



MEET OUR SUMMER INTERNS

2024

Autumn Henderson (she/her)



This past summer 2024, Autumn came to intern with BLC after completing her sophomore year at the American University in Washington, D.C. where she is majoring in Legal Studies, and minoring in Communications and Philosophy. She has her sights set on a career in environmental / land use law, international law, or fields of law relating to the rights of those with mental illnesses and other under-represented groups.

Autumn was drawn to an internship with BLC’s legal team because our mission aligns so closely with the values that she hopes to bring to her future career in law. Autumn said, *“There are too many people across the country who are entitled to government benefits, but have not consistently received them due to underlying social and financial barriers. BLC’s work is vital to the fight against this inequity. Working with the BLC was especially important to me as they assist the communities of my home city. I hope to return to Seattle post-graduation to continue facilitating social impact in related fields of law.”*

Grace Matthews (she/her)



Grace interned with BLC because she has plans to attend law school and pursue work as a public interest attorney once she completes her senior year at Stanford University, where she is currently majoring in political science and minoring in Spanish.

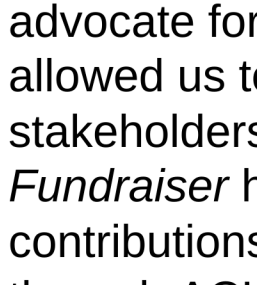
Grace joined BLC for the summer because she was drawn to our unique and vital work in advocating for individuals with physical and mental disabilities. For many, the disability benefits provided by SSA are essential to maintaining financial and medical stability. However, the system itself can be incredibly difficult to access and understand. This gap in support, where people are often left without necessary resources, underscores the importance of BLC’s work.

Grace explained, *“During my time at BLC, I was continuously impressed by the depth of knowledge, dedication, and compassion demonstrated by the team. Their commitment to not only understanding the intricacies of the legal and benefits systems but also to supporting their clients with genuine care left a lasting impact on me!”*

After graduating in June 2025, Grace plans to spend a few years working in direct service or policy roles within the social justice sector, focusing on areas such as criminal justice, economic justice, health equity, and education – before attending law school.

SPONSORSHIP SPOTLIGHT

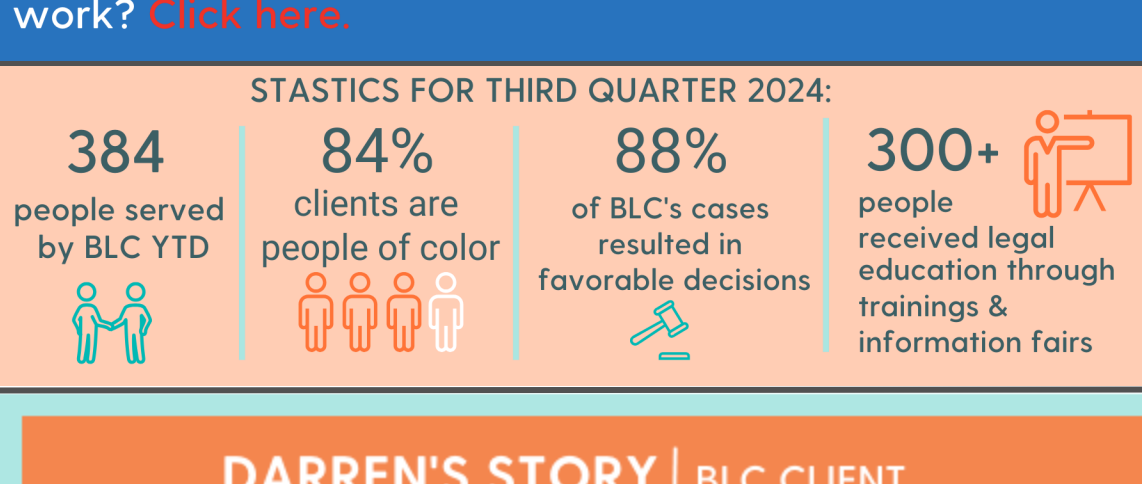
ACLU Washington



In 2024, BLC is proud to be a recipient of sponsorship support from the **American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Washington**. The ACLU is committed to protecting people’s rights with a focus on groups that have been historically marginalized. Much like the ACLU, BLC’s team of paralegals and attorneys also fight to protect people’s rights — their rights to their Social Security benefits — and we help marginalized communities advocate for themselves. The ACLU’s investment allowed us to host more than 100 donors and stakeholders at our *LOL: Comedy for A Cause Fundraiser* held in Seattle, cultivating nearly \$55,000 in contributions. By undergirding our annual fundraiser through ACLU’s sponsorship dollars, we are able to direct every penny raised towards delivering our community-based legal advocacy to nearly 1,000 clients each year. Our underserved clients live with disabilities, face poverty and oppression, and struggle to obtain affordable legal services that can award them health, housing, and economic stability.

Want to learn more about the ACLU of Washington’s work? [Click here.](#)

STATISTICS FOR THIRD QUARTER 2024:



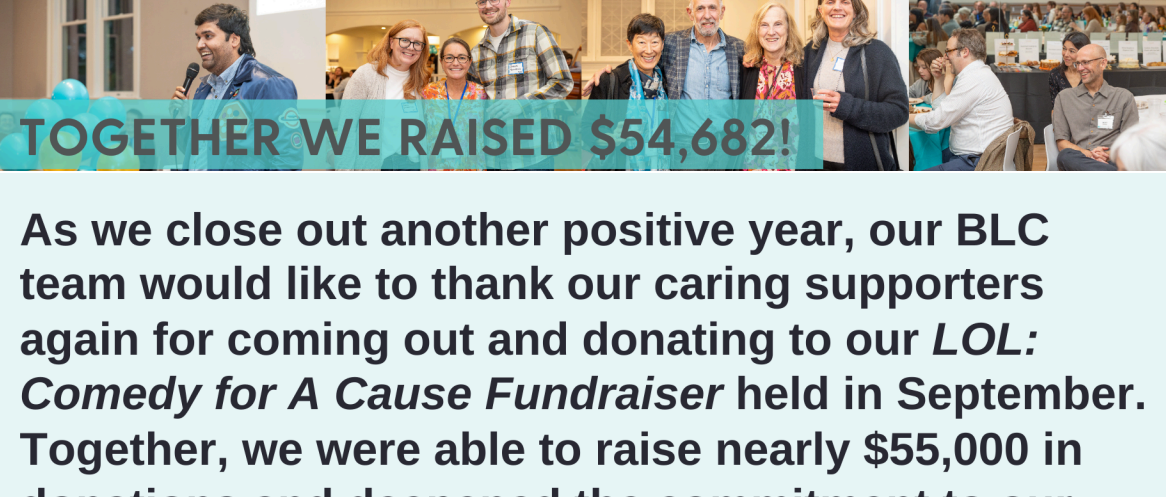
DARREN'S STORY | BLC CLIENT

Darren suffers from complex and difficult to treat medical conditions that cause disabling symptoms. He came to BLC in December 2022 when he learned his 2020 Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Application was denied in 2020. He was late filing the appeal because he was unhoused and did not receive the notice in the mail due to his housing situation. BLC helped him file a Request for Reconsideration with good cause for late filing. His case was later stuck between field offices when neither would accept jurisdiction on his claim. His BLC attorney escalated his case to the Regional Communication Director’s Office so that the proper field office would take jurisdiction and review his appeal. Unfortunately, his claim was denied again. BLC assisted him with his appeal by reviewing thousands of pages of medical records, submitting a written argument, obtaining supporting materials from his treating providers that clarified a complex medical situation, and arguing in front of an Administrative Law Judge. Darren received a Fully Favorable Decision, his monthly payments began soon after, and SSA awarded him over \$35,000 in “back pay” – the total amount of monthly payments he should have been paid from the date he applied. Darren’s case highlights how long and labor intensive each eligibility claim is when one of our attorneys provides full representation of a claimant’s case. Even after two years of intensive work and a successful outcome at hearing, we are still working to complete Darren’s case because SSA is so delayed at every stage of the process.



YOUR GENEROSITY

LOL Comedy Fundraiser 2024



TOGETHER WE RAISED \$54,682!

As we close out another positive year, our BLC team would like to thank our caring supporters for coming out and donating to our *LOL: Comedy for A Cause Fundraiser* held in September. Together, we were able to raise nearly \$55,000 in donations and deepened the commitment to our equitable legal services through informative speeches from our Executive Director, Huy Nguyen, and Equity Award recipient, Patti Bowen on behalf of Solid Ground. We learned about the **challenges of our multilingual clients, the lifeline that is our legal support, and the importance of our community partnerships** with insight from our Equal Justice Works Fellow and Attorney, Charla Boley, and the staff from partner agency, Open Doors for Multicultural Families. We also reveled in the comedy of local podcaster and comedian, Dewa Dorje, and Pacific NW native, Yogi Paliwal. Your generosity fueled the work of our devoted legal team to close out 2024 on a strong note – providing individualized legal services to many clients, and closing 38 cases. These cases resulted in **\$83,335 in back pay awarded** to clients, **\$26,893 in overpayments waived**, and **\$6,571 in new benefits received**.

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR 2024 SPONSORS & FUNDERS:

PRESENTING



PLATINUM



GOLD



SILVER

In partnership with: Shari Marion & Michael Gisser

BRONZE

