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THE BAZELON CENTER FOR MENTAL HEALTH LAW AWARDED A \$200,000 FORD FOUNDATION GRANT

*Two-Year Grant Supports Bazelon's Goal of
Ending the Needless Incarceration of People with Mental Illness*

WASHINGTON, D.C. (January 14, 2019) — The Judge David L. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law, a national legal advocacy organization advancing the rights of people with mental disabilities, today announced that it has been awarded a Ford Foundation grant to strengthen advocacy aimed at reducing the incarceration of individuals with mental illness, especially people of color.

"We are honored that the Ford Foundation recognizes our achievements over the last 45 years and values our methods for improving the lives of people with disabilities through impact litigation and advocacy," said Holly O'Donnell, President & CEO of The Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law. "Ending the cycle of institutionalization, homelessness, and incarceration for people with mental illness is critical – and achievable. With this grant award, we can make significant progress and look forward to finding new solutions in partnership with racial justice organizations."

In addition to supporting this important work, the grant from the Ford Foundation will help the Bazelon Center integrate a racial equity framework into the organization's operations and work.

"The Bazelon Center's work is closely aligned with the Ford Foundation's priority of addressing the needs of 'historically excluded populations,' including adults and children with mental disabilities who have been routinely excluded from schools, jobs, housing, community living, and other arenas," said Ira Burnim, the Bazelon Center's Legal Director. "The Center helped secure the enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) nearly 30 years ago, but unfortunately, public systems remain resistant to change, and efforts to weaken the ADA and other key civil rights and protections continue. With this grant from the Ford Foundation, the Bazelon Center can devote greater resources to the fight to extend the ADA's promise of non-discrimination to the needless incarceration of people with mental and other disabilities. We are proud to receive their support."

For information about the Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law, please visit www.bazelon.org.

About The Judge David L. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law

The Judge David L. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law is a national legal advocacy organization protecting and advancing the rights of people with mental disabilities. The Center promotes laws and policies that enable people with mental disabilities to live independently in their own homes and communities, and to enjoy the same opportunities that everyone else does. For more information, visit www.bazelon.org.

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