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Mabel Center for Immigrant Justice Launches as 501(c)(3) Organization
The organization is on track to serve 100 asylum-seekers in its first year

Arlington, MA: Mabel Center for Immigrant Justice has launched as a 501(c)(3) organization with a mission of providing expert pro bono legal representation to asylum-seeking women and children primarily from Central America. Previously operating under fiscal sponsor Rian Immigrant Center, Mabel Center received 501(c)(3) status in October 2020. Mabel Center draws on the expertise developed and knowledge gained from founding attorneys Jill Seeber and Daniel Santiago's Family Detention Project. Through this project, Seeber and Santiago helped 130 individual fleeing persecution in Central America file their asylum cases with the Boston Immigration Court.

Seeber and Santiago named Mabel Center after the strong woman whom they represented at the border, in one of their most challenging cases. In September of 2019, Seeber was working with asylum-seekers forced to wait in Mexico until their cases were heard in tent courts along the border when she met Mabel. Mabel had survived severe torture and abuse in her Central American country at the hands of military officials. After seeking safety and refuge in the United States with her daughter, the U.S. government returned them to one of the most dangerous areas in Mexico under the unlawful Migrant Protection Protocols ("MPP") or remain in Mexico policy. While waiting in Mexico, Mabel and her 6-year-old daughter were kidnapped and held for eleven days under excruciating conditions.

Three months later, Seeber and Santiago represented Mabel and her daughter. Both were granted asylum from a tent court in Laredo and permitted to enter the United States, where they now live with loved ones. "Mabel's strength and courage are our inspiration and motivate us provide needed representation in complex cases like hers where the government has made attaining asylum unnecessarily difficult," stated Seeber.

The Arbella Insurance Foundation is the first corporate supporter after awarding a grant to Mabel Center in January 2021. "We are proud to support the Mabel Center for Immigrant Justice," said John Donohue, Chairman, President and CEO of the Arbella Insurance Group and Chairman and President of the Arbella Insurance Foundation. "The immigration system in the United States is complex, and we want to ensure that those seeking refuge have the guidance they need to navigate the system. Mabel Center plays an essential role in helping families find safety." With a backlog of over 55,000 cases in the Boston Immigration Court and nearly 30,000 in the tri-county area of Suffolk, Middlesex, and Essex alone, Mabel Center's work is timely and critical.



About Mabel Center for Immigrant Justice: Mabel Center provides expert pro bono legal services to asylum-seeking families that have been separated, detained in family detention centers, and/or returned to Mexico upon seeking asylum at the southern border. Mabel Center serves approximately 100 individuals annually. Mabel Center's clients predominantly reside in Chelsea, East Boston, Lynn, and Waltham. To learn more about Mabel Center, visit www.mabelcenter.org