

Immigration

Our IMMIGRANT & REFUGEE RIGHTS team protects and defends the rights of immigrants and refugees with low incomes statewide.



OUR WORK HAS 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. Here are some recent examples of our work:

- **We settled a class action lawsuit against owners of a mobile home park in Wake County.** We alleged that the park owners had illegally “sold” our class members mobile homes on an installment basis in contracts that lacked multiple required disclosures and consumer protections, and then evicted members of the class when they fell behind on payments, despite their status as installment purchasers and not tenants. The mobile home park owners have agreed to pay \$1 million dollars to resolve this case, as well as make substantial changes to their method of operations going forward.
- **We secured a favorable declaratory ruling from the North Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles.** DMV’s ruling changed its interpretation of NC Driver’s License law as it applies to immigrants with permanent or indefinite immigration status. DMV has been illegally granting licenses of short duration, or in some instances, refusing to grant drivers’ licenses at all, to immigrants with certain permanent or indefinite immigration statuses, contrary to state and federal law. The DMV’s Declaratory Ruling essentially agreed with all our legal argument and stipulates that immigrants with permanent or indefinite immigration statuses can receive a “full term” license at the DMV (instead of inappropriately short licenses that many were receiving), and immigrants with

Our multifaceted work includes:

- ▶ *Legal representation and assistance navigating the complex immigration system.*
- ▶ *Protecting immigrants and their families from abuses in the public and private sectors.*
- ▶ *Partnering with pro-immigrant and pro-refugee organizations, allies, and leaders to advance progressive public policies that improve families’ daily lives.*
- ▶ *Promoting acceptance and understanding of immigrant and refugee communities in North Carolina—and counteract rising xenophobia, Islamophobia, and racism.*

perm/indef status can use expired status documents for renewals.

- **We settled a mandamus action that we filed in federal court** on behalf of three immigrants whose asylum applications have been pending since 2016. We alleged that USCIS has engaged in unreasonable delay in processing the applications. The government immediately arranged for asylum interviews after service of the federal complaint. We received approval of all three asylum petitions in November 2023.
- **We stopped harmful legislation.** We actively worked with partners to defeat SB 10, a harmful bill that would have forced Sheriffs to collaborate with ICE on deportations. The bill stalled in the NC legislature.

MOVING FORWARD WE WILL:

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 North Carolina's provision of benefits and financial assistance programs is inclusive** of immigrants and refugees, and 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.
- **Continue 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.

- **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, and ensure everyone eligible for in-state tuition is able to access that benefit.
- **Ensure 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.

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

SCAN HERE to support policies that protect the rights of immigrants.



Or visit:

[ncjustice.org/immigrantrights](https://www.ncjustice.org/immigrantrights)



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