Overview of Achievements

At Mobilization for Justice, we continued our strong advocacy on behalf of vulnerable New Yorkers to address their critical civil legal needs. During the reporting period, we served 20,575 people citywide and closed 9,348 cases. Our primary target population included people who live at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level and the working poor, who are predominantly racial and ethnic minorities. As a result of our legal representation and advocacy, we secured more than $1,703,000 in financial benefits for our clients.

The following is a summary of our program’s major achievements across our four main legal practice areas: Housing; Economic Justice; Disability and Aging Rights; and Children’s Rights. Our Housing work focused on preventing homelessness by defending tenants against eviction and homeowners against foreclosure, protecting tenants’ rights, improving living conditions for tenants, and fighting harassment and discrimination to keep people in their homes. During the reporting period we provided robust full legal representation in court or administrative proceedings to more than 2,500 NYC tenants, and provided advice, counsel, or advocacy services to another 3,500 NYC tenants. Although there was an eviction moratorium in place for most of the reporting period, proceedings to enforce tenants’ rights – primarily illegal lockout and repair cases – were allowed to proceed. During the reporting period, we handled hundreds of referrals for these types of rights-enforcement cases from NYC Human Resources Administration, the court directly, elected officials and other organizations.

Our Economic Justice work focused on ensuring that New Yorkers maintained financial independence and preserved economic stability by combatting predatory products and unfair practices, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis.

Population Served: Low Income and Vulnerable New Yorkers

Area Served: New York City Metropolitan Area

Total IOLA Grant: $576,000

Staffing Full Time Equivalents:
- Total Staff: 141
- Lawyers: 110
- Paralegals: 18
- Other: 13
Overview of Achievements

During this reporting period we assisted consumers sued in a variety of debt collection cases and homeowners sued in foreclosure cases, continued to advocate for and provide assistance to workers impacted by the pandemic facing challenges with unemployment insurance, and continued to assist New Yorkers with obtaining their federal economic stimulus payments.

Our Disability and Aging Rights work focused on assisting older people and people with disabilities with housing, government benefits and other legal issues. To ensure individuals with mental illness have equal access to adequate services and housing that support their needs, we advocated with the city and state to intensify oversight of supportive housing providers, develop consumer grievance investigation processes, and stop payments to providers that lease units with existing housing maintenance code violations. We also advocated with HRA for an appeals process to increase access to supportive housing.

Finally, our Children’s Rights work focused on addressing the legal needs of kinship families taking care of children whose parents cannot and representing low-income students with disabilities to obtain educational supports. During this reporting period, we assisted kinship caregivers achieve legal permanency despite COVID-19 family court restrictions, enabling relatives to enroll children in school and secure essential medical treatment for children whose parents died during the pandemic. And we successfully litigated 40 impartial hearings, winning compensatory services for students in excess of 13,000 hours of tutoring, 3,600 hours of speech therapy, 2,000 hours of occupational therapy and 4,500 hours of Applied Behavior Analysis for children with autism.

Direct Legal Services: Cases

Immigration Case:
In 2019, MFJ met Ms. M who, after years of separation, wanted to bring her daughters, K and N to the United States from Grenada. We assisted Ms. M with filing her daughters’ petitions, and once approved, we helped prepare and submit documents to obtain an interview. This interview was scheduled in August 2021 – two years after our initial meeting – at the U.S. consulate in Barbados, requiring them to travel to another country during the pandemic, obtain the necessary medical paperwork, and appear at the interview. We prepared K and N on navigating this process and for the interview. K and N’s visas were approved, and they immigrated to the United States, reuniting with their mother after living apart from her for 14 years.
Family Case:
Three siblings ages 3 to 10 experienced an unimaginable loss when both their parents died of COVID-19 days apart from one another in February 2021. Mr. and Mrs. C contacted us seeking assistance getting custody of their three nephews while still grieving the loss of their loved ones. We filed an emergency custody petition. After two court appearances, prepping the clients for a virtual court-ordered investigation of their home and communicating with the attorney for the children on a very tight deadline, Mr. and Mrs. C were granted a final order of sole custody of all three siblings. The story doesn’t end there: providing holistic services, we helped the family apply for a Havens Grant for beds and bedroom furniture so the three children would no longer have to share one bed and have a space to do their schoolwork.

Cases by Legal Problem Area

- **Housing** 57%
- **Consumer / Finance** 9%
- **Income Maintenance** 8%
- **Employment** 3%
- **Immigration** 6%
- **Miscellaneous** 7%
- **Family** 3%
- **Other** 7%
Other Services: Overview

**Trainings:** Community-based legal education is an integral component of all of our practice areas. During the reporting period, our attorneys and paralegals conducted virtual trainings and townhalls attended by more than 3,100 people. Workshops and other trainings were held for community organizations, elected officials and their constituents, and others on topics including housing, immigration matters, government benefits, mental health, kinship caregiving, and special education.

**Online Resources:** We provide free fact sheets and self-help guides in multiple languages on our website. Target populations include tenants, consumers, Medicare and Medicaid recipients, nursing and adults home residents, immigrants, seniors, and people with disabilities. During the reporting period, more than 3,390 fact sheets and guides were downloaded from our website.

**Referral Service:** During the reporting period, MFJ made more than 1,100 referrals to other organizations on matters that fall outside of our four program areas or were not legal matters.

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**Number of People who Benefitted from Services Other Than Direct Legal Representation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Legal Education</td>
<td>6,518</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro Se Assistance</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Assistance</td>
<td>3,397</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9,925 People Benefitted by Services Other Than Direct Legal Representation
Other Services: Technology and Other Innovations

During the reporting period, we upgraded all staff’s desktop computers and desk phones in anticipation of our gradual return-to-the-office as Covid restrictions loosen. This has improved staff’s ability to seamlessly provide services both from home and in the office. And we continued to engage a communications consultant and our Board’s Communications Committee to enhance our social media strategy increase our footprint on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn, where we provide important legal information to varied audiences.

Other Services: Trainings

With respect to Board training, we conduct New Board Member Orientation when we have a critical mass of new board members. Our most recent Orientation was on March 4, 2020, presented to a class of new board members who were actively recruited in the Board’s ongoing efforts to diversify the Board with people committed to our mission. The Orientation included a history of the organization, organizational structure, practice areas, board member responsibilities, and the organization’s legal documents. We are planning another New Board Member Orientation and a full Board DEI training for fall of 2022. We also regularly provide training to our Board at regular meetings and at special meetings, including an annual review of our most recent strategic plan.

Staff training is ongoing and multi-pronged. For new attorneys, there is an initial new-staff orientation about the history and structure of the organization, the supervisory structure and expectations, best practices in client interactions, policies and procedures and training opportunities. For both new and existing staff, training opportunities include: in-house trainings (i.e., this past year on electronic discovery, a training series for new housing advocates covering a wide range of topics, and class action lawsuits), trainings in coordination with LEAP (e.g., trial practice, Medicare/Medicaid and the impact on benefits when clients receive lump sum awards and windfalls), Practicing Law Institute trainings which we can access for free, and miscellaneous trainings and conferences. All managers are required to attend Management Information Exchange (known better as MIE) trainings that cater to legal services attorney supervisors and the unique challenges they face.

Additionally, we conduct an annual training on implicit bias and other diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) issues. During this reporting period, all staff participated a 5-part trainings series on diversity, equity and inclusion, as well as other topics related to racial justice.
Impact Cases

David et al v. #1 Marketing Service, Inc., RYB Realty LLC.
In 2010 we filed a lawsuit with pro bono co-counsel against an operator of three-quarter houses for harassment, unlawful eviction, and violations of housing standards. In 2017, the Court entered judgment against the defendants and awarded the class $4,082,096 in monetary damages and a permanent injunction. However, since then we have been unable to collect any of the monetary damages awarded by the Court.

Milestone: While the case was settled in 2017 and reported as closed in our FY2018 report to IOLA, in July 2021, the sale of a residential property by one of the defendants pursuant to a settlement agreement with the New York Attorney General led to the Court authorizing the net proceeds to finally be distributed to the David class members. Since then, MFJ attorneys have mailed out thousands of letters to potential claimants and staffed a unique hotline for claimants to call in response to the letter.

Impact: We are distributing $2,500 checks to approximately 350 confirmed claimants.

Garcia v. Knipel
The New York State Legislature authorized homeowners being sued in foreclosure cases who were facing COVID-related problems to file hardship declarations, which meant their cases would be automatically stayed until January 2022. However, last October, the chief administrative judge in Kings County started sending notices to homeowners and sua sponte scheduling in-person “hardship hearings” for defendants who had submitted the declarations, even though the moratorium was in effect and the plaintiffs did not question their COVID hardship claims. We were very concerned about the approximately 600 Brooklyn homeowners potentially affected by this practice.

Milestone: In response, we filed an Article 78 petition on behalf of two foreclosure clients, MFJ, and the Brooklyn Bar Association Volunteer Lawyers Project, to mandamus the judge and stop him from violating New York’s foreclosure moratorium. The judge changed course during the first day of the in-person hardship hearings, recharacterizing them as status conferences, and sent new notices to all those affected.

Impact: The mere filing of the petition benefitted hundreds of homeowners.

Golightly v. Uber Technologies, Inc.
Along with Towards Justice, we brought this proposed class action on behalf of Joseph Golightly, a Black resident of the Bronx who had driven for Uber for many years until a background check revealed an old, out-of-state speeding violation. The background check caused Uber to deactivate Mr. Golightly from the platform without any process or communication whatsoever in violation of the Fair Chance Act provisions of the NYC Human Rights Law and federal and state fair credit laws. We also alleged that Uber’s failure to comply with the Fair Chance Act has a disparate impact based on race given the statistical disparities by race in justice system-involvement.
Impact Cases

**Milestone:** We are currently awaiting a decision on whether Uber drivers are exempt from the Federal Arbitration Act as interstate transportation workers and therefore Mr. Golightly can proceed in court with this litigation on behalf of himself and hundreds of other drivers who have been deactivated from the platform after a background check.

**Impact:** This case serves to deter gig economy companies from flouting critical Fair Chance Act protections and fair credit laws that ensure individuals with criminal history have a fair shake at employment and an opportunity to provide evidence of their rehabilitation and a voice in the process.

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**Pro Bono Volunteer Involvement**

During the reporting period year, 208 pro bono attorneys, law students and volunteers provided approximately 21,236 hours of service to MFJ and our clients. We have two longstanding externship programs in which associates from Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP and Willkie Farr and Gallagher LLP serve four-month rotations in our housing unit. During the reporting period, the externs closed 26 cases. In addition, approximately 74 attorneys participate in our Pro Bono Kinship Caregiver Law Project every year, working on private placement adoption cases. Morrison & Foerster LLP and Shearman & Sterling LLP provide advice and assistance on tax issues, and Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP and Sidley Austin LLP provide assistance on special education matters.

We have a longstanding and active network of pro bono partners from NYC law firms, banks and corporations who work with our attorneys to leverage the resources available to comprehensively support the legal needs of low-income New Yorkers. Fourteen volunteer attorneys and 11 law graduates provided assistance in-house this year. We host dozens of law students and Pro Bono Scholars every academic year, each of whom is assigned to one of our four aforementioned practice areas. Several firms also provide pro bono assistance by co-counseling class action lawsuits and other litigation with attorneys which are ongoing and will continue to be litigated over the next year, such as Paul Weiss Rifkind Wharton & Garrison, Patterson Belknap Webb & Tyler, and Pillsbury Winthrop, who are co-counselling with us on longstanding impact litigations involving our Disability and Aging Rights clients.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attorneys volunteered</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>159</td>
<td>14,645</td>
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<tr>
<td>Law Students volunteered</td>
<td>6,431</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Volunteers volunteered</td>
<td>160</td>
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</table>
Significant Collaborations

During the reporting period, some of our most significant collaborations were the following:

**The Ali Forney Center (The AFC):** The AFC has been at the forefront of providing care to members of the LGBTQIA+ community, with an emphasis on helping homeless trans youth with everything from housing to healthcare, as well as connecting them to other resources they may need. We have begun collaborating with the AFC by lending legal expertise in several areas, such as housing. We are planning a series of trainings for both the AFC staff and clients so that some of the most vulnerable residents of NYS are made aware of their rights as tenants, and how to assert them.

**The Kingsbridge Heights Community Center (KHCC):** The KHCC provides services to families, ranging from after school programs, to food distributions, crisis response for those facing sexual violence, and workforce development. We have partnered with KHCC to provide legal services to its community members in need, both in housing for tenants facing eviction, and also in immigration for those members seeking to become United States citizens. In addition to direct legal services, we educate KHCC community members and staff about their rights in both housing and immigration matters.

**NYC Department of Education District 79:** MFJ partners with the City’s Alternative Schools District, which serves over 5,000 students a year, including adults, to provide legal clinics for students seeking assistance with immigration matters. We work with District 79 to provide regular telephonic clinics and collaborate to ensure that prospective clients receive preferred appointment timeslots in a private, confidential settings to ensure that our conversation do not disrupt their work or school schedules. Our District 79 partners help us reach out to clients and serve as an intermediary to assist with any technology issues to provide us with paperwork and documents necessary to evaluate a prospective client’s immigration case.

Sources of Funding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IOLA Grant</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>City and County Funding</td>
<td>$12,708,288</td>
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<tr>
<td>State Funding</td>
<td>$4,082,625</td>
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<tr>
<td>Federal Funding</td>
<td>$101,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>$2,175,555</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$19,643,468</strong></td>
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