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July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024

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NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services
NYS Division of Housing and Community Renewal
NYS Interest on Lawyer Account Fund
NYS Justice Center
NYS Legislature
NYS Office of Children and Family Services
NYS Office of Court Administration
NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance
NYS Office of the Attorney General

MOBILIZATION FOR JUSTICE

Our mission is to achieve justice for all. MFJ prioritizes the needs of people who are low-income, disenfranchised, or have disabilities as they struggle to overcome the effects of social injustice and systemic racism. We provide the highest-quality free, direct civil legal assistance, conduct community education and build partnerships, engage in policy advocacy, and bring impact litigation. MFJ also promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion in our workplace, and understands the need to eliminate all racial disparities to achieve justice for all.

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2024 YEAR-END REPORT



CELEBRATING THE NEXT 60 YEARS!

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MOBILIZATION FOR JUSTICE VICTORIES – THANKS TO YOUR SUPPORT!

Barker v. Rokosz – An Amazing Win!

Mobilization for Justice won an amazing result in a recent predatory lending case that we brought in the Eastern District of New York, *Barker v. Rokosz*.

Ms. Barker and her half-sister lived in their house in East Flatbush since childhood. When their mother passed away, they inherited the home. Ms. Barker was undergoing cancer treatment and could not buy out her sister’s share, who sued to force a sale of the property. To settle the judgment, Ms. Barker obtained a hard-money, high-interest loan from an unlicensed lender, Mr. Rokosz, which she planned to repay with a conventional loan. Without fully understanding the consequences, she signed over the home to Mr. Rokosz.

MFJ’s Foreclosure Prevention Project took the case, and investigated Mr. Rokosz’s lending practices. MFJ contacted many of the homeowners to whom he had lent money and identified a potential predatory lending suit. As expected, when Ms. Barker defaulted on the high-interest loan, Mr. Rokosz tried to evict her and take her home. MFJ represented Ms. Barker in housing court and got the case dismissed. The lender appealed the dismissal, and while that appeal was pending, MFJ filed suit in federal court on Ms. Barker’s behalf. In January 2019, an MFJ attorney obtained a restraining order and preliminary injunction to prevent the eviction. In response, MFJ and our staff attorneys were sued for malicious prosecution.

In July 2024, after years of litigation, MFJ won a summary judgment against Mr. Rokosz. The incredible result cancelled Ms. Barker’s mortgage entirely and provided for monetary damages. Ms. Barker, whose childhood home was saved, is over-the-moon happy about the result.

The decision also serves as a precedent for these kinds of hard-money lending practices, which are a growing equity-stripping scheme in New York City. It is the first time a court has granted summary judgment on a claim when the homeowner had mistakenly transferred ownership to a business entity. All told, the results are amazing and showed MFJ at its very best.

Saving Elderly Tenants from Eviction

Ms. L and Mr. H are both seniors and longtime Chinatown residents. Like many low-income seniors, their housing situation is precarious. For over a decade, they were subleasing from a prime tenant who had illegally subdivided a one-bedroom into four single room occupancy units and operated it as a boarding house. When the landlord found out, he sued Ms. L and Mr. H in an attempt to evict them. The residents retained MFJ. Since both of the clients are native Chinese speakers, most of their documentary evidence was in Chinese. MFJ translated important documents for discovery, interpreted complex legal doctrine during client meetings, and translated numerous affidavits. The MFJ case handler also eased the clients through an onerous, months-long Affordable Housing Lottery process. In the end, Ms. L and Mr. H signed a lease for an affordable, rent-stabilized apartment in a nearby neighborhood.

Securing Asylum for a Survivor of Domestic Violence

AS is from Nigeria and was a victim of domestic violence in her home country. She survived life-long abuse by her family, as she was considered to be property by her husband and in-laws. When her husband died, her in-laws treated her as family property and forced her to marry her brother-in-law while suffering ongoing physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. After escaping with the help of her children and a family friend, she flew to the U.S. and reached out to MFJ seeking asylum. Her MFJ attorney provided countless hours of application preparation, including a detailed affidavit of traumatic events and country conditions, while also obtaining an expert who could testify to her case and conditions in Nigeria. Mobilization for Justice navigated AS through four hours of testimony and cross-examination until the Judge granted Asylum in AS’s favor.

Special Education for a Child in Need

LT exhibited significant behavioral issues while attending pre-school. Although these behaviors interfered with his learning, the DOE did not conduct

evaluations as they should have, and kept him in his non-therapeutic setting throughout pre-school. For kindergarten, LT was placed in the same inappropriate, non-therapeutic setting, during which time his behavior worsened. The MFJ attorney who received the referral from a Montefiore Hospital clinician immediately filed a due process complaint and was successful in obtaining a neuropsychological evaluation, which included recommendations for a more appropriate educational setting and hundreds of hours of compensatory tutoring, speech therapy, and occupational therapy. In a subsequent case, MFJ obtained tuition funding for Gersh Academy, a private school for children on the autism spectrum. LT continues to attend this school.

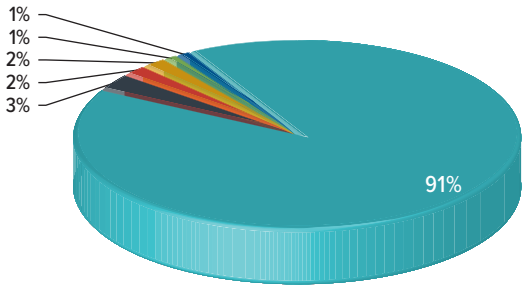
Securing an Apartment for a Mentally Disabled Man and His Family

Mr. R is a 26-year-old African American client whose family was being evicted from their apartment. Mr. R has an extensive history of trauma, including experiencing his father murdering his mother, separation from his biological family as a child, four years of street homelessness as a teenager, justice system involvement, and living in shelters for 2 years with his son. He also has difficulty securing jobs due to his history of justice involvement and his mental health disability. After discovering that Mr. R has a history of mental health illness and that he received misinformation from social services agencies about his eligibility for certain housing subsidy programs, MFJ jumped in to represent him in the eviction case and help him secure a subsidized apartment in the community with individualized supportive services for Mr. R’s young family. MFJ connected him with mental health treatment services, conducted a rapid psychological evaluation, submitted an application for supportive housing, and advocated for exceptions to the city’s policies regarding supported housing approvals. Bringing both our advocacy and social work skills to bear, MFJ was able to help Mr. R secure a lease to a supportive housing unit for his family very quickly.

Financial Overview FY 2024

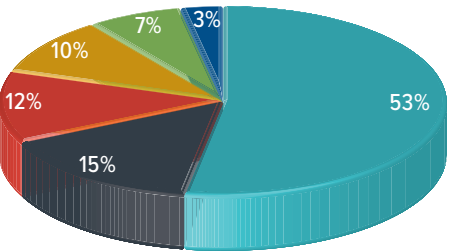
July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024

Revenue: \$20,955,360



- Government **\$19,158,356**
- Unrestricted Contributions **\$559,369**
- Attorney Fees **\$441,691**
- Restricted Grants **\$439,233**
- Interest **\$264,612**
- Training Fees & Misc. **\$92,099**

Expenses: \$22,033,456

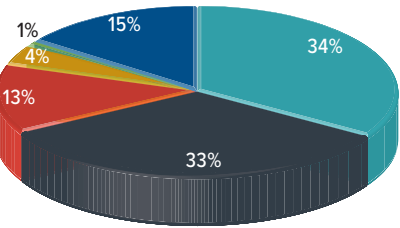


- Housing & HIV **\$11,755,971**
- Disability & Aging Rights **\$3,341,299**
- Economic Justice **\$2,607,845**
- Children’s Rights **\$2,306,738**
- Administration **\$1,520,219**
- Fundraising **\$501,384**

Client Profiles and Services FY 2024

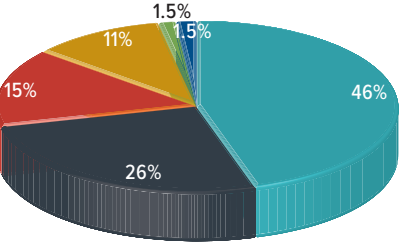
July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024

Cases by Race



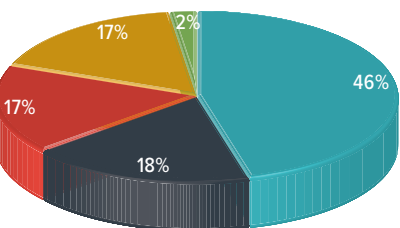
- Black & African Descent
- Latinx
- White
- Asian
- Indigenous
- Miscellaneous/No Answer

Cases by Borough



- The Bronx
- Manhattan
- Brooklyn
- Queens
- Staten Island
- Outside NYC

Cases by Program



- Housing
- Economic Justice
- Children & Families
- Disability & Aging Rights
- Social Work & Miscellaneous