

HER JUSTICE

2022-2023



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 be unrepresented. Most Her Justice clients are mothers (70%), survivors of domestic violence (83%), and women of color (92%).

During the grant period, our volunteers and staff provided legal assistance in 2,830 family, divorce, and immigration matters, including 1,195 closed cases that directly benefited 3,115 vulnerable women and children. We continued to provide services to our clients, which currently total 1,635 active and open matters. We also provided other information, legal assistance or referrals in 145 cases to legal and social service providers.

For women living in poverty, 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 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 safely and legally so that they can provide for their families. During the grant period, Her Justice clients obtained financial awards and settlements totaling \$488,160 as well as monthly benefits totaling \$43,443.



Population Served: Women Living In Poverty in New York City

Total Funding: \$7,139,668.13

Total IOLA Grant: \$260,189.60

Staffing Full Time Equivalents:

- Total Staff: 35.30 • Paralegals: 7.75
- Lawyers: 13.15 • Other: 14.40

DIRECT LEGAL SERVICES: CASES

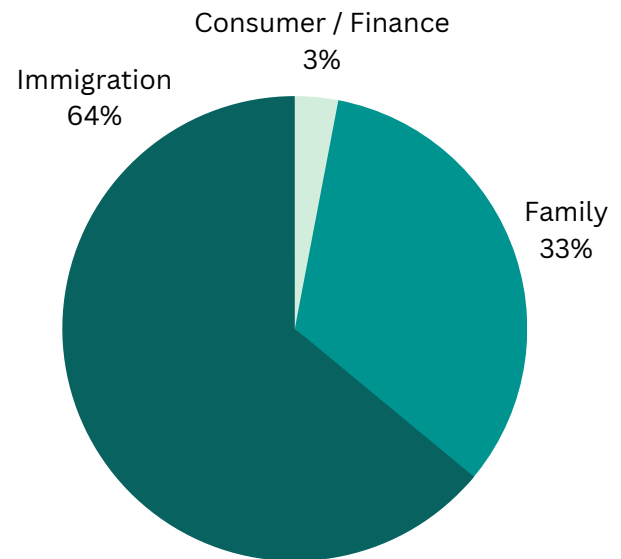
Matrimonial Law Case:

Anna* came to Her Justice with the heavy weight of marital debt. Over the course of her marriage, she started and ran her own business, raised two sons, and purchased a multi-unit apartment building with her husband where the family lived and became landlords. Unfortunately, emotional and economic abuse inflicted by her husband wreaked havoc on the world Anna worked so hard to build. Her husband’s manipulative actions resulted in crippling debt left in her name when he filed for divorce and abruptly left the country. With the assistance of a Her Justice attorney, Anna was not only able to sell their shared building before foreclosure, but her attorney secured an additional \$100,000 for Anna to offset the financial abuse she survived during the marriage. Anna left the settlement with economic autonomy and the just outcome she deserved.

**3,111 people
benefitted
from
1,195 legal
cases closed**

Immigration Case Example

Alice*, a current Her Justice client, joined a dance academy with the promise of a visa sponsorship, expecting to study and perform. Instead, she was held captive by the academy, forced to work 12-15 hour days, 7 days a week. She had her every movement surveilled by traffickers for 2 ½ years, subjected to intense coercion, abuse and isolation. In 2021, she escaped and was eventually referred to Her Justice. One of our staff attorneys helped this client report her trafficking abuse to the NY State Department of Labor and filed her I-914 Application for T Nonimmigrant Status in April 2022. Our team worked with the Office of the Attorney General and the Department of Labor to get the application approved in February 2023, much sooner than expected, based on normal processing times. Our client now has T Nonimmigrant Status and can legally live and work in the U.S. for the next four years as she continues rebuilding her life free from abuse.



Cases by Legal Problem Area

OTHER SERVICES: OVERVIEW

Her Justice continually works to identify and enhance areas of our work to meet the needs of our clients most effectively. We offer trainings to community-based organizations on rights and options available to women like our clients, expanding the reach of our efforts. We also expanded two of our existing projects to meet more of our clients’ needs. The Financial Freedom Project provides consumer debt services to clients seeking a divorce and the Trafficking Resiliency Project assists survivors of sex and labor trafficking.

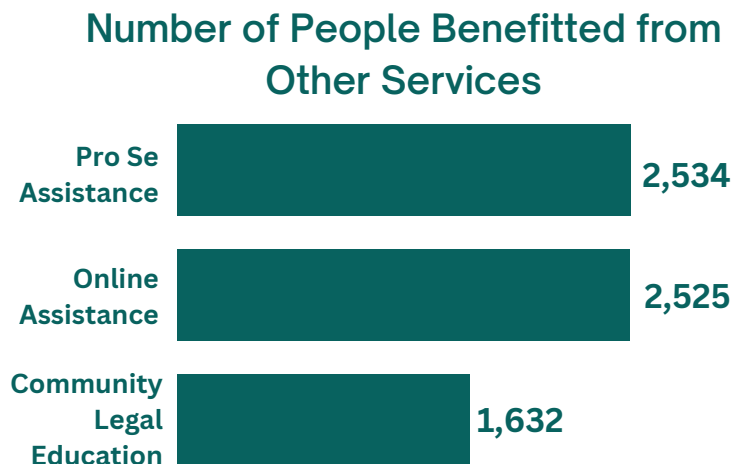
Efforts to Provide Access to Services:

As part of our strategy to ensure that underserved women living in poverty in New York City receive accurate, reliable information about their legal rights and the remedies available to them, Her Justice strengthened relationships with community-based organizations, providing trainings on rights and options available to women living in poverty including:

- Orders of Protection Training for 30 DoVE advocates at NY Presbyterian on February 12, 2023.
- Immigration Remedies Related to Domestic Violence for 25 participants of a virtual CONNECT training on October 24, 2022.
- Ethical Considerations When Representing Domestic Violence Survivors for 368 participants of a virtual Practicing Law Institute Training on February 10, 2023.

Her Justice has also developed and published 11 easy-to-read booklets covering a wide array of family law and matrimonial topics and providing pro se litigants with detailed information and instructions on how to proceed on their own in Family and Supreme Court. These Legal Information Guides are available in English and Spanish on our website and via links on the LawHelpNY.org and WomensLaw.org websites. During the grant period, the guides and other legal resources and information were accessed and downloaded on our website 5,050 times.

6,691 People Benefitted from Services Other Than Direct Legal Services



OTHER SERVICES: TECHNOLOGY

Her Justice uses technology to enhance the quality and delivery of legal services to clients, and to recruit, train and mentor volunteers. The legal department is continually refining system configuration to improve workflow and data management effectiveness. LegalServer, a web-based application, enables staff to interview clients and provide legal services at sites convenient to clients and advocates. Staff use Mitel telephone software and various applications, including Zoom, Slack, and Microsoft Suite. Attorneys also have access to legal resources and treatises from Lexis and other publications to keep them well-informed of developments in the law.

Her Justice has provided every staff member with a business laptop for off-site access to the database and to facilitate intakes and engage with clients. Staff can now also request technological accessories to support their ability to work from home. We also conduct annual organizational technology surveys to ensure our technology systems meet staff needs. The results of this survey also guide us in performing annual health checks on our hardware. We enhanced our cybersecurity insurance to protect against ransomware attacks. As mentioned above, Her Justice launched an online intake system in March 2023, allowing those seeking legal assistance to apply for an intake online.

OTHER SERVICES: TRAININGS

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 CLE credits such as the American Immigration Lawyers Association National Conference; MatLaw Ultimate Update; and the Fordham Consumer Debt Conference. LegalServer, our case management system provider, conducted a four-part series on best practices for new and existing staff on our client database. These trainings were recorded and made available to all staff.

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 and 2021, 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 aim to ensure that written materials are in plain language, and screening questions are culturally competent, and compare community demographic data to client data to guide outreach activities to underserved communities. Additionally, Her Justice utilizes The Management Center to provide trainings and coaching to all manager-level staff with a focus on advancing justice and equity within social justice organizations. We now also work with MindOpen to continue providing DEI coaching to our managers.

Her Justice provides an orientation and training to onboard new staff, volunteers and board members to introduce them to our mission, staff, and programs. Staff and volunteers are trained on our database system and in the substantive areas we practice – family, matrimonial and immigration.

PRO BONO VOLUNTEERS

Her Justice specializes in offering pro bono assistance—connecting volunteer lawyers from 100 firms with women living in poverty who desperately need a lawyer. 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 673 pro bono lawyers, paralegals and law students working on 1,195 closed cases during the grant period. Her Justice conducted 13 live Zoom Continuing Legal Educations (CLE) training webinars in each of the substantive areas of the law relevant to the matters we refer and trained 2,998 pro bono attorneys and non-attorneys (summer associates or paralegals). Her Justice had a total of 4,454 enrolled volunteers during this reporting period.

Her Justice conducts CLE accredited live and video streaming trainings year-round—providing detailed manuals containing case law and sample documents. CLE credit is also available for pro bono hours worked on referred matters.

Our trainings, which we enhanced to reflect trauma-informed practices for both our clients and attorneys, focus on the impact domestic violence and poverty have on our clients in all case areas of our practice.

Volunteer lawyers are assigned a staff attorney mentor who is available to strategize, answer questions, review documents and provide referrals. Four firm attorneys work full-time as externs, providing immediate in-court representation in complex or emergency matters. Non-attorney volunteers translate or interpret for non-English-speaking clients. Law student interns and paralegals volunteer throughout the year both in our main office and remotely. Volunteer forensic accountants and investigators compile and analyze the documentation necessary to obtain fair financial awards. Our Summer Associate Program provides summer associates at our Corporate Partner firms with hands-on legal experience and helps to recruit future lawyers to represent women living in poverty. During summer 2022, 156 attorneys with 82 Summer Associates (law students) from 26 firms worked on 97 legal matters.



1,931 Attorneys volunteered 45,151 hours

74 Law Students volunteered 1,962 hours

24 Other Volunteers volunteered 4,005 hours

Each  icon is equal to 202.9 volunteers.
Attorneys are represented through the Green Figure.
Law Students and Other Volunteers are represented through the Grey Figure.

SIGNIFICANT COLLABORATIONS

Her Justice collaborates with over 100 law firms, connecting volunteer lawyers with women living in poverty who desperately need a lawyer. By providing expert training, advice and mentoring to the private bar, Her Justice leverages its small legal staff and exponentially increases 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.

Her Justice is also an offsite partner with all five FJCs and regularly receives referrals for all our practice areas. Her Justice works closely with 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 their clients are not always comfortable going to the FJCs for legal services. Her Justice closely partners with the following organizations, providing and accepting referrals, conducting training for organization staff to provide information to their community and know-your-rights presentations and legal information and advice directly to their community members, our target population: (1) Korean American Family Service Center (KAFSC), (2) Sakhi for South Asian Women, (3) Violence Intervention Project (VIP) Mujeres, which provides crisis counseling, advocacy and support for survivors of domestic and sexual violence; (4) ConnectNYC, (5) Restore and (6) Garden of Hope, who serve trafficking survivors.

SOURCES OF FUNDING

Fundraising	\$5,091,134
State Funding	\$784,036
City and County Funding	\$535,000
Foundations	\$460,308
IOLA Grant	\$260,190
Federal Funding	\$9,000

