

**GREATER BOSTON
LEGAL SERVICES
2024-2025
IMPACT REPORT**

EST.

1900

LEGAL SERVICES

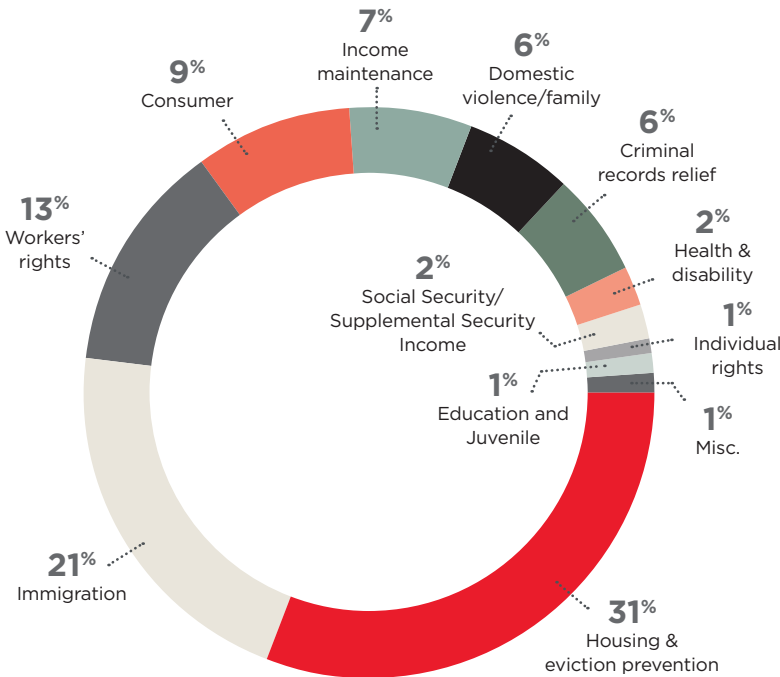
GBLS BY THE NUMBERS

JULY 1, 2024 - JUNE 30, 2025

14,411

LEGAL MATTERS HANDLED

Cases by Issue

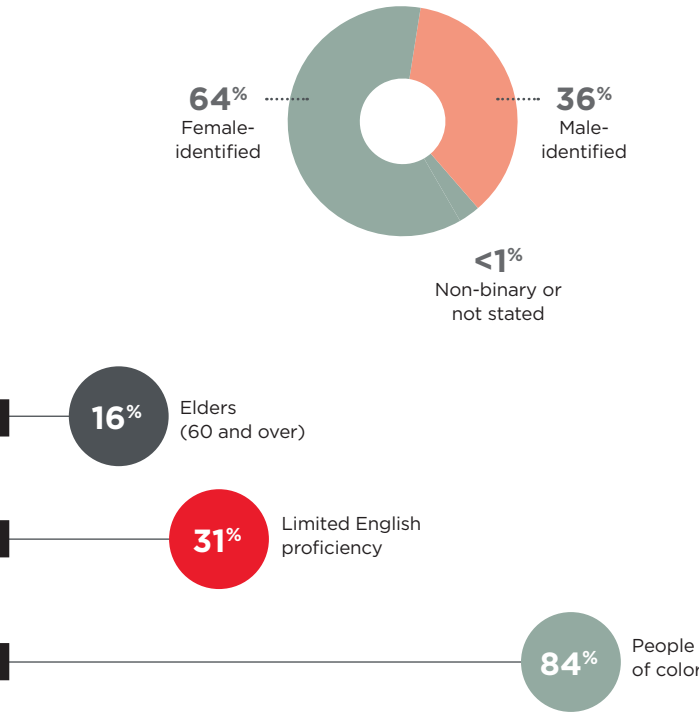


125 YEARS: GBLS has been serving the Boston area community since our founding in 1900 as the Boston Legal Aid Society. At 125 years young, we are celebrating our impact, major milestones, and our future.

11,849

FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS ASSISTED

Client Demographics





Jacquelynne J. Bowman



Anne K. Trinque

CHARTING THE PATH FORWARD: AN INTERVIEW WITH GBLS' LEADERS

At 125 years young, Greater Boston Legal Services is at a pivotal moment in our evolution. Founded to provide needed legal services to indigent clients, with an early focus on helping women with children and immigrants, the organization's purpose has never been clearer (or more important) than it is today. Jacquelynne Bowman, Executive Director, and Anne Trinque, President of GBLS' Board of Directors, share their thoughts on why civil legal aid is vital to addressing today's most daunting challenges, their connection to GBLS' purpose and values, and next steps for the future of the organization.

What do you see as GBLS' value to Boston and the surrounding communities and what are you most proud of?

Anne Trinque: I believe the value GBLS provides to the community, and which gives me the most pride, is not the big wins, though they're certainly worthy of applause. It's the fact that, day in, day out, through pandemics and political uncertainty, GBLS attorneys, paralegals and staff are fighting for the most vulnerable in our community and giving them a voice when they feel voiceless.

Jacquelynne Bowman: I see GBLS' value in that we are true community partners. We work with groups and individuals to solve legal issues that make it challenging for low-income households to meet their basic needs. We support people in a variety of ways, both through individual cases and systemic advocacy, which results in a positive impact for everyone in our region, even those we cannot represent due to a lack of resources.

GBLS was founded by members of the private bar. What does that relationship look like today?

AT: We are sincerely grateful for the support we receive from the private bar, which has been a critical partnership for the organization. From pro bono support, to fundraising efforts and drives, to board membership and even conference space—private bar support runs the gamut. The enthusiasm of the lawyers and law firms in the greater Boston area to consistently step up for GBLS reflects the deep-seated ethical responsibility we all feel to support the public good and reminds me of how fortunate we are to practice in this city.

JB: I agree. Nationally, we are the envy of many other legal aid programs due to the wide-ranging support we enjoy from the private bar. Private law firms, companies, and individual attorneys are often critical partners to GBLS, and we work together with a shared vision of expanding access to legal aid for those who need it most.

GBLS has been involved in a complex strategic planning process over the past couple of years, in which you have both been deeply involved. What excites you most about what has come out of that process?

JB: Throughout my tenure as GBLS' Executive Director, I have pushed for greater visibility in the communities we serve. We have several place-based projects, and our staff works with more than 80 community partners. This is great, but I often think about the people whom we might be missing. Do they know GBLS is available to help? Do they know how to reach us? Is our work responsive to their needs? Our strategic planning process is helping us address some of these central issues.

AT: Absolutely, a critical piece of the strategic plan is community engagement. In strengthening our partnerships and having more visibility into the needs of our communities, we'll amplify GBLS' impact. We'll also be better positioned to make systemic change—real improvements in our neighbors' and community members' daily lives.

The current federal administration is rapidly cutting government programs and funding, rewriting and re-interpreting laws and policies to suit a particular agenda. What does this mean for Massachusetts, Boston, and GBLS' community? How is GBLS meeting this moment?

JB: GBLS will continue to represent the widest range of people we can, providing comprehensive legal services to our clients. We have fought and will continue to fight to ensure that all people are treated fairly, and that our clients have access to real justice. That has been and continues to be our charge, regardless of who is leading the federal administration. GBLS was founded to address justice and fairness of our most vulnerable neighbors. We see this as our mission, part of our DNA. Of course, some times are more challenging than others, but GBLS' advocates and staff are up for the challenge. By identifying and pursuing innovative responses to support our community in this quickly changing environment, GBLS can frequently secure a positive outcome for our clients. We have a long history of successful advocacy and I don't expect this to change.

AT: It's a critical time for legal aid programs and characterizing the continuous onslaught of cuts and orders as challenging is an understatement. There's no doubt that Boston and Massachusetts are being targeted for their social and administrative policies. The lawyers and staff at GBLS are on the front lines of the barrage every day, hearing from prospective clients and community partners and devising strategies to reinforce their legal rights and opportunities. From social service and housing advocacy to critical immigration intervention, GBLS continues to be our beacon in the storm.

Greater Boston Legal Services is proud to be in community with our clients, partners, and supporters. Together, we will continue to fight for justice in Greater Boston and across Massachusetts. We hope you are encouraged by the stories of impact and achievements in GBLS' 2024-2025 Annual Report, and that you take what you read and share it as an ambassador for GBLS and the issues facing our communities. Since 1900, GBLS has carried the torch for justice, for fairness, for progress. Thank you for bearing that torch with us.



GBLS' 125th Anniversary Celebration and Staff & Board Reunion in June, featuring guest speaker Senator Lydia Edwards.

GBLS' IMPACT & ADVOCACY

A History of Legal Leadership: GBLS was founded in 1900 as the Boston Legal Aid Society to protect the rights of community members who could not afford a lawyer. Over the years, the organization expanded when it absorbed the Boston Legal Assistance Project (BLAP) in 1976 and Cambridge and Somerville Legal Services (CASLS) in 1996. Over the past 125 years, GBLS has had a tremendous impact, including these notable efforts over the past year.

Preserving Affordable Housing

Over the past year, GBLS worked with community partners to make over 350 market-rate apartments permanently affordable and saved many families from displacement. In the city of Chelsea, GBLS successfully represented a group of tenants facing no-fault evictions from their apartment building, where they were being pressured to accept big rent increases they could not afford. The building was ultimately sold in February 2025 to a nonprofit developer who will keep all 18 units permanently affordable.

In Mattapan, GBLS successfully represented—and saved from eviction—many tenants at the Fairlawn Estates complex who had been resisting big rent increases for years. The apartment complex, since renamed SoMa Apartments at the T, was purchased in March 2025 by an affordable housing developer, with funding from the City of Boston, to make the 347 units permanently, deed-restricted affordable units where all rent increases will be capped at an affordable rate. Fairlawn Tenants Association leader Annie Gordon said of the victory: “The feeling is overwhelming relief. We fought so hard, and we actually won.” Victories like these in Chelsea and Mattapan help to stabilize neighborhoods across the Boston area.

Ensuring Housing for Immigrants

For several years, GBLS' Cambridge and Somerville office (Cambridge and Somerville Legal Services/CASLS) attorneys have advocated for the Cambridge Housing Authority (CHA) and the City of Cambridge to establish a municipal rental voucher program for those without HUD immigration status. Families without immigration status lost access to 685 units and subsidies when CHA converted to federally-assisted housing. In June 2025, due to federal administration changes, the city decided to fund such a program for 47 affected tenants. This summer, GBLS' CASLS staff moved quickly to develop the parameters for this program (called MVP) with the City of Cambridge and CHA staff, with the goal that it will replicate the rights and operation that tenants currently have in either the Section 8 tenant-based program or in CHA developments. This program will serve as a model for Cambridge in developing a second municipal voucher program to operate as permanent supportive housing for unhoused residents.

Providing Access to Counsel

Since January 2025, GBLS has partnered with Boston Public Schools (BPS) and FamilyAid Boston in an Access to Counsel Pilot Program launched by the City of Boston to represent families with children in the BPS system facing eviction, following the state legislature passing a statewide Access to Counsel Pilot Program in July 2024. The program is led by the City of Boston's Office of Housing Stability (OHS). GBLS Housing Unit Managing Attorney Hed Ehrlich stated when the program launch was announced, “Right now, less than five percent of families facing eviction [in Boston] have legal representation...This program is a bold step toward addressing that inequity, significantly expanding legal services to protect our most vulnerable community members, and hopefully a foundation for a future where every tenant has a right to counsel.” GBLS also began a new monthly in-person clinic with OHS in under-served areas of Boston.

Similarly, with funding from the state, GBLS' Access to Counsel-Tenant Representation Program works to reduce evictions and the effects they have on tenants and their families in other parts of GBLS' service area. Access to Counsel program staff work to prevent evictions from being filed, assists tenants in defeating evictions in court, delay

evictions, or otherwise resolve eviction cases in a way that benefits the tenants, helping them to transfer to shelter, seal the case and prevent an eviction record, or preserve their housing subsidy.

Protecting Immigrant Workers

GBLS' Workers' Rights Unit submitted approximately 160 applications for Deferred Action for Labor Enforcement (DALE), a powerful but short-lived federal program to support workplace rights enforcement. Under DALE, undocumented immigrant workers whose workplaces were under investigation by government labor agencies were able to receive four years of deferred action and work authorization, protecting them from immigration-based retaliation and empowering them to come forward as complainants and witnesses. The clients who have received DALE and work authorization are protected from ICE enforcement action while they continue to pursue possibilities for long-term immigration relief. In addition, GBLS clients who were previously in removal proceedings or under ICE supervision have been able to get those cases closed or terminated based on their DALE approvals, providing them with significant relief from immigration-related anxieties.

Advocating for Taxpayers

GBLS' Low-Income Taxpayer Clinic (LITC) filed two pieces of legislation in January 2025. The first, a measure to improve tax credits, is a set of bills on which the LITC worked with the Healthy Families EITC Coalition. The second, An Act Providing for Settlements of Tax Liability, is GBLS' own proposal. As part of their legislative advocacy, GBLS attorneys testified



Participants at GBLS' annual Client & Community Lobby Day to support statewide legal aid funding



CORI Project staff conducting community outreach

before the Massachusetts Legislature's Special Commission on Poverty in the Commonwealth. They addressed tax credits as part of the safety net and a pending bill to assist struggling taxpayers to settle tax debt. The recommendations by GBLS' LITC led to the inclusion of the tax credits in the bills SD2872 & HD4622, An Act significantly alleviating poverty.

Ending Tenant-Paid Broker Fees

For years, GBLS advocated to eliminate mandatory renter-paid broker's fees, which force tenants to pay thousands of dollars in up-front costs and can be a significant barrier to securing housing for low- and moderate-income families, young people, and seniors across the Commonwealth. GBLS worked in close partnership with Massachusetts Law Reform Institute (MLRI), alongside a broad coalition of advocates, lawmakers, and impacted communities, to ensure that the voices of renters were heard throughout the legislative process. The Legislature's proposal to ban the practice of requiring renters to pay broker's fees when they have not themselves hired a broker was included in the Fiscal Year 2026 state budget and took effect on August 1, 2025. This reform will make accessing housing more affordable for thousands of Massachusetts renters.

Helping Drivers Stay on the Road

GBLS, in coalition with partners, is working to end debt-based driving restrictions. License suspensions as a result of outstanding E-ZPass fees, parking tickets, and other infractions unrelated to road safety can



1920

Charles Ponzi ran his infamous "**Ponzi scheme**" in Boston, and the Legal Aid Society took on bankruptcy cases from Ponzi creditors who couldn't afford legal assistance.

devastate low-income households and needlessly entangle them in the criminal legal system. These suspensions hamper economic growth and destabilize the lives of low-income workers, who need to be able to drive to or for work. The Road to Opportunity Act (S.2368/H.3662), which is championed by GBLS and partner organizations, would end debt-based driving restrictions, to the benefit of safe drivers and their families, the Massachusetts economy, and overburdened courts.

Addressing Housing Junk Fees

GBLS advocates have repeatedly heard from clients and community groups about a variety of mandatory non-rent charges demanded by landlords or real estate brokers to secure an apartment, during their tenancy, or to renew a lease. GBLS' advocates decided to work on a legislative solution to address these rental housing "junk fees." GBLS convened a working group with other public service legal partners to draft bills combatting these extraneous, unwarranted charges. The bills were filed in the Massachusetts House and Senate on behalf of GBLS' client group, with a legislative briefing held in April 2025. Advocates expect a Committee hearing in fall 2025.

Removing Barriers to Benefits

GBLS' Welfare Law Unit successfully advocated for changes to a form that is a prerequisite for every disabled individual to get Emergency Aid to the Elderly Disabled and Children (EAEDC) cash assistance benefits, including providing an electronic signature option for the form, as the requirement to return the physical form is a major barrier for many of GBLS' clients.

GBLS is also part of a state-wide group of legal services advocates responding to a marked increase in inadequately-supported accusations of welfare fraud and error-filled overpayment claims. The group has won several hearings on these issues. With the workgroup, GBLS has been working with the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) to improve the fairness and accuracy of these systems.

Enforcing Education Rights for Students

GBLS' School to Prison Pipeline Intervention Project advocates are challenging several areas of concern on behalf of students. Examples include districts failing to provide transportation as a related service

to students who are entitled to it based on the content of their Individualized Educational Program (IEP), and districts failing to provide alternative education services to students experiencing long-term suspensions. GBLS' education law staff work to ensure that students receive the high-quality education to which they are entitled under the law.

Leading CORI Reform

GBLS' CORI and Re-Entry Project is the leader of the statewide Clean Slate Massachusetts Coalition, advocating for legislative reform to automate the criminal record sealing process so that certain records are automatically sealed once the waiting period has passed without requiring a petition. This would increase sealings on a broad scale and benefit low-income communities across the state.

Partnering to Protect our Communities

Starting in January 2025, community-based organizations serving immigrants expressed a growing concern about immigration enforcement at community-based sites, and sought legal assistance from GBLS to develop protocols and procedures for handling encounters to protect staff and community members with vulnerable immigration status. GBLS' Asian Outreach Center attorneys, with the Asian American Legal Defense Education Fund (AALDEF), provided legal support and guidance to organizational clients for establishing policies and protocols to prepare for potential immigration enforcement.



ESTABLISHING SAFETY IN THE UNITED STATES

Zainab is a Shi'a Hazara woman who faced severe danger in her home country of Afghanistan due to her gender, ethnic background, and religion, and fled to the United States for safety.

Fortunately, Zainab's father filed a family-based immigration petition on her behalf several years ago, but Zainab needed help when USCIS erroneously denied her application for adjustment of status. Zainab's GBLS attorney made Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests, prepared an Affidavit of Financial Support, responded to multiple Requests for Evidence, and filed a successful Motion to Reopen. Her attorney also helped her maintain employment authorization through a mix of parole-based and adjustment-of-status-based work permits. In June 2025, facing the end of her second Operation Allies Refuge (OAR) parole period, and with no decision on her pending Green Card application, Zainab's attorney prepared and filed an application for asylum on her behalf. To her great relief, Zainab was granted asylum less than two weeks after her interview and will now be eligible to apply for an asylum-based green card in 2026. Her family-based application for adjustment of status remains pending, but Zainab now has multiple avenues to permanent legal status—and lasting safety—in the U.S.

Unless otherwise noted, client names throughout this report have been changed to protect privacy.



PROTECTING DUE PROCESS FOR IMMIGRANTS

GBLS has responded to numerous immigration actions since the beginning of 2025, as the U.S. Department of Homeland Security has increased arrests, detentions, and deportations at the behest of the current federal administration.

Alonso, an undocumented Massachusetts resident was stopped in a neighboring state by Customs and Border Protection on his way to a jobsite. Alonso was detained and denied access to counsel for many days, being informed that he would soon be transferred to another part of the country before being deported. Community activists alerted GBLS to the issue, and GBLS attorneys jumped in to help. GBLS collaborated with the Habeas Project (a partnership between the ACLU, Massachusetts Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, and MLRI) to file a habeas petition in the U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts. Almost immediately, the judge in the case issued a stay preventing Alonso's transfer outside of Massachusetts. The stay in itself is significant as ICE tends to transfer detainees swiftly to detention centers far away from their advocates and families to locations within the jurisdiction of the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. About a month after this initial victory, the habeas petition was granted, ordering ICE to release GBLS' client. Within 24 hours of the order, Alonso was back with his family. His GBLS attorney continues to advocate for him before the Department of Homeland Security.



1975

BLAP won a landmark suit, **Rogers vs. Okin**, which established the right of psychiatric patients to make decisions about their treatment.



ENDING WORKPLACE HARASSMENT

GBLS successfully represented two immigrant workers, referred by community partner La Colaborativa, in separate mediations to resolve egregious sexual harassment that they experienced in their workplaces.

Both Marisa and Marta's supervisors aggressively pursued them for sexual relationships and engaged in explicit behavior and then retaliated when the women rejected their advances. The cases were complicated, including legal questions of liability among multiple employers and individuals. During investigations by the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination, GBLS obtained Deferred Action for Labor Enforcement for both clients, giving them immigration protection while they brought their cases forward. Ultimately, GBLS reached settlements of over \$70,000 each for Marisa and Marta, as well as affirmative training and policy changes by the employers. GBLS has since also filed U visas petitions for Marisa and Marta as survivors of workplace crimes.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SURVIVOR

GBLS represented a client, Carol, who began receiving SNAP (Food Stamps) and Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) benefits on behalf of her children after she came to Massachusetts to escape domestic violence. Carol should also have been deemed eligible to receive TAFDC for herself at the time she applied (and SNAP five years later) under the applicable eligible non-citizen regulations, but DTA failed to properly screen her. Her family was underpaid for over ten years. Recognizing the severe, long-term hardship on the family, GBLS attempted to negotiate for retroactive TAFDC and SNAP benefits with DTA, but they offered only ten months of retroactive TAFDC, so GBLS and Carol took the case to a hearing.

The hearing officer decided that Carol is entitled to all ten years of retroactive TAFDC (and a lesser amount of SNAP based on limitations in the regulations). In the decision, the hearing officer provided a thoughtful analysis of DTA's failure to meet its obligation to screen Carol for eligible status. As a result of GBLS' advocacy, Carol received over \$12,000 in retroactive TAFDC and over \$1,200 in retroactive SNAP, helping to provide much-needed financial relief for her and her kids.



HEALTHCARE HELP FOR AN ELDER

GBLS' Medicare Advocacy Project helped James with a payment dispute over an inpatient dental procedure he had done at a local hospital. Before James had the procedure, he received a "good faith estimate" from the oral surgeon and paid that amount upfront. After the surgery, the surgical office submitted the claim to James' dental insurance and received payment from them for the extraction. The oral surgeon's office was supposed to refund James about \$300 in excess that he had paid out of pocket, but he couldn't get them to do so.

Separately, the hospital's general billing department submitted the claim to Medicare for the operating room and other expenses and was billing James for those costs of approximately \$32,000, for which he was not actually liable. The disputed balance was sent to collections. James had called and written to the oral surgeon's office for months without resolution. The power imbalance between the hospital and their billing department versus James created a huge barrier for him in resolving the issue on his own and was causing him a lot of stress and anxiety.

James' GBLS attorney assisted him in sending a demand letter to the hospital and appealing the Medicare Summary Notices to absolve James of the supposed debt. GBLS also succeeded in getting James his \$300 refund. Finally, GBLS received an apologetic letter from the hospital's legal counsel with written confirmation that James' had zero balance and a promise to improve their billing issues for all patients moving forward.



ADVOCACY FOR A CHILD WITH DISABILITIES

When Joyce and her disabled son Jabari needed to purchase a car, they wanted to use money saved in Jabari's Social Security Administration (SSA) Dedicated Account, funds that had been set aside because Jabari had been owed (and received with GBLS' advocacy) a significant amount of retroactive Supplemental Security Income (SSI). The family was desperate for reliable transportation to get Jabari to and from his medical appointments and school, as taking public transit had become stressful and dangerous because Jabari has a feeding tube that is easily damaged.

Funds in Dedicated Accounts, despite belonging to the SSI recipient, cannot be spent without SSA's permission, which can be difficult to obtain. Joyce and Jabari's GBLS attorneys were able to show SSA that the strict rules governing Dedicated Accounts permit the purchase of a car in such circumstances. This was a meaningful victory for the family, who now feels safer and better able to handle Jabari's care.



1978

Massachusetts' Abuse Prevention Act passed with support from GBLS, allowing survivors of abuse to seek court orders against abusive partners.



FY2025 PRELIMINARY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FY2025 (July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025) figures are preliminary and unaudited at the time of the writing of this report.

INCOME	FY2025	FY2024
Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation	18,387,511	15,967,162
Law Firms and Attorneys	3,007,035	2,937,094
Cy Pres Awards	69,194	74,818
Foundations/Corporations	3,296,388	3,066,704
Government Grants	3,014,710	4,140,176
Individual Contributions	1,313,253	1,187,119
United Way	-	15,647
Miscellaneous	1,892,016	3,067,327
Total income before donated services	30,980,107	30,456,048
Volunteer Services	1,100,000	1,008,905
TOTAL INCOME	32,080,107	31,464,953

EXPENSES	FY2025	FY2024
Salary and Benefits Subtotal	22,410,893	20,950,346
Non-Personnel:		
Occupancy	537,635	539,689
Equipment and Supplies	899,647	980,752
Contract Services	1,472,354	1,175,160
Library and Litigation Expenses	399,957	363,819
Transfer to Capital	627,924	272,635
Miscellaneous	867,902	1,146,776
Non-Personnel Subtotal	4,805,419	4,478,831
Total expenses before donated services	27,216,312	25,429,177
Volunteer Services	1,100,000	1,008,905
TOTAL EXPENSES	28,316,312	26,438,082

Change in net assets	3,763,795	5,026,871
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CUMULATIVE OPERATING NET ASSETS	FY2025	FY2024
Cumulative Operating Net Assets		
at end of prior fiscal year	30,137,840	22,655,060
Change in Assets from Operations	3,763,795	5,026,871
Net Board Investment Income/Gain	2,453,941	2,535,911
Annual transfer to Capital	(150,000)	(80,000)
TOTAL NON-OPERATING		
ACTIVITY/TRANSFERS	6,067,736	7,482,782
CUMULATIVE OPERATING NET ASSETS	36,205,576	30,137,842

ACHIEVING OVERDUE DISABILITY JUSTICE

Maya had been receiving SSI due to ongoing medical conditions, when the Social Security Administration suddenly and erroneously terminated her SSI benefits as of 2014, due to alleged medical improvement. GBLS represented Maya through a lengthy appeals process that involved several hearings, Appeals Council requests for review, and federal court cases. Following a hearing this spring, a new Administrative Law Judge finally issued a decision that Maya’s disability had never ceased. As a result, Maya is expected to receive at least \$40,000 in retroactive benefits owed to her since her unjust denial, in addition to requalifying for monthly SSI payments.

LAW FIRM 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.

As GBLS marks its 125th anniversary, we are especially grateful to our partners across the legal community who have helped sustain this mission for more than a century, and who continue to stand with us as we work toward justice for the next 125 years.

2024 Law Firm Drive

Leadership League (\$850 or more per Boston attorney)

Choate, Hall & Stewart LLP
Cloherty & Steinberg LLP
Goulston & Storrs PC
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

Pacesetter League (\$700 - \$849 per Boston attorney)

Hemenway & Barnes LLP

Reginald Heber Smith League (\$550 - \$699 per Boston attorney)

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

President’s League (\$400 - \$549 per Boston attorney)

Barnes & Thornburg LLP
Sullivan & Worcester

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

Brown Rudnick LLP
Covington & Burling LLP
Davis, Malm & D’Agostine, P.C.
Jones Day
Klein Hornig LLP
Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP
Nutter, McClennen & Fish, LLP
Proskauer Rose LLP
Robinson+Cole LLP
Troutman Pepper Locke

Friends League (up to \$249 per Boston attorney)

Adler, Cohen, Harvey, Wakeman and Guekguezian, L.L.P.
Bernkopf Goodman LLP
Blank Rome LLP
Casner & Edwards, LLP
Conn Kavanaugh Rosenthal Peisch & Ford, LLP
Day Pitney LLP
Dechert LLP
Fitch Law Partners LLP
Gilmore Rees & Carlson PC
Gordon Law Group, LLP
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
Lathrop GPM
Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, LLP
Melick & Porter, LLP
Messing, Rudavsky & Weliky, P.C.
Morrison & Foerster LLP
Nolan Sheehan Patten LLP

Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP
Pierce Atwood LLP
Pierce Davis & Perritano LLP
Seyfarth Shaw LLP
Sidley Austin LLP
Stoneman, Chandler & Miller LLP
Sunstein LLP
Swartz & Swartz, P.C.
Taylor, Ganson & Perrin, LLP
Todd & Weld LLP
Troutman Pepper Hamilton Sanders LLP
Verrill Dana LLP
Wolf, Greenfield & Sacks, P.C.

FY2025 Law Firm Fellowship

The following firm provided funding to support the salary of a Fellow.

Skadden Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP and Affiliates

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 in FY2025.

Fair Work PC
Lichten & Liss-Riordan, P.C.



2006

GBLS settled a major class action lawsuit against the MBTA, improving access to public transportation for people with disabilities.

CORPORATE SUPPORT

Corporate Fund Drive

In 2024, Boston-area corporations reaffirmed their commitment to equal access to justice by generously supporting GBLS' Corporate Fund Drive. We are deeply grateful for their investment in expanding civil legal aid for those who need it most.

Analog Devices, Inc.
Biogen, Inc.
Boston Globe
Copyright Clearance Center, Inc.
Fenway Sports Group/
Boston Red Sox
Fiduciary Trust Company
Hologic
LPL Financial Holdings Inc.
MFS Investment Management
MilliporeSigma
Patriot Care
(Columbia Care LLC)
Puma

In-House Counsel Drive

Attorneys from the following corporate legal departments generously supported the 2024-25 In-House Counsel Drive, helping ensure equal access to justice for those who need it most. We're grateful for their partnership and commitment to justice for all.

Fidelity
Fiduciary Trust Company
Harvard Management Company

Liberty Mutual
MFS Investment Management
Wellington

In-House Counsel Drive Donors

Employer matches included in giving level where applicable.

\$5,000 and above

Anonymous
Michael & Berry Flynn
Cappucci
Jonathan Chiel
William C. Coffey
Krista D'Aloia
Nati Davidi
Ramon Herrera
Nancy Keating
Richelle S. Kennedy
Anne & Brian Trinquere

\$2,500 - \$4,999

Jonathan Davis
Ron Oppenheim

\$1,000 - \$2,499

Anonymous (3)
Mark L. Belanger
Margaret A. Carey
David Carter
Jay B. Haines
Scott Kirwin
Kevin M. Meagher
Kathryn Murtagh
Karla Portocarrero
Meg Rehrauer
Stacey N. Schmidt

\$500 - \$999

Anonymous (3)
Jennifer C. Boylan
Thomas W. Bridge
Michael R. Dube

Julie Gann
Abigail A. Hemani
Christina Lee
Lawrence McNally Jr.
Susan A. Pereira
Thomas J. Provost
Anne Radday
Lauren Smith

\$250 - \$499

Anonymous (2)
Russell Aborn
Daniel P. Barry
Daniel Bennett
Jennifer Carpenter Boylan
Laura Christy
Maria E. Damico
Emily Holden
Mirela Izmirlic
Natalie Kavanaugh
Jeffrey J. Pyle
Sean C. Rogers
Matthew Shea

Up to \$249

Anonymous (6)
Shirin Baradaran
Anne-Marie Beliveau
Steven C. Bennett
Christina Caiazza
Sean Donahue
Ruth Frederick
Joshua Goldman
Robin J. Gotshall
Denise Hilger
Liz Howard
Anika Rosengarten
Anita Ryan
Talis E. Seja
Nageeb Sumar
John Ward
Tengfei Wu

ASSOCIATES FUND DRIVE

2025 Associates Fund Drive Participating Firms

GBLS is grateful to the following firms, whose associates raised over \$755,000 to support free civil legal assistance for survivors of domestic violence. Thank you!

Anderson & Kreiger LLP*
Barnes & Thornburg LLP
Brown Rudnick LLP
Casner & Edwards LLP*
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HELPING A MOTHER PROTECT HER CHILD

A former client referred Lucy to GBLS for help protecting her daughter. At the time that she called GBLS, Lucy was living out of state and her oldest child, Sophie, was living with her dad, Lucy's abusive ex-partner. Lucy came to GBLS after finding out that the Department of Children and Families (DCF) was investigating allegations of child abuse by Sophie's dad.

Lucy's GBLS attorney immediately jumped into action. GBLS went to court to represent Lucy in a custody case and a guardianship case, and also obtained a restraining order for Lucy and Sophie to protect them from their abuser. While the cases were pending in Probate and Family court, DCF received several retaliatory calls from Lucy's abuser. DCF, concerned about Sophie's welfare because of her father's abuse, made negative findings against Lucy. DCF workers also refused to work with Lucy's schedule to find appropriate meeting times, so GBLS advocates got involved to ensure that Lucy's rights were protected.

Lucy's attorney also filed a "Fair Hearing"—an administrative appeal of an adverse DCF decision—to overturn the findings made against Lucy. At the hearing, DCF confirmed that Lucy had done nothing wrong, and in the written decision, the Fair Hearing Officer referred to Lucy's behavior as "heroic." This validation was incredibly meaningful to Lucy. Today, Lucy's restraining order has been extended for two years, and Sophie has her restraining order until she turns 18, the statutory maximum. DCF hasn't been involved in over a year, and Lucy and Sophie are deepening their relationship in spite of the trauma they experienced.



2010

GBLS brought a class action lawsuit against the **Department of Unemployment Assistance**, forcing DUA to translate materials and increase language access.

PRO BONO SPOTLIGHT

In the summer of 2024, the Biden administration announced that it would expand Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Haitians due to continued instability in the country. This expanded eligibility to more than 300,000 additional Haitians who had come to the U.S. in search of safety allowed those who sought status to remain lawfully in the U.S. for a period of 18 months. TPS is a legal immigration status, allowing immigrants from designated countries to remain and work in the U.S. for a specific amount of time, but it is not a path to citizenship.

To account for this newly-eligible cohort, GBLS staff, Haitian Creole interpreters, and numerous community volunteers came together to host a weekly clinic focused on helping these Haitian immigrants apply for or renew their TPS. The TPS clinic ran for 5 weeks in July and August. During that time, volunteers met every Tuesday at Boston Missionary Baptist Community Center (BMBCC) in Roxbury, which generously hosted the clinic. Working two shifts, volunteers assisted families and individuals with their applications. Of the people served at the clinic, many had lived in the Greater Boston area for years; others were recent arrivals who had come to the U.S. in response to political and environmental turmoil back home. Overall, the clinic assisted over 410 community members in submitting their applications for TPS.

The clinic was spearheaded by GBLS immigration attorney Anne Georges and supported by the work of more than a dozen volunteer lawyers, paralegals, law students, and interpreters. Reflecting on the impact of the TPS clinic, Attorney Georges says, “It has been profound. Despite the challenges to TPS over the past few months, those who received the status were provided with crucial protection from removal and access to benefits, such as work authorization, allowing them to provide for themselves and their families.”

Georges continued: “Beyond the legal advocacy, the clinic also fostered a deeper sense of community, connecting clients with additional resources, such as access to MassHealth advocates, and community support networks that were vital to their growth and

stability. BMBCC provided many of the clients with English language and Certified Nursing Assistant courses, for instance. Ultimately, it has been incredibly rewarding to see how the clinic’s work has gone beyond legal access and advocacy.” Though the current administration has made it clear it will not renew TPS status for Haiti, those who volunteered with the clinic helped bring stability to a vulnerable community and gave breathing room for families and individuals to determine their own next steps.

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We appreciate the generosity and support of all our donors, including our many friends who donated up to \$249 between July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025. Thank you to our many donors who recommended that GBLS receive a grant from the Boston Foundation, Combined Jewish Philanthropies, Fidelity Charitable, Renaissance Charitable Foundation, Schwab Charitable Fund, Vanguard Charitable Gift Fund, or any other donor advised fund or charitable matching gift.

IN-KIND DONATIONS

Thank you to the many individuals, companies, and firms who generously donated gifts of goods or services in this past year. Your in-kind support helps GBLS conserve resources and serve as many clients and community members as possible.



2015

GBLS helped pass the **Massachusetts Earned Sick Time Law**, a major win for workers' rights.

PRESERVING AN ELDER'S HOME

Deborah is an elderly client who was facing the loss of her home after her grandson forged a deed transferring the home to him. Deborah's GBLS attorney pursued litigation in Superior Court to protect Deborah's home and deftly navigated the difficult relationship between Deborah and her grandson. With GBLS' advocacy, Deborah is not only able to stay in her home, but she is also able to collect rental income that she needs to be self-sufficient.



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Gifts in honor of:

Lucyanna Burke & Jonathan Edelman's Wedding

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Members of the GBLS Legacy Society make a lasting commitment to legal services by including GBLS as a bequest in their will or through another planned giving instrument.

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SECURING OWED WAGES

GBLS represented Valentina, an immigrant domestic worker who had provided years of childcare for a family that refused to compensate her for many of her working hours or pay overtime.

Valentina filed a complaint with the Attorney General's Office, but the investigation was closed without success based on the lack of records and the employers' claim that Valentina was an independent daycare provider and not an employee. Both Valentina and MassCOSH, the community partner supporting her, were extremely disappointed by the investigation's result and reached out to GBLS. Valentina's GBLS attorney was undeterred. He filed a complaint on Valentina's behalf in Superior Court. After initial discovery, and with a deposition on the calendar, Valentina's employers finally took the case seriously and engaged in settlement negotiations. Valentina was delighted to secure a highly-favorable settlement agreement that included a \$24,000 payment thanks to GBLS' help.

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Volunteer Lawyers Project of the Boston Bar Association

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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Students and fellows assisted GBLS' clients and staff through programs sponsored by the following school partners:

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Volunteer Attorneys

The following individuals, in addition to many law students, volunteered substantial commitments of time in FY2025 to GBLS and its clients. We are also very grateful to the many additional 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
Erin Chow
Caroline Cohn
Raymond Dougan
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Ramya Ganeshram
Charley Glerum
Jill Grossberg
Monica Halas
Lawrence Heffernan
Adrienne Lee
Melanie Malherbe
Robert Sable
Howard Silverman
Neshie Tiwari
Paul Yee

Volunteers

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

Lisbeth Britz
Simon Klein
Jurett Mooltrey-Weathers
Chloe Bobo Song
Lucas Spagnuolo
William Rosenfeld
Katarina Torres Radisic

FY2025 AWARDS AND HONORS

Kate Barry, Family Law Unit Senior Attorney, was honored at GBLS' June 2025 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.

Dick Bauer, Access to Justice Fellow at GBLS and National Consumer Law Center and retired GBLS housing attorney, was honored with a Pro Bono Excellence Award at the Lawyers Clearinghouse on Affordable Housing and Homelessness Annual Meeting in September 2024. Dick was recognized for "his years as an Access to Justice Fellow and Lawyers Clearinghouse Legal Clinic mentor, his meaningful support of Clearinghouse clients and volunteers, and his ongoing work on eviction appeals and affordable housing cases." At GBLS, Dick's ongoing work as a Fellow has included doing appellate support work on GBLS cases, including arguing several appeals, and training and support for trial work, especially jury trials.

Beth Britz, Immigration Law Unit volunteer, was honored with the Richard W. "Archie" Southgate Volunteer Award at GBLS' 2025 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 GBLS' Employment Law Unit and helped to establish the Senior Lawyer Volunteer Program. This award is presented annually to recognize an outstanding volunteer at GBLS.



Mac McCreight (center) accepting a lifetime service award



Jacquelynne Bowman receiving the BBA's Voices of Change Award

Jacquelynne Bowman, GBLS' Executive Director, was selected by the Boston Bar Association to receive a 2025 Beacon Award, specifically the Voice of Change Award. She was recognized as "a steadfast leader in advancing diversity and access to justice, who has helped ensure that over 10,000 low-income individuals receive vital legal services each year." The BBA'S annual Beacon Awards "honor those who are shaping a more inclusive future for our profession and community." Jacquelynne and other Beacon Award recipients were honored in January 2025.

Laura Gal, Managing Attorney of GBLS' Family Law Unit, was selected in June by the Women's Bar Association (WBA) as one of two recipients of the 2025 Lelia J. Robinson Award that "honors women attorneys who have captured the spirit of Lelia J. Robinson, the first woman admitted to practice in Massachusetts [and] recognizes women who, like Robinson, are pioneers in the legal profession and who have made a difference in the community."

Laura was also selected as a 2024 Top Women of Law honoree by Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly. She and the other 2024 honorees were recognized at the November 2024 Top Women of Law event that "celebrates the achievements of exceptional women lawyers who are pioneers, educators, trailblazers and role models." Additionally, Laura was honored at the Museum of Fine Arts for Soul Survivors Launch & Survivor Tribute in October 2024. Laura was recognized for many reasons, including her "unwavering commitment to marginalized communities and dedication to improving the lives of families through

[her] work at Greater Boston Legal Services.” The Museum of Fine Arts for Soul Survivors is a community-driven initiative dedicated to raising awareness about domestic violence, supporting survivors, and honoring trailblazers who have made significant contributions in this field.

Ilana Gelfman, GBLS’ Advocacy Director, was named (in November 2024) Chair of the Supreme Judicial Court Standing Committee on Pro Bono Legal Services that promotes volunteer legal work in Massachusetts to help people of limited means in need of legal representation. The SJC also appointed Ilana and three other new members to the state Access to Justice Commission, whose mission is “to achieve equal justice for all persons in the Commonwealth by providing leadership and vision to, and coordination with, the many organizations and interested persons involved in providing and improving access to justice for those unable to afford counsel.”

Lisa Locher, Immigration Unit Senior Attorney, and Sandra Tavaréz, Employment Law Unit Senior Paralegal, were honored with Dow-Gardiner-Landrum Awards at GBLS’ 2025 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.



2017

GBLS successfully argued for unaccompanied immigrant youth to be considered **Special Immigrant Juveniles**, opening pathways to immigration relief.

Miyuki Masuda, GBLS Immigration Unit intern and New England Law student, was recognized by the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court Standing Committee on Pro Bono Legal Services in October 2024. Miyuki along with four attorneys received Adams Pro Bono Publico Awards for “their exceptional dedication to providing volunteer services for persons who cannot afford an attorney.” Miyuku was honored for “providing hundreds of hours of pro bono assistance to survivors of domestic violence and severe trauma at the Greater Boston Legal Services Immigration Unit.”

James “Mac” McCreight, Access to Justice Fellow and retired GBLS housing attorney, was presented with a Pro Bono Honor Roll Certificate (High Honor Roll for individual attorneys) by the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court in October 2024 for “distinguished service in providing volunteer legal services for those most in need in calendar year 2023.” Mac provides continued support for the work of the Boston Housing Authority (BHA) Resident Advisory Board and for the BHA’s Mixed Finance Residents Group.

Also, the National Low Income Housing Coalition honored Mac with a Cushing Dolbeare Lifetime Service Award at the NLIHC Leadership Awards Reception in March 2025 during its Housing Policy Forum. The award, which is named after NLIHC’s founder, “goes to an individual who has demonstrated an unyielding commitment to achieving safe, decent and affordable homes for low-income people over a long period of time.” The award recognizes Mac’s commitment, brilliance, and leadership in the advocacy community—not only in the Commonwealth, but nationwide.

Obioma Okonkwo, Family Law Unit Attorney, was elected in April 2025 to serve as a board member of the Massachusetts Black Lawyers Association (MBLA). The MBLA is deeply committed to supporting Black legal professionals and promoting justice through community-centered initiatives. In March 2025, Obi also joined the Assessment and Response Subcommittee of the Governor’s Council to Address Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, and Human Trafficking (GCSADVHT) in the Commonwealth. This committee is focused on strengthening both criminal justice and community-based responses to domestic violence, including through developing assessment protocols and recommendations aimed at reducing domestic violence homicides.

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Rory P. Pheiffer
Vincent Pisegna
Michael N. Rader
David A. Rozenson
Robert A. Sable
Thomas G. Shapiro
Robert H. Smith
H. Michael Stevens
Paul R. Sugarman
Melissa B. Tearney
Arthur Telegen
Anne Trinqu
Steven A. Wilcox
Walter A. Winshall
John G. Wofford
Toni G. Wolfman
Stephen S. Young



2018

GBLS was instrumental in passing the **Massachusetts Criminal Justice Reform Act** and **Paid Family Medical Leave Act**.

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.

