

I N N E R

C I T Y

L A W

C E N T E R

Homelessness Prevention:

Work hard. Pay your bills. Devote yourself to family. Invest in education. Give back to your community. We imagine we can avert crisis by doing all the right things, but it is not always true. Although she grew up in foster care without a secure family, and had experienced homelessness and domestic violence, everything thirty year old Andrea Johnson did was about investing in the future: her own, her family's, and her community's. This devoted mother worked as a case manager at a social services agency. She was also working towards earning her college degree.

Andrea was moving forward when she became tangled in red tape and an avalanche of medical bills. The CalWORKs benefits that she had been receiving, stopped abruptly after a clerical error was discovered. CalWORKs demanded that Andrea return \$3,000 in overpayments. About the same time, her son was hospitalized. Without insurance or family support, Andrea lost ground. She was forced to ask for more time to pay her rent and took unpaid days from work to care for her little boy. While her landlord respected Andrea and knew her to be a woman of her word, he could only extend so much credit before he was forced to begin eviction proceedings.

Andrea was financially devastated and facing eviction when she arrived at ICLC's Homelessness Prevention Program. ICLC provided rental assistance and successfully negotiated with her landlord so her family could remain in their home. ICLC referred Andrea to the Family Worksource Center where she began free money management classes. With ICLC's support, Andrea opened a savings account with a bank and enrolled her children in free activities at the YMCA. Andrea has stabilized her life. She has almost paid back the CalWORKS overpayment and is looking forward to receiving her college degree.