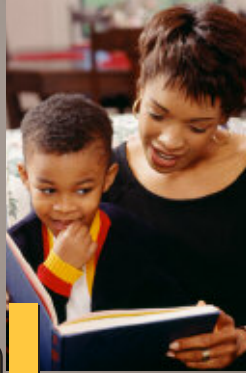


Types of law practiced at Western Mass Legal Services

- Housing Law
- Disability Law
- Employment Law (primarily unemployment compensation)
- Benefits Unit (representation of low income people in obtaining TAFDC benefits, or EAEDC disability benefits, or other public benefits programs)
- Elder Law, including a statewide Medicare Advocacy Project
- Family Law assisting victims of domestic violence and child support cases

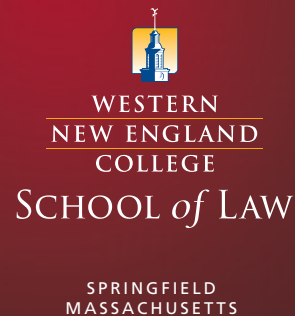


Equal justice needs equal access



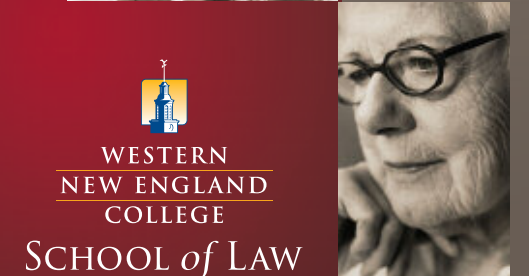
In the 21st century access to justice remains a pervasive problem for low-income members of our society. Law school clinics serve the social justice mission by advocating for the rights of people in marginalized communities. As the only law school in Massachusetts outside greater Boston, Western New England College provides an essential community service through its Legal Services Clinic. Quite simply, without the assistance of our students, many poor and elderly clients in western Massachusetts would not have access to legal representation.

Legal Services Clinic



Legal Services Clinic

Practical experience & community service



SPRINGFIELD MASSACHUSETTS

Real life impact. Real world experience.

At the Legal Services Clinic, you can make a real impact on the lives of the poor, elderly, and disadvantaged. As a student advocate you will:

- assume primary responsibility for actual cases;
- learn real-life lawyering while developing a public interest ethos;
- gain practical knowledge and develop professional skills and values;
- work under the supervision of experienced practitioners and a full-time faculty member;
- establish connections with practicing attorneys in your field; and
- build a résumé of real legal experience.



You will spend 12 hours a week in an office of Western Massachusetts Legal Services (WMLS). At WMLS, you will take on the primary professional responsibility for your cases. This involves

interviewing clients, identifying the legal issues in the case and working to resolve them. You may have the opportunity to handle administrative hearings for SSI, unemployment, and welfare cases, and court hearings for family, elder and housing cases.

Practical lawyering is at the heart of our experiential learning philosophy.

www.law.wnec.edu

Prerequisites

Students participating in the four-credit WMLS clinic must complete a two-credit lawyering skills seminar entitled Legal Services Skills Seminar as a prerequisite to their semester of field placement. The skills seminar focuses on substantive law and issues related to poverty law practice, and developing basic lawyering skills, including professionalism and ethics, client interviewing, counseling, fact investigation, oral advocacy, negotiation and litigation skills.

Clinical Professor Lauren Carasik is the supervising attorney for the Legal Services Clinic.



“My experience with the Legal Services Clinic allowed me to understand what it is like to be an attorney. The joy of winning your first court case, the stress of negotiating a case where your client has

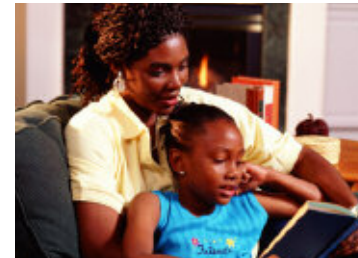
little to no evidence or power, and the empathy when notifying a possible client that they have no legal claim.

“The highlight of my experience was knowing when I had left work at the end of the day, I had made a significant difference in a person’s life.”

Kenneth Root '07

Western Massachusetts Legal Services

Western Massachusetts Legal Services (WMLS) is a private, nonprofit organization that is the principal provider of civil legal services to the poor in western Massachusetts. It is funded primarily by the



Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation (MLAC), which distributes funds budgeted by the Massachusetts legislature and from the Interest on Lawyers Trust Account (IOLTA)

program. MLAC is a public corporation created by the Commonwealth to support legal assistance to the poor.

WMLS serves the all four counties of western Massachusetts, with full-time offices in Springfield (serving Hampden County), Northampton (Hampshire and Franklin Counties), and Pittsfield (Berkshire County), home to more than 100,000 poor. It also has outreach offices in Holyoke, Greenfield, and North Adams.

Questions?

Contact Marie Fletcher, *Clinic Coordinator*

413-782-1469

mfletcher@law.wnec.edu



Jacqueline Farrow, a single mother with two young children, came to Housing Court fearful of losing her home for the second time in just over a year. With the help of the WMLS Housing

Court Intervention Project (HCIP) attorneys, Jackie went from feeling that her family’s home was at risk, to feeling like she could ask for and receive basic rights as a tenant, have a secure home and be compensated for the illegal actions of her landlord.



“The Legal Services Clinic was an experience I will never forget. I worked in the Family Law unit and the amount of time and the breadth of knowledge

that my Supervisor and Professor provided were invaluable. I was given opportunities to create and sustain client relationships on my own. I felt prepared and confident in all my court appearances because I took with me the assurance that I had a solid background and foundation of knowledge. I would recommend everyone take part in the Clinical experience as it prepares law students for the world outside of the classroom.”

Jesmin Basanti '07



Applying for the Legal Services Clinic was the best decision I made in law school, and it was by far the most outstanding educational experience I have had at Western New

England College. The Clinic gave me the opportunity to work with a wide variety of clients facing a broad range of problems. Helping real clients with their real issues taught me more about being a lawyer than any textbook or lecture. Working in the Legal Services office with their experienced lawyers gave me a tremendous insight about the practical aspects of the legal profession. Lastly, because Legal Services works primarily with economically disadvantaged clients, I learned firsthand the vital role that lawyers can play in the lives of our clients. It's not only the students that benefit from working at Legal Services—you can make a real and positive impact on our community even while you learn the skills you will need in your professional career after law school."

Chris Whalley '07