

Immigration

The Immigrant & Refugee Rights Project protects and defends the rights of immigrants and refugees with low incomes statewide.



OUR WORK, OUR IMPACT:

In addition to providing legal representation in immigration, housing, and consumer cases, we monitor and respond to immigration-related bills at the state and federal levels. We work closely with community partners and other social justice nonprofits to address the most pressing issues new North Carolinians face, from education and health care to public safety and economic security, as well as fighting discrimination and exploitation.

- After more than a decade, a historic language access complaint was resolved with NC Administrative Office of the Courts (NC AOC). In response to a 2011 civil rights complaint we filed regarding translation and interpretation access for limited English proficient (LEP) parties, the settlement is the result of more than a decade of work from the North Carolina Justice Center, Legal Aid of North Carolina, members of the private bar, NC AOC staff, and others.
- Several significant wins on immigration cases, including filing a mandamus action resulting in our client getting asylum, winning an asylum case for a Palestinian client whose case was pending since 2010, and a significant Motion to Dismiss case.
- Actively worked with partners to defeat SB 101, a harmful bill that would have forced Sheriffs to collaborate with ICE on deportations, which passed the NC House and Senate and was vetoed by Governor Cooper.
- Created a new partnership with the Value Our Families national campaign to work on family immigration policy and a successful National Week of Action with multiple events plus calls, emails, and tweets to elected officials on federal immigration policy.

Our multifaceted work includes legal representation and assistance navigating the complex immigration system, and protecting immigrants and their families from abuses in the public and private sectors. We partner with pro-immigrant and pro-refugee organizations, allies, and leaders to advance progressive public policies that improve families' daily lives. We also promote acceptance and understanding of immigrant and refugee communities in North Carolina—and counteract rising xenophobia, Islamophobia, and racism.



- Coordinated with North Carolina's Members of Congress to advocate for passage of the "Lift the Bar" Act which would expand immigrant eligibility for health and benefit programs to wider categories of lawfully present immigrants.
- Advocated with members of Congress for the Afghan Adjustment Act, alongside veterans and other key stakeholders from North Carolina.
- Past media appearances included issues such as the Biden Administration's Title 42 measure, which has been used to deny asylum to people at the border since the Trump Administration's March 2020 decision. We also gave an interview to discuss SMARTLink, an ICE program that uses facial recognition technology to continue surveillance of the immigrant community.

MOVING FORWARD

Protect immigrants from arbitrary treatment, detention, and deportation through advocacy, education, representation, and litigation.

- Provide representation to immigrants seeking legal status in the United States to prevent them from being returned to a country where they face ill treatment, torture, or death.
- Provide representation to immigrants seeking legal status in the United States to protect victims of crime and other abuse, to keep families united, and to protect against hardship caused by deportation.
- Protect non-US citizen workers from threats of immigration-related retaliation from abusive or exploitive employers.

Ensure immigrants have access to critical health, nutrition, economic, and educational benefit programs, both through maintaining and ensuring access for currently-eligible immigrants and increasing immigrant access as possible.

- Ensure that North Carolina's provision of benefits and financial assistance programs is inclusive of immigrants and refugees, and that our communities are informed on access to health, nutrition, and other benefit programs.
- Maintain and expand immigrant access to Medicaid, schools, and related programs and services.
- Monitor and improve language access in the court system and other agencies.
- Educate immigrants and advocates about policy changes related to Public Charge.
- Continued efforts to address health equity related to immigrants and refugees across North Carolina.

Stop anti-immigrant legislation from passing the North Carolina General Assembly.

- Support partners in preventing anti-immigrant legislation from becoming law in North Carolina.
- Advocate with elected officials for pro-immigrant policy proposals and against harmful state bills.

Prevent and redress fraud and unfair business practices against immigrant community members who are

particularly at risk of falling prey to fraudulent consumer transactions and abusive behavior by landlords.

- Ensure that immigrants are protected from fraudulent consumer transactions and unfair housing practices.
- With community partners, build a campaign to increase protections for mobile home residents.

Reduce or eliminate Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE's) harmful practices in North Carolina to interrupt the mass criminalization and mass deportation of immigrant community members.

- Create greater transparency about ICE operations in North Carolina and inform the public and key stakeholders about these issues.
- Advocate with partners to end the use of local and state resources to enforce federal immigration law, or to address unconstitutional ICE practices in NC.
- Protect the constitutional rights of immigrants and refugees in their interactions with ICE and local law enforcement.

Foster and promote the full integration of immigrants and refugees in North Carolina through short-term and longer-term strategies that cultivate equity and inclusion and strengthen NC's immigrants' rights movement.

- Advocate for tuition equity at the state level that includes all immigrants, regardless of immigration status, and ensure everyone eligible for in-state tuition is able to access that benefit.
- Ensure that immigrant and refugee community members have access to driver licenses and photo identification documents to which they are entitled, and advocate for expanded eligibility for licenses and IDs.
- Continue our work with refugee resettlement agencies across NC and play a supportive role in pro-refugee policy efforts.
- Protect and defend immigrant communities and farmworkers in the design and implementation of disaster management plans, in addressing transportation needs, and in priorities related to environmental justice.

LET'S WORK TOGETHER to end poverty, build power, and share prosperity across North Carolina!



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