

ELIZER DARRIS



The Legal Revolution

2022 Global Fellow

BIG BOLD IDEA

Revolutionize the American legal field by creating a first-ever, replicable model that opens access to legal degrees and careers for currently and formerly incarcerated people across the U.S.

ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

The Legal Revolution (TLR) helps people who are incarcerated, and thereby most impacted by the law, earn degrees in the legal field. TLR currently has paralegal students and juris doctorate (JD) students attending Mitchell Hamline Law School to get paralegal and law degrees. TLR is also creating a law firm in which these students, once released, will become practitioners in the legal field to engage in impact litigation. TLR students are the first J.D. students in U.S. history to attend law school while incarcerated.

PERSONAL BIO

Elizer Darris is a former juvenile lifer who successfully fought to get his life sentence overturned and became impassioned to create systemic change. Elizer is the co-executive director of the Minnesota Freedom Fund, which pays criminal bail and immigration bonds for those who cannot otherwise afford to, seeking an end to discriminatory, coercive, and oppressive jailing.

Previously, he worked as a coordinator for the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Minnesota's Smart Justice Campaign, which aims to reduce mass incarceration, reform the criminal legal system, and create racial equity. He serves as co-founder and board chair for The Legal Revolution, a national effort to democratize the field of law by giving currently and formerly incarcerated individuals access to formal legal education.

Elizer was appointed in 2021 by Governor Tim Walz to Minnesota's State Board of Public Defense, which oversees operations and management of all the public defenders in the state, becoming the first formerly incarcerated person appointed to that position. Elizer was also awarded "40 under 40" recognition for 2022 by the Minneapolis/St Paul Business Journal.

Issue area

Racial Equity

Organization/Fellow Location

Minneapolis, United States

Impact Location

North America

Organization Structure

Nonprofit

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