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www.ILAPmaine.org

Our Mission:

The **Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project** helps low-income immigrants improve their legal status and works for more just and humane laws and policies affecting immigrants.

Photo: Shutterstock/by Gts



“The bird was in a cage, now the bird can fly wherever it wants.”

American Dream Delayed

Xiuhong Wu left Fujian, China, in 2002 to seek the American Dream. Instead she spent 15 years on the wrong side of the U.S. immigration system, the result of an early legal advisor’s negligence.

“**There was no freedom in China,**” says Wu. She worked as a teacher, and says displeasing the government—for example, by attending church—risked arrest. “But here without a green card you are not free! I couldn’t drive. I couldn’t go to China to see my mom. I didn’t even send my daughters to school because I did not want to see a policeman. I was like a bird in a cage.”

Wu, 39, has an energetic, gracious manner that suits her role managing the dining area of Lewiston’s Mandarin Buffet, which she runs with her husband, Tony Zhang. Her U.S. odyssey began when she arrived alone in Houston at age 24, with little English and less understanding of the immigration system she would have to navigate.

Wu immediately hired someone she thought was a lawyer to help her with immigration matters. He wasn’t, and he didn’t. Wu’s slide into legal purgatory began when he failed to tell her about a hearing she was required to attend. “I knew nothing,” she recalls. “He cheated me.”

Unaware of the hearing or the trouble she was in, Wu made her way to New York. She reconnected with Zhang, a friend from home who had been in the States since 1997, and they married soon afterward. When the couple engaged Zhang’s attorney to try to gain Wu permanent legal

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Maine’s immigrant community has faced unprecedented ICE enforcement, anti-immigrant policies and fear-invoking rhetoric during the first months of the new presidential administration.



SUE ROCHE
Executive Director

Many of Maine’s immigrants fled violence and persecution in their home countries and thought they had found safety and freedom in the United States. Now many fear leaving their homes, bringing their children to school or using the court system out of fear they will be deported.

At ILAP, we see firsthand the burdens these new policies impose on Maine’s immigrant community. Some clients have been arrested and detained by ICE; some fear that because they are Muslim they won’t be reunited with family abroad; others face potential deportation to Haiti because the administration has threatened to revoke the Temporary Protected Status they were granted after the devastating 2010 earthquake.

We also see the toll these policies take on the broader immigrant community. The barrage of executive orders and enforcement actions has created a climate of fear and confusion. Many clients—including longtime permanent residents and naturalized U.S. citizens—tell us they are afraid they might be deported because of their religion or country of origin.

ILAP staff and volunteers are working tirelessly to overcome these challenges by defending individual clients and advocating for the rights of our immigrant community. We have convened a group of

private immigration attorneys who are providing *pro bono* assistance. Staff have created advisories on the new policies, available in multiple languages, and have collaborated with the ACLU of Maine to conduct outreach and know-your-rights presentations around the state. We send regular email updates to inform supporters about new policies and their impact on Maine’s immigrant community. (Let us know if you are not on the email list and would like to be added.)

This administration is likely to persist in trying to implement anti-immigrant policies and practices. ILAP will continue to advocate for Maine’s immigrant community, both by working on individual cases and by advocating for a fairer immigration system. Thank you for joining us in these efforts as volunteers, donors and fellow advocates. Together, we will ensure that Maine is a safe and welcoming place for immigrants, who bring a wealth of culture, skills and ideas to our community and economy.

2016 | ILAP by the Numbers

- ILAP provided direct **legal services to 2,429 individuals**
- ILAP **clients originated from 15 counties** in Maine
- ILAP staff and *pro bono* attorneys provided **full legal representation services that benefited 300 individuals**
- **1,533 individuals were served** through ILAP’s Immigration Clinic
- ILAP served **clients from 94 different countries**
- 1,310 immigrant community members and service providers attended **41 ILAP outreach events**
- **140 pro bono attorneys donated 2,506 hours of their time**, valued at \$595,636, representing asylum seekers

SUE ROCHE
Executive Director

Xiuhong Wu
Continued from Cover

status, they discovered that she had been ordered deported. This was shocking news for Wu, and she began to live her life in fear of being deported.

The couple eventually moved to Maine in 2007, after Zhang found the space they would turn into the Mandarin Buffet.

In the meantime Wu gave birth to two daughters, now 9 and 12. One girl was born with a neurological condition that makes her unable to feel pain in her legs, resulting in frequent injuries and regular trips to the hospital—including a fateful stay at Maine Medical Center in 2013. “People told me ILAP helps people,” says Wu. “It’s near the hospital, so I walked there.”

Legal director Philip Mantis reviewed her case and brought in staff paralegal Sean Douglas to help. They worked in collaboration with an immigration attorney in Boston, who was able to get Wu’s removal order thrown out. Once the removal order was vacated, ILAP helped her apply for lawful permanent resident, “green card,” status.

The green card came through one year later, providing incalculable relief to Wu and her family. These days she is appreciating her long-sought freedom, including preparing for a trip to Fujian in July—the first time she’ll see her parents in 15 years.

Asked how she feels, she fixes her interviewer with a kind, clear gaze. “You don’t understand,” she says. “You’re an American—you don’t know this feeling. The bird was in a cage. Now”—Wu presses her hands together, then smiles widely and quickly spreads them apart—“the bird can fly wherever it wants.” ■



Reduce Reuse Recycle

Please pass along your copy of *The Immigrant Beacon* after you’ve enjoyed it, and remember to recycle.



Photograph by Molly Haley

**ILAP Portrait Project:
The Changing Face of Maine**

Photographer Molly Haley (mollyhaley.com) has been working with ILAP for the past year to illuminate immigrants in Maine through a portrait project that debuted at *CeleSoirée* 2017.

The Changing Face of Maine has been shown at *Coffee by Design* and will be at the law offices of **Bernstein Shur** until the end of June. With interest from around the state, we hope to bring it to many more places, and Molly will be adding portraits this year too. Check in on Facebook to see where it will exhibit next, and plan to see it!

Immigration Updates at Your Fingertips:

For a roundup of immigration news with links to more reading, you can get our email series sent to your inbox. **Sign up through our Facebook page;** just click on “Join My List” to the left.

For advisories on governmental policies affecting immigrants, you can visit our website anytime: **www.ILAPmaine.org** and click on Immigration Updates.

How You Can Help ILAP

It’s never been more important to support justice for immigrants in Maine.

To donate, use one of these options:

- Make a check out to ILAP and mail it to us in Portland
- Donate through our secure link online: www.ILAPmaine.org
- Make your online donation to ILAP recurring, by the month, quarter or year
- Transfer a gift of stock to ILAP; contact Olivia Orr at oorr@ilapmaine.org
- Call Loretta Prescott about an estate gift, at 207-699-4407

New Executive Orders Under the Trump Administration

During his first week in office, President Trump issued three executive orders related to immigration.

The first two addressed immigration enforcement. One dealt with building a wall at the Mexican border and increasing the number of immigration enforcement officers. The other would expand Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) enforcement and detention, limit access to immigration courts and withhold federal funds from localities that become sanctuary cities or states. A District Court in San Francisco issued a nationwide temporary injunction against the portion of the executive order that sought to penalize sanctuary cities. That case is pending.

The second order's most significant component eliminated enforcement priorities put into place under the Obama Administration. Previously, ICE prioritized deporting individuals who had criminal convictions or had entered the country recently. Under the new order, anyone who does not have legal status in the country is a priority for deportation—even people with no criminal history or with family members who are U.S. citizens.

The third executive order of President Trump's first week in office was the infamous "Muslim Ban." That order banned refugees from entering the United States for at least 120 days, and barred individuals from Somalia, Sudan, Iran, Iraq, Yemen, Syria and Libya for at least 90 days. The order also halved the number of refugees to be admitted to the United States, reducing it to 50,000. The Administration purportedly took those actions to ensure "extreme vetting" in the immigration process, despite the process's already rigorous security procedures. That order was quickly suspended by a nationwide temporary restraining order, which was upheld by the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals.

Soon afterward, the Trump Administration issued a second Muslim Ban executive order, narrowing the ban to six countries and removing some of the contentious portions of the initial order. That order also was suspended, in this case by Federal District Courts in Hawaii and Maryland. The executive orders will not go into effect while cases concerning them are being litigated. Their fate is likely to be decided by the United States Supreme Court. The executive orders related to enforcement remain in effect, except for the portion related to sanctuary cities.



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Impact of the Executive Orders in Maine

The immigration executive orders hurt individuals and communities in Maine in both direct and indirect ways. The Muslim Ban affected some individuals who were traveling to Maine during the short period that it was in effect. Its larger impact was to stoke a sense of fear throughout the Muslim community and among immigrants of all faiths. Mainers with permanent legal status canceled travel plans out of fear that they might not be able to return. People with family members going through the immigration process worry that their spouses or children will be denied entry before they get through the bureaucratic backlog to obtain their visas.

The enforcement-related executive order has been implemented across the country, including here in Maine. ICE has already arrested individuals who previously had been considered low priorities, in locations previously considered safe for them. For example, ICE has sought to arrest individuals in Maine at their homes and in a courthouse. In other areas of the country, domestic violence victims, children with DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) status, and demonstrators have been arrested by

ICE. The activity in Maine, compounded by reports from around the country, has intensified fear and confusion in the immigrant community. ILAP has been conducting know-your-rights presentations for immigrant community groups and individuals detained at the Cumberland County Jail by ICE, to ensure that they have accurate information about our immigration laws and policies and that they understand their legal rights.

Anti-Sanctuary Bill Would Penalize Maine Towns and Cities That Refuse to Enforce Federal Immigration Laws

Anti-sanctuary bill LD 366, presented by Rep. Larry Lockman of Amherst, aims to prevent Maine municipalities from refusing to help immigration authorities enforce federal immigration laws. Similar bills have been proposed across the country, and one was recently passed in Texas. ILAP and dozens of other advocates and members of the immigrant community testified against LD 366, arguing that it would encourage racial profiling and threaten public safety. Local law enforcement officials need the trust of the community so that people will report crimes and help in investigations. This bill would erode that trust and further fuel the community's climate of fear and anxiety. At the time this newsletter went to press, an amended version of the bill had passed the Judiciary Committee and was headed to the House and Senate for votes.

The Governor's Budget Would Eliminate the General Assistance Program and Cut Benefits for Vulnerable Immigrants

The Governor's proposed budget includes cuts to TANF, SSI and SNAP benefits for vulnerable immigrants in Maine, including asylum seekers, as well as lawful permanent residents who have been here for less than five years. The budget also would eliminate the entire general assistance program for all Maine residents. Asylum seekers and other vulnerable immigrants, such as victims of domestic violence, rely upon general assistance benefits while asylum seekers wait for their immigration cases to be processed and for the required six months to pass before they are allowed to work. ILAP joined other advocates and community members to testify against the proposed cuts and submitted written responses to questions from committee members. The Health and Human Services Committee voted 6-4 against the cuts. The proposals are now before the Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs, which will make recommendations before the budget is passed later this spring. ■

■ **STAFF CHANGE**

ILAP is pleased to have Staff Attorney Jennifer Bailey, Esq. back in the fold. After a stint away from ILAP, she has taken over the management of ILAP's *pro bono* panel. Also, we are pleased to have Nadine Twagirayezu serving as our asylum paralegal. Since Jennifer and Nadine have started in their new positions, the *pro bono* panel has expanded and continues to attract new recruits.

■ **TRAININGS**

A training covering the representation of asylum seekers before the Boston Immigration Court was held on October 14, 2016, at Verrill Dana in Portland. Immigration Judge Paul Gagnon and the Court's Administrator, Robert Halpin, were gracious enough to present on best practices before the Court. We'd like to thank Judge Gagnon and Mr. Halpin, as they have both routinely offered their thoughtful insight at our *pro bono* panel trainings.

■ **A training covering the representation of asylum seekers before the U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services** was held on March 2, 2017. Thank you to Jennifer Archer, Esq. for her presentation on substantive asylum law. Also, thank you to Jamie Wagner, Esq., who provided attendees with valuable insight on representing asylum seekers. Thank you to AVESTA for allowing ILAP to use their conference room for this training.

■ **ILAP will be holding another such training on October 14th at 9:00 AM at Verrill Dana.** The Honorable Paul Gagnon and Court Administrator Robert Halpin of the Boston Immigration Court will once again join us for this training, which will cover the representation of asylum seekers before the Immigration Court.

■ **ILAP PRO BONO PANEL ASYLUM GRANTS**
Hearty congratulations to three panel members who recently won asylum cases for their ecstatic clients. Three of the victories were defensive cases won in Immigration Court!

■ **Toby Dilworth** received an affirmative grant for a Rwandan man AND won a very challenging defensive case for another man from Somalia.



A smoking hot Latin jazz band, three local international food purveyors and a record crowd for our event at Ocean Gateway made for a festive evening at CeleSoirée 2017.

It might also be why guests refer to it as “Portland’s Best Fundraiser”!

ILAP had a record night of fundraising as well, thanks to our guests and to Coffee by Design for donating two trips to La Minita Estate in Costa Rica, a coffee farm growing some of the world’s best coffee, that raised an additional \$11,000 for ILAP’s services.

Thanks to our sponsors, raffle donors, volunteers, including the fabulous Casco Bay High School students, and the swinging Feijoada, many of whom traveled from Boston in a snowstorm to play salsa music for our celebration. And thanks to our guests for coming out to support immigration legal aid



services in Maine, especially at this moment in time. One generous donor set out a challenge to match \$10,000 that evening in new or increased donations, and the crowd got it done.

ILAP and photographer Molly Haley (mollyhaley.com) debuted our portrait project called "The Changing Face of Maine" at the event. It features portraits of immigrants, and the subjects were kind enough to join us and greet guests as they came into Ocean Gateway. The project will be on exhibit at several locations around the city and beyond through the end of the year. Visit our Facebook page for locations and dates.

We are already planning next year’s CeleSoirée and hope you can join us March 23, 2018, for another celebration of immigration!

■ **ILAP is a community partner with Project Citizenship**, a regional collaboration of organizations that provide assistance with citizenship applications. Project Citizenship provides funding, trainings and an opportunity for information sharing with the other providers. This year, we have seen an increase in the number of people seeking assistance with citizenship, and we have already helped 40 people apply to become U.S. citizens.

■ **ILAP Staff Attorney Kate Chesney partnered with Helen Hall at Pine Tree Legal Assistance to provide tax & immigration outreach events in Portland and Lewiston.** Kate and Helen provided important information on filing taxes and pitfalls that can cause immigration problems.

■ During the past several months, ILAP and the ACLU of Maine have conducted several **“Know Your Rights”** presentations throughout the state. The new executive orders and increased ICE enforcement have created much confusion and fear in the community. These outreach events provide immigrant communities with accurate information about new immigration policies and an understanding of their legal rights.

■ The increase in ICE activity has led to more ICE detention and a greater demand for ILAP’s services. **ILAP staff attorneys and volunteers visit the Cumberland County Jail to meet with individuals who are detained**

by ICE. The attorneys advise individuals of their legal options and explain their rights and the immigration court process. If ILAP is unable to represent the individual, we provide him or her with referrals.

■ ILAP’s Lewiston Asylum Project has been very successful. Since August, **Staff Attorney Meg Moran has traveled to Lewiston once a week to provide consultations to asylum seekers.** She has assisted dozens of clients, conducted workshops for *pro se* asylum seekers and provided outreach to service providers. As the demand for immigration legal assistance in Lewiston grows, we hope to expand our services. We are grateful to Bates College for their partnership in providing work study students to interpret, and to Lewiston Adult Education for providing us with donated space.

■ **Nadine Twagirayezu** transitioned from a part-time front desk position to a full-time asylum paralegal position at ILAP this year. Nadine was a lawyer in Burundi, and she speaks French, Kinyarwanda, Kirundi and Swahili. She has helped us expand our services to asylum seekers.

■ **Philip Mantis became ILAP’s Legal Director in December 2016.** He started at ILAP in 2014 as an Asylum Coordinator Attorney, after several years in private immigration practice in Massachusetts. Phil is responsible for setting the direction of ILAP’s legal work and managing the legal staff.

Leaving a Legacy: Consider a Bequest to ILAP



When you leave a planned gift in your will to ILAP, you could see these benefits:

- Your estate will qualify for a federal estate tax deduction.
- You will keep control over your bequest assets should you need them during your lifetime.
- You will retain the flexibility to modify your gift anytime, should your circumstances or desires change.
- Your gift will have a lasting impact, helping to ensure that ILAP can fulfill its mission for years to come.

To discuss a gift for the future, contact Loretta Prescott, Development Director, at 699-4407.

Thank You!

BIENVENUE!

Willkommen, Welcome!

■ **Jennifer Bailey** returned to ILAP staff as our Asylum Attorney/*Pro Bono* Coordinator. Jennifer was previously a staff attorney at ILAP for seven years and has decades of experience in immigration law and policy. She is working along with ILAP's new asylum paralegal Nadine Twagirayezu to expand our asylum services.

■ **Zoe Sahloul** joined ILAP's Board of Directors in January. Zoe is the Executive Director of the New England Arab American Organization, and she is well respected as a leader in the community. She has helped hundreds of Arabic-speaking immigrants integrate into their new communities.

■ **Lily Woodward** was an intern last summer at ILAP through the McKean Center at Bowdoin and joins the staff as Development Associate this summer. She recently graduated from Bowdoin with honors in Africana Studies and anthropology and plans to attend law school at UMaine Law in the fall.

BANKWANA!

Farewell and Well Wishes!

ILAP thanks Barbara Taylor for 10 years of service, most recently as Senior Staff Attorney. Barbara represented hundreds of clients in a wide range of matters. She is known throughout the state as an expert on the intersection of criminal and immigration law. Barbara now advises court-appointed attorneys on potential immigration consequences of their clients' criminal charges. Barbara's previous background in education led her to expand ILAP's outreach efforts to the immigrant community and service providers. In 2016, Barbara was awarded the Thomas P. Downing Jr. Award by the Maine Justice Foundation for her significant contributions to low-income clients in Maine.

■ **Kathy Willing** served as a member of the ILAP Board of Directors for three years and was instrumental in helping develop the start of our Planned Giving program. She is the CFO of Diversified Communications in Portland, and ILAP thanks her for her service.

Pro Bono Updates Continued from Page 5

- **Robyn March** won a defensive case for a woman from Somalia whom she represented for many years before her **successful result**.
- **Lauri Boxer-Macomber** also prevailed in Immigration Court on behalf of a Burundian man who initially filed for asylum in 2011.

These three attorneys are heroes for their steadfast dedication to their clients whom they defended for years. Now these clients can finally set their sights on the future and leave behind the constant fear of forced return.

■ **Michael Welch of Hardy, Wolf and Downing**, an ILAP *pro bono* panelist, successfully litigated a very difficult asylum case in Boston Immigration Court for two Mainers, a husband and wife who suffered lifelong abuse due to their ethnicity. They are now free to live a life without fear in Maine thanks to our volunteer lawyer's tenacity.

ILAP *pro bono* panelist **Chris Harmon of Terry Garmey and Associates** won an asylum decision before the Boston Asylum Office for an ILAP client. The man had waited many years for asylum, and Chris's dedication and zealous advocacy assures this person will not be removed to a place where he could suffer persecution again.

Development Update

Development in nonprofit language means fundraising and marketing.

Marketing raises awareness, and awareness leads to support, as long as you are doing the mission work well. It's not so much rocket science as human science. Here at ILAP, we are fortunate to have a steadfast community to support our work.



This year, we have met more people who care about immigrants, diversity and social justice than ever before.

The community this builds is stronger because of our union within it, and that makes for a sturdy foundation on which ILAP stands. We are grateful for your awareness of our work, and for

the subsequent support that has enabled ILAP to meet an enormous increase in demand among a fearful and uncertain immigrant population here in Maine.

Our mission work is to help immigrants improve their legal status, a challenge in these times, and more of a necessity than ever in order to maintain this country's rich tradition of welcoming strangers and creating community among diverse factions. Human science: it's how the work gets done, funded and made visible to others. Thanks for being part of that circle at ILAP.



VOLUNTEER AWARDS

ILAP recognizes our brilliant volunteer corps annually with a small get-together featuring awards for outstanding service to the organization. This year, the awards were given for:

◆
Pro Bono Firm of the Year

Bernstein Shur

◆
Pro Bono Attorney of the Year

Catherine Lindgren

◆
Business Partner of the Year

Androscoggin Bank

◆
Community Partner of the Year

Trinity Jubilee Center

◆
Pro Se Clinic Volunteer of the Year

Brooke DeLorme

◆
ILAP "Hero"

Erin Tolan

◆
Volunteer Interpreter of the Year

Vanessa Stasse

◆
Intake Volunteer of the Year

Mona Dahan

◆
Development Volunteer of the Year

Lily Woodward

ILAP relies on the dedication of volunteers to accomplish our work. Thanks to the 160 *pro bono* attorneys and nearly 70 other volunteers who devote time and talent to ILAP's clients and community.



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Jane Makela



Whatever else is happening in the world or in her life, Jane Makela knows that Tuesdays will bring good news. "They're an antidote," Jane says of her weekly volunteer shifts at ILAP, where she helps clients complete immigration applications. Jane also represents asylum seekers on ILAP's *pro bono* panel. "If you

have any doubt about the resilience of people, just spend a few hours in the ILAP offices. I come away feeling like the world is going to be okay, and that truth, justice and compassion will ultimately prevail."

Jane has offered her considerable legal skills to ILAP since 2010. Before moving to Maine in 2000, Jane specialized in corporate employment law as a partner at a large Dallas law firm. When she came to Maine she quit practicing law, leaving behind 80-hour workweeks and freeing up time to spend with her two elementary-school-aged children. Ten years later she found a new avenue for her legal training.

"My church was encouraging the congregation to study immigration as a moral issue," she says. "I knew very little about the immigrant experience in America, and I delved into the subject."

During her research, Jane read an article in the Maine Bar Journal about ILAP's work, written by Portland attorney and ILAP board member Jennifer Archer. "I immediately picked up the phone, called ILAP and asked them to put me to work," Jane says.

By volunteering, Jane hopes to help both ILAP's clients and the state of Maine, which faces critical labor shortages. "There's a very strong influx of refugees and asylum seekers coming to Maine with very high skill levels," she says. "They're doctors, lawyers, engineers and IT professionals. If we can help them stay and get assimilated, this could be a match made in heaven." ■



ILAP is part of a regional collaborative with Project Citizenship to provide **free legal assistance to individuals applying for U.S. citizenship.**

If you or someone you know is interested in applying for citizenship, please call ILAP for an intake appointment: 780-1593, extension #100.



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309 Cumberland Avenue, Suite 201

P.O. Box 17917

Portland, ME 04112

ph 207.780.1593

fax 207.699.2313

email: info@ilapmaine.org



ILAP Services

INTAKE for new clients, or former clients with new matters, takes place every Friday by appointment.

Appointments for Friday Intake can be made any weekday except Wednesday by calling the ILAP office at **207-780-1593** or by coming to the office between 9 and 5. Friday Intake appointments can be done in person or by phone. **Everyone must first have an Intake appointment** before consulting with an ILAP attorney or getting help in our Forms Clinic.

■ ILAP offers extended attorney consultations on immigration legal issues each month in Portland and Lewiston, as well as bi-monthly in Milbridge, for those who have gone through Intake. For those who cannot travel to those locations, we offer consultations by telephone or Skype. ILAP also offers emergency consultations for clients referred by other service providers and for those with pressing issues of safety. ILAP attorneys may also provide full representation to vulnerable clients with complex cases before Immigration hearing officers and courts.

■ ILAP's Forms Clinic helps people to understand, fill out, document, file and follow the progress of their immigration applications. The Clinic also assists applicants who must progress through additional complicated steps on their way to a final result.

■ ILAP assists asylum seekers to find lawyers through its asylum *pro bono* panel. ILAP also collaborates with the Justice for Our Neighbors program and the University of Maine School of Law to offer regular classes for asylum seekers who have no lawyer and are filing their own asylum applications.

■ ILAP offers education and outreach programs, by request, to organizations and service providers on a range of immigration topics. We take part in training programs for legal, medical, law enforcement or other personnel who work with immigrant communities. We also participate in advocacy to improve laws and policies that affect Maine's immigrants.

ILAP Office:

309 Cumberland Avenue, Suite 201
Portland, ME