

CATHOLIC CHARITIES COMMUNITY SERVICES

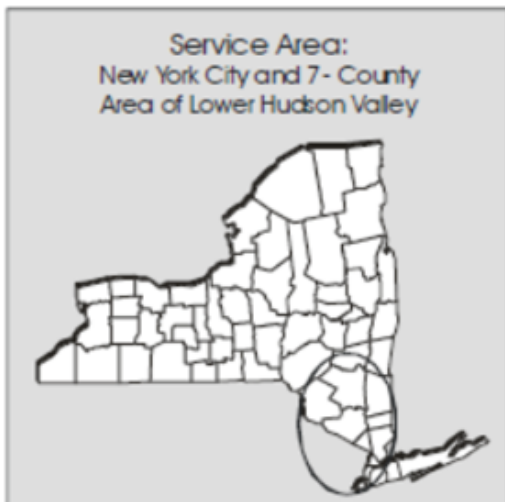
2022-2023

OVERVIEW OF ACHIEVEMENTS

This report highlights the tireless work of our Division of Immigrant and Refugee Services over the past year as we worked to advance the rights of our clients. During the last few years, highly publicized, negative, and rapid-fire policy changes created confusion in communities and fostered an environment in which unscrupulous practitioners could take advantage of desperate immigrants and their families. Simultaneously, the whiplash created by midnight policy changes and subsequent court injunctions, along with the shutdowns during the pandemic, led to chaos and severe backlog at all of our federal immigration agencies. CCCS services are thus in high demand and have continued to increase throughout the past year due to a spike in recently arrived families who were detained at the southern border and bused to New York in the summer and fall of 2022. During the reporting period, our staff, pro bono attorneys, law students, and volunteers:

- Screened 5,841 adults and children, accepting 747 new cases for representation.
- Closed 2,674 cases (949 through administrative agency decisions, 295 through court decisions, and 1,430 non-litigation advocacy decisions).
- Provided legal updates, Know Your Rights (KYR) presentations, legal orientations, and trainings by phone and through Zoom; televised interviews; radio shows; and printed materials to 15,272 people on topics including information on how to make an appointment for legal consultations, where to go for more information regarding one’s immigration case, and more.

In August 2022, we onboarded a new supervising attorney with diverse and extensive substantive legal and clinical experience who has been key in providing elevated and in-depth supervision to the staff attorney cohort across our Immigration Legal Services Programs. From August 25 through September 30, 2022, CCCS redeployed



Population Served: Low Income Immigrants and Refugees

Total Funding: \$15,291,987

Total IOLA Grant: \$230,000

Staffing Full Time Equivalent:

- Total Staff: 119
- Paralegals: 35
- Lawyers: 43
- Other: 41

staff to serve at the city's Asylum Seeker Navigation Center, offering legal screenings, change of address forms, motions to change venue, and KYR presentations to recently-arrived asylum seekers bussed to New York from the southern border. Our Community Legal Clinics (CLCs) hosted legal clinics every month across the Lower Hudson Valley and the Bronx, providing expert and professional advice to areas of New York State that remain critically underserved, as well as critical application assistance for Haitian nationals with time-limited filing needs for Temporary Protected Status. Our Pro Bono Project provided case mentorship for over 107 cases and re-engaged several new pro bono partners for new case placements in response to the demand for services due to the surge of recent asylum seekers. Meanwhile, our Unaccompanied Minors Program has returned to fully in-person intake services for minors in the custody of the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), at both our downtown Manhattan and South Bronx office locations, and it has begun preparing for expanded services in May 2023 at several ORR shelter sites in New York City. In June of 2022, we hired a new Director of Hotlines, Policy & Training. During the reporting period, our hotlines served 79,229 people with inquiries, referrals, appointments, and more.

DIRECT LEGAL SERVICES: CASES

Case #1

Adam, a young, award-winning investigative journalist in his home country, was arrested, tortured, and illegally detained in solitary confinement for 27 days after he published an article reporting on a controversial decision made by his government. Within six hours of publication, intelligence agents arrested Adam at his office, blindfolded him, drove him around for hours, and finally locked him in solitary confinement for 24 hours without food or water. After a combination of severe beatings and waterboarding, Adam woke up hours later in a notorious underground dungeon. Upon release, agents threatened to kill him should he ever again criticize his government. Adam managed to flee with the help of foreign journalists and ultimately arrived in the United

17,030
people
benefitted from
7,768
immigration
legal cases
closed

States. CCCS represented Adam in his individual hearing. Thanks to intensive preparatory work, expert witness testimony, and negotiation efforts, we achieved a favorable asylum outcome.

Case #2

In February 2023, we received a 27-page written decision granting asylum to long-standing CCCS clients from El Salvador. The grant is based on imputed anti-gang political opinion and the particular social group of “former members of the Salvadoran military.” CCCS first accepted this family’s case over seven years ago and was finally able to present their asylum claim during two individual hearings on October 12, 2022, and December 27, 2022, during which their eligibility was fiercely contested by the government attorney. The case required extensive testimony from an expert witness familiar with the complexities of politics and gangs in El Salvador.

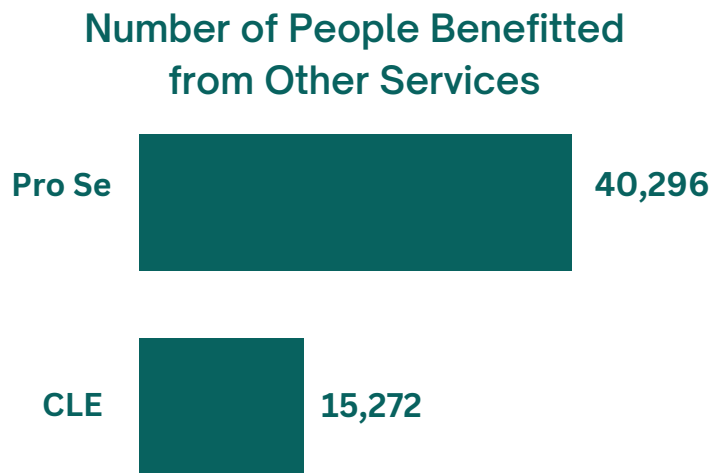
OTHER SERVICES: OVERVIEW

Community Legal Education: Catholic Charities is in the process of becoming an accredited provider of continuing legal education (CLE). We hosted four CLE programs during the reporting period: two in August 2022 and two in January 2023. On August 17, 2022, Managing Attorney for Access to Justice Initiatives Lauren Wyatt and Lead Project Attorney for Community Legal Clinics Lesly Santos presented a CLE entitled Identifying and Reducing Bias in Intake. On August 30, 2022, Pro Bono Supervising Attorney Keighly Rector and Pro Bono Supervising

Attorney Rosanna Eugenio presented a CLE entitled Trauma-Informed Lawyering for Immigrant Clients. On January 19, 2023, Managing Attorney for Community Legal Programs Liane Aronchick and Pro Bono Supervising Attorneys Keighly Rector and Rosanna Eugenio presented a CLE entitled Responding to New Arrivals: Venezuelan Political Asylum – Law & Procedure. On January 25, 2023, Managing Attorney for Access to Justice Initiatives Lauren Wyatt and Lead Project Attorney for the Immigration Court Helpdesk Hannah Strauss presented a CLE entitled Overview of Asylum, Withholding of Removal, and the Convention Against Torture and What to Expect in Immigration Court.

55,568
people benefitted
from Services
Other Than Direct
Legal Services

Pro Se Assistance: During this reporting period, the Immigration Court Helpdesk held 112 workshops and provided 1,252 individuals with help at the three New York City immigration courts. Our Haitian Response Initiative reviewed the cases of more than 450 Haitians for eligibility to register for Temporary Protected Status (TPS), assisting over 200 eligible Haitians with re-registering for TPS and with motions before the immigration courts. As previously noted, CCCS re-deployed to NYC’s Asylum Seeker Navigation Resource Center for the entire month of September to provide pro se assistance on Change of Address forms and Motions to Change Venue as well as Know Your Rights presentations.



OTHER SERVICES: TECHNOLOGY

One of the main achievements of our organization in the past year was implementing full use of our existing technology to enhance performance and efficiency. The Immigrant and Refugee Services Division has undergone a technological overhaul and upgrade, moving our filing systems and dashboards into encrypted cloud storage to facilitate team sharing. It has improved collaboration, communication, and productivity across different teams and projects. Additionally, we are currently working on redesigning our current Legal Case Management system, LawLogix, to change the functionality and improve user experience. LawLogix is a cloud-based system that helps us manage our immigration cases, track deadlines, communicate with clients, and store documents. We have engaged LawLogix to address these issues and meet our evolving needs by adding more customization options for case types, workflows, and reports and improving the performance and reliability of LawLogix to reduce downtime and errors. We are also planning to launch an Exponent Case Management (ECM) database for two of our immigration hotlines: the Office for New Americans (ONA) Hotline and the ActionNYC Hotline. Building ECM for these two immigration hotlines is a continuation of the upgrade to RingCentral, our new call center software. Building ECM—which is compatible and can be integrated with RingCentral—for two of our immigration hotlines will allow CCCS to maximize the capabilities of RingCentral while also improving our internal data-tracking and reporting abilities. RingCentral is expected to go live in late spring or early summer of 2023, and now we are looking to upgrade the database that RingCentral feeds into.

OTHER SERVICES: TRAININGS

We provide our legal staff with comprehensive and practical training on the cases we handle for our clients. Our staff learn from experienced supervisors who guide them through the process of representation. They also benefit from various training opportunities on substantive law and skills development offered by the New York Immigration Coalition, the American Immigration Lawyers' Association, the Immigration Advocates Network, and CLINIC. Our attorneys and paralegals stay up-to-date and collaborate with other professionals through local and regional list serves and working groups. We also hold regular roundtables for attorneys and paralegals to discuss new developments and case strategies.

New York Legal Response (NYLR) staff hosted a CLE program on asylum, removal defense, and serving as a Friend of the Court (FOTC) in conjunction with the Varick Street Immigration Court. The Varick assistant chief immigration judge as well as several other immigration judges attended and gave remarks on the importance of serving as FOTC and providing other pro bono services. The court has already invited NYLR staff to return to provide another CLE later in the spring or summer.

The Unaccompanied Minors Program conducted stakeholder training at the Lincoln Hall Boys Haven ORR facility. A total of 40 staff members consisting of the program director, assistant program director, case managers, clinicians, and youth workers were in attendance. The meeting was praised by Lincoln Hall leadership and staff as an opportunity to learn more about our services, immigration court proceedings, legal relief options, and the type of cases they should flag to our attention for the minors in their care. Similar stakeholder trainings will be conducted for the other facilities that we provide legal services to.

The CCCS Immigrant and Refugee Services Division hosted more than ten trainings for immigrant advocates, attorneys, case managers, and pro bono volunteer advocates, with 247 individuals in attendance. Trainings focused on trauma-informed legal practice; immigration law and court procedure updates and volunteering at the Immigration Court Helpdesk; Venezuelan political asylum, migration, and migratory flow; CCCS services; and general immigration updates for 2023.

IMPACT CASES

On September 9, 2021, Catholic Charities and partner organizations filed a Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (CRCL) complaint against the ICE Buffalo Field Office and the Rensselaer County Jail on behalf of Ms. Q and all other women currently or previously held in ICE custody at the Rensselaer County Jail in Troy, NY. The complaint details how Ms. Q was physically brutalized by an ICE officer while being transferred to the jail, resulting in a fractured ankle. Once at the Rensselaer County Jail, Ms. Q was denied the ability to shower and call her family for two weeks, denied access to medical care, and suffered discrimination and verbal harassment from jail officials. After lodging the Complaint, Catholic Charities advocated to schedule a doctor's appointment to examine Ms. Q's ankle. Even with our advocacy and attempts to intervene by DHS, it took nearly four months after ICE physically brutalized Ms. Q, she received a doctor's appointment, and the doctor confirmed Ms. Q's ankle was fractured. The four-month delay exacerbated the damage to her ankle. On December 3, 2021, Ms. Q was finally released from ICE detention. Her release came nearly a week after we learned that Ms. Q's foot was fractured, and likely had been for more than three months. While detained, she received no medical care and was told over and over she was fabricating her pain. Ms. Q's release was the result of extensive and consistent sustained advocacy, including a Civil Rights Complaint, press coverage detailing the deplorable conditions in the Rensselaer County Jail, organizing, and activism. CCCS continues to provide input on proposed settlement discussions.

2,926
beneficiaries
were affected by
1 Impact Case

PRO BONO VOLUNTEERS

Our statewide ONA Liberty Defense Pro Bono Project continues to engage firms and private bar attorneys to mitigate the lack of direct representation capacity throughout underserved immigrant communities in New York. Our attorneys train volunteers to prepare affirmative asylum applications for individuals afraid to return to their home countries; litigate asylum cases for mothers and children fleeing gang violence; help unaccompanied immigrant children obtain special immigrant juvenile status based on abuse, neglect or abandonment by their parents; empower survivors of violence to find safety, stability, and lawful immigration status through visas available to victims of crime, trafficking, and familial abuse; and help immigrants to reunify with family

members. While many volunteers join our Pro Bono Volunteer Advocate network with little immigration practice experience, our supervisory team ensures that each volunteer attorney feels confident and empowered to represent their immigrant clients. CCCS engages with local bar associations, fellowship programs, law schools, and many law firms to recruit pro bono attorneys. We also collaborate with coalitions to develop in-person and web-based trainings to support pro bono attorneys on substantive issues. CCCS also boasts a robust volunteer cadre that supports our clinical legal services. These include our Community Legal Clinics throughout the Lower Hudson Valley, our ICH/FGLOP programming at the three New York City immigration courts, and our recently launched New York Legal Response Project, which is specifically directed at recently arrived asylum seekers. The New York Legal Response Project serves those who are not eligible for our Immigration Court Helpdesk because they are not yet officially in removal proceedings. The project focuses on recent arrivals who appear to be eligible for asylum but have an ICE check-in far into the future, with a one-year filing deadline prior to that first check-in or shortly thereafter and a lack of effective jurisdiction to submit their applications. To date, this project has hosted seven legal clinics specifically for these new arrivals, providing legal consultations to more than 100 individuals. Volunteers are trained and supervised on gathering information from unrepresented immigrants for legal consultations as well as application assistance for asylum and other time-sensitive submissions to the court.



212 Attorneys volunteered 2,940 hours

29 Law Students volunteered 8,754 hours

40 Other Volunteers volunteered 353 hours

Each  icon is equal to 28.1 volunteers.

Attorneys are represented through the Green Figure.

Law Students and Other Volunteers are represented through the Grey Figure.

SIGNIFICANT COLLABORATIONS

CCCS has a long-standing history of partnering with other legal service providers, community-based organizations, base building groups, local and state agencies, law schools, law firms, and other stakeholders to create partnerships, develop innovative programming, and improve gateways for immigrants seeking assistance and justice. Several of our recent significant partnerships include:

New York City (NYC) Legal Programs: During redeployment to the Asylum Seeker Navigation Center, Immigration Legal Services Program staff partnered with Immigrant Justice Corps (IJC) and New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG) on legal service delivery at the Center. The organizations shared resources/materials for KYRs and legal consultations and took shifts to provide daily service at the center through the month of September 2022. CCCS management and leadership met regularly with these partnering organizations to strategize and collaborate on service delivery and advocacy issues with the City.

Liberty Defense Project Pro Bono (LDPPB): Since 2021, when EOIR reopened its doors after over a year of closure due to the pandemic, New York State legal service providers, including CCCS, joined the Immigrant Advocates Response Collaborative's (I-ARC's) initiative to monitor and provide feedback to EOIR regarding problems that advocates faced in the court. From that collaboration, CCCS managing attorneys and I-ARC have held quarterly meetings with providers and liaised with John Martin, EOIR's public relations officer, who has heard and heeded both complaints and praises. Some concerns raised have improved communication between advocates and EOIR, and Mr. Martin has made himself personally available to liaise with EOIR leadership.

Mentorship: CUNY Citizenship Now! and LDPPB entered into a mentorship agreement in the spring of 2023. In the pilot program, pro bono supervisors will train CUNY Citizenship Now! staff to screen students and then identify and refer six students who may be eligible for SIJS. CUNY Citizenship Now! will partner the student with pro bono counsel from their network and refer the matter to LDP pro bono supervisors to mentor for the life of the case. The initiative is a unique opportunity to expand CCCS's pro bono volunteer network and help a special population of students to improve their futures.

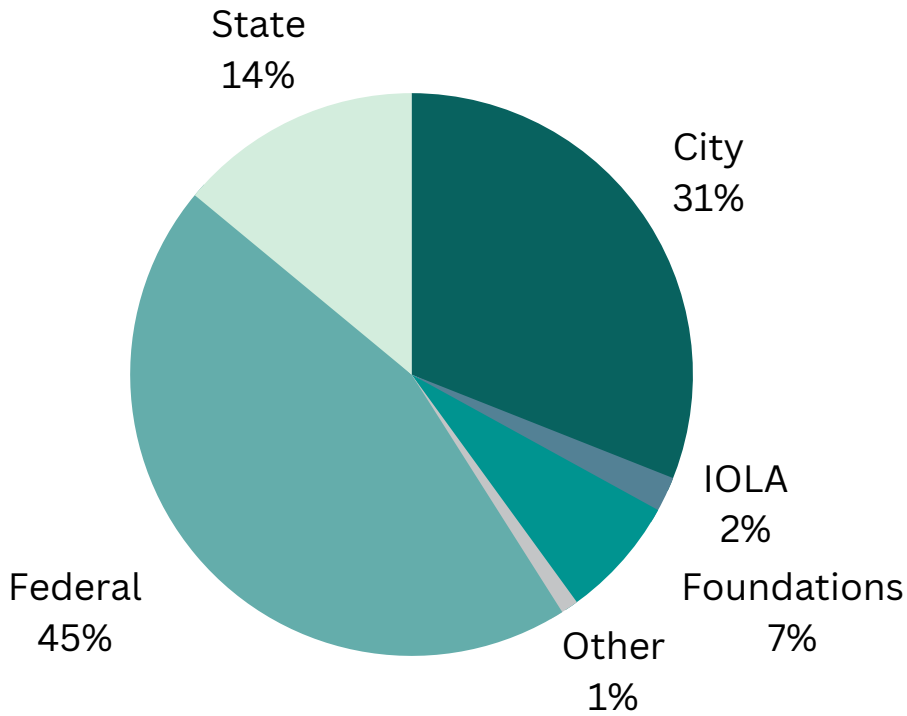
Pro Bono Partner Highlights: To increase capacity to represent the wave of newly arrived immigrants, CCCS hosted a specialized training in partnership with Manuel Gago, Amnesty International’s resident expert on Venezuela, in January 2023. Seventy-seven attendees engaged with pro bono supervising attorneys and Manuel Gago to provide winning strategies in representing Venezuelan asylum seekers. The firms represented at the training included O’Melveny & Myers, Mayer Brown, Kobre Kim, Gibson Dunn, Cooley, White & Case, Weil Gotschal, and others. In tandem, CCCS engaged or re-engaged with more than 20 law firms throughout the fall and winter and successfully placed 20 pro bono cases in the first three months of 2023 alone. Firms included in our outreach initiative included those listed above as well as Cravath, Swaine & Moore; Debevoise; Milbank; Fried Frank; Venable; Willkie Farr; and others.

Justice in Motion: In 2022, CCCS partnered with Justice in Motion (JiM). JiM received a grant from the NY Community Trust to assist nonprofits with complex legal requirements in Central American countries. This collaboration supports cases in which service, document collection, and other in-country needs are challenging to accomplish from the U.S. Through this grant, CCCS was one of three organizational partners whose attorneys could access JiM defenders for case support at no cost to the organization.

Volunteer Partnerships: In the past year, CCCS partnered with BNY Mellon, a financial institution, to host two major remote clinics to assist with pro se applications for asylum and employment authorization for unrepresented individuals in removal proceedings. BNY Mellon recruited approximately 150 volunteers across the two events. The first one yielded the preparation of 100 pro se asylum applications, more than CCCS had ever previously completed at a single clinical event.

SOURCES OF FUNDING

Catholic Charities Community Services received **\$15,291,987** in total funding this past year



IOLA Grant	\$230,000
City and County Funding	\$4,792,434
Foundation	\$1,110,443
Federal	\$6,826,767
State Funding	\$2,177,444
Other	\$154,899
Total	\$15,291,987