



# Next Gen



This week's Q&A with

## Jennifer Capasso Mendonça

Boston Public Finance Partner [Jennifer Capasso Mendonça](#) helps colleges, universities, independent schools, hospitals, health care organizations and other 501(c)(3) charitable organizations obtain lower-cost financing to assist with their capital finance needs. For example, if a college needs to borrow money to build a new dormitory or library for its students, Jenn helps them finance the transaction.



### More About Jenn

#### What has helped you to become successful in your field?

My amazing mentors and colleagues in my practice group. We are all very proud of the long and storied history of Locke Lord's Public Finance practice. I have worked with and learned from some of the best public finance lawyers in the nation. While leaders in their field, these colleagues and Partners were always willing to stop, listen to my questions and teach me. They made me the lawyer I am today and their continued mentorship has allowed me to be successful in my field. I hope to have the same impact.

#### How did you know that you wanted to practice law? // What inspired you to become a lawyer?

I worked for several years as a business consultant at Arthur Andersen after graduating from college, doing business process redesign work on the West Coast. While I found the work interesting (and certainly loved living in San Francisco and Seattle), it seemed there was no tangible result from my work. I wanted to be in a profession where I was truly making a difference and could point to actual results. I also wanted to be doing work for organizations with missions I feel passionate about. So, I went to law school. Stumbling upon public finance was a bit fortuitous — I had lunch with the department as a Summer Associate at Locke Lord predecessor firm Palmer & Dodge and had an "aha!" moment. I have never looked back.

#### What drives or motivates you on your hardest days/during your most difficult matters?

Knowing my work is extremely important in helping my clients achieve their missions is always fulfilling and powerful motivation. Access to cheaper capital is critically important to nonprofits, from large universities all the way (and especially) down to very small human services providers. Sometimes the work can be challenging either because of the volume of transactions or a particularly tricky tax issue. But in the end, I know a successful transaction will lead to new facilities that support organizations playing an important role in our society.

**What do you do to relax and reset after a long week?**

Before I had my daughter, I was very active in martial arts. I have a second-degree black belt in Muay Thai kickboxing and Krav Maga self-defense. This was always my key way to unwind. Unfortunately, having little ones, there's not a whole lot of "me" time anymore. These days, relaxing and resetting after a long week usually involves playing with my daughter, a few challenging CrossFit classes on the weekend or a long run, and during the fall, watching the New England Patriots games! GO PATS!!

**What is your favorite thing about, or to do in, Boston?**

The Patriots (see above)! My family has had season tickets for over 40 years. I grew up going to my grandparents' house every Sunday while my parents went to football games. We were fans when the Pats were bad...and I mean REALLY bad (think '80s and early '90s...1-15 seasons). Of course, it's fun going to games now with the dynasty we have, but the fact that it's a family affair makes it even better for me. I go with my parents, grandfather, sister and a couple — and their kids and spouses — who graduated from high school with my parents. It's a great tradition and one of the reasons I moved back from California.

**What would be your fantasy career if you weren't a lawyer?**

I would own a gym and be a full-time gymnastics coach and choreographer.



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