

TENNESSEE INNOCENCE PROJECT

2019 ANNUAL REPORT

Dedicated to
Exonerating the
Innocent in
Tennessee



WWW.TINNOCENCE.ORG

OUR MISSION

Inaugurating Innocence

The Tennessee Innocence Project is designed to prevent and correct wrongful convictions throughout the State of Tennessee.

What Do We Focus On?

- Exonerating wrongfully convicted people
- Raising awareness about the realities of the criminal justice system
- Advocating for policy changes and laws that will result in a more efficient and fair judicial system.

For more than **30 years**, wrongful convictions have stolen **20,000+** years from innocent people according to the national registry of exonerations.

OUR VISION

We are expanding our mission to collaborate with law schools, law firms, advocacy groups, and other partners. Our overall focus is dedicated to providing the resources, staff, and infrastructure necessary to fight for the innocent.

Letter From the Executive Director



2019 was a year of change, growth, and strategy. With decades of experience and research to pull from, we started the Tennessee Innocence Project in Nashville with the goal to do what had never been done in Tennessee – a full-time innocence organization. Prior iterations never included a full-time employee or a Board of Directors. We made tremendous progress in Year One, but we have even bigger goals for our second year.

Since opening our doors on February 1, 2019, we've created and implemented the following:

- organizational infrastructure;
- applications and intake procedures for potential clients;
- developed collaborative client representation with other innocence organizations, law firms, or public interest defense lawyers;
- an active caseload of clients; and
- fundraising efforts to expand the organization.

Our number one goal at the Tennessee Innocence Project is to investigate and litigate claims of actual innocence. In the first six months, we received more than 75 letters requesting assistance. We quickly learned that we cannot provide the services we want to the number of clients we would like to serve with only one full-time employee. We have made plans to add to our team in 2020 and are excited for the year ahead.

"Inaugurating Innocence," held in October at Montgomery Bell Academy in Nashville was our first major event. We were humbled that best-selling author and attorney John Grisham offered keynote remarks to a group of 300 attendees. We are so proud of this event which conveyed our mission of exonerating the wrongfully convicted while also raising critical funds for programming. In 2020, we plan to host a wider array of events across Tennessee.

The reality is that none of the services provided by TIP are available without this organization. Without TIP, the attorneys appointed to handle these cases are often the newest attorneys in the courtroom, and they will be paid \$1000 for representation that can last years. They will not receive funding for investigative or expert witness services. TIP is critical to filling the gap in services that exist in Tennessee. Innocent lives depend on it. If you supported us in 2019, thank you. We are appreciative of those who recognized the need for this work in Tennessee. We hope you'll join us as we Envision Innocence in 2020.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jessica Van Dyke".

Jessica Van Dyke
Executive Director/Lead Counsel

LITIGATION UPDATES

The Tennessee Innocence Project is currently litigating a total of 8 cases. Our organization received over 75 requests for assistance in 2019. Our goal is to address all claims of innocence across Tennessee with the help of gracious and supportive donors, community partnerships, sponsorships, and legal support throughout the State.

800

Number of hours our pro bono attorneys have dedicated to innocence work.

ENVISION INNOCENCE 2020

Increase fundraising efforts to expand our litigation efforts across the State of Tennessee.

INAUGURATING INNOCENCE EVENT OCTOBER 2019

On October 23, 2019, Tennessee Innocence Project joined with friends and supporters at our first fundraising celebration, Inaugurating Innocence, at the Montgomery Bell Academy Dining Hall.

We are so honored to have had Best-Selling novelist John Grisham attend the event and share inspiring remarks with fellow guests. Also a special thank you to Eddie George for hosting the event.

The evening raised more than \$135,000, which will support our litigation efforts on behalf of innocent people in Tennessee prisons. This funding will open up opportunities to help people who are innocent, imprisoned, and waiting to come home to their loved ones and their communities.



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Tennessee Innocence Project

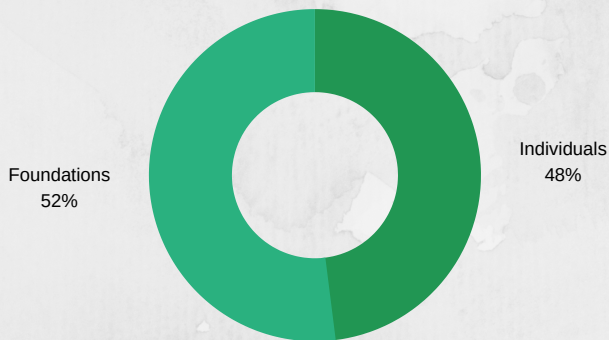
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JANUARY 1, 2019 - DECEMBER 31, 2019

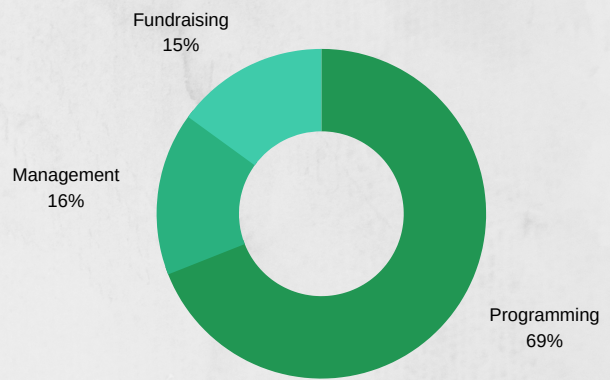
Revenue



Operating Revenue

Foundations	\$206,105
Individuals	\$191,903.58
Total	\$398,008.58

Expenses



Expenditures

Programming	\$117,849.55
Management	\$27,059.27
Fundraising	\$26,162.89
Total	\$171,071.71