



***Advancing justice through research, advocacy, education,
and public engagement.***

The School of Law's roots in community-based legal education stretch back for a century, with the mission of promoting opportunities for students and engagement with the greater Springfield community. Launched in 2019, the University's Centennial year, the **Center for Social Justice** is designed to strengthen collaborative efforts between the School of Law and the region to work toward a more just, equitable, and inclusive society in its next century of service.

The Work We Do

The Center provides a cohesive hub for the School of Law's justice-related teaching, scholarship, and service. We also broaden social justice academic offerings, help students aspiring to be social justice lawyers achieve their goals, manage in-house pro bono projects, and work closely with community organizations and partners to identify and address unmet needs that require a multi-dimensional response cutting across law and other fields. We effectuate these efforts through four primary avenues:



To achieve our goal of being a preeminent Center for Social Justice—locally, nationally, and globally—we need your support! In its first year, the Center surpassed all initial goals of fundraising, programming, community engagement, and backing for student and faculty social justice work. Moving ahead, we are raising funds to increase our organizational capacity, continue serving the public, and be a leader of the times through development of a new law and technology lab. We believe that the Center will be transformative for the School of Law *and* for our community, and look forward to bringing our ambitious vision to fruition with your help.

[CLICK TO DONATE!](#)

Homepage: https://bit.ly/WNE_CSJ & **Giving:** wne.edu/give (Center designation option)

Contact: Ariel Clemmer, Director, ariel.clemmer@law.wne.edu, 413.796.2103

Initiatives

FROM RESEARCH TO ACTION

The Center serves as an innovation catalyst for students, faculty, and our partners to not just research social justice solutions, but also to put those ideas to action. We are excited by the prospect of creating a new law and technology initiative that will explore the intersection between these two fields and their potential to create meaningful access to justice-informed tech solutions. We also are continually generating new ideas and currently operate two active economic justice projects:

- the Consumer Debt Initiative serves self-represented debtors facing collection lawsuits in the Springfield District Court through volunteers who provide counsel and advice, representation, and connect clients to consumer debt and financial literacy resources;
- the [Covid Relief Coalition](#) helps small businesses and nonprofits access emergency loans and other sources of financial relief in the wake of COVID-19. Started by a group of law firms, nonprofits, and governmental agencies in Boston, we facilitated extending the Coalition to western Massachusetts in partnership with Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company and the School of Law's Small Business Clinic.

ADVOCACY AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The Center is designed to facilitate critical discourse in academic and community circles by promoting social justice scholarship and advocacy. The Center has capitalized on the School of Law's existing institutional strengths with an initial focus on the unmet legal needs of the western New England community, while also working to expand its reach to other social justice issues that affect the local, national, and global communities. We're doing so through our racial equity advocacy, and have been leading efforts at the University and for the public to initiate change.

LEVERAGING LAW FACULTY EXPERTISE

The initial areas of the Center's focus align with the nationally-recognized scholarship and teaching of our faculty in the intersected areas of economic justice and community economic development; civil and international human rights; gender equity and legal issues faced by the LGBTQI community; immigrants' rights; and racial justice. Through their work and the creation of related educational and training opportunities we aim to enrich learning for all.

INSPIRATION FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

The Center enhances the School of Law's ongoing efforts to diversify the legal profession through its engagement with local schools and colleges by supporting a pipeline to law school for those students who are traditionally underrepresented in the field of law.

Other Social Justice Involvement

We are involved in a number of other social justice-related projects, events, conferences, and conversations happening at the School of Law and in the community. These include a CPCS-CAFL Pipeline Program, partnership with the Immigration Project of the Massachusetts ACLU, ACLU Hotline support, mentoring initiatives, sponsorship of the Northeast Region Fair Housing & Civil Rights Conference, and recent projects to address the COVID-19 pandemic's disproportionate impact on communities of color and the poor.

Thank you to our many individual donors and supporters, as well as our large-gift sponsors.

We invite you to [join us](#) as we work to create a different and better future!