

Hello, I'm Maya Tsukazaki.

I am honored to serve as the Vermont Poverty Law Fellow, working on the project of breaking down barriers to justice for noncitizens in the state of Vermont.

This is more important now than ever as Vermont welcomes populations fleeing violence and humanitarian crises abroad, as well as with a growing noncitizen workforce providing essential services to some of Vermont's biggest industries.

During my fellowship, I plan to provide direct legal services to noncitizen Vermont residents before federal immigration agencies, including for local youth and their families, survivors of domestic violence, migrant farmworkers, and individuals who have fled persecution abroad.

I also am working on broader advocacy projects around the state, including building partnerships with local community organizations, producing Know Your Rights and educational materials for Vermont's noncitizen populations, and hosting trainings and CLEs for other attorneys in the state.

If you are interested in supporting this work, please consider donating to the Vermont Bar Foundation to support future generations of Vermont Poverty Law Fellows in expanding access to justice for Vermonters.

Donate online at <https://vtbarfoundation.org/donate>.

If you are interested in getting involved in the work I am doing during my fellowship, please feel free to contact me at mtsukazaki@vermontlaw.edu.

Read Maya's detailed bio at:

<https://vtbarfoundation.org/programs/poverty-law-fellowship/maya-tsukazaki/>

Maya's Projects:

- Expand connections between immigration legal services and networks of advocates and other service providers in the state.
- Kicking off a project on Special Immigrant Juvenile Status, a status for vulnerable noncitizen youth, including presenting a preview at the VBA Pro Bono Conference in October in anticipation of a full CLE at Thaw in January 2023.
- Starting a database of contacts at state law enforcement agencies who can provide certifications for visas for victims of certain crimes.

- With the legalization of recreational use of marijuana in Vermont, raising awareness of federal immigration consequences associated with marijuana use and work in industry.
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Vignette:

Anita (name changed for anonymity) and her family were heavily involved in the protesting against corruption and human rights abuses in the government in her country of origin. However, due to her and her family's advocacy, she experienced extreme torture and violence at the hands of the police there. Anita and her young child fled to the United States to seek safety. Anita had been unable to find an attorney in Vermont able to assist her, and she came to our clinic with only a few weeks left before her deadline to file for asylum, but Maya submitted Anita and her daughter's application in time. A timely asylum filing ensures that Anita and her daughter will be able to remain safe in the U.S. (and obtain work authorization) while the application is pending, as well as protect her and her daughter's ability to have their claim for asylum fully and fairly adjudicated.