

# Civil Legal Aid in Employment & Unemployment

Massachusetts  
Legal  
Assistance  
Corporation

Line item 0321-1600

During the COVID-19 crisis, legal aid advocates assisted with a surge in unemployment applications. In FY21, legal aid organizations expect to address a 54% increase in employment discrimination cases compared to FY20.

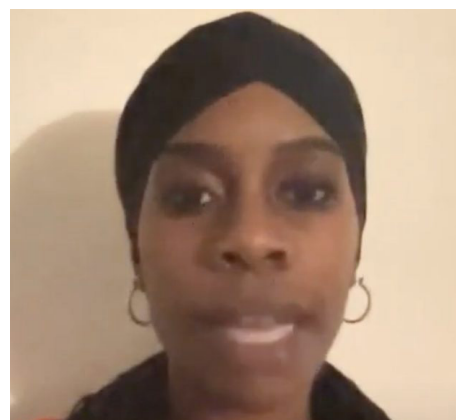
## Legal aid lawyers help low-income people facing:

- Improper denial of unemployment compensation
- Wage theft
- Employment discrimination
- Unsafe working conditions or unfair labor standards

When the COVID crisis hit, advocates helped workers— especially people with limited English proficiency, people without computer access, and recent immigrants—file online unemployment applications and appeal wrongful denials.

Civil legal aid organizations also conduct policy advocacy on behalf of workers in partnership with unions, workers' groups, and social service providers.

**Low-income people at or below 125% of the federal poverty level (\$33,125 per year for a family of four) qualify for civil legal aid.**



***"I believe that if I didn't have GBLs with me to help with the appeal that I would not have been able to get my family out of that financial burden."***

- Malensky, mother and legal aid client who was improperly denied unemployment benefits

## 3,154 employment-related cases closed in FY20, including:

Unemployment Compensation	2,409
Wage Claims & Fair Labor Standards Act Issues	258
Taxes	256
Other Employment	81
Employment Discrimination	79
Employee Rights	71

Last year  
legal aid provided  
**\$115 million**  
in economic benefits  
to the Commonwealth  
and its residents

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