



IMMIGRANT LEGAL ADVOCACY PROJECT

ILAP's Strategic Plan 2021-2025

Approved by Board and Staff, December 2020

The Board and Staff of the Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project have developed and approved a bold new Strategic Plan for the next five years. After more than twenty-five years as Maine's only immigration legal aid organization, ILAP is now ready for transformational growth.

We strive to advance equity and justice in the immigration system, and within our organization, while helping clients navigate the complex immigration laws that we have. When barriers to gaining stable legal status are removed, immigrants can attain safety, economic security, and access to opportunities that fulfill their dreams, making Maine a better place for everyone.

Our 2016 Strategic Plan guided us through events that we could not have predicted: a relentless four-year attack on due process in our immigration system; the arrival in Maine of hundreds of asylum seekers faced with a daunting immigration court process; a global pandemic disproportionately impacting immigrants and people of color; a forced move to remote operations during the public health emergency; a national reckoning on racial justice; and now a new Administration bringing the potential for change and imperative for action. Our Strategic Plan must reflect these new challenges and opportunities for Maine's immigrant communities.

ILAP staff and board worked together to develop a 2021-2026 Strategic Plan, informed by meetings with our client communities. Our plans for growth would not be possible without the community support and funding that helped ILAP become the organization that it is today.

From 2016 to 2020, ILAP:

- **Doubled our capacity to twenty staff**, enabling us to assist over 5,000 immigrants each year through direct representation and outreach.
- **Opened a new office in Lewiston** to help hundreds of immigrants and asylum seekers in the Lewiston area, in partnership with Bates College and local *pro bono* attorneys.
- **Launched a Rural Maine Project**, working along with local community-based organizations around the state to reach immigrants living in rural Maine.
- **Expanded our Asylum Program** with workshops and self-help materials, additional staff attorneys, and an expanded *Pro Bono* Panel to represent more asylum seekers.
- **Amplified Advocacy and Outreach** efforts, working with immigrant-led partners to improve laws impacting immigrants and to get information out to communities.
- **Doubled our budget** from \$750,000 to \$1.5 million.
- **Created a Board Restricted Fund**, currently \$750,000, for long-term sustainability.



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ILAP's Strategic Plan Goals 2021 - 2025

ILAP's Strategic Plan for 2021-2026 builds upon our growth over the past four years. It reflects the current landscape and needs of Maine's immigrant communities. The goals are intended to be broad enough to let us remain nimble in response to external changes, while focused enough for setting short-term goals and priorities.

Six Key Strategic Plan Goals:

1. **Center our Work in Equity and Anti-racism:** Equity and anti-racism will be built into all aspects of ILAP's work, including programming, community outreach, and systemic advocacy; interactions with clients and communities; internal staff policies and culture; and board governance. We will center the voices of Black and immigrant-led partners, while continuing to build a more inclusive organization.
2. **Expand Outreach and Collaborations with Maine's Immigrant Communities.** Programs and initiatives will reflect the priorities of Maine's immigrant communities. Increased outreach and collaboration with other agencies serving immigrants and better use of technology will ensure services are equitable and accessible to all client communities.
3. **Expand our Statewide Presence.** An expanded statewide presence, enhanced by technology and relationships with local community-based organizations, will remove geographic barriers to immigration law information and legal assistance in Maine.
4. **Turn Away Fewer People who need Immigration Legal Assistance.** More clients will have full representation in their immigration cases, and those we cannot represent will have access to more limited assistance and translated audio, video, and written immigration law resources. For the greatest impact, we will prioritize:
 - Those at risk of persecution and violence, including asylum seekers, victims of domestic violence and trafficking, and children.
 - Those at risk of due process violations before immigration authorities and law enforcement, including individuals who are undocumented, those in removal proceedings, and those detained by immigration authorities.
 - Those experiencing or at risk of family separation due to the immigration laws.
 - Those who will derive economic security from work authorization and legal status, including DACA and TPS applicants.
5. **Advance Racial Justice and Due Process for Immigrants through Advocacy and Federal Litigation.** We will work to change the immigration system through advocacy and federal litigation rather than just reacting to unjust laws, in collaboration with local, national, and immigrant-led partners.
6. **Grow and Sustain ILAP's Fiscal Health, Infrastructure, and Human Resources.** We will complete an "Immigrant Justice Campaign" to support this growth, modeled on Community-Centric Fundraising practices. Investment in technology, human resources, and board governance will ensure a strong infrastructure for long-term sustainability.