

## Jefferson

Meet Jefferson, a Haitian immigrant who decided on July 4, 2015 to come to Boston because his life was at risk.

**But his journey has not been easy.** In Haiti he employed his two master's degrees for the country's Interior Ministry: *"I [advised the prime minister's office] on immigrant rights, immigration. If someone wanted to open an orphanage in Haiti, they had to see me in person, and I would talk with them and give advice, that was my job."* However, Jefferson's safety was at risk in Port-au-Prince: *"In Haiti, to be honest, so many bad things happened to me. At the time, I thought maybe if I stayed in this country, I would be dead one day. I remember I was attacked twice, and I said, well, I don't think I should stay."* When he arrived in Boston the only job he could find was working nights as a security guard.

***"My English was not okay. I remember even if there was a shift in the morning, the manager told me that because of my English I had to work overnight because people would not be able to understand me."***

Jefferson knew he needed to learn English if he wanted a better life. *"That was the reason I went to EDG [Educational Development Group for English classes]. I went over there, and after six months I would say that I was able to have a conversation with real everyday English speakers."*

***"I go to Bunker Hill for liberal arts, but I'm trying to see if I can enroll in the nursing program. I don't know because they said it's very challenging. I said to my advisor that I'm not even afraid. If it's challenging, it's better."***

As of 2018, Jefferson was working as a human rights officer in the state's Department of Developmental Services where he advocates for people with developmental disabilities and their families. He also attends classes at Bunker Hill Community College.

*P.S. We'll leave you with this thought from Jefferson, "The first thing I would tell other immigrants is that you cannot just live in this country if you don't know English. That's the only thing that will take you to a higher place."*