



IMMIGRANT LEGAL ADVOCACY PROJECT

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# ANNUAL REPORT 2019

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# A MESSAGE FROM ILAP'S LEADERS

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Dear Friends,

The past three years have tested our democracy and its underlying principles. Unlawful and inhumane immigration policies have targeted children, families, and asylum seekers. Racialized enforcement of immigration laws has illuminated the long history of anti-black policies that underlie our immigration system. Countless lives have been irreparably harmed.

ILAP has joined advocates in Maine and across the country to fight back against these injustices. At the same time, we are working on proactive initiatives to create a brighter future for Maine. Read on for more about our collective effort to align state law with federal statutes so that more immigrant children in Maine can now qualify for a pathway to legal status.

As detailed in this report, we also helped more than 5,000 clients as they navigated their own turbulent immigration processes, with our expanded Rural Maine Project and offices in Portland and Lewiston.

And when 400 asylum seekers arrived in Maine last summer, ILAP staff responded quickly with legal orientations and procedural assistance. We now have ongoing asylum outreach that supplements our legal services, while we coach *Pro Bono* Panel members to provide representation in more cases.

Your support has made this work possible. We share your vision of a more just and equitable immigration system. We will continue to fight for systemic change while we advocate for our clients who face the system we have. Thank you for your partnership in this fight!

Warm regards,



Sue Roche, Esq.  
Executive Director



Leslie Silverstein, Esq.  
Board President



Sue Roche, Esq.  
Executive Director



Leslie Silverstein, Esq.  
Board President

# ABOUT ILAP

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## 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.

## SERVICES

### Direct Legal Services

ILAP provides a continuum of direct immigration legal services based on client needs and priorities, encompassing full representation, consultations, brief interventions, and forms assistance.

### Education & Outreach

ILAP serves as a trusted source of accurate, accessible and timely information on immigration law issues for immigrant communities and service providers from York to Aroostook counties.

### Systemic Advocacy

ILAP collaborates with immigrant-led groups and other partner organizations on systemic advocacy efforts at the local, state and federal levels to improve laws and policies that affect immigrants in Maine and prevent those that would negatively impact immigrant communities.

## VALUES

**Social Justice** • **Integrity** • **Respect**

## OUR IMPACT

**5,261** immigrants in Maine received legal support from ILAP:  
**2,040** individuals received immigration forms assistance

**748** individuals received legal advice during a consultation or brief intervention

**293** individuals received full representation by ILAP staff or a *pro bono* attorney

**2,180** community members attended **81** legal education workshops and outreach events

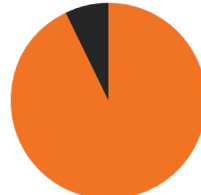
ILAP's **175-member** *Pro Bono* Panel donated **4,014** hours of time to support asylum seekers.



ILAP clients originated from **15** counties in Maine and **98** countries around the world



**77%** self-identified as African/African American, **15%** as Latinx, **4%** as Caucasian, **3%** as Asian and **1%** as Other



**93%** accessed our services at no cost

# WHO WE ARE

## STAFF

**Jennifer Bailey, Esq.**  
Asylum Program Director

**Sarah Barton**  
Development Assistant

**Melissa Brennan, Esq.**  
Senior Staff Attorney

**Julia Brown, Esq.**  
Advocacy & Outreach  
Attorney

**Kate Chesney, Esq.**  
Senior Staff Attorney

**Treva deMaynadier, DOJ  
Accredited Rep.**  
Immigration Forms  
Program Supervisor

**Michelle Gentry, Esq.**  
Asylum Program Attorney

**Felix Hagenimana, Esq.**  
Asylum Outreach Attorney

**Alice Kopij, Esq.**  
Lewiston Staff Attorney

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# HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2019

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## ADVOCACY & OUTREACH

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We celebrated a major advocacy victory in 2019 with the passage of a Maine bill (LD 1596) that fixed the age gap between Maine and federal law regarding the age of someone applying for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS). The law created a pathway to permanent legal status for vulnerable children between 18 and 20 in Maine who previously had no other legal options. ILAP partnered with UMaine Law, ACLU of Maine, Maine Business Immigration Coalition, and expert immigration and family law attorneys to draft and pass this critical piece of legislation.

“The enactment of this law means that dozens of young people in Maine will be able to access permanent legal status and move forward with their lives without fear. It is truly life-changing legislation,” says ILAP Advocacy and Outreach Attorney Julia Brown.

Throughout the year, ILAP continued to serve as a trusted source for accurate and accessible information about complex immigration issues. ILAP was quoted and interviewed by local and regional media on 57 occasions and hosted 81 multilingual legal education and outreach events, including community asylum workshops, presentations to Congressional delegation staff and community partners, comprehensive “public charge” outreach, “Know Your Rights” trainings, community learning sessions, and other events across the state.

## ASYLUM

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Asylum remained at the core of our work this year. In 2019, ILAP added two new positions to our Asylum Team, including an Asylum Program Attorney and Asylum Outreach Attorney. We worked hard to provide consults to hundreds of asylum seekers in Maine and provide robust support to those navigating the unjust asylum process on their own.

ILAP’s asylum work became particularly critical following the arrival of hundreds of asylum seekers to Portland from the southern border in the summer of 2019. Thanks to an outpouring of community support, ILAP was able to jump into action, leading legal orientations, providing in-depth consultations, and offering support filling out immigration forms over several months.

Felix Hagenimana, ILAP’s Asylum Outreach Attorney hired at this time says, “I came here in 2010 in almost similar circumstances...I stay in solidarity with our clients and guide them through the very long, complicated asylum process.”

In response to the increasing need, ILAP launched a permanent Change of Address Clinic, developed new online resources, and hosted weekly asylum workshops throughout the fall and winter. Participants have reported successful grants of asylum, crediting the workshop for their success. ILAP also continued expanding and supporting our 175-member *Pro Bono* Panel of volunteer attorneys across the state, which meant more asylum seekers in Maine received the support and representation they needed to seek safety from persecution.

## LEWISTON

ILAP's Lewiston office, which marked its one-year anniversary in the spring of 2019, continued to serve as a trusted resource in the Lewiston/Auburn area for community members and service providers alike. Asylum remained the area of highest demand, encompassing about 80% of the office's overall work.

Lewiston's Staff Attorney Alice Kopij held nine legal education and outreach events throughout the year, attended by nearly 200 local community members. These events included community workshops for asylum seekers, as well as trainings for *Pro Bono* Panel attorneys and local service providers on a wide range of immigration topics.

The Lewiston office took on a number of full representation cases and provided consultations, brief interventions or forms assistance to 129 individuals. Throughout the year, it was our community partners that helped us thrive, including Bates College and Lewiston-based law firm Berman & Simmons. "In 2019, Bates students provided countless hours of in-person interpretation and administrative support," says Kopij. "Our *pro bono* attorneys also fought, and won, some challenging asylum cases. We couldn't do this work in Lewiston without them."

### Stay Connected!

Sign up for our monthly Golden Door e-newsletters at [signup.ilapmaine.org](http://signup.ilapmaine.org) and join us @ILAPMaine on Facebook and Twitter to stay up to date on our work!

## RURAL MAINE PROJECT

ILAP launched its Rural Maine Project in 2018 with the goal of building relationships across the state and delivering mobile legal services to Maine's rural immigrant communities. In 2019, the project successfully completed its first pilot year, logging almost 7,000 miles throughout our state's eight rural counties. Local organizations with close ties to Maine's rural immigrant communities were instrumental partners, most notably Maine Mobile Health, Mano en Mano, and the Farmworkers Resource Network.

By listening, seeking information, and getting to know residents and service providers, we learned a lot about Maine's rural immigrants and their legal needs. ILAP significantly expanded our role as a state-wide resource for seasonal workers; survivors of domestic violence, trafficking, and crime; and the organizations who work with them across Maine.

The year brought many complex changes to immigration policies along with heightened immigration enforcement across rural communities. Through outreach events and trainings, ILAP played a critical role in conveying accessible information and bringing our legal expertise to immigrant community groups and service providers all across the state.

ILAP now holds a clear vision for the Rural Maine Project. Read more about what we learned and our plans for the future at [www.bit.ly/ILAP-rural-maine](http://www.bit.ly/ILAP-rural-maine). We look forward to ongoing relationship building, resource sharing, and continued advocacy for all of Maine's immigrant communities.

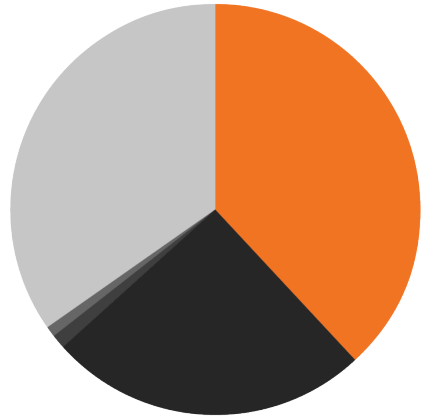
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## REVENUE & EXPENSE REPORT

For transparency and accountability to our donors and supporters, ILAP undergoes annual external audits. The following information is from audited financial statements for January 1, 2019–December 31, 2019:

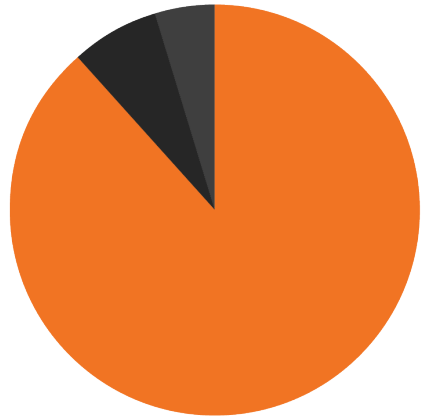
### REVENUE

● Grants	\$1,090,702
● Donations	\$725,147
● Events	\$29,916
● Fees, interest & other revenue	\$21,752
● In-kind contributions*	\$989,946
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$2,857,463</b>



### EXPENSES

● Program*	\$2,076,088
● Fundraising	\$164,004
● Management & general	\$106,338
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$2,346,430</b>
<b>Change in Assets**</b>	<b>\$511,033</b>



\*In-kind Contributions and Program Expenses include the value of donated pro bono attorney time.

\*\*A portion of this surplus was transferred to ILAP's Board-restricted fund, which was created in 2017 to sustainably expand our services.



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*Thank you to all our supporters, including those listed below and those who've chosen to remain anonymous. Every gift helps us fulfill our mission and we are beyond grateful for your generosity.*

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