



LOYOLA
UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

SCHOOL OF LAW



The Curt and Linda Rodin Center for Social Justice

Impact Report 2022-2024





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Letter from the Director, L. Kate Mitchell

Dear Curt and Linda:

I am excited to be leading the work of the Curt and Linda Rodin Center for Social Justice and to be highlighting and growing the incredible and integral social justice work of our Loyola University Chicago School of Law students, faculty, and programs. From 2022 to 2024, Rodin Center programming resulted in more than 200 clients served through the Health Justice Project and the Education Law & Policy Project, development of a new partnership with Saint Leonard's Ministries, essential programming to promote social justice work among law students, and impactful community programs. The 2024 Rodin Symposium, which boasted over 200 registrants, brought together leading experts on immigration and migration with community leaders in Chicago working to serve immigrants and recent arrivals in the Chicagoland area through social work, legal advocacy, health care, educational services, and housing support.

The Rodin Center holds an essential place within the broader law school community as it enhances and builds upon the Loyola University Chicago School of Law and larger University commitments to social justice and community service. The Rodin Center supports regular educational opportunities for students to learn about and engage in a variety of social justice programming and provides opportunities for service through clinical and experiential programs, including the Health Justice Project Clinic, Education Law & Policy Project, Civitas ChildLaw Center, and Criminal Law Practicum. Rodin faculty are leading scholars on social justice topics such as sex trafficking, police stop trends, affirmative action, poverty law, family dispute resolution, and enforcement of constitutional rights.

The Rodin Center also recognizes and supports the leadership and accomplishments of some of Loyola Law's most committed social justice student advocates. The Rodin Center has supported Rodin Fellows' work at education advocacy, criminal defense, and workers' and immigrant rights organizations. Rodin Fellows have also gone on to obtain prestigious postgraduate fellowships, including the National Immigrant Justice Center Schreiber Fellowship, the Equal Justice Works Fellowship, and the Skadden Fellowship. Rodin Fellows are truly becoming leaders for social justice in our communities. It is my great honor to support and bear witness to all they have accomplished.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "L. Kate Mitchell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

L. Kate Mitchell

Director

Curt and Linda Rodin Center for Social Justice



Rodin Center Updates

The Curt and Linda Rodin Center has continued to be a staple of social justice programming at Loyola Law, supporting critical services for vulnerable members of the community, student development and financial support through its fellowship program, support for faculty engaging in scholarship and service in furtherance of social justice, and critical educational programming for the law school community and beyond.

Rodin Center Symposium

The 2024 Curt and Linda Rodin Center Symposium, **Immigration and the Chicago Migrant Crisis**, was held on April 19 at the Loyola University Chicago School of Law. Cosponsored by the Center for the Human Rights of Children, the Civitas ChildLaw Center, the Health Justice Project, and the Center for Public Interest Law, the program featured Oscar A. Chacón, co-founder and executive director of Alianza Americas, and other experts in immigration law and policy as well as a range of professionals including physicians, social workers, volunteers, and educators serving recent arrivals to Chicago. The symposium had over 200 registrants.

Rodin Center Lunch & Learns

The Rodin Center hosted a series of Lunch & Learn events offering Loyola Law students the opportunity to learn about social justice issues, careers, and studies at Loyola. Topics included social justice in the law school curriculum, presented by Rodin faculty; public interest summer internships, presented by current 2L and 3L students; voting rights; a criminal defense panel; a presentation by Vanessa Aceves, Class of 2023 Rodin Fellow, on postgraduate fellowships; and a social justice and public interest career panel including Loyola Law alumni working in government, legal aid, and immigration positions.

Rodin Center Celebrates New Collaboration

Saint Leonard's Ministries

In October 2023, the School of Law announced a collaboration with Saint Leonard's Ministries through which law students and faculty can participate in pro bono/public interest initiatives. Saint Leonard's, located on Chicago's Near West Side, provides holistic reentry and housing services to men and women released from incarceration, empowering participants to lead whole and productive lives. Loyola's Criminal Law Practicum students currently support and volunteer with Saint Leonard's as community partners. Our hope is that through this collaboration, Loyola Law students can assist Saint Leonard's clients as part of a future criminal legal clinic under the supervision of a licensed attorney.



Health Justice Project

L. Kate Mitchell, Director, Health Justice Project, Clinical Professor

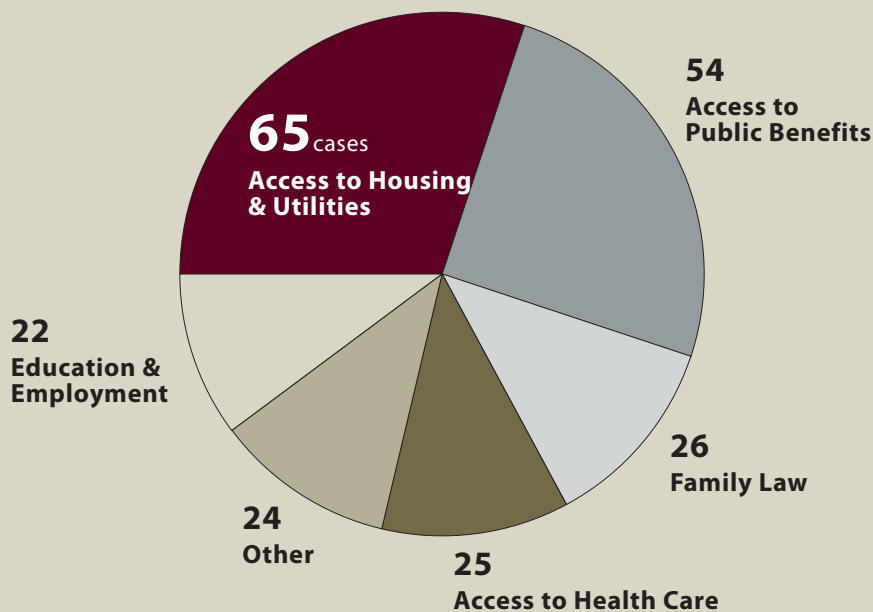
The Health Justice Project (HJP) is an interprofessional law school clinic housed within the Beazley Institute for Health Law and Policy. Faculty and law students enrolled in the HJP provide direct legal services to people living in poverty and people with disabilities or chronic challenges in collaboration with medical and social work students. The HJP utilizes the medical-legal partnership (MLP) model to improve the health and well-being of Loyola Medicine patients with holistic legal and social supports.

The Health Justice Project's Maywood MLP First Three-Year Report highlighting the impact and successes of the project can be found at <https://www.luc.edu/law/stories/our-stories/hjp-maywood-mlp-report-2024/>.

OUTCOMES

The HJP receives referrals from partner health care providers at Loyola Medicine for a range of health harming legal needs. The six main areas of referral include: access to housing, access to health care, access to public benefits, access to education and employment, and family law. From June 2022-June 2024, the HJP received 171 referrals for assistance with 216 legal needs.

REFERRALS BY AREA OF NEED



CASE OUTCOMES

From June 2022 to June 2024, the Health Justice Project closed 219 cases on behalf of 166 clients and assisted clients by providing full legal representation, advice, extended brief services, and referrals to other legal services providers. HJP faculty and students helped clients resolve insurance issues, obtain rental assistance, improve conditions in rental housing, avoid eviction, obtain over \$210,00 in public assistance and financial supports like SNAP (food stamps) and disability benefits (SSDI and SSI), complete advance directives, obtain an order of protection, and support students with disabilities obtain appropriate special education supports in their community schools.

OUTCOMES OF CLOSED CASES

Advice and Counsel - 122

Extended Brief Services - 42

Full Legal Representation (i.e. hearing, trial or other extended matter) - 15

Referral after Legal Representation - 15

Client Withdrew/Unable to Contact - 25

DEMOGRAPHICS

Black - 54

Latinx - 20

White - 21

Other - 6

Asian - 1

Not reported - 50

GENDER

Not reported - 30

Female - 81

Male - 41

Nonbinary - 1

CASE HIGHLIGHT

“Olivia” was referred to the HJP because her disability (SSDI) benefits had been suspended, and she had received notice of a \$70,000 overpayment from the Social Security Administration due to errors recording her work efforts. Olivia had severe COPD and could no longer work as a health care worker despite many efforts in various positions. Olivia had also fallen behind on rent and her subsidized housing was at risk. HJP students assisted Olivia with an appeal of her SSDI overpayment, supported her in getting SSI and then getting her SSDI reinstated. Students also supported Olivia in ensuring that her rent was recalculated to protect her subsidized housing.

Education Advocacy

Jackie Ross, Clinical Faculty and Staff Attorney, Civitas ChildLaw Clinic

Miranda Johnson, Director, Education Law Policy Institute

2022-2023 School Year *Representation: 26 cases* 2023-2024 School Year *Representation: 27 cases*



DEMOGRAPHICS FOR THE 27 CASES IN WHICH REPRESENTATION OFFERED

Latinx	37%	Male	70%	85% of cases were below federal poverty line
Black	30%	Female	22%	
White	22%	Transgender	7%	
Asian	7%			
Middle Eastern	4%			

CASE HIGHLIGHTS

“Michael” was facing expulsion for bringing a weapon onto campus. A high school senior, he rode public transit for over an hour to get to/from school. As he traveled through communities experiencing significant violence, he commuted with a weapon for protection. Michael maintained that the school’s security was aware that he did this and had no concerns so long as he turned the weapon over upon arriving at school. However, a substitute security guard was unaware of this practice, resulting in Michael being referred for expulsion for having a weapon on campus. The Clinic represented him and successfully had the expulsion dismissed, allowing him to graduate and be accepted to a four-year college on scholarship. When Michael learned the expulsion was being dismissed he wrote, “Thank you. You guys saved my life for real. I wish you could see my face right now I’m smiling so big.”



ChildLaw Center Report 2022-2024

Over the course of the past two years, the students and faculty of the ChildLaw Clinic have represented approximately two hundred children in private parenting disputes and child protection cases. In parenting disputes, we successfully settle most cases, resulting in agreed parenting plans that clarify parenting roles and promote family peace. In the small number of cases requiring full trials, the clinic's positions on behalf of child clients almost always prevail.

In child protection, many of our cases involve children who remain in foster care for extended periods of time, where success is measured by our ability to ensure their placements are stable and their needs are met. We have also closed cases for approximately 25-30 children in care, through permanency options that include return home, adoption, guardianship, and the achievement of independence.

In addition, the ChildLaw Clinic has handled several matters involving international child abductions. One such case involved the representation of two young children who were returned to the care of their mother; another more recent case involves an effort to secure the return of three minors to their mother in Mexico, following the children's wrongful retention by their grandmother here in Chicago.



Rodin Fellows 2023-2024



Carly Gustaveson (JD '24) obtained her bachelor's degree in psychology and worked in community mental health and as a case manager in the criminal legal system. Since graduating and passing the bar in 2024, she has been working as an assistant appellate defender with the Office of the State Appellate Defender. In this role, she has the honor of representing clients in the criminal legal system and zealously advocating for their rights via both direct and collateral appeal. In addition to her salaried work, Carly is learning how to represent clients in front of the parole board as pro bono counsel. She has also been involved with various forms of community building and community care in a nonlegal capacity.

Julian Quiroga-Cubillos (JD '24) is a Schreiber Fellow with the National Immigrant Justice Center's Legal Defense Project. After graduating, Julian obtained his license to practice in Illinois. He now defends individuals in immigration court proceedings and provides legal representation to individuals seeking to apply for citizenship, adjustments of status, and other legal protections from deportation.



Laura Christensen Garcia is committed to using her legal degree to build a more just and equitable society. Laura spent her 1L summer at UNITE HERE Local 1 in Chicago and her 2L summer at UNITE HERE Local 11 in Los Angeles, California. Through her work at two militant and progressive locals, Laura developed a strong commitment to the labor movement which she continues to develop as a law clerk at Dowd, Bloch, Bennett, Cervone, Auerbach & Yokich. After graduation, Laura returned to California to work for a labor rights law firm.

Alumni Spotlight

Vanessa Aceves (JD '23) is an Equal Justice Works (EWJ) Fellow hosted by Equip for Equality's Special Education Clinic, sponsored by Aon and Kirkland & Ellis. Vanessa's project supports nonverbal students in Illinois by providing access to communication devices. These devices help students express themselves and engage in their education. In her first year as an attorney, Vanessa provided brief service to 110 clients, legal representation to 28 clients, and presented to 589 attendees in English and Spanish.

Recently, Vanessa filed a systemic complaint that resulted in corrective action to address district-wide delays in evaluations for communication devices, impacting over 900 students.



Rodin Fellows 2024-2025



Ally Hayes is currently a law clerk with the Cook County Public Defender's First Municipal Division. Previously, Ally was a 711 certified intern with Cabrini Green Legal Aid (CGLA), where she represented clients with criminal records in expungement and sealing court. Most notably, in her first time speaking in court, she successfully argued for the expungement of a first-degree murder arrest. Throughout law school, Ally has worked with individuals involved in the criminal and juvenile legal systems, both with the public defender's office and with legal aid organizations, including CGLA and the Illinois Prison Project. At Loyola, she is the editor-at-large for the Public Interest Law Reporter and a student clinician with the Legislation and Policy Clinic, crafting policy to prevent Illinois youth in conflict with their families from entering the juvenile system. After her graduation in May 2025, Ally plans on working as a public defender.

Yael Pineda Chavez is a first-generation Mexican immigrant and a third-year law student. She earned her bachelor's degree in psychology and labor and workplace studies from UCLA. After college, Yael was a community organizer and policy advocate in Los Angeles. Prior to law school, she worked as an eviction defense paralegal at Bet Tzedek Legal Services and provided counsel and advice and other legal services to immigrants and other low-income communities. Yael spent her 1L summer interning at Impact for Equity, where she conducted legal and policy research on the use of pretextual race-based traffic stops. In 2024, Yael clerked at Georges & Synowiecki, where she worked on immigration, family law, and housing matters for union workers. Currently, Yael is interning at the ACLU of Illinois.



René J. Valenzuela is devoted to working at the intersection of education, criminal, and immigration law. René's summer experience includes working with Equip for Equality in its Special Education Clinic, where he provided direct legal services to ensure students with disabilities had access to an appropriate education. Prior to law school, René was a fellow at the Immigrant Justice Corps in New York City, where he worked with diverse communities to file affirmative immigration applications. René's lived experiences inform his pursuit of a career in social justice. Upon graduation, he hopes to be a zealous legal advocate working alongside marginalized communities in pursuit of a more equitable and just society.

Constance Young is a third-year student at the School of Law. Over the summer, she served as a 711 legal intern with the Law Office of the Cook County Public Defender, gaining hands-on experience through trial preparation, drafting motions, and aiding her supervising attorneys in daily court proceedings. This semester, Constance is a judicial extern for Justice P. Scott Neville, Jr., at the Illinois Supreme Court, where she looks forward to learning, gaining invaluable experiences, and honing her skills as a legal researcher and writer. She also serves as captain of the Constance Baker Motley Mock Trial Team. Upon graduation, Constance plans to continue pursuing her interest in social justice by becoming a criminal defense attorney so she can be an active and effective advocate for individuals within underrepresented or marginalized communities.



Rodin Faculty Updates

Jeannine Bell

Professor Bell was the 2023-24 William H. Neukom Fellows Research Chair in Diversity and Law. This year-long visiting position is awarded to an outstanding scholar with a distinguished record of scholarship in law and the social sciences who conducts empirical research on diversity and law. As a Neukom chair, she gave three separate presentations on a book she is writing on police stops to different groups of lawyers, judges and policy makers. In addition to her work on policing, Professor Bell is a nationally recognized speaker on hate crime

Bruce Boyer and Anita Weinberg

Professor Boyer and Professor Weinberg, together with Emma McMullen, (JD '18) authored a chapter in the Illinois Institute for Continuing Legal Education's Practice Manual on juvenile law, focused on permanency planning and the termination of parental rights.

Blanche Bong Cook

Professor Bong Cook's first four chapters of her textbook on sex trafficking were accepted for publication: *Sex Trafficking Primer*, 47:2 WAYNE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF TRIAL ADVOCACY (forthcoming).

She also made several presentations at Loyola University Chicago. These included two lectures—*So You Want to Be a Prosecutor and Navigating a Career in Criminal Law*, and *The Role of Black & Minority Lawyers in the New Era of Civil Rights*; keynote, *Victim/Suspect: Patriarchy's Punishment for Reporting Perpetrators*, 2023 Annual Conference to End Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence; as speaker at *Mosaic Legal Voices: Celebrating Diversity in the Legal Profession*; served as conference organizer for *Intersectional Method and Methodology, Intersectional Feminism and Police Violence*, and as commentator, *Chicagoland Junior Scholars Conference*.

Juan Perea

Professor Perea's research and scholarship included completing *Denying the Violence: The Missing Constitutional Law of Conquest*, 24 U. Pa. J. Const. L. 1205 (2022); and completing "Supreme Court Sophistry: More Inequality in the Name of Equal Protection," a commentary on the SFFA affirmative action case, to be published in the *American Journal of Law and Equality* (forthcoming this fall). His work-in-progress includes a study of how founding violence finds expression in law.

He made several presentations over the same period. They included Loyola University Chicago panels on affirmative action, SFFA; on Diversity, SFFA; recent Supreme Court cases; and a conference on teaching constitutional law UC Irvine, California.

Stacey Platt

Professor Platt served as president of the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts, an interdisciplinary, international family peace organization focused on family law policy and best practices for family law professionals, including legal and mental health providers. Along with former teaching fellow, Laura Matthews-Jolly, she co-authored a chapter on child participation and advocacy in the book, "Family Dispute Resolution: Process and Practice," published in 2024 by Oxford University Press.

Alan Raphael

Professor Raphael taught classes in constitutional law and criminal procedure. In addition to teaching basic doctrinal law and the development of legal principles, he spent significant time discussing issues of race in constitutional adjudication and in police use of discretion in law enforcement. He co-authored with students, articles on upcoming United States Supreme Court cases on issues of criminal law, criminal procedure, and First Amendment law. He also spent considerable time counseling students interested in public service employment.

Henry Rose

Professor Rose spoke at a Rodin Center-sponsored panel on planning a public interest career as a law student and was a member of the planning group for the Rodin Center Symposium on Homelessness. Additionally, his work included teaching Law and Poverty classes as well as Civil Rights; counseling alumni and students about public interest career planning; speaking to incoming students on the social justice mission of the School of Law. He served as co-chair of the school's Loan Repayment Assistance Program that provides financial assistance to defray the educational debt of alumni engaged in full-time public interest legal work.

He wrote two law review articles: *The Demise of the Bivens Remedy is Rendering Enforcement of Federal Constitutional Rights Inequitable But Congress Can Fix It* in 42 Northern Illinois University Law Review 229 (2022); and *A Federal Legislative Proposal To Address The Demise Of The Bivens Remedy* in 49 Notre Dame Journal of Legislation 376 (2023).



APPRECIATION FOR

Mary Bird ('JD 87)

Mary Bird, longtime Director of the Center for Public Interest Law and Rodin Center Advisor, retired in the Summer of 2024. Mary supported Rodin Fellows and other law students in organizing law school activities highlighting social justice topics and supported students with post graduate fellowship applications, summer public interest funding, and job searches. Mary helped generations of law students endeavoring to dedicate their careers to social justice and is missed by the law school community.



SCHOOL of LAW

March 2025

Dear Curt and Linda:

On behalf of Loyola University Chicago School of Law, thank you for your investment in our work, our students, and our shared mission of excellence in service to society. Your support has provided critical funding for our students and our programming. The Curt and Linda Rodin Center for Social Justice is a point of great pride at the law school.

I am honored that you have chosen the School of Law as a trusted partner to advance your philanthropic priorities. Your investment in the academic development of our students is advancing Loyola's foundational purpose of expanding knowledge through learning, justice and service. Your generosity helps to further elevate the School of Law as a destination for scholars who are committed to developing solutions to the long-standing and emerging issues we face.

Thank you for your continued support of our school and for your impactful partnership in creating a more equitable and harmonious society.

With warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michèle Alexandre".

Michèle Alexandre

Dean and Professor of Law



The Curt and Linda Rodin Center for Social Justice
at Loyola University Chicago School of Law

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