

# Finn Seifert, Human Services '25

General Legal Intern Co-op, Spring '23

## Prisoners' Legal Services of Massachusetts

Boston, MA

With a lawyer ratio of 1500+:1, Prisoners' Legal Services is a small legal services nonprofit in Massachusetts. We serve all prisoners in Massachusetts prisons. Our mission is to challenge the carceral system through advocacy, litigation, and policy initiatives focused on decarceration.

### My Role

- Assigned to specific teams for my work
  - Medical Parole, Solitary Confinement, Women's Project, HEAT Team, Race Equity in Corrections Initiative (REICI) team, class action lawsuits
- Performed individual client advocacy
  - Advocacy letters
  - Prison visits
  - Regular client Zoom meetings
- Assisted with administrative tasks
  - Updating Department of Correction contact information
  - Paper survey organization and scanning

### Advocacy Projects

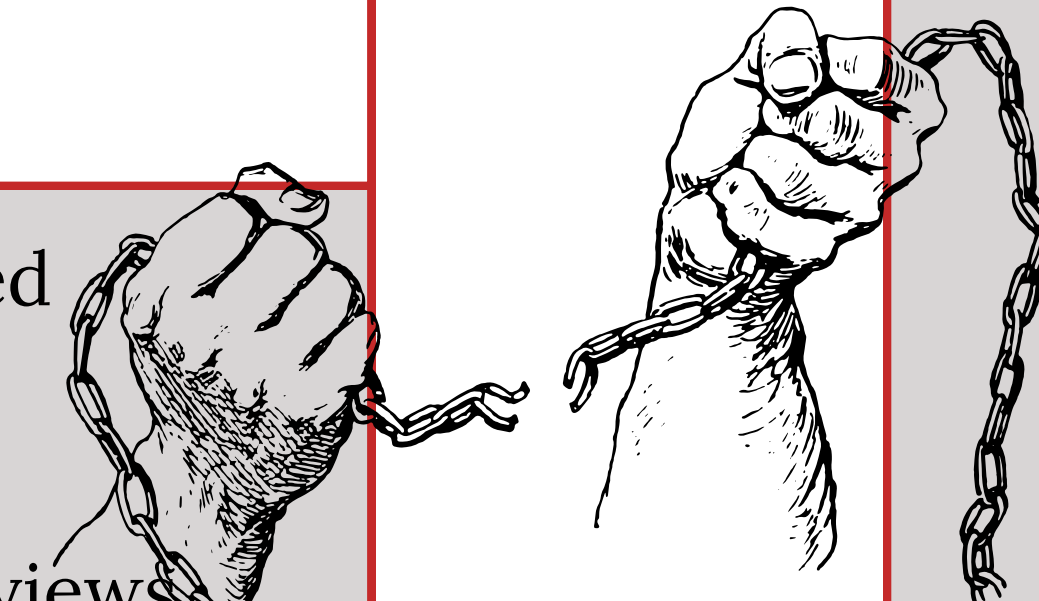
- Medical Parole Team:** Filed individual medical parole petitions for incarcerated people to get out of prison based on medical necessity (see Massachusetts Medical Parole statute, G.L. chapter 127 § 119A (a-i) )
- HEAT Team:** Drafted and submitted advocacy letter to the Department of Public Health and Department of Correction to address the dangerous heat in Massachusetts prisons
- Individual Advocacy:** Advocated on behalf of my individual clients for medical and mental health care, rooming issues, etc.

### Litigation Involvement

- Case challenging Department of Correction non-compliance with protocols for deaf and hard-of-hearing people
  - Tracked medical records, documents, and other materials for plaintiff information
  - Wrote affidavit to be submitted before the court
- Case challenging the fact that in Massachusetts, men civilly committed under Section 35, can be sent to a jail rather than a rehabilitation facility
  - Coordinated and ran Zooms to recruit new plaintiffs for the case
  - Interviewed plaintiffs and their families; then wrote affidavits based on interviews to be submitted before the court.

### Research Tasks

- Solitary Confinement Team:** Reviewed and organized surveys from prisoners on conditions of solitary confinement
- Women's Project Team:** Acted as note taker in interviews with incarcerated women on issues of verbal harassment; Conducted research on abuse taking place in Massachusetts women's correctional centers
- REICI Team:** Surveyed incarcerated people on issues of race equity in prisons
- Independent Project:** Conducted interviews with incarcerated people on educational opportunities in prison; information will be published in an article for our clients



### Applied Coursework

**HUSV 3570 Nonprofit, Philanthropy, and Social Change** - applied knowledge about the way nonprofits function and space they occupy in society

**AFRS 2325 Black Feminist Studies** - practiced methodologies of communication to acknowledge and tackle systemic issues



Thank you to all of my coworkers, and my supervisor for making this the best experience possible.

### Impactful Moments

Prison Visits; spending days visiting multiple clients, seeing solitary and health services units

### My Future

- This co-op solidified my interest in prisoners' rights work
  - I have greatly improved my research and writing skills
  - PLS showed me the work environment I want: one that is supportive, collaborative, and understanding of work-life balance
  - I learned I enjoyed hybrid work which I did not think I would previously
- I could not have asked for a more positive first co-op experience.*