

IMPACT CAMPAIGN 2021-2025

Year Two Update



ILAP

IMMIGRANT LEGAL ADVOCACY PROJECT

NEW INITIATIVES SUPPORTED BY IMPACT CAMPAIGN FUNDS

Piloting a new kind of asylum assistance

In summer 2022, ILAP launched the Asylum Assistance and Legal Orientation Project (AALOP) with impact campaign funds and a grant from MaineHousing. Building on three decades of supporting asylum seekers, AALOP is finding new, creative ways to increase the number of asylum seekers in Maine who have access to timely and reliable immigration help.

Over the last year, ILAP has worked with local partners to lead legal orientations for nearly 1,500 new arrivals living in temporary housing in southern Maine and provided individual screenings and assistance to more than 350 people.

As the next phase of this work, we are collaborating with the American Bar

Association's Commission on Immigration to pilot a workshop series to help people complete their asylum applications with direct support from ILAP's experienced immigration lawyers and accredited representatives.

"Our goal is for applicants to leave with a well-prepared application that has been properly filed, bringing them a critical step closer to being able to obtain a work permit and rebuild their life in Maine, their new home," explains Senior Project Attorney Catherine N. Lindgren.

ILAP's workshop series is thought to be among the first of its kind in the nation.

Due to the complexity of defensive asylum cases, this kind of *pro se* assistance is rare and ILAP's workshop series is thought to be among the first of its kind in the nation.

Knowing that traditional forms of legal assistance are not keeping pace with our community's needs, we are committed to providing asylum assistance on a larger scale with this new initiative.

Representing more immigrant children and youth

ILAP believes no child or young person should face the immigration system alone.

In fall 2020, we used impact campaign funds to launch the Immigrant Children's Project to expand access to legal representation for immigrant children and youth across Maine who may qualify for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS).

SIJS is a pathway to permanent residency for children and youth under 21 who have been abused, abandoned, or neglected by a parent, and it can open doors to life-changing opportunities at a critical time in a young person's life.

“SIJS is a very confusing process that requires multiple courts and multiple lawyers,” says Immigrant Children’s Project Attorney Maggie Loeffelholz. “The Immigrant Children’s Project is providing continuity and support for youth in Maine and will ensure no young person slips through the cracks.”

Since launching the Immigrant Children’s Project, we have successfully grown our capacity from 40-50 SIJS cases per year to more than 200 in 2022.

Unfortunately, unprecedented numbers of children and teens are eligible for SIJS, so we have prioritized sustainably growing the Immigrant Children’s Project to provide legal representation to even more immigrant youth seeking stability and protection.



Photography by Molly Haley: Jocelyne and her family on the cover, Leandre above.

Expanding access to justice in rural Maine

Maine is a large, rural state, but everyone should have equal access to immigration legal services no matter where they live or how much money they have.

ILAP’s Rural Maine Project combines outreach and legal assistance in all sixteen counties so more people can understand their rights and get the legal help they need to thrive.

Using impact campaign funds, we are now expanding the Rural Maine Project to reconnect with rural immigrant communities that became even more isolated during the pandemic and to meet more of the need for immigration legal services across the state.

We have also deepened our focus on reaching more survivors of labor trafficking or exploitation through a new collaborative grant with Preble Street and Pine Tree Legal Assistance from the Howard G. Buffett Foundation.

“Being empowered with legal information, knowing your rights, and having a lawyer by your side as an advocate is vital for immigrants escaping dangerous, inhumane, and unjust work conditions,” explains Executive Director Sue Roche. “ILAP looks forward to working with our partners to expand access to justice and build a stronger safety net for immigrant survivors of labor trafficking and exploitation in Maine.”



**Immigrant Legal
Advocacy Project**

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**ILAP is creating a world where
systems are rooted in justice,
where everyone
belongs and thrives.**

We would love to hear from you!

Contact Development Director Laura Simocko at
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Learn more:

www.ilapmaine.org/impact-campaign