

MONITORING COOK COUNTY'S CENTRAL BOND COURT:

A Community Courwatching Initiative



ABOUT THE COMMUNITY COURWATCHING INITIATIVE

Last fall, the Coalition to End Money Bond organized more than 70 volunteers to monitor the implementation of General Order 18.8A in Cook County's central bond court. The order aims to ensure that no one is incarcerated at Cook County Jail simply because they are unable to pay a monetary bond. On February 27th, 2018, the Coalition to End Money Bond released its findings in the new report: *Monitoring Cook County's Central Bond Court: A Community Courwatching Initiative*. The information collected in the courtwatching report shows that some positive changes have occurred as a result of recent reforms but that the order has not met its goal.

Coalition courtwatchers found that the use of money bonds decreased by 48% after the order went into effect, but nearly half of all money bonds issued were still in amounts above what the accused person could afford to pay. The report also compares results across different judges and used information obtained using Freedom of Information Act requests, to track changes in the number of people in Cook County Jail following the order's implementation.

You can read "*Monitoring Cook County's Central Bond Court: A Community Courwatching Initiative*" at:
www.chicagoappleseed.org/courtwatchingreport2018

THE COALITION TO END MONEY BOND INCLUDES:

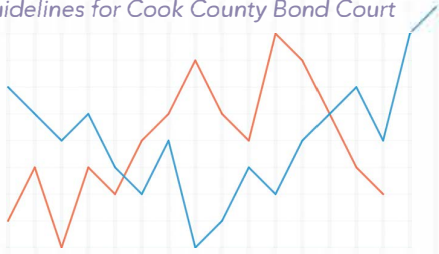
A Just Harvest • Chicago Appleseed Fund for Justice • Chicago Community Bond Fund • Illinois Justice Project • Justice and Witness Ministry of the Chicago Metropolitan Association, Illinois Conference, United Church of Christ • Nehemiah Trinity Rising • The Next Movement committee of the Trinity United Church of Christ Prison Ministry • The People's Lobby • Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law • and Southsiders Organized for Unity and Liberation (SOUL).

For More Information Visit:

<http://www.chicagoappleseed.org/coalition-to-end-money-bond/>

KEY COMMUNITY COURTWATCHING FINDINGS

September 18, 2017 – Chief Judge Timothy Evans issues General Order 18.8A, providing new bond guidelines for Cook County Bond Court



25% - 51%

I-Bonds

Courtwatchers observed the rate of I-Bonds increase from 25% to 51% after the Order was issued, and the rate of D-Bonds decrease from 48% to 23%.

48% - 23%

D-Bonds



7%

Before the Order

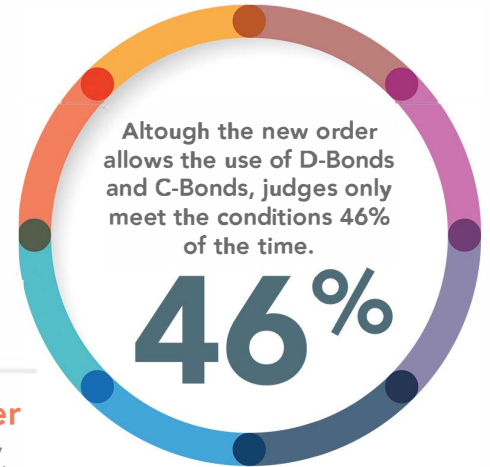
Before the order, judges only had income information on the accused in 7% of cases.



80%

After the Order

After the order, judges now know how much the accused person can afford in 80% of cases.



Although the new order allows the use of D-Bonds and C-Bonds, judges only meet the conditions 46% of the time.

46%



57%

Only 57% of people were given affordable bonds in cases where the judge knew how much a person could afford to pay.

JUDGE #1 **JUDGE #3** **JUDGE #5**

JUDGE #2 **JUDGE #4** **JUDGE #6**

The Order, while full of potential, is limited in execution because court watchers found that some individual judges are largely ignoring it.

When General Order 18.8A went into effect in September, Chief Judge Evans brought in six new judges to Cook County's central bond court to implement reforms.

Courtwatchers witnessed a wide variance in the implementation of the order by judge.



Population dropped by more than 1,400 people

73%

73% of people who courtwatchers observed go through Central Bond Court are Black.

72%

The jail population is 72% Black.

24%

The population of Cook County is only 24% Black.



That gradual decrease stalled out in January, and the jail's population has now remained close to 6,100 people for more than two months



This flatlining is due to judges in both bond court and criminal courtrooms across Cook County disregarding Chief Judge Evans' order



Five months after General Order 18.8A went into effect, approximately half of all people incarcerated at Cook County Jail are still there only because they cannot afford to pay a monetary bond

- **D-Bonds** – you must pay 10% of the bail amount set by the judge to get out of jail
- **C-Bonds** – you must pay the full amount of the bail that is set to get out of jail, pre-trial
- **I-Bonds** – personal recognizance bonds, mean you pay nothing and are released, and won't owe anything unless you skip your court appointment