

2020

ANNUAL REPORT



ILAP

IMMIGRANT LEGAL ADVOCACY PROJECT

Photography by Molly Haley

Cover (L to R): Yassin with his family; Fowsia and Fawa; Leandre; Jocelyne and her children
Page 2: Kifah

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

MESSAGE FROM ILAP'S LEADERS

Dear Friends,

This past year was like no other and we hope that you and your families are healthy and safe.

We are grateful for the hard work of staff, the dedicated commitment of our board, volunteers and supporters, and most of all, for our clients' resilience and the strong leadership of our community partners, especially immigrant-led organizations. Working together, we continue to respond to many challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, while we strive for a just and equitable immigration system.

Our clients were impacted disproportionately by the pandemic, with higher rates of infection and greater job loss. Many did not qualify for the safety net of the federal stimulus programs. At the same time, harsh immigration policies were enforced, immigration backlogs grew, and more people needed legal assistance.

While working remotely since March, ILAP provided direct legal serves and outreach to over 3,000 people in 2020. *Pro bono* attorneys donated 3,917 hours of their time, representing over 200 people in asylum and Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) cases.

We used technology to increase access to information and services with a new online intake system, multilingual self-help materials and videos, and a weekly Facebook Live asylum workshop. We provided translated information packets to migrant farmworkers and other immigrants in rural Maine and connected with clients and community partners by video and phone.

At the end of 2020, we launched an Immigrant Children's Project to help eligible young people apply for legal status, and a Mendez Rojas Project to help qualifying class members apply for asylum so they might avoid deportation after missing their one-year filing deadline.

With a new administration in the White House and national momentum towards racial justice, we are optimistic for real change. In December, ILAP staff and board approved a bold new strategic plan with goals that align with our vision of a world where systems are rooted in justice and equity and where everyone reaches their full potential without barriers created by racism and injustice.

Thank you for your partnership and support!

Warm regards,



Sue Roche, Esq.
Executive Director



Leslie Silverstein, Esq.
Board President



Sue Roche, Esq.
Executive Director



Leslie Silverstein, Esq.
Board President

WHO WE ARE

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(she/her)

Asylum Program Director

Sarah Barton (she/her)

Development & Communications Associate

Melissa Brennan, Esq.

(she/her)

Supervising Attorney, Portland Office

Julia Brown, Esq. (she/her)

Advocacy & Outreach Director

Emily Burns (she/her)

Program Assistant

Kate Chesney, Esq.

(she/her)

Senior Staff Attorney/Intake Supervisor

Treva deMaynadier, DOJ

Accred. Rep (she/her)

Immigration Forms Program Supervisor

Michelle Gentry, Esq.

(she/her)

Asylum Program Attorney

Felix Hagenimana, Esq.

(he/him)

Asylum Outreach Attorney

Alice Kopij, Esq. (she/her)

Supervising Attorney, Lewiston Office

Maggie Loeffelholz, Esq.

(she/her)

Immigrant Children's Project Attorney

Philip Mantis, Esq. (he/him)

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Operations Coordinator

Francine Ngabu

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Nolwenn Robison

(she/they)

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Nadine Twagirayezu, DOJ

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Asylum Program Paralegal

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WHAT WE DO

Direct Legal Services

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

Collaborate with immigrant-led groups and other partner organizations on systemic advocacy efforts at the local, state, and federal levels to advance equity and justice for immigrants

Systemic Advocacy

Community Legal Education

Serve 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

IMPACT IN 2020

1,431

individuals attended 62 community legal education events

574

individuals received legal advice during a consultation or brief intervention

3,076

immigrants in Maine received legal support from ILAP in 2020

683

individuals received immigration forms assistance

388

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

HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2020

Immigrant Children's Project

ILAP launched our new "Immigrant Children's Project" in fall 2020 in response to a growing need for legal support among Maine's immigrant children and youth.

Within the first months, we paired 17 young people with *pro bono* attorneys at Preti Flaherty to help them pursue Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS), a pathway to permanent residency for children and youth under 21 who have been abused, abandoned, or neglected by one or both of their parents.

"It can open doors to life-changing opportunities at a critical time, but it's a very confusing process that requires multiple courts and multiple lawyers," explained Maggie Loeffelholz, Immigrant Children's Project Attorney. "This Project is providing continuity and support for youth in Maine and ensures no young person slips through the cracks."

ILAP's past advocacy work to align state and federal law has meant more youth are newly eligible for SIJS and now, we have more ways to support them.

Key partners include Preti Flaherty, Hopeful Links, Maine Law, Preble Street Teen Center, Pine Tree Legal Assistance, and Tori Stenbak and other local family law attorneys.

Advocacy

2020 became a call to action for systemic change in response to the pandemic's disparate impact on communities of color and public reckonings with racism after the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and too many other Black people killed by police.

ILAP stood by our values, joining with you and our partners to advocate against

devastating asylum rules, the exclusion of many immigrant families from pandemic relief, and the over-policing of Black and Brown people.

We also cheered the Supreme Court's decision to uphold the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, reflecting years of activism led by immigrant youth and communities. And we sought to hold immigration agencies accountable through impact litigation with ACLU of Maine and Maine Law.

The Biden-Harris administration came as a much-needed respite from the ongoing attacks of the previous four years. Yet, ILAP recognizes the flaws in our immigration system are rooted in a long history of racism and oppression, and we will work to rebuild and reimagine our immigration system with an unyielding commitment to racial justice.

Asylum

Navigating the challenges of the pandemic, ILAP's Asylum Team found creative ways to continue providing vital information to people seeking asylum in Maine. And our 175-member *Pro Bono* Panel, who donated 3,781 hours of their time, represented 190 asylum seekers during one of the most trying years for asylum law.

"Several *pro bono* attorneys who had been waiting for years to argue their client's case faced sudden cancellations," said Asylum Director Jennifer Bailey. "But Panel members showed their resilience and mettle."

Despite the year's hurdles, we joined the Panel and clients in celebrating many legal wins, including a father from Rwanda who won permanent residency, a Gabonese family who secured asylum, and legal

advocacy for someone detained at the height of the pandemic.

ILAP also provided consultations and translated online self-help resources for people applying for asylum without an attorney. Asylum Outreach Attorney Felix Hagenimana joined local translators for online workshops on common questions about asylum.

We ended the year with a new initiative for asylum seekers who may benefit from the *Mendez Rojas* settlement agreement, which may help people avoid deportation if they missed the one-year deadline for filing asylum applications. We have found that many people in Maine qualify, including some who stayed at the Portland Expo Center in summer 2019.

Rural Maine Project

The Rural Maine Project started the year responding to increased immigration enforcement in Maine's rural areas, including at bus stations and other transportation hubs. ILAP acted quickly, providing know-your-rights outreach and sharing information on how to navigate immigration arrests and detention.

Typical in-person outreach was interrupted by COVID-19, just when thousands of



essential seasonal workers were arriving, despite the pandemic, to fill agricultural jobs. To ensure access to essential information and support, ILAP, Maine Mobile Health Program, and Mano en Mano distributed hundreds of welcome packets with health, labor, and immigration resources in multiple languages.

“One of the most moving distributions was organized in Milbridge. A caravan of local vehicles festooned with banners, welcoming seasonal workers and thanking them for their labor, paraded to local blueberry worker housing with music, food, packets, and posters of gratitude,” recalled Barbara Taylor, Rural Maine Project Senior Staff Attorney.

We also used technology in new ways to communicate across distance and maintain closer ties with our clients and partners, developing tools that will help us well into the future!

OUR CLIENTS IN 2020



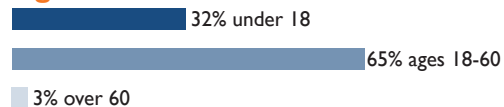
ILAP clients originated from **15** counties in Maine and **90+** countries around the world.

The most common languages spoken include French, Lingala, Portuguese, Spanish, and **30+** other languages.

Race/Ethnicity:



Age:

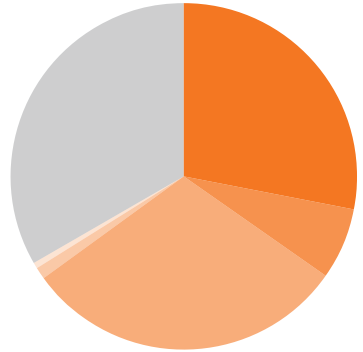


2020 FINANCIALS

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, 2020 – December 31, 2020:

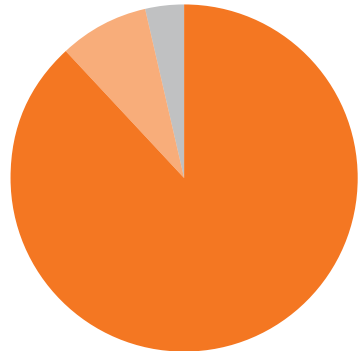
REVENUE

● Grants (28%)	\$801,168
● Pandemic relief funds (7%)	\$190,317
● Donations (30%)	\$866,568
● Events (1%)	\$30,756
● Fees, interest & other revenue (<1%)	\$12,508
● In-kind contributions* (33%)	\$947,247
TOTAL	\$2,848,564



EXPENSES

● Program* (88%)	\$2,204,429
● Fundraising (8%)	\$204,583
● Management & general (4%)	\$88,929
TOTAL	\$2,497,941
CHANGE IN ASSETS**	\$350,623



*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.

2020 SUPPORTERS

We are grateful to every one of you, including those listed below and those who have chosen to remain anonymous, for partnering with ILAP to advance equity and justice for immigrants in Maine. **Thank you!**

ILAP VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers help drive ILAP's mission and our work would not be possible without them. This group is made up of dedicated language and legal volunteers; pro bono attorneys and other professionals; and committee members. 2020 Volunteer Awards are noted in italics.

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 Honor of" or "In Memory of"
 someone important to them.
 Help us celebrate those who
 were honored and remembered
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 Nisha Agarwal**

Bonnie and Stephen Wood

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Advocates for Justice are donors who sustain ILAP's critical work by giving monthly. These supporters help ILAP remain flexible and resilient, especially during times of uncertainty. Those who gave over \$300 in 2020 are bolded under "India Street Society."

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\$300 and up

ILAP recognizes those who provide crucial financial leadership as our India Street Society. The name comes from Portland's India Street, where many immigrants first landed in the 19th and 20th centuries and, more recently, where ILAP's first office was located. Advocates for Justice are bolded.

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Up to \$300

Our community of annual donors provide an immediate, meaningful impact with gifts that advance justice and equity for immigrants. Every gift is significant, and we are grateful

to each and every donor.

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