Overview of Achievements

Her Justice stands with women living in poverty throughout New York City by training and mentoring volunteer lawyers to represent them and address individual and systemic barriers. Working with pro bono attorneys from over 100 law firms and corporations, Her Justice provides access to justice to women living in poverty in all five boroughs of New York City who would otherwise generally be unrepresented. Most Her Justice clients are mothers (70%), survivors of domestic violence (80%), and women of color (90%).

During the grant period, our volunteers and staff provided legal assistance in 4,304 family, divorce, and immigration matters, including direct representation in 774 closed matters, advice and counsel and brief services in 829 closed matters and 2,701 active and open matters. We also provided other information or legal assistance or referrals in 327 cases, to legal and social service providers.

IOLA funding enabled Her Justice to provide legal assistance in 1,603 closed cases that directly benefited 4,151 vulnerable women and children. For poor women, especially victims of domestic violence, the assistance of trained, competent legal counsel can make the difference between long-term stability and extreme poverty and homelessness. The women Her Justice serves attain freedom from abuse and the legal remedies they need to assert their independence from their abusers—custody of their children, child support, divorce judgments providing children with essential health insurance and women with fair financial awards, and immigration status enabling them to work legally and provide for their families. During the grant period, Her Justice clients obtained financial awards and settlements totaling $170,988 as well as monthly benefits totaling $20,255.

Her Justice exceeded the anticipated goals for the grant period for Volunteers enrolled and Website downloads. We did not achieve our anticipated annual goals for Individual Case Services—Cases Closed, People Benefitted, Pro Se Assistance, or Referrals. Cases are remaining open longer and fewer closed within the reporting period than anticipated. COVID 19 impacted many systems we work with, and we experienced a decrease in individuals reaching out for services and a delay in processing of new and existing matters.

Population Served: Indigent and Working Poor Women
Area Served: New York City Metropolitan Area
Total IOLA Grant: $253,599
Staffing Full Time Equivalents:
- Total Staff: 35.38
- Lawyers: 13.86
- Paralegals: 7.83
- Other: 13.69
Direct Legal Services: Cases

Family Law:
Elena, a bilingual mother of 2 children – a 17-year-old daughter and a 6-year-old son, came to Her Justice in 2016 seeking child support from her son’s father. While Elena attempted to support her family with her $737 biweekly income, the son’s father refused to pay child support despite making around $90,000 a year. Her Justice placed the case with the law firm of Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom, LLP. The trial began in the summer of 2019 in person and did not conclude until 2021 virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout the entire process, the father harassed Elena by filing enforcement custody/visitation petitions while the support trial was going on and showing up unannounced to see his son, violating their visitation order as well as commencing Landlord Tenant actions to try and evict her from her home.

By demonstrating how he spent his money on his girlfriend over his son and damaging his credibility during cross-examination, Elena’s team helped to secure her a victory. The court awarded Elena $524 biweekly, more than the original court order, a retroactive support amount awarded of $71,322.93 and ordered the father to pay 73% of childcare and unreimbursed health-related expenses, allowing her to support her family more securely.
Direct Legal Services: Cases

Immigration:
Maria, a deaf mother from the Dominican Republic and survivor of domestic violence, had been trying for almost 10 years to secure legal permanent residency in the United States. Maria came to Her Justice in 2014 after she her initial VAWA application had been denied. Maria faced many challenges in her pursuit of legal residency including coordinating a CDI and ASL interpreter to communicate with her attorneys during COVID and while in shelter.

Despite these challenges, Maria’s team filed her application for relief under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA self-petition) and application for her green card (legal residence). They responded to several Requests for Evidence (RFEs). Her case was recently approved, and she now has her Legal Permanent Resident Card.

Other Services: Overview

Her Justice has identified areas to enhance the quality and scope of our services to better meet our clients’ needs. We now offer virtual, Zoom based, trainings and outreach presentations, allowing us to train more attorneys, and connect with more providers and elected officials as well as reach more of our targeted population. We have experienced an increase of web traffic to our website with over 4,000 downloads of our informational materials, including our Legal Information Guides which provides detailed information and instructions on how to navigate the legal system and Family and Supreme courts. We expanded an existing project and launched a new project to meet more of our clients’ needs. The Financial Freedom Project provides services to clients in consumer debt for clients seeking a divorce and the Trafficking Resiliency Project assists survivors of sex and labor trafficking.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Benefitted People</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Legal Education</td>
<td>5,736</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pro Se Assistance</td>
<td>4,039</td>
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9,775 People Benefitted by Services Other Than Direct Legal Representation
Other Services: Technology and Other Innovations

Her Justice uses technology to enhance its outreach and the quality and delivery of legal services to clients, to recruit, train and mentor volunteers. The legal department is continually refining system configuration to improve workflow and data management effectiveness. LegalServer, a webbased application, enables staff to interview clients and provide legal services at sites convenient to 13 clients and advocates. Clients regularly send us emails and photos of documents and we are using a Legal Server texting tool for clients to send us communications and documents in text messages which is often the easiest method for them. These features enhance our ability to work with clients and partners wherever we are needed and ensure business continuity. In addition, attorneys have access to legal resources and treatises from Lexis, as well as other publications to keep them well-informed of developments in the law. This past year, Her Justice provided every staff member business laptops for off-site access to the data base and to facilitate intakes and engage with clients, thereby enhancing access to justice. In addition to LegalServer, staff use Mitel telephone software, as well as a variety of applications, including Zoom, Slack, and the Microsoft Suite, including TEAMS.

Later this year, we plan to implement the online intake function of Legal Server via a link on our website. This will assist clients seeking legal help outside of our Thursday Help Line hours as well as support staff, by capturing information about a person seeking services before scheduling a full intake or consultation.

Other Services: Trainings

During the grant period, Her Justice conducted 8 live Zoom CLE programs and trained 893 pro bono attorneys and non-attorneys (summer associates or paralegals). Multiple trainings were provided in each of the substantive areas of the law relevant to the matters we refer.

Her Justice staff members regularly attend trainings to keep up-to-date with developments in various aspects of family, matrimonial and immigration law relevant to our work, including courses which provide Continuing Legal Education (CLE) credits such as the American Immigration Lawyers Association National Conference; MatLaw Ultimate Update; and the Fordham Consumer Debt Conference. In addition, Her Justice staff also attended many live trainings and webinars on other topics that hone our practice and managerial skills, including vicarious trauma; interpretation; technology; presentation and communication; and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI).

Her Justice values a culturally diverse workplace and encourages inclusionary practices in all aspects of our work. In 2020, Her Justice engaged with Community Resource Exchange to better address issues of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and to embed racial equity into the fabric of Her Justice programs and policies. We engage in monthly training and workshop session.
Pro Bono Volunteer Involvement

Her Justice specializes in offering pro bono assistance—connecting volunteer lawyers from 90 firms with women living in poverty who desperately need a lawyer. For over 29 years, Her Justice has provided essential legal assistance to indigent women and children, as well as expert training and support for the attorneys who represent them. By engaging the talent and resources of private firms, Her Justice leverages its small legal staff and increases exponentially the number of women who go to court with their own lawyers and obtain the legal protections that they and their children need and deserve.

Our 13 staff attorneys trained and mentored 594 pro bono lawyers, paralegals and law students working on 1,603 closed cases during the grant period and 893 new volunteers were trained. Her Justice had a total of 3,897 enrolled volunteers during this reporting period.

Her Justice conducts live trainings year-round—also available via video streaming—providing detailed manuals containing case law and sample documents. CLE credit is available for live and video trainings and pro bono hours worked on referred matters. Our trainings focus on the impact domestic violence has on the lives of survivors and the challenges faced by immigrants. Volunteer lawyers are assigned an experienced staff attorney mentor who is available to strategize, answer questions, review documents and provide referrals. Four firm attorneys work full-time as externs in our main office, providing immediate in-court representation in complex or emergency matters and receiving daily mentoring. Non-attorney volunteers translate or interpret for non-English-speaking clients. Volunteer forensic accountants and investigators compile and analyze the documentation necessary to obtain fair financial awards. Our Summer Associate Program gives summer associates at our Corporate Partners hands-on legal experience and helps to recruit future lawyers to represent low-income women. During summer 2021, 135 attorneys with 85 Summer Associates (law students) from 22 firms worked on 68 legal matters. Law student interns and paralegals volunteer throughout the year, usually in our main office, but this past year they worked with us remotely, supervised by staff attorneys.

3,754 Attorneys volunteered 51,100 hours

94 Law Students volunteered 5,069 hours

49 Other Volunteers volunteered 4,124 hours
Significant Collaborations

Her Justice is an offsite partner with all five FJCs and regularly receives referrals for all our practice areas. Her Justice works closely with the more than 20 other on-site and off-site social service and civil legal partners to provide comprehensive service to FJC clients. Her Justice Staff conduct intake and provide a full range of information, advice and counsel, brief services and representation. The FJCs are a particularly effective way to connect with women who are in the greatest need of our services.

During the grant period, Her Justice continued to conduct know-your-rights legal presentations with community-based partners who do not have legal services on-site and who have informed Her Justice that its clients are not always comfortable going to the FJCs for legal services. Her Justice partners with (1) Korean American Family Service Center (KAFSC), accepting referrals, providing KAFSC clients and staff with legal information and advice, and training KAFSC staff and intake volunteers to provide information to more members of their community and to conduct intake for matters to be referred to Her Justice, in a program focused on preventing and ending domestic violence and relationship abuse; (2) Sakhi for South Asian Women, accepting referrals and providing community education and outreach to South Asian women; (3) Violence Intervention Project (VIP) Mujeres that provides crisis counseling, advocacy and support for survivors of domestic and sexual violence; (4) ConnectNYC, providing immigration trainings to Connect staff so that they may better serve their clients and provide appropriate referrals for services to Her Justice; and (5) Restore and (6) Garden of Hope, who refer trafficking survivors to Her Justice for legal assistance.

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>
<td>City and County Funding</td>
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<td>State Funding</td>
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<td>Federal Funding</td>
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IOLA 3%  
State 8%  
City 7%  
Federal 8%  
Other 74%