

*A Report from Jaclyn Saffir, New York Women's Bar Association
Foundation Fellow at inMotion*

In the Spring of 2013, I was fortunate enough to serve as the New York Women's Bar Association Foundation's fellow at inMotion. As a third-year law student, I looked forward to the opportunity to learn about new areas of the law and to apply the skills I had learned in the classroom to the important work of assisting clients.

InMotion is a non-profit organization that specializes in assisting low-income women in New York, many of whom are victims of domestic violence, with divorce, custody, support and immigration matters. inMotion assists women in attaining pro bono representation, and even when none is available, will provide its clients with advice and counsel, and assist them in preparing briefs to proceed *pro se*. InMotion takes a coordinated and comprehensive approach to its clients' problems, addressing the whole picture of a woman's legal problems, assisting a client in attaining social work services, and strategizing the best possible outcome for the client.

My work at inMotion gave me a wide range of opportunities. Each week, I assisted inMotion's intake hotline, speaking with women facing a wide range of complicated legal and emotional issues. Intake volunteers would discuss the client's legal goal and develop a complete picture of the facts of the case for an inMotion staff attorney to examine. Many women were incredibly relieved to finally have someone who would listen to their story and try to work with them to resolve their problems.

My work also included assisting a number of *pro se* clients. When an attorney cannot be found for a client, inMotion prepares clients to represent themselves by preparing legal documents and helping them understand what to expect during the legal process. This work was extremely rewarding because the legal process can be incredibly intimidating to someone with no experience in that area. To be able to ensure a woman understands the procedural issues and is prepared to begin the process of attaining a favorable judgment was one of the highlights of my law school experience.

I also worked on immigration-related matters. This included assisting women who are victims of domestic violence by their spouses who were citizens or lawful permanent residents self-petition in obtaining lawful immigration status under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). VAWA requires a woman to demonstrate that her marriage was in good faith and not for immigration purposes, that she was battered or suffered extreme cruelty at the hands of a husband who is a citizen or lawful permanent resident, and that she possesses good moral character. To prepare a client's VAWA self-petition, I spoke with her and her close friends to prepare affidavits describing her courtship, marital relationship and the abuse. I also helped her go through family photos and documents to help prove that her marriage was in good faith. To assist inMotion clients in this long and emotional process, and directly see their strength and resilience, was incredibly meaningful.

While my experiences at inMotion were diverse, the unifying theme was the opportunity to work with a caring and committed team of individuals serving an incredibly deserving clientele. I am so grateful to the NYWBAF for giving me the wonderful opportunity to assist inMotion's invaluable work.