



# 2025 IMPACT REPORT

Dear Friends,

In 2025, Massachusetts Appleseed strengthened its commitment to advancing equity through research, advocacy, and community partnership across the Commonwealth. Through rigorous research, public education, coalition-building, and legislative advocacy, we elevated the lived experiences of impacted communities and advanced practical solutions to improve systems that too often fall short.

Our work focused on expanding language access, protecting educational equity, supporting youth experiencing homelessness, and ensuring that policies translate into meaningful protections in practice. We are deeply grateful to the staff, board members, volunteers, and supporters who make this work possible. Together, we are building a more just and inclusive Massachusetts — and laying the foundation for continued impact in the years ahead.

With appreciation,



John Shutkin J.D.  
**Board Chair of Massachusetts**



Ranjini Govender Dowley J.D., PhD  
**President and Executive Director**

# POLICY AND NARRATIVE CHANGE

## Justice Disrupted: Improving Language Access at the Massachusetts Trial Courts

On October 23rd, we co-hosted a virtual launch of our newest report, ***Justice Disrupted: Improving Language Access at the Massachusetts Trial Courts***. With our partners at MLRI, we presented our findings and recommendations to inform the Trial Courts' improvement of language services for limited English proficient (LEP) and Deaf and hard of hearing (D/HH) court users. This report was put together by the Courts Language Access Working Group (CLAWG) of the Language Access Coalition and pro bono Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough LLP and Bloomberg LP.

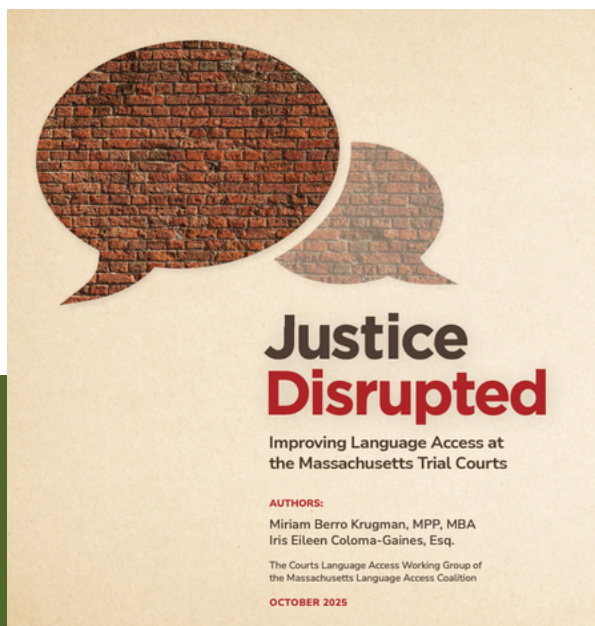
Our Justice Disrupted report was featured by **WGBH**, which emphasized the report's documentation of unreliable interpreting services across Massachusetts courts. In its coverage, the outlet noted, **"Researchers took a few different approaches to gathering data for the study including surveys, focus groups and court-watching. Among findings, they found that 45% of people surveyed said that an interpreter never showed up for their hearing."**

“

A particularly troubling trend emerged from our analysis: LEP litigants were often told their court event would be delayed unless they waived their right to an interpreter—a practice that is intimidating to court users and undermines equitable access to justice.

- Justice Disrupted Report, Oct. 2025

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**DID YOU KNOW?**

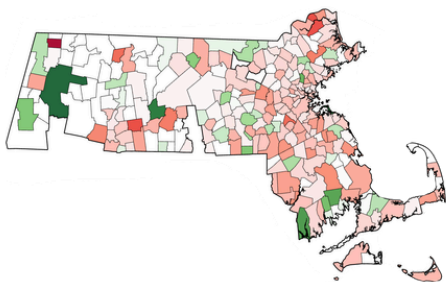
**77%**

of court watchers noted delays in court proceedings due to the absence of or need to call an interpreter

## Legislative Wins

In May 2025, MA Appleseed testified in support of *An Act relative to affirming and maintaining equal access to public education for all children*, which was passed by the legislature and signed into law in August. The law maintains special education protections for English learners with disabilities, and ensures that school interpreters are qualified and trained. It also protects students with disabilities from inequitable school exclusion and preserves the right to public education regardless of disability or immigration status. Appleseed continues to support this law by ensuring that the protections are put into practice by being a member of the Massachusetts Coalition for Immigrant and Multilingual Learner Justice in Education.

Highlighting one of the provisions of the bill, which would protect students with disabilities from inequitable exclusion, Nadia referenced data from [MA Appleseed's School Discipline Data Dashboard](#):



“...In the 2021-2022 school year, Black students with disabilities were nearly **2x** more likely to be disciplined than their white counterparts, statewide. This gap is even larger in specific districts. In Burlington, Black students with disabilities were **4x** more likely to be disciplined than their white counterparts, and in Wakefield, **12x** more likely.

- Nadia Romanazzi, Director of Legal Education and Policy”

## Quoted in the Boston Globe

In April, MA Appleseed was quoted in a [Boston Globe article on federal changes to school discipline policy](#). Nadia Romanazzi, our Director of Legal Education and Policy expressed concern about the Trump administration’s approach. Romanazzi highlighted research showing, “large discipline disparities between students of color and their white counterparts,” noting that these gaps often reflect differences in how discipline policies are enforced rather than differences in behavior. She also pointed out that Black girls, for example, are more likely to be targeted for dress-code violations, underscoring the need to address inequities in school discipline practices.

The Boston Globe

DID YOU  
KNOW?

MA Appleseed testified/submitted legislative testimony in support of **13 Bills**



Nadia Romanazzi, Director of Legal Education and Policy at the C1 Better Future Series

# COMMUNITY EDUCATION

## Know Your Rights Presentations

We empowered over **100** youth and their allies through **13** Know Your Rights presentations to nonprofit organizations and youth service providers based on key chapters of the **Homeless Youth Handbook**, including housing, trafficking, and medical rights. These presentations and workshops provided clear, practical information to help youth experiencing homelessness understand their legal protections, access services, and advocate for themselves.

DID YOU  
KNOW?



The Homeless Youth  
Handbook Received

2,564  
Visits



In September, we led a KYR presentation on trafficking for The Home For Little Wanderers, BCYC in partnership with Audrey Morrissey, Executive Director of My Life My Choice

## Investigating Barriers to Language Access in MA Courts

In May 2025, **Miriam Berro Krugman, MBA, MPP**, Appleaseed's Former Director of Community-Engaged Research, presented on a panel at the Greater Boston's Annual Insight-to-Impact (**Boston Area Research Initiative**) Summit. She discussed the Language Access in the Massachusetts Courts Research project we are working on with our partners. On the "Doing Public Administration Differently" panel, Miriam detailed the consequences the lack of language access services can have for court users, outlined the project's data collection methods, and shared some preliminary findings.



**Miriam Berro Krugman MBA, MPP, Appleaseed's Former Director of Community-Engaged Research at the BARI Summit**

# MOBILIZING A MOVEMENT FOR JUSTICE

## Massachusetts Homeless Youth Legal Network

In 2025, the Massachusetts Homeless Youth Legal Network (MHYLN), led by MA Appleseed, continued to mobilize the legal community to improve outcomes for youth and young adults experiencing homelessness. With 60+ members statewide, MHYLN worked to identify systemic legal barriers, expand access to know-your-rights resources, and strengthen cross-sector collaboration to advance



housing stability and opportunity for young people. Convening in January and May, members deepened their engagement, elevated policy priorities, and coordinated efforts to ensure vulnerable youth can access the legal support and protections they deserve.

## Co-Hosted Legislative Briefing

In March 2025, MA Appleseed, as co-leader of the Mass Speaks Coalition, co-hosted a legislative briefing, along with sponsors Representative González, Representative Madaro, and Senator DiDomenico on An act relative to language



access and inclusion, to discuss the need for robust language access services at state agencies and enforcement mechanisms to hold agencies accountable.

## Mass Speaks Coalition Testimonials

As Co-Chairs of the Mass Speaks Coalition, MA Appleseed testified at the state house in support of the [Language Access and Inclusion Act \(H.3384/S.2125\)](#). When state agencies only provide services in English, thousands of Massachusetts families are denied access to the services and information they need to survive, such as those to help put food on the table or navigate the child welfare system. We thank the entire Mass Speaks Coalition, made up of over 75 advocacy, research and legal service organizations, for standing with us and sharing their stories.



DID YOU  
KNOW?

1:4

residents in Massachusetts speak a language other than English at home

## Celebrating Justice and Leadership at our 17th Annual Good Apple Awards Reception

On November 13th, 2025, Massachusetts Appleseed gathered over 120 community leaders, supporters, and partners for our 17th Annual Good Apple Awards Reception in Boston. The evening celebrated champions of justice and highlighted the critical issues facing our communities, including youth homelessness, the school-to-prison pipeline, and barriers for non-English speakers navigating government systems. We were honored to recognize:



Appleseed Board Members celebrate with Ursula Furi-Perry

**James Parker**, SVP & General Counsel of the Boston Celtics, with the Good Apple Award, for his long-standing commitment to supporting youth experiencing homelessness.

**Ursula Furi-Perry**, Staff Attorney at the Lowell Court Service Center, with the inaugural Community Leadership Award, for her tireless advocacy and volunteer work.

**Ropes & Gray LLP**, with the Pro Bono Champion Award, for their dedication to expanding access to justice.



Community Leadership Awardee, Ursula Furi-Perry gives speech at the Good Apple Awards Reception



Jon Herzog celebrates with Good Apple Awardee, James Parker

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The work I do with youth experiencing homelessness is fueled by the truth I lived: that potential is everywhere, but access is not. And when we remove barriers, when we expand legal protections, and when we take the time to simply listen to young people, we change not just individual futures, but entire communities.

- Ursula Furi-Perry, Staff Attorney at the Lowell Court Service Center

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ROPES & GRAY

### We Welcomed New Staff Members



We welcomed Ranjini as Appleseed's new President and Executive Director. Ranjini received her law degree from Syracuse University and doctorate in social policy from Cornell University and brings over two decades of leadership in nonprofit management, government affairs, and development. Her appointment marks a new chapter in Appleseed's mission to dismantle barriers that perpetuate inequities and ensure all youth and families across Massachusetts have equality.

**Ranjini Govender Dowley J.D., PhD**



We welcomed Xiomara as the organization's new Director of Partnerships and Engagement. Alfaro-Martínez is a campaign specialist with experience in political strategy, community outreach, and program management across the United States. She has led large-scale voter engagement efforts, managed various national pilot-program initiatives, and built coalitions that strengthen civic participation and equity.

**Xiomara Alfaro-Martínez**

### We Welcomed New Board Members



Devin is a health care partner at Proskauer Rose LLP, with over 13 years of experience in the field. In his role, he counsels leading health care organizations, insurers, and private equity sponsors on complex transactional and regulatory matters. Devin's passion for health care extends to his community service and pro bono efforts in the Boston area, including working on the [Health Care chapter of the Homeless Youth Handbook](#).

**Devin Cohen**



Amy is a senior attorney at Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP, specializing in higher education law and providing legal counsel to higher education institutions in matters of labor, civil rights and Title IX, policy development, regulatory compliance, and more. In 2025, Amy was recognized as a Recommended Lawyer for Industry Focus in Education by the Legal 500 United States.

**Amy Fabiano**



McKenzi is a corporate attorney at Feinberg Hanson LLP, where she partners with entrepreneurs, growing businesses, and investors to navigate complex corporate transactions including mergers and acquisitions, financing, governance, and strategic investments. She previously served as an associate in the corporate group at Cooley LLP and has been recognized for her leadership, including being named to Forbes' 30 Under 30 Boston.

**McKenzi Baker**

## Special Thanks to Our Pro Bono Partners

edgeworth | economics



Baker  
McKenzie.

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WILMERHALE® 

Boston  
Scientific



Liberty  
Mutual®



NELSON  
MULLINS



MINTZ

## Thank you to our volunteers and interns in 2025!

Thank you to all our other volunteers who dedicated their time to making our work possible



**Urmika Nandwani**  
Fall Volunteer



**Caitlyn Chang**  
Summer Volunteer



**Katie Wilberding**  
Research and Policy  
Intern



**Rachel Tisevich**  
Research Intern

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I joined Massachusetts Appleseed because I believe in the power of community to advance justice. When people come together with purpose and shared commitment, we can break down barriers and create meaningful, lasting change across the Commonwealth.

- **McKenzi Baker, Appleseed Board Member**

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Sustain our work!

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[inquiry@massappleseed.org](mailto:inquiry@massappleseed.org)



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Appleseed**  
Center for Law & Justice

