

# 2015 YEAR IN REVIEW

BOSTON GLOBE  
**Mixed Results from Putting Students on the T**

Bay State Banner  
*Activists Raise Concerns About School Closure Plan*



BAY STATE BANNER  
*Black Cops Suing Department Over 'False Positives' in Hair Tests*

TELEMUNDO  
**Alertan Sobre Suspensiones Escolares**



REUTERS  
**The Battle Over Race Preferences at Harvard**

WBUR  
**After Officer Shooting, Community Leaders Praise Transparency – And Call for More**



LAWYERS' COMMITTEE  
FOR CIVIL RIGHTS AND  
ECONOMIC JUSTICE  
*Serving Greater Boston Since 1968*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 02 Mission and History
- 03 Message from the Executive Director
- 04 Who Seeks Our Help: Intakes and Clients
- 05 Belin Economic Justice Project
- 07 Education Project
- 11 Equal Employment Opportunity Project
- 13 Medical-Legal Partnership
- 15 Protecting the Right to Vote: Fifty Years after Selma
- 16 Board of Directors
- 16 Member Firms and Organizations
- 17 Staff
- 18 Interns
- 18 Special Thanks

## MISSION AND HISTORY

The Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Economic Justice is a non-profit, non-partisan organization formed to marshal the resources of the legal community to address racial and national origin discrimination throughout Massachusetts. For four decades, the Lawyers' Committee has worked to safeguard the civil, social, and economic rights of our constituencies. We handle impact litigation as well as legal actions on behalf of individuals. We also engage in community economic development, community education, and public advocacy.

Founded in 1968, the Lawyers' Committee was the first of eight local affiliates of the Washington-based Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, a national organization formed in 1963 at the request of President John F. Kennedy to involve the private bar in providing legal representation to address racial discrimination. In 1973, the Lawyers' Committee became the first *pro bono* project of the Boston Bar Association and was the only Lawyers' Committee in the country affiliated with a major bar association. Although the organization is now separately incorporated with its own 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status, the Lawyers' Committee continues to maintain strong ties to the private bar.

Membership by private law firms in the Lawyers' Committee still forms the working foundation of the organization. Member firms fund a significant part of our annual operating expenses and provide millions of dollars in *pro bono* legal services by co-counseling with the organization. In this way, the Lawyers' Committee has for decades harnessed the resources and legal talent of Boston's leading law firms to secure the civil rights of area residents.

The Lawyers' Committee has also grown, adding new projects and initiatives to fit the changing face of discrimination. While working closely with an ever-increasing number of community partners, it has always remained true to its core mission to challenge discrimination.

*"The proof that one truly believes is in action."*

BAYARD RUSTIN



## MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

At the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Economic Justice, our mission is the complete elimination of discrimination. I know firsthand the importance of our mission. Throughout my life, I have lived, learned, and worked in minority and low-income communities facing complex legal and social challenges. The Lawyers' Committee exists to address these challenges and to help create the type of world – full of justice, equality, and opportunity – that all our families and children deserve.

The Lawyers' Committee is the only legal organization in Massachusetts that expressly brings a racial justice lens and an economic justice analysis to its work. Our unique role and perspective makes us ideally qualified to challenge discrimination in education, housing, employment, public accommodations, and voting.

We also know that legal protections must be matched with economic empowerment to ensure equal opportunity. This is why we provide free business legal support to minority and immigrant entrepreneurs. Our small, minority-owned businesses are economic engines fueling the development and growth of our Commonwealth.

In 2015, we dramatically expanded our work to make it even more diverse, inclusive, visible, and impactful. We launched exciting new litigation in partnership with our member firms, which provide extraordinary *pro bono* support to help advance our mission.

From our historic role in desegregating Boston's public schools to our ongoing efforts combatting discrimination, we have a rich history to build on, and we know that our mission is as critical today as it was four decades ago. In the words of Cesar Chavez:

*We cannot accept achievement for ourselves and forget about progress and prosperity for our community...Our ambitions must be broad enough to include the aspirations and needs of others, for their sakes and for our own.*

**Iván Espinoza-Madrigal**  
*Executive Director*

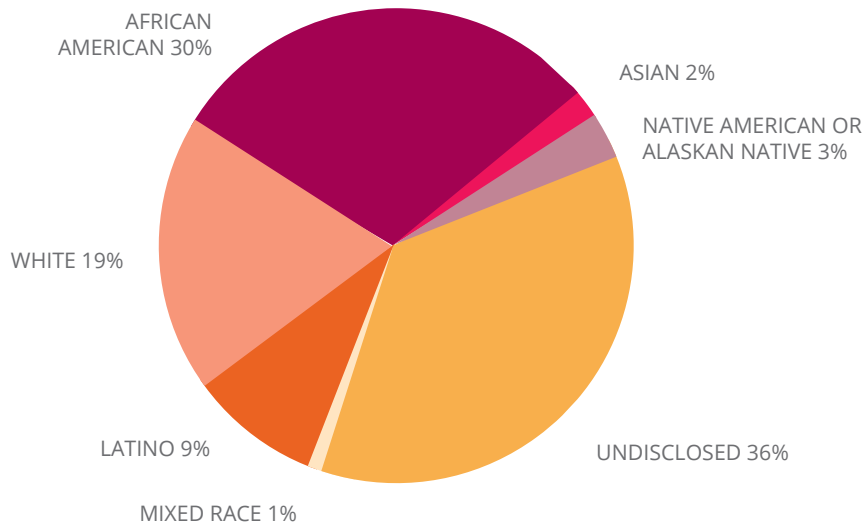


Lawyers' Committee Staff (left to right): Priya Lane, Oren Sellstrom, Alexa Marin, Matt Cregor, Laura Maslow-Armand, Iván Espinoza-Madrigal, Sarah Ward

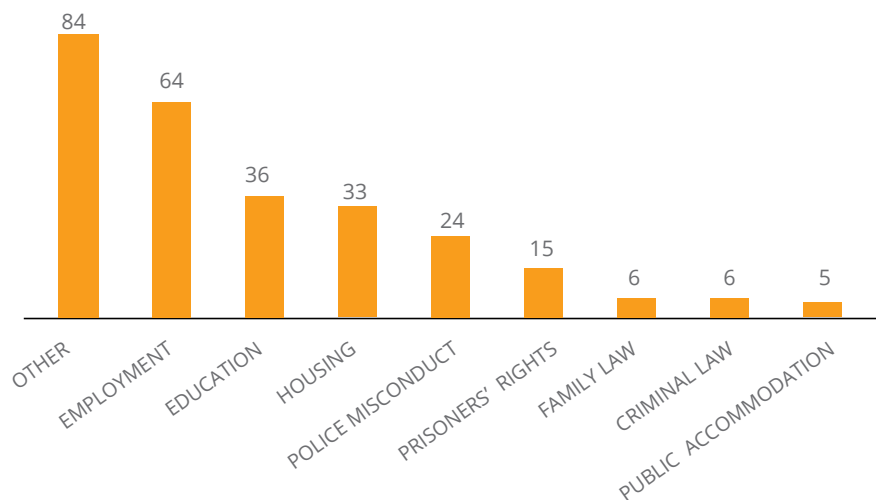
## WHO SEEKS OUR HELP: INTAKES AND CLIENTS

Each year, Lawyers' Committee staff and interns field hundreds of calls, emails, and letters from individuals seeking legal representation and advice. Information about the people seeking our help is summarized below:

### 2015 INTAKES BY RACE



### 2015 INTAKES BY AREA OF LAW



## BELIN ECONOMIC JUSTICE PROJECT

At the Lawyers' Committee, we believe that economic empowerment is a critical means to advance civil rights. Since 2001, the **Belin Economic Justice Project (EJP)** has provided legal assistance to individuals in low-income and minority communities to help them create and expand their small businesses.

*Pro bono* attorneys from member law firms provide transactional assistance to entrepreneurs in underserved communities and, in collaboration with our community partners, conduct workshops on business legal issues. Workshop topics include entity formation, contracts, leases, and employment law. EJP and member firms host legal clinics that provide small businesses and entrepreneurs an opportunity to have one-on-one consultations with attorneys concerning their business legal needs.

In 2015, EJP partnered with **Latham & Watkins** and **Roxbury Community College** to host two "Create Your Own Job" seminars that introduced entrepreneurs to business planning, marketing, accounting, access to capital, and business law. Each seminar, held over the course of seven weeks, helped over 30 entrepreneurs launch or expand their businesses. With assistance from *pro bono* attorneys from member firms, EJP provided one-on-one coaching to seminar graduates.



Diana Cardona, Co-Founder of ManiNuts. Photo courtesy of ManiNuts.

### CLIENT SUCCESS STORY: MANINUTS

Diana and Angelica Cardona are sisters who grew up in Revere and dreamed of opening a business in their community. They started with an idea – roasted peanuts with sesame seeds – but needed help establishing a business to sell what became known as "ManiNuts." With help from EJP, the sister duo is now on their way to realizing their dream. In Spring 2015, they participated in EJP's "Create Your Own Job" seminar and they were matched with attorneys from **Ropes & Gray LLP** who provided *pro bono* assistance in connection with their commercial lease.

Today, they have a thriving small business, their signature product is sold in more than 25 stores throughout Greater Boston, and they intend to expand their distribution. By producing locally, they are also giving back to their community.

Our EJP clients are drawn from diverse communities throughout Greater Boston. Over the last year, we have served entrepreneurs and businesses in the following communities through legal clinics, workshops, seminars, and individual counseling:

Brighton  
Brockton  
Cambridge  
Chinatown  
Dorchester  
East Boston  
Hyde Park  
Jamaica Plain  
Lawrence  
Lynn  
Malden  
Mattapan  
Quincy  
Randolph  
Rockland  
Roxbury  
Stoughton  
Waltham  
West Roxbury  
Worcester

## BUILDING BETTER BUSINESSES: THE EAST BOSTON SMALL BUSINESS LEGAL OUTREACH PROJECT

With a little over half of East Boston identifying as minority, the neighborhood has become a gateway for immigrant, minority, and low-income entrepreneurs. In 2015, **Latham & Watkins** sponsored an **Equal Justice Works Fellow**, who is launching the **East Boston Small Business Legal Outreach Project**, which aims to increase sustainable small business development in this community by conducting legal outreach and providing tailored legal assistance. The project will provide small business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs with:

- Weekly workshops on the legal issues they may encounter while starting or operating their businesses;
- Weekly office hours in East Boston for onsite intakes;
- Monthly legal clinics;
- Limited in-house representation on business law issues; and,
- One-on-one *pro bono* attorney matching for complex business law issues requiring ongoing representation.

**Alexa Marin**, the Equal Justice Works Fellow, will lead this effort in East Boston. As a Latina immigrant, she can personally relate to the East Boston community. She has earned graduate degrees in both business and law, and has over a decade of experience working in a minority-owned small business.



# EDUCATION PROJECT

## PROTECTING EDUCATIONAL EQUITY IN BOSTON

Since *Morgan v. Hennigan*, Boston's school desegregation case, the Lawyers' Committee has worked to protect the civil and educational rights of Boston students. Today, the Lawyers' Committee continues its fight for educational equity on matters at the heart of *Morgan*, including student assignment, student transportation, and teacher diversity.



Matt Cregor at a Boston Branch NAACP Forum on Charter Schools with Mel King, Harneen Chernow, Heshan Berents-Weeramuni, and Odette Williamson. Photo courtesy of the Bay State Banner.

### *Ensuring Middle School Students' Safety to and from School*

Students suffer when they cannot get to school safely. That is why the Lawyers' Committee opposed Boston Public Schools' (BPS) decision to practically eliminate yellow bus service for middle schoolers, transporting them via public transportation instead. In partnership with the **Boston Branch of the NAACP** and a host of allies, the Lawyers' Committee opposed BPS' transportation plan, successfully reducing the number of students affected by the plan. In 2015, the Lawyers' Committee served on **Mayor Martin J. Walsh's Middle School Transportation Advisory Group** to monitor implementation of the new transportation plan. As part of this Advisory Group, the Lawyers' Committee brought public attention to the sexual harassment that Boston's middle school girls experience from older men on public transportation. We have continued to push for BPS to address these concerns, both as a matter of good public policy and to avoid liability under federal anti-discrimination laws such as Title IX. Given BPS' expanded use of public transportation for middle school students, the Lawyers' Committee continues to urge BPS and the MBTA to develop proper safety protocols for Boston's students.

BOSTON GLOBE  
AUGUST 15, 2015

*Safety concerns do not always involve throwing punches, said Matt Cregor, a member of the transportation advisory committee and an attorney with the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Economic Justice. Cregor's main worry, after speaking to a focus group of about a dozen middle school girls, is sexual harassment. "What they told us was profound," he said. Cregor described cat calls and touching. Though some of it is accidental, he said, the young women in the room had difficulty dealing with the interactions.*

## Supporting Communities' Call to Keep Their Schools Open

Together with the **Black Educators Alliance of Massachusetts (BEAM)**, the Lawyers' Committee and a host of other allies opposed the proposed closure of five public schools. BEAM and the Lawyers' Committee argued that the Boston School Committee was not giving the communities of color served by the schools an adequate opportunity to respond (the subject of a longstanding complaint filed by the Lawyers' Committee on BEAM's behalf with the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights). Two of the schools slated for closure were kept open as a direct result of this advocacy effort, and the Lawyers' Committee continues its work to ensure that BPS institutes an equitable, transparent process for considering school closures.

## PROMOTING RACIAL DIVERSITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The U.S. Supreme Court has long recognized that our colleges and universities have a compelling interest in creating diverse student bodies. When students from different walks of life learn with and from each other, they are better prepared for success in our increasingly diverse and interconnected world. A series of challenges were raised in 2015 to the use of race in college admissions, and the Lawyers' Committee has helped answer this call in federal court cases in Massachusetts and in the U.S. Supreme Court.

### *Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin II*

Two years ago, when the U.S. Supreme Court examined the University of Texas' admissions process, it reaffirmed colleges' ability to consider race as one of many factors in admitting a diverse student body. This year, Texas' admissions policy is once again before the Supreme Court. Together with **Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky & Popeo, P.C.**, the Lawyers' Committee filed an *amicus* brief in *Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin II* to counter the so-called "mismatch hypothesis," which posits that affirmative action is harmful to students of color. Our clients are leading scholars from Harvard, Stanford, Yale, the University of Pennsylvania, and other prominent institutions of higher learning, who have thoroughly debunked this theory. In our brief, we bring to the Court's attention the significant methodological flaws the scholars have identified in the "mismatch" research.

### *Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard*

The same forces behind the *Fisher* case have also engineered a challenge to Harvard's ability to consider race in admissions in *Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard*. Together with the national **Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law** and **Arnold & Porter**, the Lawyers' Committee moved to intervene in this case on behalf of a multi-racial group of current and prospective Harvard students who value diversity on campus and believe their educations would be harmed were Harvard prohibited from considering racial diversity in the admissions process. The federal judge hearing the case granted our students *amicus* status, but we believe that current and prospective students should have a seat at the table as full parties to the case. We therefore appealed the decision to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit to ensure that students' voices are properly heard in this important case. Oral argument was held in November 2015, and we are awaiting a decision.

### Harvard Black Students Association Whose Version of Fairness?

Addressing *Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard*

Information Session: Thursday, 4/23, at 5:00pm

Emerson Hall Room 101

An anti-affirmative action group has sued Harvard for the way it values racial diversity in admitting students. The Project on Fair Representation (POFR) orchestrated a similar unsuccessful lawsuit for white students in Texas, and has filed the Harvard suit on behalf of Asian-American students. The suit (and the flyer below) resulted in significant pushback from Harvard's Asian-American student community and the #IAMNotYourWedge campaign.

Please join us for a discussion with attorneys from the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights who oppose the lawsuit to talk about ways to get involved in pushing back both in and out of court.

From POFR's recruitment website ([harvardnotfair.org](http://harvardnotfair.org)):





## KEEPING STUDENTS IN SCHOOL

Out-of-school suspensions significantly affect students' ability to learn. According to the U.S. Department of Education, out-of-school suspension predicts school dropout and involvement in the juvenile and criminal justice system. Nonetheless, nearly two-thirds of out-of-school suspensions in Massachusetts are for what the state describes as “non-violent, non-criminal, and non-drug-related” behavior, and Massachusetts’ students of color are far

more likely than their White peers to be suspended for such minor misbehavior.



Massachusetts enacted a new school discipline law, “Chapter 222,” which went into effect for the 2014-2015 school year. The law limits reliance on out-of-school suspensions and affords families greater due process rights. In 2015, the Lawyers’ Committee worked to ensure the law’s proper implementation through:

**Legal Representation:** The Lawyers’ Committee is partnering with **Nutter McClennen & Fish** to advocate on behalf of an African-American homeless student who may have been denied Chapter 222’s protections when suspended for such infractions as using the wrong bathroom. This effort is part of a series of challenges that the Lawyers’ Committee plans to pursue to ensure that all school districts are fully implementing the new law.

**Outreach:** Lawyers’ Committee staff traveled across the state to meet with families, community organizations, and educator groups to provide information and trainings on Chapter 222. Together with the **Mental Health Legal Advisors Committee**, the Lawyers’ Committee is staffing an intake office in Springfield, Massachusetts. Pioneer Valley school districts, including Springfield, have some of the highest discipline rates of students of color in Massachusetts.

**Policy Advocacy:** The Lawyers’ Committee testified twice before the Massachusetts Legislature on the findings of its landmark report, *Not Measuring Up: The State of School Discipline in Massachusetts*, which drew attention to the disproportionate discipline of students of color. Together with **Massachusetts Advocates for Children** and the **Chapter 222 Coalition**, the Lawyers’ Committee also met with the Massachusetts Commissioner of Education and other key officials in the Massachusetts Department of Education to advocate for proper monitoring of Chapter 222’s implementation.

**Supporting Student Voice:** The Lawyers’ Committee provided legal support to the **Boston Student Advisory Council (BSAC)** as the group developed an innovative tool – a school discipline smartphone application (app) – to inform students and parents of their rights under Chapter 222. This student-created app is the first of its kind in the country and serves as a model for school districts nationwide interested in innovative, tech-based approaches to community legal education.

## COMBATTING RACIAL HARASSMENT IN SCHOOLS

As minority households increasingly diversify the suburbs, the Lawyers' Committee has been receiving more calls from families whose children have been harassed and bullied at school based on their identity, including their race. In 2015, we advocated for several students of color experiencing racial hostility in school. For example, "Adam," a bi-racial student in a coastal Massachusetts town, experienced extensive racial harassment and alienation from members of his otherwise all-White high school track team. Adam's teammates directed racial slurs towards him, sent him images of the Ku Klux Klan over social media, and placed a cross on his gym locker. Adam felt little support from school leaders in addressing this harassment.

The Lawyers' Committee represented Adam and his family in negotiations with the district and secured the family's preferred remedies, including a restorative justice conference between our client, school administrators, and the students who had targeted him. Restorative justice is an approach to resolving a conflict that places mutual responsibility on those involved to craft and carry out a solution to the harm. Through this restorative justice conference, Adam's harassers have come to understand, and begun to repair, the harm they caused, and Adam's school has taken significant steps to properly respond to and prevent future occurrences. As a result, Adam has started this school year in a far more supportive and inclusive school environment.



Cross placed on "Adam's" gym locker after he received images of the Ku Klux Klan from harassing classmates.

## EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY PROJECT

The Lawyers' Committee seeks to eradicate unjust employment practices that disproportionately affect minority and immigrant workers. Our goal is to ensure that all individuals have equal opportunity in the workplace.

### REPRESENTING THE MOST VULNERABLE WORKERS

Through referrals from our community allies such as the **Chelsea Collaborative** and **Justice at Work**, we represent many recent immigrants, particularly those from Latin America. These low-wage workers are among the most vulnerable and exploited, working at such employers as a roofing company, a fish factory, an office cleaning enterprise, a cemetery, and a fast-food restaurant. Their claims range from disparate treatment, retaliation, and constructive discharge, to associational discrimination, sexual harassment, and hostile work environment.

For example, in proceedings at the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination, we are representing a Honduran immigrant who experienced a hostile work environment and disparate treatment working as a roofer. For over a year, our client routinely endured verbal abuse and racial slurs from his foreman. In front of a work team of roofers, the foreman would call our client "Honduran trash" and "wetback." This unending stream of insults culminated in a workplace injury. Our client, pushed to work harder and faster by the foreman, stepped on a nail that went through his work boots and injured a tendon. Told that if he left to get medical care he would lose his job, the worker stoically endured the pain for two weeks before finally seeking medical treatment. When he returned to work, he was terminated. After securing a probable cause determination, we are preparing for a public hearing.

African-American employees, and in particular African-American women, also make up a substantial portion of our employment discrimination docket. For example, we represent an African-American woman alleging disparate treatment against a charter school that has very few teachers of color. In another matter, we represent an African-American social worker hired to assist children of color enrolled in a voluntary suburban busing program. Our client alleges disparate treatment and retaliatory termination.

### ENSURING EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IN POLICE DEPARTMENTS

As recent events in Ferguson, Missouri and elsewhere have reminded us, diversity in police ranks is a key component of community representation and accountability. Our communities are safer and stronger when minority police officers are given equal opportunity to advance and when police departments reflect the neighborhoods they serve.

Nevertheless, the Boston Police Department ("BPD") continues to use a drug testing modality that courts have found to be scientifically unreliable and racially discriminatory. We represent ten African-American former police officers and the **Massachusetts Association of Minority Law Enforcement Officers (MAMLEO)** in an employment discrimination case, *Jones v. City of Boston*, concerning BPD's use of hair samples in drug screenings administered annually to sworn personnel. We contend that the BPD's "hair test" has a statistically significant adverse impact against African Americans because it generates false-positive results in processing the type of hair common to African Americans.

## ENSURING EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IN POLICE DEPARTMENTS (CON'T.)



Former Lawyers' Committee Deputy Director Rahsaan Hall (far right) facilitating a panel on racial diversity in police ranks with (left to right) Boston City Councilor Ayanna Pressley, Larry Ellison (MAMLEO), Carl Williams (ACLU of Massachusetts), and Michael Curry (Boston NAACP). Photo courtesy of the Bay State Banner.

The Massachusetts Civil Service Commission has already found the “hair test” to be unreliable, and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit held that it has a statistically significant adverse impact against African Americans. Nonetheless, a federal judge found that the BPD has a “business necessity” for using the test and granted summary judgment against us. The Lawyers' Committee is appealing this decision in partnership with *pro bono* counsel from **WilmerHale**.

In 2015, we continued to participate in *Lopez v. Lawrence*, a case involving African-American and Latino police officers who are challenging an examination used by Boston and a number of other municipalities to determine promotions to sergeant positions. The plaintiffs contend that the promotional exam disproportionately and unfairly excludes minority police officers from advancement. The plaintiffs further allege that a written multiple-choice exam cannot be used to measure skills such as leadership, supervisory ability, and command presence. These barriers to promotion deprive the community of fair representation on the police force and serve to breed distrust. This case, brought by our friends at **Lichten & Liss-Riordan, P.C.** and **Fair Work, P.C.**, is on appeal to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit.

## MEDICAL-LEGAL PARTNERSHIP

People living in low-income communities such as Chelsea face significant barriers to health. Children living in substandard housing are more prone to illness. Families with limited resources may have to choose between buying food or medicine. Homelessness can profoundly affect mental health.

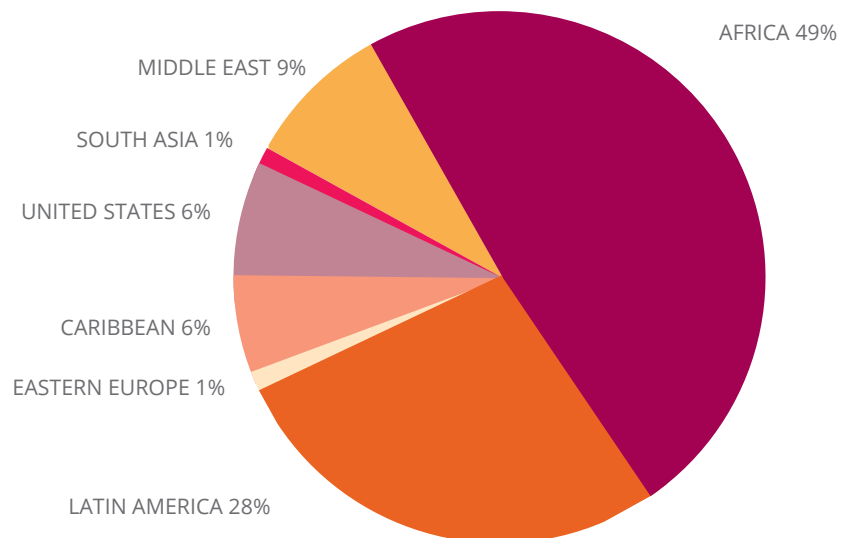


A nurse and a community health worker meet with a patient at the MGH HealthCare Center in Chelsea. Photo courtesy of MGH.

Legal intervention, however, can help remove many of these barriers to health.

Through our Medical-Legal Partnership, the Lawyers' Committee and Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) work together to address the complex interaction between race, immigration status, poverty, healthcare, and the law. A Lawyers' Committee staff attorney is onsite one day a week at the MGH HealthCare Center in Chelsea, offering free legal assistance to patients. Healthcare providers and a team of 45 multicultural community health workers make referrals when they identify a legal issue that is detrimental to a patient's health.

### 2015 ORIGIN OF CLIENTS BY REGION



Since its inception over a decade ago, the program has served more than 2,545 clients and their family members. Clients are primarily non-English speakers, many of them refugees from Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East, as well as immigrants from Latin America.

## LEGAL INTERVENTION TO REMOVE BARRIERS TO HEALTH

The Medical-Legal Partnership addresses a wide range of legal needs, including:

- Preventing eviction and remedying substandard living conditions;
- Securing disability benefits for children and adults;
- Obtaining court-ordered child support for children being raised by single parents; and,
- Assisting refugees living with disabilities with the citizenship application process.

By providing legal advocacy at critical junctures, the Lawyers' Committee helps to remove barriers to health and improve health outcomes.

## CLIENT PROFILE: STABILIZING A FAMILY IN CHELSEA, MASSACHUSETTS

An elderly couple and their daughter came to Massachusetts from Burundi, devastated by a decade of civil war. The husband was in his late 60s, the wife was blind, and the daughter was confined to bed by untreated cerebral palsy. Two adult married daughters, who served as the parents' caregivers, accompanied the family. The Lawyers' Committee applied for and obtained disability benefits for the family. We helped the family find handicapped-accessible subsidized housing. We assisted the elderly parents through the citizenship application process and convinced immigration officials to hold the swearing-in ceremony in the family's apartment. This multi-pronged legal advocacy strategy has led to greater stability and improved health outcomes for the family.



Staff Attorney Laura Maslow-Armand with a client at the MGH HealthCare Center in Chelsea. Photo courtesy of MGH.

## PROTECTING THE RIGHT TO VOTE: FIFTY YEARS AFTER SELMA

The “Bloody Sunday” beatings of civil rights demonstrators in Selma, Alabama, served as a catalyst for the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965. Fifty years after Selma, immense challenges remain. The U.S. Supreme Court, in *Shelby County v. Holder*, gutted key protections against voting discrimination in the Voting Rights Act. Congress has yet to restore this law to its former vitality.

Voting rights are under attack across the country. State and local officials are disseminating misinformation about voting requirements and procedures, eliminating early voting, purging voter rolls, and enforcing discriminatory voter ID requirements that disproportionately affect minorities, transgender people, and elderly voters. Many polling sites are inaccessible to non-English speakers and voters living with disabilities. Far too many states, including Massachusetts, are ignoring federal laws that are designed to expand access to the polls.

Just this year, the Lawyers’ Committee – in partnership with the national **Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, Demos, Project Vote**, and *pro bono* counsel from **Ropes & Gray LLP** – settled a major case, *NAACP v. Galvin*, which challenged Massachusetts’ failure to comply with its federally-mandated duty, under Section 7 of the National Voter Registration Act, to provide voter registration opportunities to public assistance recipients. Under the settlement, Massachusetts will now automatically distribute voter registration materials to public assistance recipients and provide multi-lingual assistance to those who wish to register. This important case was brought on behalf of our clients, the **New England Area Conference NAACP** and **New England United for Justice**.



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Iván Espinoza-Madrugal, *Executive Director*

Iván joined the Lawyers' Committee in April 2015. Previously, he was the Legal Director of the Center for HIV Law and Policy; a staff attorney at Lambda Legal and MALDEF; an associate at Fried Frank; and a judicial law clerk in the U.S. District Court, S.D.N.Y., and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit. Iván is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania and NYU School of Law. The National LGBT Bar Association has recognized him as one of the Best LGBT Lawyers Under 40.



Oren M. Sellstrom, *Director of Litigation*

Oren joined the Lawyers' Committee in September 2015 and oversees the organization's legal work. Previously, he served as Legal Director for the Lawyers' Committee affiliate in San Francisco, California. He has also worked as a legal services attorney, and he served as a judicial law clerk in the U.S. District Court, N.D.Cal. He is a 1992 graduate of Harvard Law School.



Matthew Cregor, *Education Project Director*

Matt joined the Lawyers' Committee in January 2014 and works on a variety of education matters including school discipline, special education, and student assignment. Previously, Matt served as a staff attorney for the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund and the Southern Poverty Law Center. Matt is a 2006 graduate of the Georgetown University Law Center.



Priya Lane, *Staff Attorney*

Priya, a former Lawyers' Committee intern, returned to the organization in 2013 after graduating from Northeastern University School of Law. After working for a year as a public interest fellow with the Lawyers' Committee, Priya became a staff attorney in 2014. Priya works on education, employment and housing matters.



Laura Maslow-Armand, *Staff Attorney*

Laura joined the Lawyers' Committee in 2003. Prior to that, she served as an Assistant Attorney General in the Civil Rights and Public Charities Divisions. Laura is a graduate of Harvard College and Harvard Law School. She divides her time between employment discrimination litigation and the Lawyers' Committee's Medical-Legal Partnership with MGH.

## INTERNS

Aaron Bray  
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Elizabeth Curran  
*Harvard Law School*

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*Boston College Law School*

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Julina Guo  
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Amelia Wirts  
*Boston College Law School*



Alexa Marin, *Equal Justice Works Fellow sponsored by Latham & Watkins LLP*

Alexa joined the Lawyers' Committee in Fall 2015 after graduating from Northeastern University School of Law, where she participated in the Community Business Clinic. As part of the Belin Economic Justice Project, Alexa is spearheading a project providing transactional legal assistance to low-income and minority entrepreneurs and small business owners in East Boston, Massachusetts.



Sarah Ward, *Legal and Administrative Assistant*

Sarah supports the Lawyers' Committee's legal work and administration. Sarah has served as an AmeriCorps Vista Member and is completing her Masters of Public Administration at Northeastern University as well as a Nonprofit Certificate in the Nonprofit Sector in Philanthropy and Social Change.

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## SPECIAL THANKS

The Lawyers' Committee would like to offer profound thanks and gratitude to Rahsaan D. Hall, Sarah Gautier, Bryn Sfetsios, and Gerald Glover III, each of whom made significant contributions to the work and direction of the organization during their tenure.

*“The heart of the question  
is whether all Americans  
are to be afforded  
equal rights and equal  
opportunities, whether  
we are going to treat our  
fellow Americans as we  
want to be treated.”*

PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY, 1963



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