



HER JUSTICE AT WORK

SUMMER 2024

Bringing Her Justice's Immigration Expertise to NYC and Beyond

Her Justice Joins City Council's New Arrivals Strategy Team

We're thrilled to announce that Hamra Ahmad, Director of Legal Programs and Policy, is representing Her Justice on the City Council's inaugural New Arrivals Strategy Team. We're ready to roll up our sleeves alongside 74 other expert organizations to strengthen how our city integrates newcomers and provides supportive services for all New Yorkers!

Immigration has always been core to New York City's story, economy, and culture. Her Justice is deeply grateful to our immigration clients who trust us with their journeys. Their invaluable lived experiences, combined with our deep legal expertise, give Her Justice a unique perspective on solutions that will move our city in the right direction. [READ MORE](#)

[HERE >](#)

Mapping the Positive Economic Impact of Immigrants

The [American Immigration Council's](#) interactive "Map The Impact" analysis of 2022 census data highlights how immigrants are helping make the United States a more prosperous and economically booming country. Discover information that's as broad or narrow as you want – from the U.S. to your specific district. Data includes: number of immigrants in a given area; amount of taxes immigrants pay; immigrants' spending power; number of eligible immigrant voters; home ownership; participation in the workforce; and more. [VISIT THE MAP >](#)



Celebrating **IMMIGRANT HERITAGE MONTH!**

June 2024

Her Justice Advocacy Leads to a Nationwide Policy Win

Thanks to the advocacy of Her Justice and other organizations across the nation, the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has issued new fee regulations that include fee exemptions for virtually all immigration applications based on claims of gender-based violence.

What does this mean? As of April 1st, Her Justice clients no longer have to worry about paying any immigration application fees or applying for fee waivers in order to request immigration status. This is a meaningful win, as fees are often impossible for our clients and applying for fee waivers takes time and they are not always approved.

Her Justice Brings Our Original Policy Report to Washington, D.C.

In April, Director of Policy Rachel Braunstein shared findings from our policy report [Stories from Immigrant Survivors of Gender-Based Violence: The Impact of Work Authorization](#) with lawmakers in DC. We were thrilled to educate and collaborate with policymakers and their staff about the need for expedited work permits for immigrant survivors of gender-based violence.

Our team highlighted the power of work authorization to significantly improve financial independence, housing stability, confidence to seek help from law enforcement and the justice system, and health and well-being. We shared our clients' stories about the impact of delays in obtaining work authorization – with some waiting five years or more after applying while they work and raise families in New York City, where many have lived for decades – and the life-changing relief from being approved.

Thank you to Akin for providing pro bono support in preparation for this effort!

Her Justice Shares Learnings from Policy Report with Local News Station

Immigration Practice Director Susanna Saul sat down with BronxNet TV to discuss our current moment's migrant surge and how that intersects with learnings from our latest policy report. Tune in at:

- Minute 1:44 – to hear what having a work permit means for our clients in their day-to-day lives.
 - Minute 4:51 – to hear about Her Justice’s recommendations to city, state, and federal policymakers.
 - Minute 7:37 – to hear about challenges posed by the legal system; long-term and short-term solutions; and how Her Justice assists on the journey to legal status.
- [WATCH HERE>](#)

“ —
 | What we’ve come to call the migrant crisis
 | isn’t a crisis with people —
 | it’s a crisis with systems. — ”

SUSANNA SAUL, ESQ.
 Her Justice | Practice Director, Immigration

A Champion Retires After 17 Years of Service



Celebrating Cathy Curry!

Cathy Curry, our powerhouse Director of Institutional Relations, retires at the end of this month after 17 years of dedicated service. Since joining our team in 2007 after beginning her legal career at Davis Polk & Wardwell, Cathy has been a fierce advocate for Her Justice, nurturing vital relationships and raising millions in funding. Her tireless commitment, exceptional professionalism, and compassionate leadership have left an indelible mark on Her Justice. Cathy, a heartfelt thank you for all the ways you have grown our community. The work we do every day for our clients and the broader New York community has been

made possible by your vision and care. Here's to you!

Policy Developments to Watch

SCOTUS Upholds Federal Law Keeping Guns Out of the Hands of Abusers

We're relieved to share that this past Friday, the Supreme Court made the decision to

maintain a decades-old federal ban on gun possession when a restraining order is in effect. This case was sparked by the Supreme Court's 2022 ruling in *New York State Rifle & Pistol Association v. Bruen*, which said courts must judge restrictions on gun rights by turning to early American history as a guide. Given that context, we're relieved at the outcome of *U.S. v. Rahimi*. [HEAR FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AMY BARASCH >](#)

Former Her Justice Senior Staff Attorney Naomi Young also provided excellent context around this case and its outcome for Women's Health Magazine. [READ THE INTERVIEW >](#)

State Bill Drafted by Her Justice Passes in Senate

For the past several years, Her Justice, along with a coalition of other advocates in New York City, has helped to draft and advocate for a State bill ([S.2278-A](#), Cleare/[A.1309-B](#), Rosenthal) designed to provide relief from "coerced debt" to survivors of domestic violence, elder abuse, human trafficking, and abuse by caretakers. The proposed legislation would amend New York State law to prohibit creditors from collecting a consumer debt incurred because of economic abuse and fraud and to allow the survivor to sue in court for relief against creditors. We made a big push for the legislation this cycle and were excited to end the session with Senate passage! We will continue our advocacy next year with the goal of passing in the Assembly.

This policy solution matters because many of our clients experience financial abuse. This happens when one intimate partner controls the other's access to economic resources. It diminishes the victim's capacity to support themselves and forces them to depend financially on the abuser. Debt and damaged credit as a result of financial abuse (which can look like withholding assets, identity theft, or debt incurred without consent) make it even more difficult for survivors to leave the relationship – for example, with a low credit score, survivors cannot rent an apartment, get a job, or buy a house or car. Here's to passing this important legislation next cycle!

State Bill Introduced to Protect IOLA Fund Against Future Sweeps

The Interest On Lawyers Account (IOLA) Fund is one of the top funders for civil legal services in New York State. Her Justice and our many community partners depend on IOLA funding to support our clients. This year, \$55 million was diverted away from the fund into the general State budget. This was after the legal community staved off an unprecedented proposal to sweep \$100 million away at the beginning of the year.

In response, Senator Sean Ryan and Assembly Member Michaelle Solages have introduced legislation that would remove the IOLA Fund from the appropriations and budget process. This will ensure that last month's diversion of IOLA revenue into the State budget will be a one-time event and protects the mission of the IOLA Fund: to support civil legal services for low-income New Yorkers. [READ ABOUT THE BILL HERE >](#)

Her Justice in the Community

Her Justice Reaches 379 People Through 22 Training and Outreach Events

Since March, Her Justice has shared our expertise at 22 events that reached 379 attorneys, policymakers, professionals, students, and more – building an NYC community that's connected, informed, and fighting the good fight.

New Recorded Trainings Available Attorneys and Community Partners

Are you an attorney participating in a Her Justice case? This year we added two new trainings to our Summer Associate Program onboarding: one focused on trauma-informed lawyering and the other on T nonimmigrant status. Both trainings were recorded and are available to all Her Justice pro bono attorneys. To receive the recordings, please reach out to Martha Vargas at mvargas@herjustice.org.

Is your organization a Her Justice referring partner? This spring, our team held a Community Partners Town Hall designed to help referring partners better understand Her Justice's services, who we serve, and what our intake process is – so you can determine which of your clients are best fits for referral. [WATCH THE TOWN HALL HERE >](#)

Her Justice Trains Newly Appointed Family Court Judges on the Court's Power in Addressing Family Violence

Family & Matrimonial Practice Director Anna Maria Diamanti trained all newly appointed family court judges as part of the NY State Judicial Institute. She covered Article 8 (orders of protection) proceedings, as well as common dynamics of domestic violence, the impact of trauma, myths and assumptions about victims and perpetrators, and firearms restrictions.

Thanks to Anna's work, our judges better understand the real-world experience of victims, what to expect from victims during cases, and their own power to address family violence in the courtroom.

We're Hiring!

Seeking Staff Attorney: Eugene M. Lang Incarcerated Women's Project

The project supports incarcerated and formerly incarcerated women by providing them with free civil legal services in the areas of family and matrimonial law. For incarcerated individuals, access to the civil court system is significantly limited, yet civil legal issues have a dramatic impact on their lives as they prepare for reentry. This role will provide legal information and direct services to clients, as well as enhance Her Justice's partnerships with community-based organizations to ensure we continue to provide holistic and culturally competent services. [LEARN MORE AND APPLY HERE >](#)

You can always visit [our website](#) for more information on Her Justice's current open positions.

Shifting the Power through Partnerships

Recognizing our Incredible Funding Partners

A heartfelt thank you to **The Alice Lawrence Foundation** for renewing its generous general operating support; to **The Hyde and Watson Foundation** for its funding that enables us to purchase and install technology to enhance accessibility in the Her Justice office; and to the **Venable Foundation** for its support of Her Justice's [Trafficking Survivors Resiliency Project](#), which provides survivors with a clear pathway to transformative legal services that ensure safety, financial stability, and freedom.



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