



\$7.4 Million Awarded to 17 Legal Nonprofit Organizations to Provide Free Legal Representation

Hundreds of vulnerable immigrants estimated to receive access to free legal representation through innovative L.A. Justice Fund

LOS ANGELES – November 27, 2017 – The L.A. Justice Fund has awarded \$7,450,000 to 17 L.A. based nonprofit legal service providers to bolster and expand access to legal representation for individuals facing immigration detention and deportation. The L.A. Justice Fund is a unique public-private partnership between Los Angeles County, the City of Los Angeles, the Weingart Foundation, and the California Community Foundation (CCF).

As fears in the immigrant community have dramatically escalated in response to increased federal immigration enforcement, Los Angeles leaders have joined forces to help address the rising demand for legal representation.

“In the face of increased federal immigration enforcement, Los Angeles is stepping up with the LA Justice Fund to provide support, hope and access to justice for our immigrant communities,” said Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda L. Solis. “I am hopeful that LA County's \$3 million dollar contribution to the L.A. Justice Fund will make a world of difference in the lives of many immigrants who could not otherwise afford a lawyer, as they face deportation and being torn apart from their families and their lives here in Los Angeles. LA County will always protect, defend, and fight for our immigrants.”

“The most vulnerable members of our communities — children and victims of domestic violence — should not have to face even greater risk because they cannot afford legal representation,” said Mayor Eric Garcetti. “We want to help keep families together by giving people in need access to the protections in our legal system, and that’s what the L.A. Justice Fund will do. This partnership shows that we value fair and equal justice for all Angelenos.”

Today, more than two thirds of detained individuals are unrepresented in their deportation proceedings. Representation matters: detained immigrants who have lawyers are five times more likely to succeed in challenges to their deportation.

The L.A. Justice Fund will increase access to legal representation for immigrants in removal proceedings by supporting a network of nonprofit agencies and legal service providers. Following a rigorous review, nonprofits were awarded two-year grants.

"There is nothing more troubling than visiting an immigration court to see one immigrant after another subject to deportation because they simply don't have legal representation," said Judy London, Directing Attorney, Public Counsel and L.A. Justice Fund grantee. "Because of the Fund, people are going to have lawyers who are going to aggressively fight for their rights."

The Fund aims to prioritize the most vulnerable populations in the immigrant community, including children and victims of sex trafficking. With this increased funding, grantee organizations will be able to address their most pressing needs, including hiring more immigration lawyers and strengthening their organization's removal defense programs through training workshops and expanded resource and expertise sharing. Grantees will also be able to broaden partnerships between pro-bono and nonprofit legal service providers.

"It is urgently important that we have come together to support Los Angeles' immigrant communities at this time, and safeguard our values of diversity, inclusion and equity," said Fred Ali, President and CEO of the Weingart Foundation. "The L.A. Justice Fund is another excellent example of the City, County, and philanthropy working together with nonprofits, with dollars going to provide legal representation to the families that need it most."

"We are stronger when we partner across sectors. Addressing the complex challenges our immigrant communities face requires collective effort." said Antonia Hernández, President and CEO of the California Community Foundation. "The cross sector collaboration of the L.A. Justice Fund is a model for developing and implementing impactful solutions."

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L.A. Justice Fund



Grantee	Mission
<p>Asian Americans Advancing Justice Los Angeles (AAAJ-LA)</p>	<p>AAAJ-LA is Southern California’s leading organization dedicated to meeting the legal needs of AAPI communities. For over 30 years, AAAJ-LA has provided legal assistance and representation in immigration areas including naturalization, family-based petitions, VAWA, T and U visas, asylum, deportation defense and DACA.</p>
<p>Bet Tzedek</p>	<p>Since its inception, Bet Tzedek has maintained a firm and unwavering commitment to serving immigrants in need. In 2011, Bet Tzedek established its Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) Project to address the unique humanitarian crisis presented by the surge of unaccompanied children (UC). Through direct legal representation, in-house and pro bono attorneys, Bet Tzedek helps UCs obtain legal guardians and SIJS, so they can remain safely in the U.S.</p>
<p>Central American Resource Center (CARECEN)</p>	<p>CARECEN is a non-profit, community-based organization with over 33 years of experience delivering quality, high-volume immigration legal services. CARECEN's Legal Department of 60 full-time staff, including 20 attorneys and 4 Accredited Representatives, provides information, advice and direct services to over 15,000 individuals per year.</p>
<p>Coalition for Human Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)</p>	<p>CHIRLA’s mission is to achieve a just society fully inclusive of immigrants. CHIRLA’s legal services program assists over 3,000 immigrants annually and ensures they have access to quality, free or low-cost immigration services that can help gain U.S. citizenship, legal status or protection from deportation. On an annual basis, CHIRLA’s legal team processes an average of 50 cases on behalf of immigrants in removal proceedings.</p>

<p>Esperanza Immigrant Rights Project, Catholic Charities of Los Angeles (Esperanza)</p>	<p>Esperanza, a program of Catholic Charities of Los Angeles, Inc. (CCLA), is one of the leading immigration-focused public interest organizations. It has grown from a staff of five to over 30 and has expanded its programs to meet the increasing and changing needs of the immigrant community. Esperanza represented 1,431 adult and child immigrants in removal proceedings in the last three years and provided other immigration services to over 3,000 individuals last year. Esperanza has extensive experience working with both detained and non-detained immigrants.</p>
<p>Immigrant Defenders Law Center (ImmDef)</p>	<p>ImmDef is a next-generation social justice law firm that defends immigrant communities against systemic injustices in the legal system. Founded in 2015, ImmDef has steadily grown to be the largest non-profit provider of deportation defense in Southern California. Their team of 25 attorneys and 24 support staff members provide full-scale deportation defense and legal education classes to approximately 1,900 adults and children annually.</p>
<p>Kids in Need of Defense, Inc. (KIND)</p>	<p>KIND works to ensure that no refugee or immigrant child faces immigration court alone. KIND's Los Angeles office serves unaccompanied children (UC) who are released to a sponsor in the Los Angeles area. Once a case is referred to KIND's Los Angeles office, staff conducts an intensive intake. If the case is accepted, KIND's Los Angeles office will either find a pro bono attorney to represent the child, or provide the child with direct legal representation.</p>
<p>Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles (LAFLA)</p>	<p>LAFLA has a history of providing services to immigrants. In 1984, LAFLA concentrated its efforts to serve Central American asylum seekers. In the mid-90's, LAFLA began providing services to domestic violence survivors. In the 2000's, LAFLA was at the forefront of the legal efforts to assist victims of serious crimes and of human trafficking following passage of legislation to provide immigration relief to those groups.</p>

<p>Los Angeles LGBT Center (the Center)</p>	<p>The Center is a multi-service organization committed to providing holistic services and support to the LGBTQ communities in the greater Los Angeles area. The Center’s Legal Services Department focuses serving the most vulnerable LGBTQ communities by providing legal services to survivors of violence and discrimination. It is a critical resource for LGBTQ survivors of persecution and torture from Central America to the Middle East and Africa. Beginning in the summer of 2013, building upon their existing U-Visa and VAWA work, Legal Services staff began providing representation for clients seeking asylum.</p>
<p>Loyola Immigrant Justice Legal Clinic (LIJC)</p>	<p>Founded in 2012, LIJC is a community-based collaboration of Loyola Law School, Homeboy Industries, and Dolores Mission Parish with a dual pronged mission: to advance the rights of the indigent immigrant population residing on the East side of Los Angeles through direct legal services, education, and community empowerment, while teaching law students effective immigrants’ rights lawyering in a real world setting.</p>
<p>National Day Laborer Organizing Network (NDLON)</p>	<p>Launched in 2001, NDLON was formed as a collaborative effort by 12 local day laborer organization and worker centers from across the country – all dedicated to a unifying mission of improving the lives of day laborers. Guided by a mandate from our members to respond to escalating deportations, NDLON has been at the forefront of efforts to develop organizing and legal strategies to fight deportations. NDLON has also provided full representation to detained and non-detained clients in removal proceedings, and has focused such efforts on representing members or individuals whose cases that intesect with broader policy concerns.</p>
<p>One Justice</p>	<p>OneJustice is widely known as the support center and go-to resource on pro bono best practices in California. Each year OneJustice provides coaching, training, resources, and collaborative projects to a network of over 100 nonprofit legal organizations, their staff, volunteers, and boards. Since 2014, OneJustice has been building an Immigration Pro Bono Response Network. For example, it deployed its innovative pro bono assistance strategies as the operational support entity for “pop-up” immigration services clinics at the two airports in the wake of the executive order travel ban.</p>

<p>Program for Torture Victims (PTV)</p>	<p>PTV assists asylum seekers who are survivors of torture, persecution or other forms of human rights abuse. It offers forensic medical and psychological reports and provides expert witness testimony to clients in asylum hearings and immigration court. Adding a medical forensic evaluation to an attorney-represented client can increase asylum award rate to 89%, compared to 48% for those with attorneys and just 10% for those who are unrepresented. PTV is the only organization providing medical forensic reports in immigration cases in Southern California and provides approximately 110 forensic reports per year.</p>
<p>Public Counsel</p>	<p>Established in 1986, Public Counsel's Immigrants' Rights Project (IRP) is one of the leading programs providing legal defense and advocating on behalf of Los Angeles' immigrant community. For nearly a decade, IRP has conducted legal orientations for detained immigrants, provided legal consultations to those who lack representation, offered direct representation to immigrant detainees, and match detained asylum seekers, victims of violence, and long-time lawful permanent residents with pro bono attorneys. Public Counsel is currently working to expand legal assistance to two additional detention centers: Theo Lacy Facility in Orange and Adelanto Detention Facility.</p>
<p>Southwestern Law School, Immigration Law Clinic (ILC)</p>	<p>The ILC, established in 2009, operates under the umbrella of the Southwestern Legal Clinic. ILC provides free legal representation to low-income children and adults throughout Southern California, focusing on areas where a gap in service exists amongst non-profit immigration legal services. A large percentage of clients live in the Lancaster/Palmdale, an area of Los Angeles County lacking non-profit immigration legal services.</p>
<p>USC Gould School of Law, Immigration Clinic</p>	<p>The USC Immigration Clinic has been providing direct legal representation to immigrants since its inception in 2001. The Clinic has represented more than 1,000 clients. Legal representation is provided by two supervising attorneys, a staff attorney, and second and third year law students enrolled in the Clinic who practice pursuant to DHS and Immigration Court student practice rules.</p>

<p>Vera Institute of Justice, Center on Immigration and Justice</p>	<p>Vera's Center on Immigration and Justice has strong experience in managing large-scale immigration removal defense programs. Since 2005, Vera has overseen federally-funded programs that provide legal information and legal representation to adults and children in deportation proceedings, most of them detained. Moreover, Vera is a founding member of the New York Immigrant Family Unity Project coalition, through which it led efforts to analyze the need for legal services in New York, launched the program's legal services in three sites, and is currently conducting a comprehensive outcome evaluation.</p>