

Milwaukee Justice Center

Mobile LEGAL *Clinic*

A project of MARQUETTE LAW SCHOOL and the MILWAUKEE BAR ASSOCIATION



2020 ANNUAL REPORT

Letter From the Director

by Megan Morrissey, MLC Director



Dear Community Partners, Supporters and Friends ~

2020 was a year of the likes none of us could have imagined with unforeseen challenges, uncertainty and much loss. Many of the individuals served by the Milwaukee Justice Center's Mobile Legal Clinic (MLC) faced sudden and lasting unemployment, evictions, food insecurities and significant trauma and grief as a result of social distancing and loss of loved ones this past year due to COVID-19.

Pre-COVID-19, the Milwaukee Justice Center's Mobile Legal Clinic: a project of the Marquette University Law School and the Milwaukee Bar Association, collaborated with local community partners, including shelters, health clinics, and other social service organizations, to host our community legal clinics. The first of its kind in Wisconsin and only one of a few in the nation, the MLC is both a law-office-on-wheels and a legal classroom. In the model of the Marquette Volunteer Legal Clinics, volunteer lawyers and law students collaboratively problem solve and research a client's legal issues while participating in real attorney/client experiences.

In 2020, the MLC aspired to expand the number of legal clinics in underserved neighborhoods by incorporating six new community partners. However, the MLC's in-community legal clinics were not exempt from the mandated shutdowns and closures caused by the national pandemic. In March 2020, the Milwaukee Justice Center and the MLC were directed to discontinue in-person legal services and to cancel scheduled in-community legal clinics.

Our community legal clinics were put on hold at a time of increased vulnerability and legal needs in our community. Knowing how important our services are to those we serve, we knew we needed to adapt. In April of 2020, the Milwaukee Justice Center and the Marquette Volunteer Legal Clinic created a virtual platform to host remote legal clinics. The MLC reached out to our community partners and many other social service organizations



throughout Milwaukee to encourage them to refer their clients, patients, and families to our clinics, now over the internet and accessible over a Smartphone!

The MLC began to host remote clinics in June 2020 with clinics every Monday afternoon and one Saturday morning per month. Additionally, the MLC's Expungement/Pardon Clinics were added, occurring every Wednesday afternoon.

I am proud of the hard work of the Mobile Legal Clinic team and volunteers. Our innovative response to COVID-19 has expanded our services in ways we had not previously envisioned. Moving forward, we have created a space where we can engage with our clients remotely as well as at our community partner locations, allowing us to reach more people than ever before.

Sincerely,

Megan Morrissey

Megan Morrissey, JD

Milwaukee Justice Center,

Mobile Legal Clinic and Expungement/Pardon Clinic Director

Mobile Legal Clinic Expungement / Pardon Clinic

August - December 2019: 88 clients assisted

January - March, June - December 2020: 126 clients assisted

The MLC's Expungement/Pardon Clinic was created in 2019 originally in partnership with neighborhood Milwaukee Public Libraries (MPL). This partnership proved to be a convenient and sustainable location, both for volunteers and the clients served - in the neighborhoods where needs are concentrated.

Because of the transition to remote services, the Expungement/ Pardon Clinic is now able to assist out of state clients with Wisconsin convictions seeking pardons. To support this significant increase in appointment requests, the MLC added a Marquette Law School intern to assist with eligibility screening and appointment scheduling.

The clinic offers advice for expungement or pardon on a variety of convictions. Many individuals have non-violent and/or drug felony convictions on their records. They have struggled for years, even decades, being denied employment, career advancement, educational financial assistance, and safe and sustainable housing. A felony conviction even impacts



the ability to secure home loans and other financing, further hindering upward mobility. The list of the collateral consequences of a felony conviction is long and one that many don't think of, until you carry the label of 'felon.' Many of our clients share the lifelong psychological impact of 'feeling less-than' and 'not worthy,' often due to an immature or impulsive action from their youth.

Individuals seeking a pardon are not entitled to a lawyer. They either are left to hire their own lawyer or attempt the arduous 11-page application and pardon process on their own. The clinic's trained volunteer lawyers and law students assist clients with the pardon application process and the gathering of supporting documentation. The pardon application process can evoke very traumatic experiences in clients' pasts. The volunteers are sensitive to the client's experience and the clinics are designed to provide a continuity of care. Client are encouraged to follow up with further questions and to schedule a Final Pardon Review of their pardon packet before submission.

Interested in volunteering for this life-changing clinic, contact us at mkemobilelegalclinic@gmail.com.

Our Team



Megan Morrisey has dedicated her legal career to serving those caught in our legal system and assisting marginalized individuals by effectively problem-solving their way to a just resolution. She was an Assistant State Public Defender in the Milwaukee Trial Division until 2015. Early in her legal career, she taught evening courses in criminology and criminal law at Waukesha County Technical College (WCTC).

Megan investigated sexual discrimination, sexual harassment and Title IX discrimination complaints by faculty and student employees at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Recently, Megan was the Community Outreach Director at Stork & Company, where she presented on infant safe-sleep education and distributed Baby Boxes to new parents and caregivers to address and combat the high infant mortality rate in Milwaukee.

Megan is an Adjunct Professor of Law at Marquette University Law School, where she teaches Interviewing and Counseling. This course incorporates techniques and artful skills in interviewing clients by casting actors from Milwaukee's Repertory Theater in the role of clients. This course creates a unique opportunity for the law students to practice and refine their techniques and skills in addressing the needs of their clients who are often frustrated and anxious about their legal dilemmas.

Megan graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Madison with a bachelor's degree in Behavioral Science and Law and a certificate in Criminal Justice. She is a graduate from the University of Wisconsin Law School, where she participated in the Legal Defense Program and the Wisconsin Innocence

Project. In 2019, Megan created, the first of its kind in Wisconsin, the Expungement/Pardon Clinic. She created this clinic to address the needs of individuals who are seeking to remove past criminal convictions or arrests from their records. Megan is extremely proud of creating and directing this program, which has proven to be very popular throughout the state of Wisconsin. She has grown into her role as Coordinator and Clinical Supervisor of the Milwaukee Justice Center-Mobile Legal Clinic and to be an important part of the solution to bridge the "Justice Gap" that affects so many in Milwaukee.



Marycruz Sanchez (she/her) is a Marquette University 2020 graduate with a degree in Psychology and Social Welfare and Justice. Throughout her undergraduate career Marycruz worked with the Service Learning

Program as a Student Staff Manager where she helped plan and facilitate reflection sessions about different social justice issues and she also helped students find organizations in Milwaukee where they could serve and complete their service learning hours. She also served on the Dreamers Gala Planning Committee, which helped raise money for the Ignacio Ellacuria Dreamers Scholarship, a scholarship offered to undocumented and DACA-metned students at Marquette. She also interned with Catholic Charities - Refugee and Immigration Services in Milwaukee. As an intern with RIS, Marycruz helped create different online legal resources such as Youtube videos and informational blogs in Spanish to help explain immigration law and its ever-changing policies to the surrounding Milwaukee community. Marycruz is passionate about empowering and helping the Milwaukee community navigate different legal resources available to them through the Milwaukee Justice Center -Mobile Legal Clinic.

**MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY LAW SCHOOL
LAW STUDENT INTERNS:**



**Maddie Bitto
Juris Doctorate
Candidate, 2021**

As the legal intern at the Mobile Legal Clinic (2019), I was fortunate to work with Megan to create the Expungement/Pardon Clinic. We saw

there was a large gap in free legal services for post-conviction matters. Individuals are not assigned an attorney for an expungement, and the court system can be hard to navigate.

Creating this Clinic gave us the unique opportunity to highlight issues of post-conviction law in Wisconsin. Megan and I participated in multiple judges' meetings where we discussed how the current expungement process is full of administrative barriers that make it harder for an individual to obtain criminal conviction relief.

On a personal level, working on the Expungement/Pardon Clinic solidified my passion for criminal defense work. I learned firsthand from working with clients how a criminal record has a lasting and far-reaching impact on their lives. As a future attorney, I plan to use the skills that I learned at the Expungement/Pardon Clinic to foster a more equitable criminal justice system.



**Laura Frederico
Juris Doctorate
Candidate, 2022**

While interning at the Expungement and Pardon Legal Clinic, for the fall semester of 2020, I gained experience in client communication

and interviewing skills while working one on one with our clients and volunteer attorneys. I was the first person from the clinic to reach out to potential clients to assess their criminal convictions for expungement and/or pardon relief. Conducting the initial contact with clients helped me develop my interviewing skills surrounding their convictions and application of that information to the statutory criteria and the eligibility standards for the Wisconsin pardon application. I was also able to participate in meetings with the attorney's and the client's and help take notes. During these meetings I was able to give input on the best ways to fill out the pardon application. This internship has taught me many useful skills I will be able to use throughout my legal career.

By the Numbers

363
Total Clients Seen

146
Pro Bono Lawyers

187
Pro Volunteer Law Students

126
Expungement/Pardon Clients

Mobile Legal Clinic Donations

We are so grateful for the support of these donors and foundations:

Association of Corporate Counsel (ACC) Foundation

Pro Bono and Justice (PB&J) Grant, to the ACC-WI Chapter to incorporate ACC members to volunteer with the Mobile Legal Clinic

Bader Philanthropies, Inc

Frank Daily & Julie Ebert

Direct Supply – In-Kind Donation of Plexiglas

The Evinrude Foundation

Marquette University Law School (Public Ally Support)

Individual Donors

Godfrey & Kahn, S.C. and the support of their Attorneys, with Special Acknowledgment to Attorney Arthur Harrington
Warren and Wendy Blumenthal
Trishia Cangelosi
Mike and Robin Gonring
Marilyn Johnson
Sanford and Katherine Mallin
Nicole Masnica
Mike and Karen Morrisey
Patrick Murphy
Holly Ryan

MLC Volunteers 2020

Crystal Abby	Maggie Cook	William Keeler	Elizabeth Neal	Kelsey Schanke
Kori Ashley	Paul Covalesski	Olivia Kelley	Nicole M. Padway	Rodd Schneider
Nina Beck	Jay Creagh	Rebeca Lopez	Brian Pierson	Thomas Schrimpf
Erin Block	Emily Fons	Yamilett Lopez	Victor Plantinga	Mary Shcolle
Ann Bowe	Dave Geraghty	Calvin Malone	Peter Ramirez	Ashley Smith
Amanda Bowen	Matthew Hills	Michael Malone	Annette Rauch	Matt Stoiber
Jeffrey Carpenter	John Ingrisano	Nicole Masnica	Olivia Robinson	Melinda Swartz
James Cauley	Molly Kanter	Jennifer Montalvo	Sandra Ruffalo	Yvonne Vegas
Khatija Choudhry	Russell Karnes	JJ Moore	Sarah Sargent	Brian Vogt

Comments from our *pro bono* Legal Volunteers, Community Partners and Clients

“I started volunteering with the Mobile Legal Clinic a few years ago because it was an opportunity for me, as a transactional lawyer, to meet with people that don’t typically get the benefit of legal advice, and help people solve problems in real time. Our attorneys enjoy the client interactions, as well as the chance to work with the law students.”

The Mobile Legal Clinic took a pause in March, but when it came back virtually, it was a seamless transition. The Mobile Legal Clinic staff is extremely organized and I’ve gotten nothing but positive feedback from the attorneys at Godfrey & Kahn about the virtual clinic experience. For anyone considering volunteering, the virtual clinic experience makes it easier than ever. We’ve had attorneys volunteer from Green Bay, Madison and Appleton. While the entire Milwaukee Justice Center staff has been incredible, Megan Morrissey, the clinic’s director, has a passion that is contagious. Whenever there is a need to collaborate or a complicated legal issue, she jumps in and assists, and is always there to help with unique issues that arise.”

**Jay Creagh, Attorney
Godfrey & Kahn, SC**

“This divorce is the beginning stage of a new life for me and my children. I thank you all for your assistance, advice, and overall guidance throughout this journey. As terrifying as this all has been for me, you all have made it easier for me to face this issue head-on and with strength I didn’t know I had. I pray that God keeps all of us safe and out of harms way. Thank you.”

Client from our Family Law Legal Advice Clinic

“I think what you are doing is an awesome service to the community. I pray people will take advantage of the service’s you all are offering. Again thanks for your encouragement”

Client from the Expungement/Pardon Clinic

“Having the Mobile Legal Clinic at the Mitchell St Library has been a great help to our community. Whenever they are here, people are lined up waiting to meet with the legal teams. The program allows an underserved community to get the legal questions answered in a quiet location close to their home. They are one of the most impactful programs we have here at Mitchell St. I wish we could have them more often!”

**Anthony Frausto, Branch Manager
Mitchell Street Public Library**

“Neighborhood libraries are places where community members can access information and connect to key resources. Partnering with the Mobile Legal Clinic was a natural fit, as it brought critical legal services directly to those who need it most. The importance of MLC support to our community members cannot be overstated; from housing insecurity, to job access, and consumer rights. Megan and her team are there to address community need in the moment. It has been wonderful to watch our partnership develop and expand. We look forward to continuing to collaborate with MLC for years to come!”

**Kristina Gomez, Events and Programming Librarian,
Milwaukee Public Library**

“I had a wonderful experience with the clinic. The attorney was hands-on and respectful throughout the entire meeting. The energy was positive and very encouraging. This is the first time I felt good about myself after having a professional conversation about being a felon. My cup is overflowing with tears of confidence and belief that felons do deserve a chance.”

Client from the Expungement/Pardon Clinic

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The Milwaukee Justice Center Mobile Legal Clinic: A project of Marquette University Law School and the Milwaukee Bar Association takes civil legal aid to the streets, providing brief legal advice and referrals to Milwaukee County residents in their neighborhoods

Milwaukee Justice Center Mobile Legal Clinic
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