

2023-2024 Annual Report

GREATER BOSTON LEGAL SERVICES



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Dear friends and supporters,

As I reflect on this past year at GBLS, I am filled with immense gratitude and pride for what we have accomplished together. From ensuring that elders receive the assistance they need to live in their home communities, to preserving valuable equity for low-income homeowners, to securing immigration relief for refugees seeking respite from violence, to increasing income potential for families accessing Paid Family Medical Leave, and much more, GBLS' dedicated advocates and staff make a profound difference in the lives of those who need it most.

This year, we have looked to the future as we embarked on a comprehensive strategic planning process. Our goal has been to envision the future of our organization and to ensure that we are well-positioned to address the evolving needs of the communities we serve. Through thoughtful discussions and extensive community engagement, we have laid the groundwork for exciting new initiatives that will enhance our ability to respond to emerging challenges. As the process wraps up, we look forward to sharing exciting plans for the future. There is more to come!

Thanks to your unwavering support, we remain steadfast in our mission to provide free, high-quality legal assistance to individuals and families who would otherwise have nowhere else to turn. This annual report highlights some of the remarkable milestones we've achieved together. We have expanded our outreach efforts to underserved immigrant populations, increased capacity to serve clients through our new Central Screening Unit, and continued to advocate for systemic changes that will benefit our community and the Commonwealth for years to come.

This would not have been possible without you, the GBLS community. Your partnership, financial contributions, pro bono hours, and advocacy efforts are vital to the long-term success and sustainability of our organization. Each dollar donated, every hour volunteered, and every voice raised in support has a direct impact on our ability to provide critical legal services and drive meaningful change.

Looking ahead, we are thrilled to announce that next year will mark a major milestone in our history—GBLS' 125th anniversary. This anniversary—and the history of advocacy it represents—is a testament to the enduring commitment of supporters like you who have been integral to our success. As we look forward to honoring our history and celebrating the future, we invite you to join us in reflecting on our rich legacy and renewing our commitment to our mission.

We are excited about the opportunities and ready for the challenges that await us. At Greater Boston Legal Services, we remain committed to our vision of a justice system that is fair and accessible to all, and we will continue to push forward with determination and hope. As we embark on this next year, we invite you to stay engaged and involved. Your continued support is critical as we navigate the evolving landscape and work to address emerging needs. Thank you for being our partner in justice.

Together, we are making a difference.

With heartfelt appreciation,



Jacquelynne J. Bowman
Executive Director

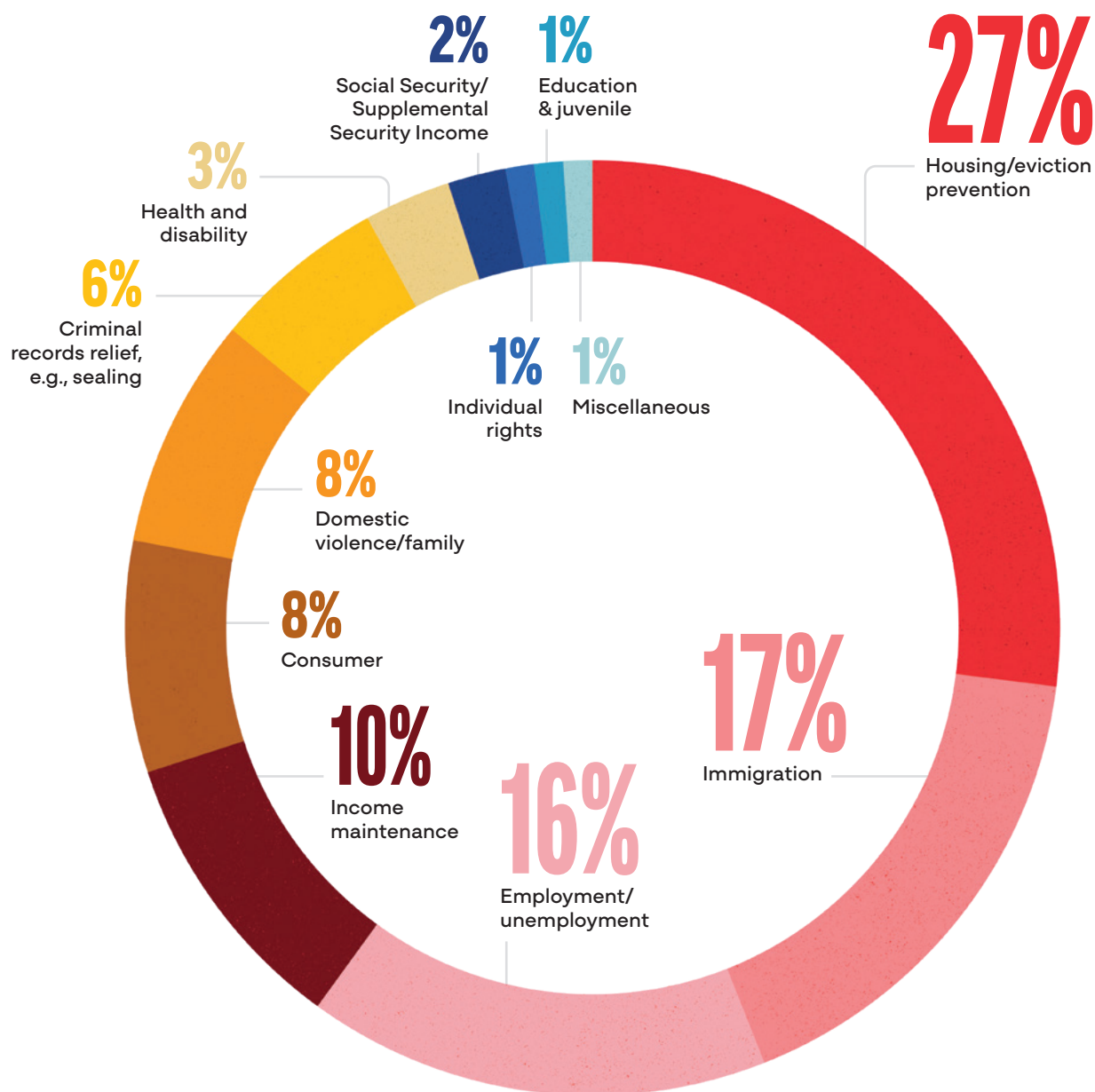
GBLS at a Glance

July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024

14,399

LEGAL MATTERS HANDLED

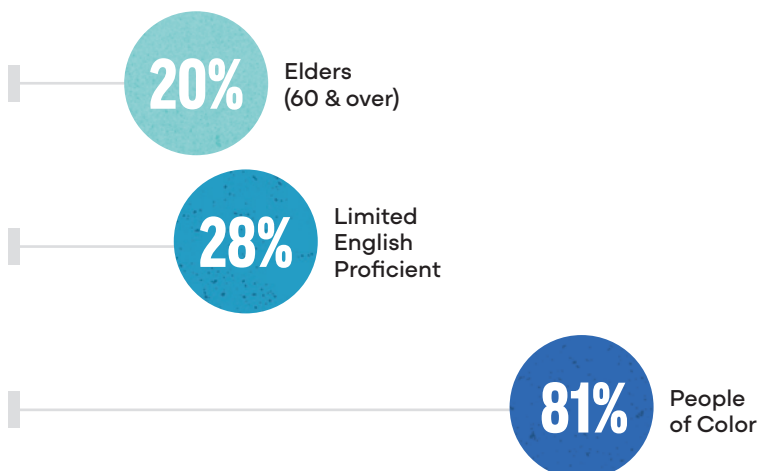
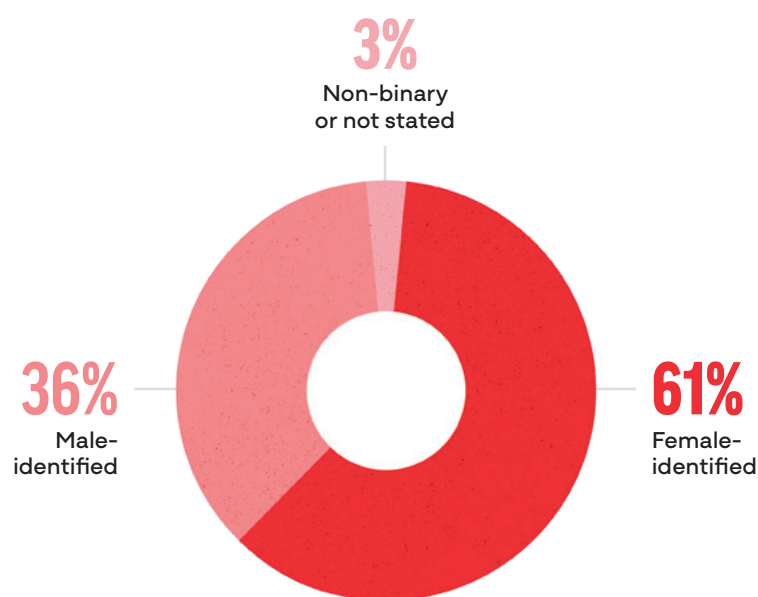
CASES BY ISSUE



11,658

FAMILIES & INDIVIDUALS ASSISTED

CLIENT DEMOGRAPHICS



ABOUT GBLS

Mission

GBLS' mission is to provide free civil legal aid to help individuals and families who are living in poverty to achieve justice and meet their basic needs, such as food, security, safety, and adequate shelter. GBLS helps vulnerable individuals and families retain affordable housing, gain protection from domestic violence, obtain subsistence income for food and necessities, access health care, seek immigration relief, and recover earned wages.

History

Greater Boston Legal Services was formed in 1900 as the Boston Legal Aid Society, the third oldest civil legal aid organization in the United States. Today, GBLS is the largest legal aid provider in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, serving Boston and the 31 surrounding cities and towns, plus an additional 15 municipalities through our elder law work.

Services

GBLS serves clients and community members through individual representation, impact advocacy, community legal education, and outreach, working closely with a wide network of organizational partners to seek justice, stability, and fairness for everyone in our community.

Impact Advocacy Highlights

Consumer Rights

- GBLS and co-counsel Cohen Milstein and the National Consumer Law Center secured a fantastic settlement on behalf of housing voucher holders against SafeRent Solutions, a national tenant screening provider. Plaintiffs alleged that SafeRent's algorithmic tenant screening program (the "SafeRent Score") relies significantly on credit history and other information that disproportionately harms Black and Hispanic renters and all housing voucher users regardless of race. The settlement will require a more robust evaluation of prospective housing voucher tenants' eligibility for housing rather than relying on an algorithmic score. If SafeRent develops another tenant screening tool in the future, it will have to be validated by an independent third-party organization agreed to by the plaintiffs. This is the first case where the discriminatory aspects of tenant screening software have been raised and prevailed.
- In April 2024, the Hampden Superior Court found unconstitutional Chapter 60, a Massachusetts law under which a municipality (or a private actor to whom a municipality sells its right to foreclose) could keep the difference between a home's fair market value and the taxes owed by the homeowner. GBLS, the Pioneer Public Interest Law Center, and law firms Morgan Lewis and Greenberg Traurig had filed an action to stop the City of Springfield from foreclosing on their client's home because of a \$22,000 unpaid tax bill without returning more than \$200,000 in remaining home equity to the homeowner.

Further, in July, after over six years of advocacy by GBLS and partners including the ACLU of Massachusetts, Pioneer Public Interest Law Center, the Massachusetts Association of Realtors, National Consumer Law Center, and

the Boston Bar Association, the Massachusetts legislature signed into law historic changes to the state's tax foreclosure process. In a win for low-income homeowners, the new law ensures that if a home is lost to a tax foreclosure, the homeowner keeps the excess equity. The new law will also preserve homeownership and prevent tax foreclosures by reducing the interest rate on property tax arrears from 16% to 8%; by reducing the upfront payment required to enter into a repayment plan from 25% to 10% of the outstanding debt; and by giving municipalities the flexibility to enter into longer tax repayment plans that can eliminate interest charges.

CORI Sealing & Incarcerated Persons' Rights

- In February 2024, GBLS achieved a huge win in the Supreme Judicial Court (SJC) following a lawsuit filed against the Commissioner of Probation. The SJC's decision stops the Commissioner from treating juvenile court youthful offender records as adult records for sealing purposes, which was giving children never sealable records in some cases, and made children wait seven years instead of three years to seal other types of offenses. This unduly harsh practice harmed children for a lifetime in some instances, and delayed sealing of many other cases.
- In November 2023, after five years of advocacy by the Keeping Families Connected/No Cost Calls Coalition members including GBLS, Governor Healey signed a bill making prison phone calls free, and Massachusetts became the first state to provide free calls from county jails. Many families, including children, were harmed by the unconscionable "for profit" prison phone calls system.

Elder & Disability Rights

- In June 2024, a settlement agreement was approved in the landmark disability rights class action *Marsters v. Healey*, brought by the co-counsel team of GBLS, the Center for Public Representation, Justice in Aging, and Foley Hoag against the Commonwealth of Massachusetts on behalf of tens of thousands of individuals with disabilities who are unnecessarily institutionalized in nursing facilities. The agreement will allow thousands of people to return to the community and live in new homes with appropriate services. In addition to increased funding for housing programs, the settlement includes a comprehensive set of actions the Commonwealth will undertake over an eight-year period to support, at minimum, 2,400 class members in their transition from nursing facilities to the community, including information and supports to make an informed choice about where to live, case management and transition assistance services, specialized services in the nursing facility, culturally and linguistically competent staff and services, and an array of residential services and supports in the community.



Family Law

- In early 2024, GBLS learned that impounded addresses were visible on the trial court's online case management system, which is accessible by the public. This threatened individuals' and families' privacy, as well as jeopardized the safety of survivors of domestic violence and harassment. GBLS quickly surveyed other legal services agencies to learn how widespread the problem was and then reached out to the Administrative Office of the Probate and Family Court. The problem was resolved and opened the door to a broader conversation with the trial court about impoundment policies and procedures.

Immigrants' Rights

- After a Biden administration rule to bar asylum seekers from applying for asylum if they crossed the border without authorization went into effect, GBLS made repeated challenges to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' and Immigration Courts' application of the rule to deny asylum seekers the right to apply for asylum in the United States. Nationwide and in the Boston area, application of the rule has led to the deportation of many families who recently arrived in the U.S. Through vigorous appellate advocacy, GBLS worked to prevent these deportations. GBLS has been working, in consultation with other advocacy organizations, to determine the most fruitful course for strategic litigation in this area so that restrictions on the rule's application will apply to affected clients across the board.



Housing & Eviction Prevention

- GBLS, Massachusetts Law Reform Institute (MLRI), Harvard Legal Aid Bureau (HLAB), and City Life/Vida Urbana testified about the dire need for representation in eviction cases at a Boston City Council hearing in March 2024. Councilors were especially interested in the disparity in representation between tenants and landlords in the city and the effect that has on communities of color, immigrants, and single-parent households. After the hearing, the City Council adopted a resolution in support of a statewide Right to Counsel Bill.
- With other members of a MLRI/HLAB-convened advisory committee, GBLS successfully advocated for passage of a state law to seal eviction court records, often a major barrier for tenants to find other housing. The law passed as a provision of the Affordable Homes Act and will go into effect next year; it will be of particular benefit to people of color who are evicted at higher rates than others.

Public Benefits

- GBLS continued to co-lead the Lift Our Kids Coalition with MLRI, working to improve the state's cash assistance programs. Through FY25 budget advocacy, the Coalition succeeded in securing 10% increases to both Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) and Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled and Children (EAEDC) grants, effective in April 2025.
- Many of the proposals GBLS made for reforms to the subsidized childcare system were incorporated into new regulations and policies that became effective in October 2023, including access to childcare for domestic violence survivors. The Department of Early Education and Care also asked GBLS to help revise forms used for all families getting subsidized childcare, which provides an opportunity to reduce access barriers. GBLS also succeeded in getting the Social Security Number field removed from the state's online childcare wait list registration, which had deterred some immigrant parents from applying.

Taxpayer Advocacy

- Massachusetts previously approved tax credits of \$310 for children under 13 regardless of immigration status. The children, however, need to have tax ID numbers to claim the credits, and not all of them qualify for Social Security Numbers or Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers from the IRS. GBLS' policy advocacy with Massachusetts policy officials, legislators, and the Governor led to fixing this gap. The Massachusetts Department of Revenue announced in April that it will issue tax ID numbers, to be known as MATINs, to affected children.

CLIENT STORIES

Working Together for Justice

Pierre is originally from Haiti but came to the U.S. with his sister and her family, seeking relief from ongoing troubles in their home country. Pierre is blind and does not speak English. He first came to GBLS when his sister, with whom he was living, had her shelter placement threatened for providing a home for her brother. Incredulous that the family was threatened with homelessness and forced to kick Pierre out, several GBLS advocates stepped up to help Pierre and his sister.



Among the relief they provided, GBLS' welfare law experts identified multiple errors in the Department of Transitional Assistance's (DTA's) handling of Pierre's case and were able to get Pierre's food stamps benefits reinstated and get his application for cash assistance approved, including \$1,470 in retroactive benefits, and DTA addressed several systemic barriers that had arisen in Pierre's case. Meanwhile, GBLS' housing experts represented Pierre's sister in her request to the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) to add Pierre to her shelter household. EOHLC guidance requires family members who are not parents or children to prove they will help with rehousing or be excluded from the

household. When GBLS fixed Pierre's cash benefits, the housing team submitted a new request to add him to the shelter household, arguing that he would now be able to contribute to the costs of private housing. After repeated follow up, EOHLC relented and agreed he could be added to the household. Finally, a letter by GBLS' benefits experts explaining Pierre's eligibility as a Cuban-Haitian Entrant resulted in the Social Security Administration approving his application for Supplemental Security Income benefits. By coming together, advocates across several of GBLS' legal practices stabilized this vulnerable client and vindicated Pierre's rights in a variety of legal areas.

Maintaining Income for Families

Joanne was fired from her job as a preschool teacher after she became pregnant.

Joanne let her boss know that she needed to take occasional time off from work for prenatal doctor's appointments, as well as for appointments related to a cardiac issue diagnosed early in her pregnancy. Her employer became upset and questioned the need for the appointments. Joanne's boss then tried to transfer the mother-to-be from the preschool classroom to the toddler classroom, which would have required more physical activity chasing and lifting children. When Joanne objected to the switch, the employer gave her a warning for arriving late at work and shortly thereafter terminated her. Joanne applied for unemployment benefits and the employer falsely claimed that the job separation was due to a "no call, no show" absence. As a result, the Department of Unemployment Assistance determined that Joanne had quit and disqualified her from receiving benefits. GBLS represented Joanne in her appeal hearing, which resulted in the hearing officer overturning the denial. GBLS also provided Joanne with advice about her rights to Paid Family and Medical Leave relating to the birth of her baby (and additional leave if a serious medical condition were to arise during the remainder of her pregnancy). The new mom-to-be was relieved to be able to maintain income as she looked for a new job and prepared for her baby's arrival.



Achieving Justice for Survivors of Abuse

Annika is a survivor of domestic violence and single mother who desperately needed the child support owed by her abuser to be able to properly care for their child.

Despite two prior contempt hearings, the father continued to make no payments toward current or past due support. At an evidentiary hearing, GBLS entered evidence of the father's income and the many ways he was spending that income, including a vacation to St. Croix, instead of supporting his child. As a result, the father made a \$3,000 payment towards his arrears the morning of the hearing and was ordered to pay an additional \$2,500 after the hearing. A balance of almost \$4,000 remains after this second payment. The judge's order makes clear that Annika's ex must pay regular support or risk further court action and, possibly, incarceration. In addition, due to the father's disregard of the court's previous orders and his continued financial abuse of Annika, he was found in contempt and ordered to pay GBLS \$2,900 in attorney fees.

FY2024 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

THE FY2024 (JULY 1, 2023-JUNE 30, 2024)
FIGURES ARE PRELIMINARY AND UNAUDITED.

INCOME	FY2024	FY2023
Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation	15,775,094	13,241,600
Law Firms and Attorneys	2,937,094	3,112,282
Cy Pres Awards	74,818	3,559
Foundations/Corporations	3,066,704	2,230,176
Government Grants	4,245,534	4,757,706
Individual Contributions	1,187,119	1,200,327
United Way	15,647	49,045
Miscellaneous	3,067,327	1,992,097
Total income before donated services	30,369,338	26,586,792
Volunteer Services	1,028,924	1,825,633
TOTAL INCOME	31,398,262	28,412,425
EXPENSES	FY2024	FY2023
Salary and Benefits Subtotal	21,129,357	19,349,302
Non-Personnel:		
Occupancy	534,020	501,926
Equipment and Supplies	979,743	669,921
Contract Services	1,519,632	1,747,506
Library and Litigation Expenses	284,646	377,300
Transfer to Capital	1,125,185	771,290
Miscellaneous	572,905	504,355
Non-Personnel Subtotal	5,016,132	4,572,298
Total expenses before donated services	26,145,489	23,921,600
Volunteer Services	1,028,924	1,825,633
TOTAL EXPENSES	27,174,413	25,747,233
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	4,223,849	2,665,192
CUMULATIVE OPERATING NET ASSETS		
Cumulative Operating Net Assets at Year-end 2022	22,655,060	17,415,001
2023 Change in Assets from Operations	4,223,849	2,665,192
Net Board Investment Income/Gain	2,410,358	1,858,158
Annual transfer to Capital	(80,000)	(80,000)
TOTAL NON-OPERATING ACTIVITY/TRANSFERS	6,554,207	4,443,350
CUMULATIVE OPERATING NET ASSETS	29,209,267	21,858,350



CLIENT STORIES

Preventing Evictions

Martina and Manuel have rented their Chelsea home for 23 years. A new investor bought the home and immediately wanted to dramatically raise the rent to an unaffordable level.

The landlord brought a no-fault eviction against the couple, which means that Martina and Manuel hadn't done anything wrong and were current on rent payments. GBLS represented the family when they went to trial in May, with a follow-up session scheduled for June. Leveraging what transpired during their first court date, including compelling testimony from Martina, GBLS negotiated with the landlord. When the parties returned to court in June, GBLS was able to secure a six-year lease for Martina and Manuel, along with a cap limiting any rent increases to only 5% annually.

Securing Housing for Immigrant Survivors

Mary came to GBLS for help divorcing her abusive husband. As an immigrant survivor of violence, she is eligible for immigration relief under the Violence Against Women Act ("VAWA"), and has a pending VAWA application, as well as an application for a project-based Section 8 subsidy. Mary made it through the housing waitlist, and she was thrilled to finally have safe, affordable housing for her and her daughter. However, the housing administrator told Mary that she was not eligible for a federal housing subsidy due to her immigration status and that the subsidy would only cover Mary's U.S. citizen daughter. The apartment, which signified safety and independence, would be unaffordable for Mary.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) expressly states that VAWA applicants are covered by federal housing subsidies, but when Mary's GBLS advocates shared this information and provided recent HUD memos about the issue, the housing administrator doubled down on their stance. GBLS reached out to the Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) and HUD. Both EOHLC and HUD contacted the administrator agency—which oversees thousands of federal housing vouchers—and told it that it had misinterpreted the law. The administrator finally changed its policy—a huge win! This was an enormous relief for Mary, who will now have an affordable apartment, and also will help all other VAWA applicants who have their federal housing vouchers administered by that agency.

Legal Community Support

The Greater Boston legal community demonstrates a special commitment to GBLS and ensuring equal access to civil justice for all. Every year, generous individual attorneys, law firms, and corporate legal departments show their support for “justice for all” by investing in our work. They provide support in a variety of ways—including the annual Law Firm Drive, Associates Fund Drive, Corporate Fund Drive, In-House Counsel Drive, legal fellowships, and more. We are grateful for their partnership.

2023 Law Firm Drive

Leadership League

(\$850 or more per Boston attorney)

Choate, Hall & Stewart LLP
Cloherty & Steinberg LLP
Goulston & Storrs PC
Hemenway & Barnes LLP
McNeill PLLC
Meehan, Boyle, Black & Bogdanow, P.C.
Ropes & Gray LLP
Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP and Affiliates
Sugarman and Sugarman, P.C.
Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr LLP

Reginald Heber Smith League

(\$550 - \$699 per Boston attorney)

A&O Shearman
Fish & Richardson P.C.
Goodwin Procter LLP
Landay Leblang Stern

President's League

(\$400 - \$549 per Boston attorney)

Hogan Lovells
Sullivan & Worcester

Supporter League

(\$250 - \$399 per Boston attorney)

Barnes & Thornburg LLP
Burns & Levinson LLP
Davis, Malm & D'Agostine, P.C.
Hirsch Law LLC
Jones Day
Klein Hornig LLP
Locke Lord
Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP
Nutter, McClennen & Fish, LLP
Proskauer Rose LLP
Robinson+Cole LLP

Friends League

(up to \$249 per Boston attorney)

Adler, Cohen, Harvey, Wakeman and Gueguezian, L.L.P.
Bernkopf Goodman LLP
Brown Rudnick LLP
Casner & Edwards, LLP
Cetrulo LLP
Conn Kavanaugh Rosenthal Peisch & Ford, LLP
Covington & Burling LLP
Cushing & Dolan, P.C.
Davids & Cohen, P.C.
Dechert LLP
DLA Piper LLP (U.S.)
Donovan Hatem LLP
Foley Hoag LLP
Gilmore Rees & Carlson PC
Hinckley, Allen & Snyder LLP
Hirsch Roberts Weinstein LLP
Kirkland & Ellis LLP
Kotin, Crabtree & Strong, LLP
Krems, Jackowitz & Carman, LLP
Krokidas & Bluestein LLP

Laredo & Smith LLP
Lawson & Weitzen, LLP
Lee & Rivers LLP
Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, LLP
Messing, Rudavsky & Weliky, P.C.
Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky and Popeo, P.C.
Morgan, Brown & Joy, LLP
Morrison & Foerster LLP
Nolan Sheehan Patten LLP
Peabody & Arnold LLP
Pierce Atwood LLP
Seyfarth Shaw LLP
Sidley Austin LLP
Stoneman, Chandler & Miller LLP
Swartz & Swartz, P.C.
Tarlow, Breed, Hart & Rodgers, P.C.
Taylor, Ganson & Perrin, LLP
Troutman Pepper Hamilton Sanders LLP
Wolf, Greenfield & Sacks, P.C.

Law Firm Fellowships

The following firms provided funding to support the salaries of GBLS attorneys and fellows.

Finnegan, Henderson, Farabow, Garrett & Dunner, LLP
Goodwin Procter LLP
Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky and Popeo, P.C.
Ropes & Gray LLP
Skadden Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP and Affiliates
Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr LLP

Cy Pres and Other Awards

We wish to acknowledge the following law firms who facilitated the award of class action lawsuit residuals received by GBLS.

Berman Tabacco
Fair Work P.C.
Gordon Law Group, LLP
Lichten & Liss-Riordan, P.C.

Corporate Fund Drive

In 2023, Boston-area corporations donated over \$150,000 to the Corporate Fund Drive to support access to justice for all. Thank you to the participating companies for their generosity.

Analog Devices, Inc.
Arbella Insurance Foundation
Biogen, Inc.
BioMed Realty
Boston Globe
Copyright Clearance Center, Inc.

Fenway Sports Group/Boston Red Sox
Fidelity Investments
Fiduciary Trust Company
Floyd Advisory
Hologic
John Hancock Financial Services, Inc.

Liberty Mutual Insurance
LPL Financial Holdings Inc.
MFS Investment Management
MilliporeSigma
Ontra
Patriot Care
Plymouth Rock Assurance Foundation

Point32 Health
RMR Group
State Street Bank and Trust Company
Takeda Pharmaceuticals



CLIENT STORIES

Enforcing Workers' Rights

A jury convicted a pizza shop owner of three counts of forced labor and three counts of attempted forced labor in a prosecution brought by the U.S. Attorney's Office. GBLS represents five of the six immigrant workers who testified before the jury as labor trafficking survivors. The workers described years of working at Stash's Pizza, some for as many as 17 hours a day and seven days a week without receiving overtime pay. They explained how the owner, Steve Papantoniadis, hired them, knowing that they did not have work authorization in the United States, and took advantage of their vulnerabilities, threatening physical violence and explicit and implied threats that he would report workers to immigration authorities and have them deported. This victory sends a powerful message to employers taking advantage of undocumented employees, reminding them that workplace laws protect all workers, regardless of immigration status.

Photo: Wade Austin Ellis, Unsplash

In-House Counsel Drive

Attorneys from the following corporate legal departments donated to the 2023 In-House Counsel Drive.

Abbott Laboratories
Aon
AstraZeneca
Biogen
Eaton Vance
Fidelity Investments
Fiduciary Trust Company
Google

Harvard Management Company
Liberty Mutual
Loomis, Sayles & Company
McKinsey & Company
MFS
Microsoft
Moderna
Morgan Stanley

Motorola
RELX Inc.
State Street
Thermo Fisher Scientific
T-Mobile
Toast
Vertex
Wellington

In-House Counsel Drive Donors

Employer matches included in giving level where applicable.

\$5,000 and above

Anonymous
Jonathan Chiel
Bill Coffey
Krista D'Aloia Busnach
Nati Davidi
Ramon Herrera
Nancy Keating
Anne & Brian Trinque

\$2,500 - \$4,999

Jonathan Davis
Nancy Keating
James Kelleher
Scott Kirwin
Ron Oppenheim

\$1,000 - \$2,499

Anonymous (2)
David Altshuler
Mark Belanger
Michael & Berry Flynn Cappucci
Margaret Carey
David Carter

Pamela Egleston
Jay Haines
Jennifer Inker
Anne Katsas
Abigail Ostow
Susan Pereira
Meg Rehrauer
Meaghan Sanders
Stacey Schmidt
Patrick Thrasher

\$500 - \$999

Anonymous (2)
Thomas Bridge
Stephen Evans
Julie Gann
Ellen Grossman
Mirela Izmirlic
Christina Lee
Kevin Meagher
Joel Nolan
Karla Portocarrero
Rebecca Radford

Melissa Shea
Samuel Sherry
Nathan Williams

\$250 - \$499

Anonymous (2)
Russell Aborn
Daniel Barry
Daniel Bennett
Steven Bennett
Jennifer Carpenter Boylan
Tom Brown
Maria Damico
Mary DiMaiti
Michael Dube
Ellen Grossman
Henry Mayer
Lawrence McNally Jr.

Up to \$249

Anonymous (4)
Shirin Baradaran
John Basile
Anne-Marie Beliveau

Andrea Crowell
Brian Dowling & Michelle Shortsleeve
Joshua Goldman
Colleen & John Hawley
Abby Hemani
Liz Howard
Natalie Kavanaugh
Matthew Keffalas
Kellianne Munichiello
Joel Nolan
Michael Palek
Amy Pannoni
Christopher Pearsall
Erik Sabot
Talis Seja
Beverly St. John
Nara Tjitradjaja
John Ward

Associates Fund Drive

2024 Participating Firms

GBLS is grateful to the following firms, whose associates raised over \$635,000 to support free civil legal assistance for survivors of domestic violence. Thank you!

Anderson Kreiger*
Barnes & Thornburg
Brown Rudnick
Burns & Levinson*
Casner & Edwards*

Choate*
Conn Kavanaugh*
Cooley*
Davis Malm*
Day Pitney*

DLA Piper*
Donnelly, Conroy & Gelhaar*
Finnegan*
Fish & Richardson
Foley & Lardner*
Foley Hoag*
Goodwin*
Goulston & Storrs
Greenberg Traurig*
Hemenway & Barnes*
Hogan Lovells*
Holland & Knight*
Husch Blackwell*

Jones Day
K&L Gates*
Kirkland & Ellis*
Krokidas & Bluestein*
Locke Lord*
McCarter & English*
McDermott Will & Emery*
Mintz*
Morgan Lewis
Nixon Peabody
Nutter*
Orrick
Peabody & Arnold

Proskauer Rose
Quinn Emanuel
Robinson+Cole*
Ropes & Gray
Sherin and Lodgen*
Skadden*
Sullivan & Worcester*
Todd & Weld*
WilmerHale*
Wolf, Greenfield & Sacks*

* Firm matched its associates' fundraising

2024 Individual Donors

The 2024 Associates Fund Drive raised more than \$635,000 from over 1,200 donors to provide civil legal aid to survivors of domestic violence.

\$5,000 and above

Anonymous (2)
Chelsea A. Loughran
Maria Trevisan

\$2,500 - \$4,999

Eva Edmonds
Alex Loomis
Leslie A. McDonell
Timothy J. Oyer
Michael N. Rader
John R. Van Amsterdam
Kate Wallace

\$1,000 - \$2,499

Anonymous (11)
Michael A. Albert
Deborah Anderson
C. Hunter H. Baker
Brandon S. Blackwell
Thuy-Dien Bui*
Jim Carroll

Kristina Cary
Amelia Charamba
Eben P. Colby
Gregory Corbett
Hannah Dawson
Jim Donohue
Kathleen Downes*
Stuart Duncan Smith
Roque El-Hayek
Catherine Fisher
Edward R. Gates
Dana M. Gordon
Victoria Grant
Kat S. Gregor
Philip Hamzik*
Sean Hill
Jeffrey Hsi
John Ilardo
Marc Johannes
Oona Johnstone
Hunter D. Keeton

Robert A. Kole
Joshua Krumholz
Colleen Laduzinski
Jonathan Lipnick
Kevin MacDonald
Mina Makarious
Michael T. Marcucci
Thanos Matthai
Christine D. McCay
Matthew V. McTygue
Jennifer C. Mendonca
J. Gregory Milmoe
Jeffrey W. Mittleman
Kisha Montoya Wilson
Mark Pearlstein
Jessica Perry
Michael Pomianek
Randy J. Pritzker
John Ramsey
Harrison Rogers
Carly Romanowicz*
Ryan Rosenblatt*
Daniel Rudoy
Edward Russavage
Eric Rutt
Mike Sartor
Claire Schuster
David Scott Sloan
Charlotte Stewart-Sloan*

Alexis Theriault
Robert H. Walat
Patrick Waller
Michelle Wang
Harvey Wolkoff
Lauren Yeager

\$500 - \$999

Anonymous (44)
Alexander J. Aber
Jim Anderson*
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CLIENT STORIES

Advocating for People With Disabilities



Deborah had been on disability for several years but was terminated due to medical improvement. GBLS determined that Deborah is likely still disabled based on past mental health impairments, as well as having a newer cancer diagnosis. After reviewing the records, GBLS was able to show that

the cancer likely existed prior to the last decision by Social Security Administration that terminated Deborah's benefits, and that Deborah would now be considered disabled based on the unfortunate, advanced stage of her cancer. Deborah's advocate wrote a powerful legal memorandum requesting that the Administrative Law Judge make a favorable decision without requiring Deborah to testify, knowing how difficult that would be on her, and the judge granted reinstatement of disability benefits. The decision brought some peace to Deborah, who can now count on ongoing income as she fights to improve her health.

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CLIENT STORIES

Relieving Unfair Tax Burdens

Lucinda found herself saddled with six years of tax debt amounting to \$317,262 in federal and \$72,000 in state taxes arising from her abusive husband's construction business.

During these years, Lucinda lived with her husband, who would give her a weekly stipend for groceries. He kept control over all other expenditures and bills. Lucinda's husband would then list her in the company's payroll to justify the stipend. All along, the husband filed joint tax returns without Lucinda's knowledge or consent, making her severally and jointly liable for the tax debt. With help from her eldest daughter, Lucinda left her husband and secured a restraining order. When Lucinda came to GBLS' Low-Income Taxpayer Clinic (LITC), she brought countless collection letters and lien notices to show her attorney. On Lucinda's behalf, GBLS' LITC filed an Innocent Spouse petition and prevailed with the IRS in 2023, freeing her from this debt in full. Lucinda is also guaranteed to receive relief from the state, thanks to GBLS' advocacy over the past year that led to Massachusetts adopting the federal innocent spouse statute.



Pro Bono Spotlight

Pro Bono Makes a Difference for GBLS Clients

While many people dread doing their taxes, the dedicated volunteers in GBLS' Low-Income Taxpayer Clinic (LITC) are enthusiastic about helping vulnerable clients navigate tax matters. Since 2002, the Clinic's staff and volunteers have helped thousands of households file their taxes, worked to improve the Massachusetts and federal tax systems, and educated the community about taxpayers' rights and responsibilities when dealing with tax agencies.

The complexity of the American tax code makes it inaccessible and confusing for many people who do not have the resources to pay a private accountant or attorney to help guide them through the process. Fortunately, GBLS' LITC benefits from the pro bono help of attorneys Hardin Matthews and Michael Dworman, CPA Simon Klein, and certified IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program specialist Bill Rosenfeld.

The LITC leverages this dream team of volunteers to help distressed clients with a variety of tax issues, including responding to audit notices, dealing with collections, liens and appeals, making innocent or injured spouse claims, dealing with worker misclassification, applying for Offers in Compromise when faced with crippling tax debt, and getting



representation in Tax Court. The LITC helps clients with all of these issues on an individual basis, while also advocating for wide-ranging legislative and administrative changes to make the system fairer for everyone.

The LITC advocates for issues such as expansion of the Child Tax Credit, which had a demonstrable impact on childhood poverty during the pandemic and could have additional impact if renewed. However, thousands of eligible households did not receive that benefit because of the barriers immigrants face accessing the tax system.

Additionally, as the only nonprofit in the greater Boston area that helps immigrants

apply for Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers (ITINs), GBLS' tax clinic is an important resource for immigrant families. The LITC's volunteers have helped hundreds of people apply for ITINs and retroactively claim tax credits they deserve.

Fundamental to the LITC's advocacy is its educational work, and GBLS engages with community-based organizations to make the tax system understandable. Volunteers help raise awareness about existing and emerging issues in tax, helping taxpayers understand an obscure system. LITC volunteers also mentor law students and less experienced attorneys by sharing their expertise in accounting and legal analysis.

Through the LITC, GBLS aims not only to provide free legal assistance, but to reduce poverty for low-income households. This work is central to GBLS' mission, and thanks to the dedication of our longstanding volunteers and pro bono attorneys, it makes Massachusetts a fairer place for all taxpayers.

Greater Boston Legal Services relies on our pro bono partners—from members of the private bar, to students and retired legal professionals, and non-attorney volunteers. With their assistance, we can supplement staff capacity to meet a greater proportion of client need.

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We are grateful to the following law firms and in-house legal departments who provided pro bono services to GBLS and our clients in 2023-2024, and to the many individual attorneys who dedicated their time and energy to ensuring civil justice for all.

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CLIENT STORIES

Relieving Unfair Debt

Liliana has significant disabilities that render her homebound. She had her identity stolen by her late father, who racked up substantial credit card debts in Liliana's name before his passing. Liliana was sued by debt collection companies, even though she never incurred or benefited from any of the purchases.

GBLS worked with Liliana, the debt collection companies, and her bank to have all of the companies seeking to collect release the liability against her. Liliana is no longer liable for her deceased father's debts and has a judgment in her favor in court. She is relieved to be free of the unfair debt.

THANK YOU to the additional community-based groups and social service organizations with whom GBLS partners, which are too numerous to list here. We appreciate your hard work on behalf of our mutual clients. The collaborative work we do with partners to remedy critical community needs makes a significant impact in the lives of many. We look forward to continuing to work with you to find effective solutions and approaches to addressing emerging issues in the communities we serve.

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Katie Yao^
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^ AmeriCorps
* Fellow during FY2024
◊ Retired during FY2024

Volunteer Attorneys

The following individuals, in addition to many law students, volunteered substantial commitments of time in FY2024 to GBLS and its clients. We are also very grateful to the many pro bono attorneys, too numerous to list here, who handled GBLS cases at their firms, participated in legal clinics, or provided research or other legal support.

Rhonda Berkower
Judi Diamond
Ron Eskin

Monica Halas
Lawrence Heffernan
Simon Levenson

R. Hardin Matthews
Robert Sable
Howard Silverman

Volunteers

We are grateful to the following individuals who provided administrative or other services during the year.

Lisbeth Britz
Abraham Kirby-Galen
Simon Klein
Jurett Mooltrey-Weathers

William Rosenfeld
Katarina Torres Radisic
Rebecca Warner

CLIENT STORIES

Ensuring Accessible Education

David is a 10-year-old boy who originally came to GBLS in 2022 for help with his Individualized Education Program (IEP). One month into representing him, David was hospitalized, where he remained for over a year and a half because he could not safely return home.

As a result of his challenges, David cannot attend a traditional public school and needs a residential placement in order to receive appropriate educational support. However, numerous residential schools rejected David due to his acute needs. GBLS advocated for Boston Public Schools to provide additional services to facilitate David's placement and get him out of the hospital quicker, while also urging BPS to send referral packets to every residential school in the region. While they waited, David's advocate ensured that the hospital maintained communication with David's father in his native language and provided updated clinical reports for the referral packets sent out every few months. GBLS conducted weekly group meetings with all of



David's providers to ensure everyone was working diligently to transition David out of the hospital and into a residential school. Finally, due to GBLS' efforts, an excellent residential school accepted David in June 2024. He is now attending his new school and thriving.

AWARDS & HONORS

Majda Abbas, Elder, Health, and Disability Unit Attorney, was honored at GBLS' 2024 Annual Meeting with the Reginald Heber Smith Award. She was recognized for building community within and outside GBLS, innovation and excellence in legal work, and for bringing a fresh perspective to GBLS' legal advocacy as an advocate for justice with fewer than ten years of experience.

Manisha Bhatt, then Senior Attorney in the Family Law Unit, was confirmed by the Governor's Council as one of two new judges on the Massachusetts Probate and Family Court after Governor Maura Healey nominated her and two other attorneys to the court in December 2023. Manisha had represented GBLS clients living in poverty in probate and family matters for 22 years.

Nadine Cohen, former Consumer Rights Unit Managing Attorney, now retired, was honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award at the National Lawyers Guild Mass. Chapter's May Testimonial Dinner.

Taramattie Doucette, Elder, Health, and Disability Senior Attorney and Children's Disability Project Director, and **Dan Manning**, GBLS' former Litigation Director, now retired, were honored by the Massachusetts Office on Disability for their tremendous work as lead attorneys in *Daniels-Finegold v. Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority*—the watershed class action lawsuit filed in 2022 that changed everything about access to the MBTA for riders with disabilities. The lawsuit resulted in the Daniels-Finegold Settlement Agreement, which

outlined sweeping accessibility improvements to be made across the transit system. Taramattie also received the Women's Bar Association's 2023 Lelia J. Robinson Award, honoring women who are pioneers in the legal profession and who have made a difference in the community.

Todd Kaplan, Consumer Rights Unit Senior Attorney, and **Yahaira Ortiz**, Administration Unit Administrative Assistant, were honored with Dow-Gardiner-Landrum Awards at GBLS' 2024 Annual Meeting. GBLS' board created the award in 1985 to recognize staff and board members who demonstrate a long-term commitment to ensuring equal access to justice, as modeled by the three board members after whom the award was named.

Simon Klein, Employment Law and Welfare Law Units volunteer, was honored with the Richard W. "Archie" Southgate Volunteer Award at GBLS' 2024 Annual Meeting. The award was established in 1998 to honor "Archie" Southgate, former Managing Partner of Ropes & Gray, who upon retirement volunteered for three years as a staff attorney in the Employment Law Unit and helped to establish the Senior Lawyer Volunteer Program. This award is made annually to recognize an outstanding volunteer at GBLS.

Amiee Parco, Family Law Unit Attorney, was selected for the Boston Bar Association's 2024-2025 Public Interest Leadership Program. The BBA's PILP each year "welcomes a select group of talented and highly motivated lawyers to participate in a year-long program designed to provide intensive leadership and professional development training."

Pauline Quirion, Lead Attorney and director of GBLS' CORI and Re-entry Project, and GBLS Board member Arthur Telegen, Partner at Seyfarth Shaw LLP, were selected to join the Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly Hall of Fame, reserved for Massachusetts lawyers who have been practicing for 30 years or more, and who meet several sets of criteria, including efforts to improve the quality of justice in the state.

Audrey Richardson, Employment Law Unit Managing Attorney, was honored with a Massachusetts Bar Association Access to Justice Award, specifically as one of two recipients of the Legal Services Award. She was recognized for "ma[king] a particularly significant or meaningful contribution to the provision of low-income legal services."

Hannah Tanabe, Employment Law Unit Senior Attorney, was featured in the Boston Globe's profile of "exceptional women making a difference in the Greater Boston area" in March 2024.

Melissa Tearney, Choate, Hall & Stewart LLP Partner and now-former GBLS board member, was honored with the President's Award at GBLS' 2024 Annual Meeting for her many contributions to GBLS over the years, including serving on numerous committees and shepherding the organization as Board President for four years.

John Willshire Carrera, Immigration Law Unit Lead Attorney and Co-Managing Director of the Harvard Immigration and Refugee Clinic at GBLS, was honored as the recipient of the 2024 Founder's Award by the Welcome Project, an immigrant advocacy organization based in Somerville, Massachusetts.

Commemorative Gifts

Gifts in Memory of:

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CLIENT STORIES

Achieving Immigration Relief for Asylum Seekers

Ramon was born into an indigenous and devout Seventh Day Adventist family in El Salvador. He was heavily involved in his church and in a youth group called the Conquistadors, which sought to involve young people in community service and survival skills development as an alternative to the gangs that plagued the area. Gang members in Ramon's neighborhood abducted and killed Ramon's uncle and the younger brother of another Conquistador. They then targeted Ramon, mocking his religion and his youth group, ordering him never to make eye contact with them, beating him, and threatening his life. Ramon arrived in Massachusetts as an unaccompanied seventeen-year-old in 2019. He continued to be heavily involved in church life, and worked as a grocery bagger, then cashier, and then manager. In July 2024, with GBLS' advocacy, an Immigration Judge granted Ramon asylum based on the religious persecution he experienced in his home country.



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