



# NO SHOW BALL NEWSLETTER

**BALANCING THE SCALES:  
SYSTEMIC RACISM AND RACIAL BIAS IN THE LEGAL SYSTEM  
IMPACTS ON OUR CLIENTS IN FAMILY LAW MATTERS**

For most of us, the holiday season marks a time of celebration with family members and friends. Trafficking survivors and sex workers often struggle to restore these important family connections. In this third week of Amara Legal Center's 2020 No Show Ball, we ask you to consider how systemic racism and racial bias contributes to unfair and sometimes ill-informed court determinations in Family Law matters.

Won't you make a donation to Amara Legal Center to support our free, trauma-informed Family Law services?

## **FAMILY LAW**

Sex trafficking survivors and sex workers often need legal representation to address Family Law matters, including separation, divorce, child custody and support, guardianship, or adoption. The trafficking experience can seriously damage even the strongest family units. Similarly, negative attitudes toward sex work in general can lead to public service agencies and courts to target and discriminate against sex workers.

Amara provides survivors and sex workers with free holistic, trauma-informed and culturally humble legal services to reunify families that have been disproportionately impacted by systemic inequities. Consider: a national study of child protective services reported that similarly-situated minority children, particularly Black children, are more likely to be placed in foster care than they are to receive in-home services. It is no surprise that most of our clients are fighting to regain custody from third-party family members or foster care. Sadly, Black children are overrepresented in the foster care system. According to research by Rights4Girls, although they make up fourteen percent of children in the U.S., Black children make up twenty three percent of the foster care system.

Amara represents clients in their efforts to regain custody of their children, providing the tools and support required to navigate difficult, confusing and life-altering civil actions. Throughout the process, Amara connects its clients to partner legal services organizations, mental health professionals and social services agencies to ensure that they can be in the best position to lead their lives free of the stigma, harm, and destruction that they have endured.



## Client Story

This year, we helped April\*, a child sex trafficking survivor, regain custody of her one-year-old daughter. Many of our clients leave their children to be cared for by third parties, trusted family members or friends who can care for their children because our clients do not want to bring their children into “the life.” Too often, our clients are also struggling with substance abuse disorders after being forced by their traffickers to take drugs to keep them submissive or because they have used drugs to survive their trafficking experience.

For April, leaving her daughter in an aunt's care was necessary until she got herself clean and found suitable housing for her and her daughter. Unfortunately, when April returned a few months later to bring her daughter home, her aunt refused to give her daughter back. April contacted the police to no avail; after all, April had a criminal record. Thankfully, April was working with a partner service provider who was providing her emotional and case management support, and her case manager contacted us.

We met with April, assessed her case, and explained that her aunt did not have legal custody of her daughter, and we did not need to file a case. Instead, we contacted the police, who went to the aunt's residence, retrieved the child, and that same night reunited April with her daughter. Our staff attended the reunification meeting, provided the client with a ride home, took April to purchase groceries, and coordinated donations of clothing, a stroller, and other items for the child. We are happy to report April and her daughter are still together and moving forward with their lives.



## Ways to Give

Family Law work represents more than half of Amara's case load. Your monthly, yearly, and one-time donations help Amara address the family issues facing our clients.

A gift of:

- \$50 covers the costs associated with filing a custody case.
- \$100 covers the costs of new family law client intake.
- \$250 covers the costs for developing a safety plan for a trafficking survivor.

- \$500 covers the costs of securing a civil protective order.
- \$1000 covers the costs of a custody or child support case for one client.

Every amount helps!



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**Federal Workers Can  
#ShowSomeLove to Amara, #43434 in  
the 2020 CFC**

If you're a federal worker or retiree you can set up a one-time donation or continued support directly from payroll at [www.givecfc.org](http://www.givecfc.org) until January 15th, 2021. Use our CFC #43434 to find us!

**Donate Online**

You can make a donation to the 2020 No Show Ball until December 31st [here](#).

**Benefit Amara while you Shop  
on Amazon**

Shop on [smile.amazon.com/ch/46-3819394](https://smile.amazon.com/ch/46-3819394) and Amazon will donate a portion of your shopping to Amara.

**We Gratefully Accept Checks**

Please make checks out to "Amara Legal Center, Inc." and mail to 1629 K Street, NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20006

Visit [www.amaralegal.org/donate](http://www.amaralegal.org/donate).



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