, host awareness events, or join our Young Professionals Board.

"The momentum we've built together is powerful, but the need remains urgent. With 161 new applications received in 2024 alone, innocent people are waiting for someone to hear their story, investigate their case, and fight for their freedom. Every day an innocent person spends behind bars is a day too many. Your support helps us work faster, reach further, and fight harder for justice. Join us in building a future where wrongful convictions are prevented and justice is truly served for all Tennesseans."

Jason Gichner
Executive Director



2024 JOURNEY TO JUSTICE

Our flagship Journey to Justice Gala brought together over 600 supporters, legal professionals, and community leaders at the Music City Center for an evening dedicated to honoring the strength and courage of our exonerees. The event served not only as a celebration of the past year's achievements but as a powerful reminder of why our work matters.

EXONEREE TRIBUTES: HONORING THE JOURNEY

The heart of the evening was our Exoneree Tributes, a moving segment dedicated to all our freed and exonerated clients. These courageous individuals, who collectively lost hundreds of years to wrongful imprisonment, were honored with standing ovations as their stories of perseverance and dignity in the face of injustice were shared.

In a powerful highlight of the evening, Artis Whitehead participated in a compelling interview conducted by Khalil Ekulona, host of "This is Nashville." The conversation provided attendees with profound insights into Artis's 21-year fight for freedom and the devastating impact of wrongful conviction on his life. His candid reflections and unwavering spirit resonated throughout the hall as he spoke of resilience, hope, and the critical importance of organizations dedicated to correcting injustice.

THE JOURNEY IN 2025

Mark your calendars for the 2025 Journey to Justice Gala, scheduled for December 4, 2025, at the Loews Vanderbilt.

"Each year, our Journey to Justice Gala reminds us of the power of perseverance and the impact of collective action. Our exonerees inspire us to work harder, reach further, and fight more passionately for justice in Tennessee."

Becca Morris
Chief Operating Officer



TIP BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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Vice President – Stephanie Ditenhafer

Secretary – Yasmine Mukahal

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OUR GENEROUS SUPPORTERS

The Tennessee Innocence Project's work is made possible through the generosity of our supporters. Each contribution, regardless of size, directly impacts our ability to investigate cases, represent clients, and fight for justice. We extend our heartfelt thanks to all who supported our mission in 2024.



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Allison Greenfield
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Lynn Hagar
Pat Halper
Mary Halstead
Lindsey Hamilton
Benjamin Harms
Emily & Curtis Harrington
Carly Harris
Rhea Hart
Morgan Hartgrove
Bradford Harvey
Kiah Haslett
Megan & Cameron Hawk
Andrea Hayduk
Joanne & Mark Hazelwood
Katherine Hazelwood
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THE POWER OF PERSISTENCE

Every exoneration tells a story of persistence—the persistence of an innocent person maintaining their truth despite overwhelming odds, the persistence of families who never stopped believing, and the persistence of advocates who refused to let injustice stand.

In 2024, we witnessed the power of persistence as Ricky Lee Webb walked free after 46 years and Artis Whitehead reclaimed his life after 21 years.

Their stories remind us that no matter how long injustice has prevailed, it's never too late for truth to triumph.

But persistence alone isn't enough. It takes resources, expertise, and a community of supporters committed to fighting alongside us. Every investigation, every court filing, every client support service depends on people like you who believe in our mission and stand ready to help.



Your support directly powers our fight for justice. Here's what your donation can achieve:

- \$1,000 funds forensic testing that could prove innocence
- \$500 enables our team to conduct vital witness interviews
- \$250 covers travel costs for client visits and investigations
- \$100 provides essential documentation and court filing fees
- \$50 helps support an exoneree's immediate needs upon release

Monthly giving creates sustained impact:

- \$100/month helps fund expert witness consultations
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Your support can help write the next chapter in Tennessee's journey toward justice. **Here's how you can make a difference:**

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Every innocent person behind bars deserves a chance at justice. Every exoneree deserves support in rebuilding their life. Every wrongful conviction deserves to be prevented. **Together, we can make this vision a reality.**

"When you support the Tennessee Innocence Project, you're not just making a donation – you're investing in justice. Every dollar brings hope to someone like me who's fighting to prove their innocence. Your support means someone is listening, someone is investigating, and someone is fighting alongside us. That means everything when you're trapped behind bars for something you didn't do."

Joyce Watkins
Exoneree

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Nashville Office: 700 Craighead St, Ste 300 Nashville TN 37204
Memphis Office: 2029 Peabody Ave. Memphis TN 37104
Phone: 615-581-7230 Email: info@tninnocence.org