

# Civil Legal Aid in Employment & Unemployment

During the COVID-19 crisis, legal aid advocates assisted with a **353% surge** in unemployment insurance compensation cases.

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

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

During the pandemic, advocates have found innovative ways to help people without computer access or with limited English proficiency 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 (\$34,688 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**

## 3,711 employment-related cases closed in FY21

Unemployment Compensation	3,167
Taxes	217
Employment Discrimination	103
Wage Claims & Fair Labor Standards Act Issues	92
Employee Rights	72
Earned Income Tax Credit, Agricultural Worker Issues, and Other Employment	60

Last year, legal aid provided

**\$103 million**

**in economic benefits to the Commonwealth and its residents**