



Mabel Center for Immigrant Justice



FY2021 Impact Report

Why Mabel Center?

It is a privilege to serve our clients and an honor that they entrust us with their stories of resilience and survival. I will never forget the first time I met Mabel, shortly after she and her young daughter had escaped kidnappers in Mexico. I've worked with hundreds of brave asylum-seeking women, but Mabel's strength was electric and palpable. When she and her daughter sought asylum at the border two years ago, the United States turned them away under the since-rescinded Migrant Protection Protocols and they were immediately kidnapped and held in Mexico. We worked with Mabel to prepare her asylum claim and represented her in a tent court at the border where an immigration judge granted her asylum. Mabel and her daughter now reside in the United States, where they are rebuilding their lives with security and safety.



Mabel and her daughter's first steps in the United States after being granted asylum.

When I founded Mabel Center for Immigrant Justice with my colleague, Daniel Santiago, Esq., naming our organization after Mabel was the natural choice. It enabled us to honor her, and center clients in our name, as the focus of our mission and practice.

Mabel and her young daughter endured tremendous trauma in pursuit of safety from the torture they fled in their home country. Her strength was, and continues to be, an inspiration to us. Honoring Mabel's perseverance and courage drives us in our dedication to provide pro bono legal services to women and children seeking asylum. I hope that you are equally inspired by her story and by the countless others who need our support. If you have already given- thank you. If you haven't, I hope you will explore our first annual update in these pages and consider a donation. Your collaboration is integral to our work.

Mabel Center is justice in action.

We believe that every human
- regardless of status or place of
origin - deserves the dignity and
respect of legal representation.

That's why we take on tough and complex
asylum cases, representing women and
children whose strength and resilience have
allowed them to survive unimaginable violence
in pursuit of safety in the United States.

Stories of Impact: Jennifer

Mabel Center works hard each day to help women and children who have endured violent persecution find hope and a new start in the United States.

In 2017, Jennifer fled her Central American home country to save her 11-year-old's life and her own, where female persecution and gang violence were rampant. As a single and religious woman living alone with her young son, Jennifer became a target. Gang members forced their way into her home, took over the house, and subjugated and tortured her inside for nearly a year.

Jennifer and her son were referred to us by a legal services organization that serves clients in a family detention center at the southern border. We reached out to her to continue helping her after she and her son were released to sponsors in Massachusetts, awaiting their immigration proceedings.

We helped Jennifer file her asylum application on time, therefore preserving her asylum claim. We helped her get a work permit, which enabled her to get a job that provided her family with security and stability, while she and her son awaited their day in court. We represented Jennifer in Boston Immigration Court, helping her and her child avoid deportation, win asylum, and begin a new life. Serving mothers like Jennifer, in each of these life-changing ways, motivated us to start our own client-centered organization, Mabel Center for Immigrant Justice.



Stories of Impact: Steven

In February 2020, Steven was referred to us by the ACLU. Steven had fled political persecution in his Central American home country with his wife and young daughter with special needs. They were forced to remain in Mexico under the Trump Administration's Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP). Daniel Santiago, Esq. prepared applications, affidavits, and evidence for Steven and his family, to help them get ready for their individual hearings in a temporary court at the border. When courts closed due to COVID-19, Steven and his family were forced to wait in uncertainty.

In January 2021, the Biden Administration rescinded MPP, but the damage had been done: the majority of asylum-seeking migrants, like Steven and his family, were put in danger while waiting



in Mexico or were deported back to the persecution they were fleeing, without due process. Mabel Center helped Steven and his family prepare the arduous paperwork necessary to enter the U.S. to prepare their asylum claim under these new procedures.

In April 2021, Jill Seeber, Esq. traveled to the southern border to welcome migrants with dignity. While there, she served as an attorney volunteer at the U.S./Mexico border, providing legal orientation to migrants paroled into the U.S. Incredibly, in the process of her volunteering this year, Jill met Steven at the border. While the path to asylum is challenging and long, Mabel Center works tirelessly with

clients to help them navigate the ever-changing policies that directly impact their cases.

*Identifying information changed to protect Jennifer, Steven, and their respective families.

By the Numbers

130

Clients served
in FY2021

44

Work permits
submitted in
FY2021

49

Asylum
applications
filed in FY2021

58,360

Backlog of
cases in Boston
Immigration
Court

30,804

Backlog
of cases
belonging
to Suffolk,
Middlesex, and
Essex Counties
alone

4 to 8

Current
processing
wait time at
the border for
asylum-seekers
in months

Notes: Mabel Center for Immigrant Justice's 2021 fiscal year is July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021. Mabel Center's 501c3 status was approved October 2020 and numbers reflect work completed after non-profit status was approved. Backlog statistics as of June 2021.

Supporters & Team

Mabel Center's work would not be possible without our donors.
We deeply appreciate those that have contributed to us in our first fiscal year.

\$500 to \$999

Karen and John Buschini
Judy Holcomb and Katy Walter
Debra Mattina
Ronnie Millar
Erin Truex and Greg Passano

\$250 to \$499

Ruth Cherneff and Cary Pfeffer
Stacey and Matthew Conroy
Lanessa Davis
Glenda Fuentes
Westcott Mercantile

Up to \$250

66 individuals contributed
less than \$250 for a total
of \$8,396 in FY21.

\$25,000+

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IMMIGRANT
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