



# *Immigrant Justice Corps*

2016-2017 Annual Report





Immigrant Justice Corps (IJC)  
is the country's first fellowship  
program dedicated to meeting the  
need for high-quality legal assistance  
for immigrants seeking lawful status,  
citizenship and fighting deportation.





## MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear Friends of IJC,

Approximately eighteen months ago, I joined IJC to help fulfill its mission of leveraging the social justice and human rights passions of recent law school and college graduates to meet the critical need for high-quality representation to low income immigrants.

In my brief tenure, we have built on the solid foundation laid by my predecessors. We have streamlined our recruitment and selection process, improved our three-week initial “boot camp” training, monthly fellows professional development sessions and ensured that our Fellows find a path to permanent employment in the immigration field.

We are excited and proud about our recent continued expansion to underserved immigrant communities in Albany, Buffalo, Kingston – New York; New Haven – Connecticut, and Karnes City, Texas.

Today, the representation crisis that led to the creation of IJC has grown exponentially due to the Department of Homeland Security’s repressive policies. With anticipated increased staffing–

10,000 deportation officers and 5,000 border patrol agents– to arrest and detain asylum seekers and long-time residents but no right to appointed counsel in removal or administrative proceedings, there is a critical demand for competent and ethical lawyers.

To cater to the needs of modest income immigrants who are priced out of free legal services, IJC is exploring other service delivery models including a low bono practice that will serve as a training ground for Justice Fellows interested in going into private practice or establishing a low bono practice in the future. We are also considering continued expansion in 2018 to other parts of the country where there is a critical need for representation and a great opportunity for the development of our Fellows.

These are challenging and uncertain times fraught with unique opportunities to make a difference in immigrants’ lives. On behalf of our Board, staff and Fellows, I am proud to share this year’s Annual Report highlighting our Fellows work in keeping immigrant families together

With profound gratitude,

Jojo Annobil  
Executive Director





# OUR IMPACT

IJC is forging a generation of committed immigration lawyers and advocates who are pioneering innovative legal strategies and making a difference for immigrant families. IJC’s goal of ensuring that immigration status is no barrier to social and economic opportunity has become only more urgent as the federal government’s immigration policies have grown harsher.

In its first three years, Immigrant Justice Corps has blossomed into a robust and firmly-rooted non-profit, building a nationwide reputation thanks to its accomplishments.



IJC has recruited and trained **105 Fellows** (75 Justice Fellows, and 30 Community Fellows).



Justice Fellows worked on more than **3,130 complex cases** –and won **92% of cases** completed!



**92%** of Justice Fellows have secured employment practicing immigration law after their fellowships have ended.



Fellows have substantially increased the capacity of the more than **35 large, medium, and small non-profits**, who have hosted them, to take on additional cases.



Community Fellows filed more than **3,480 applications** for green cards and other immigration benefits – and obtained the benefits for their clients **95% of the time**.



IJC Fellows have saved low income immigrants nearly **\$1.9 million** in application fees, and millions of dollars more in private attorney fees.

# OUR 2017 HOST ORGANIZATION PARTNERS:

 <b>American Friends Service Committee</b>	 <b>GPC</b>	 <b>MINKWON CENTER</b> For Community Action	 <b>NDS HARLEM</b>	 <b>Sanctuary for Families</b>
 <b>Arab American Association of New York</b>	 <b>Empire Justice Center</b> Making the law work for all New Yorkers	 <b>NYLAG</b> NEW YORK LEGAL ASSISTANCE GROUP	 <b>SAFE PASSAGE PROJECT</b>	 <b>Sauti Yetu</b> CENTER FOR AFRICAN WOMEN
 <b>The Bronx Defenders</b> Redefining public defense.	 <b>BS</b>	 <b>Bklyn Public Library</b>	 <b>LAA</b> NEW HAVEN LEGAL ASSISTANCE ASSOCIATION, INC.	 <b>THE DOOR</b>
 <b>CARECEN</b>	 <b>ECBA VOLUNTEER LAWYERS PROJECT</b>	 <b>New York Public Library</b>	 <b>IMMIGRATION EQUALITY</b>	 <b>UNLOCAL</b>
 <b>Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New York</b> Providing Help. Creating Hope.	 <b>PLSNY</b> PRISONERS' LEGAL SERVICES of New York	 <b>POTS</b> Part of the Solution Feeling Our Neighbors. Nourishing Our Community.	 <b>THE LEGAL AID SOCIETY</b> MAKING THE CASE FOR HUMANITY	 <b>URBAN JUSTICE CENTER</b>
 <b>CATHOLIC MIGRATION SERVICES</b>	 <b>KIND</b> KIDS IN NEED OF DEFENSE	 <b>Legal Services NYC</b>	 <b>PH Project Hospitality</b>	 <b>RAICES</b> Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services
 <b>CENTRAL AMERICAN LEGAL ASSISTANCE</b> Ayuda legal para las comunidades latinoamericanas	 <b>Queens Library</b>	 <b>Lutheran Social Services of New York</b>	 <b>safehorizon</b>	 <b>WORKER JUSTICE CENTER of NEW YORK</b>
	 <b>CITY BAR JUSTICE CENTER</b>	 <b>ATLAS: DIY</b>	 <b>human rights first</b>	

“Our partnership with the Immigrant Justice Corps has propelled our organization to meet the needs of the Arab-American and immigrant population of Southwest Brooklyn. Hosting both IJC Justice and Community Fellows has helped build a foundation for our organization to grow from offering legal services through a part-time pro bono attorney to a staff of seven immigration professionals.”

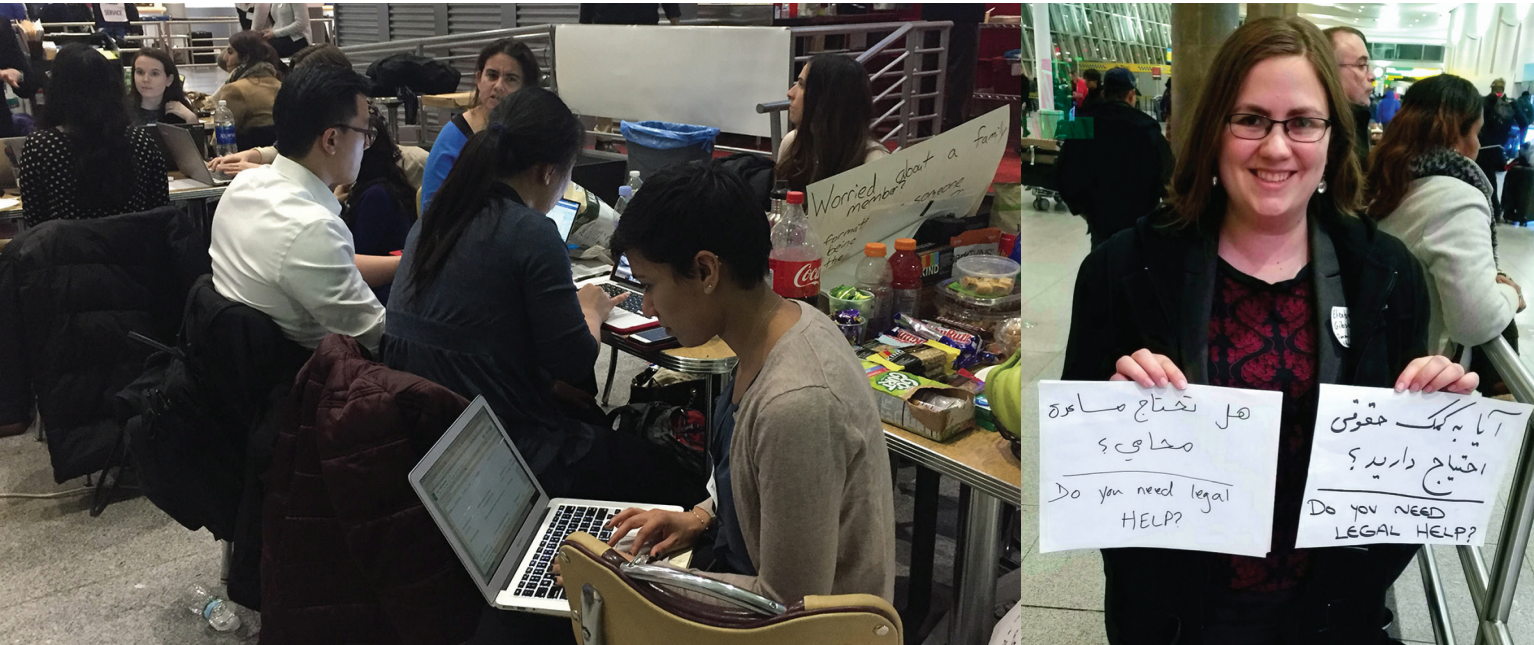
– Ashleigh Zimmerman, Deputy Director, Arab American Association of New York



# CHANGES IN THE IMMIGRATION LANDSCAPE

In the months following the 2016 presidential election, President Trump set in motion immediate sweeping changes to immigration policies and enforcement, and repeatedly attacked immigrants with hateful rhetoric. With good cause, undocumented immigrants and their mixed status family members feared arrest, detention and deportation. Even permanent residents worried that their lawful status would not protect them, and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) agents confirmed such fears by detaining green card holders at several airports after the President banned travel to the United States by citizens from several Muslim countries in January 2017.

Immigration service providers continue to grapple with the Trump administration’s harsh policies. Justice and Community Fellows must be prepared for the arrest of virtually any client, at any time. The specter of draconian enforcement has made every case more time and labor intensive and emotionally charged.



# IJC STAFF AND FELLOWS RESPOND

Vulnerable immigrants and their family members have been looking for advice, solidarity and legal assistance, and IJC has worked to provide all three.

Educating immigrants about their rights in an environment of heightened enforcement became a critical priority. IJC Fellows and staff organized Know Your Rights (KYR) and other presentations on immigrant rights across the New York region, and participated along with thousands of other citizens in demonstrations of public support for due process and the rule of law.

Immigrant Justice Corps staff and Fellows have also responded to the increased needs of the immigrant community by:

- Organizing clinics to screen immigrants, determine eligibility for legal relief, and advise about options;
- Reaching out to clients with advice on planning for the possibility of arrest and removal from the U.S.;
- Preparing to more aggressively litigate cases; and
- Increasing collaboration across a wider network of immigrant legal services providers.



# JUSTICE FOR ALL

*The first year of the Trump Administration brought huge new challenges. IJC worked to meet the needs of vulnerable immigrants in an uncertain time.*

Within weeks of the 2016 election, IJC launched an educational campaign. On November 28, 2016, IJC and the NYU Immigrant Rights Clinic, together with over 40 co-sponsoring organizations, hosted an Immigrant Rights Teach-In. The program included an overview of the Immigration Enforcement System, several KYR presentations, and other trainings. More than 650 people attended.

After the administration issued its January 2017 “Muslim Travel Ban,” Fellows and staff joined mass protests at JFK Airport. Some volunteered in a legal assistance center at JFK to help refugees, lawful permanent residents, and non-immigrant visa holders with valid entry documents to enter the country.

IJC recognized that attorneys and advocates needed to coordinate efforts. In February 2017, IJC joined a newly formed Immigrant Advocates Response Collaborative among more than 60 immigration legal service providers from across New York state. Members work to share best practices, avoid duplication of labor, and respond to changes in enforcement and the law.

Community Fellows organized over 20 Know Your Rights (KYR) presentations, attended by some 600 individuals. Justice Fellows and IJC staff delivered more than 60 KYR talks to some 2,500 immigrants.

The gatherings helped spread the word about immigrant rights in public schools, colleges, community centers, bar associations, town halls, churches, synagogues, a mosque, and a day care center. Less formal gatherings included dinners in homes within immigrant communities – one of which was featured in [The New York Times](#).



# JUSTICE FELLOWSHIP

Each year, IJC awards 25 Justice Fellowships to promising recent law graduates who have demonstrated a commitment to working with low income immigrants. After weeks of legal training, each Justice Fellow is placed in one of dozens of host organizations, where they earn a salary while representing clients. They take on some of the toughest cases in immigration law, typically including removal defense cases and complex affirmative applications that ensure due process for those with long ties to the U.S. or who have suffered unimaginable harm as asylees or tracking victims.

Justice Fellows	Total
Justice Fellows	50
Third-year Justice Fellows	7 Justice Fellows extended their Fellowship for a 3rd year
Spanish speakers	45
Fellows speaking 3 or more languages	9
Languages Spoken	Arabic, Bengali, Cantonese, French, Hebrew, Hindi, Italian, Korean, Mandarin, Papiamento, Portuguese, Punjabi, Spanish, Turkish, Urdu, Yoruba

# JUSTICE FELLOW SPOTLIGHT



Lindsay Mullet, a 2016 Justice Fellow, changed the life of Rafael, a native of Venezuela.

In the summer of 2017, Lindsay persuaded a Family Court that Rafael was particularly vulnerable and to issue a Special Findings order that paved the way for him to gain lawful status. When Lindsay met Rafael, he was 17 years old. He had fled to the United States on a tourist visa in 2016 to escape Venezuela’s political and economic crisis. He joined his older brother, Marco, who had himself fled Venezuela with his family a year earlier.

By the time Rafael’s visitor’s visa expired, food riots were making Venezuela more dangerous by the day. He desperately needed a path to lawful immigration status. Lindsay interviewed him several times. She learned that Marco had been 16 years old when Rafael was born. Rafael’s biological father had neglected Rafael. Marco had become a surrogate father to Rafael, changing the infant’s diapers and later caring for and guiding him through childhood.

Lindsay determined that Rafael was eligible to apply for Special Immigrant Juvenile (SIJ) Status, a classification for children abused, neglected or abandoned whose interests would not be served by returning them to their home country. She petitioned a state family court to appoint Marco as Rafael’s guardian and to issue a special findings order, required under federal law before applying for the SIJ classification which may qualify for lawful permanent residence.

When the Family Court judge issued those orders, Marco and Rafael knew it was an important victory. They embraced and wept outside the courtroom. There were further legal steps to pursue before Rafael could obtain the SIJ visa. But with Lindsay’s help, he was on his way.

# MEET THE JUSTICE FELLOWS

Name	University	Host Organization	Incoming Class
Alexander Holtzman	Ohio State University, Moritz College of Law	Safe Passage Project	*
Amandeep Singh- Kahlon	New York University School of Law	Catholic Migration Services	*
Amelia Marritz	New York University School of Law	Brooklyn Defender Services	*
Angelica Juarbe	Columbia Law School	Atlas: DIY	*
Anna Byers	Harvard Law School	Sauti Yetu	*
Carlos Valenzuela	New York Law School	Safe Passage Project	*
Cecilia Lopez	American University Washington College of Law	Catholic Charities Community Services	*
Cristina Manzano	Boston College Law School	The Door	*
Elizabeth Gibson	Georgetown University Law Center	NYLAG	*
Erika Vera	Columbia Law School	The Door	*
Frances Davila	New York University School of Law	Bronx Defenders	*
Guadalupe Aguirre	U.C. Berkeley	Empire Justice Center	*
Jill Rudge	Brooklyn Law School	Sanctuary for Families	*
Jonathan Hurley	Yale Law School	Bronx Defenders	*
Kathryn Kimball	American University Washington College of Law	Legal Services of NY	*
Katie Kavanagh	New York University School of Law	Legal Aid Society	*
Leah Glowacki	The University of Texas at Austin	CARECEN	*
Lindsay Mullet	Harvard Law School	Lutheran Social Services	*
Luis Rodriguez	Pace University School of Law	Catholic Charities Community Services	*
Matthew Johnson	James E. Roger College of Law at the University of Arizona	Immigration Equality	*
Natalie Maust	Northwestern University Pritzker School of Law	Legal Aid Society	*
Noelle Yasso	University of Pennsylvania School of Law	Catholic Migration Services	*
Razeen Zaman	Fordham University School of Law	Legal Services of NY	*
Setenay Akdag	Brooklyn Law School	Lutheran Social Services	*
Shanti Tharayil	University of Michigan Law School	Urban Justice Center	*
Annie Matthews	New York University School of Law	Neighborhood Defender Service	
Antonia House	New York University School of Law	Make the Road New York	
Christina Elhaddad	American University Washington College of Law	Arab American Association	
Danielle Alvarado	Northeastern University School of Law	CARECEN	
Gilda Holguin	Cardozo School of Law	KIND	
Grace Kao	Yale Law School	NYLAG	
John Travis	Boston University School of Law	Catholic Charities Community Services	
Jonathan Mulligan	UC Davis School of Law	Atlas: DIY	
Julina Guo	Harvard Law School	Sanctuary for Families	
Kellie MacDonald	Harvard Law School	American Friends Service Committee	
Kennji Kizuka	University of California Berkeley School of Law	Human Rights First	
Kristen Cates	Georgetown University Law Center	Safe Horizon	
Laura Rodriguez	Emory University School of Law	Immigration Equality	
Matt Boaz	Georgetown University Law Center	American Friends Service Committee	
Nabila Taj	City University of New York (CUNY) School of Law	Empire Justice Center	
Natalia Renta	Stanford Law School	Make the Road New York	
Nick Phillips	Cardozo School of Law	Pace Community Law Practice	
Paola Uriate	Brooklyn Law School	CALA- Central American Legal Assistance	
Samuel Dillon	Rutgers School of Law	Human Rights First	
Sussan Lee	Harvard Law School	MinKwon Center for Community Action	
Ting Poon	Brooklyn Law School	Brooklyn Defender Services	
Victor Cueva	Cardozo School of Law	MinKwon Center for Community Action	
Willie Giacofci	Roger Williams University School of Law	Safe Horizon	
Anna Oguntimein	David A. Clarke School of Law	Legal Services of NY	
Katie Madison	Yale Law School	KIND	

**Third-year Justice Fellows:** Palmer Lawrence (CARECEN), Sean Lai McMahon (Urban Justice Center), Kendal Nystedt (Make the Road New York), Janice Chua (Legal Services of NY), Caitlin Miner-Le Grand (City Bar Justice Center), Scott Coomes (CARECEN), Dave Wilkins (CALA)



# COMMUNITY FELLOWSHIP

Immigrant Justice Corps offers 10 Community Fellowships every year to recent college graduates with the linguistic fluency, passion, and cultural competency to work with diverse immigrant communities. Like Justice Fellows, they receive immigration law training. After placement in community-based organizations across the New York area, they conduct outreach, explore potential clients’ eligibility for immigration relief, and help clients with benefits applications. They refer complex cases to Justice Fellows. All the Community Fellows are Department of Justice accredited representatives that allows them to represent clients before USCIS. Embedded within immigrant communities, they serve as first responders in meeting the high demand for immigration legal services.

Community Fellows	Total
Community Fellows	20
Third-year Community Fellows	1 Community Fellow extended their Fellowship for a 3rd year.
Spanish speakers	15
Fellows speaking 3 or more languages	1
Languages Spoken	Arabic, Cantonese, French, Fujanese, German, Haitian Creole, Korean, Mandarin, Portuguese, Soninke, Spanish

# COMMUNITY FELLOW SPOTLIGHT



**Danyeli Rodriguez Del Orbe, a 2015 Community Fellow, met her client Iris at an IJC legal clinic in December 2016.**

That was one month after the presidential election, a fearful time for undocumented immigrants. Iris, middle-aged and suffering from a degenerative bone marrow disease, had resided in the United States for over 25 years. She lacked legal status, even though she had once been married to a U.S. citizen and has two adult U.S. citizen children. A few years earlier, her U.S. citizen spouse had petitioned for her to obtain a green card. But when she got sick, he had abandoned Iris and their children. That left Iris unable to proceed with her application for a green card. Her situation seemed hopeless.

Danyeli, however, went to work. She investigated Iris’s immigration history, eventually securing her immigration file from the Department of Homeland Security. In it, Danyeli found the

paperwork filed by Iris’s ex-spouse in the 1990s, which became the lynchpin of Iris’s case.

Through a now-defunct immigration law provision, which allowed non-citizens who had entered the country without authorization to legalize their status if they were beneficiaries of immigration petitions filed before April 30, 2001, Iris’s U.S. citizen daughters could re-petition her to become a green card holder by paying a \$1,000 fine. Working quickly, Danyeli prepared and filed the necessary applications. The government sent a receipt notice – evidence that Iris had a pending immigration benefit application and was thus eligible for Medicaid. Danyeli and a social worker helped Iris to enroll, and to schedule the medical treatment she desperately needed.

Recently, Iris underwent a successful bone marrow transplant. Her health is improving. Her prognosis is strong. And, thanks to Danyeli, Iris is on her way to obtaining a green card.

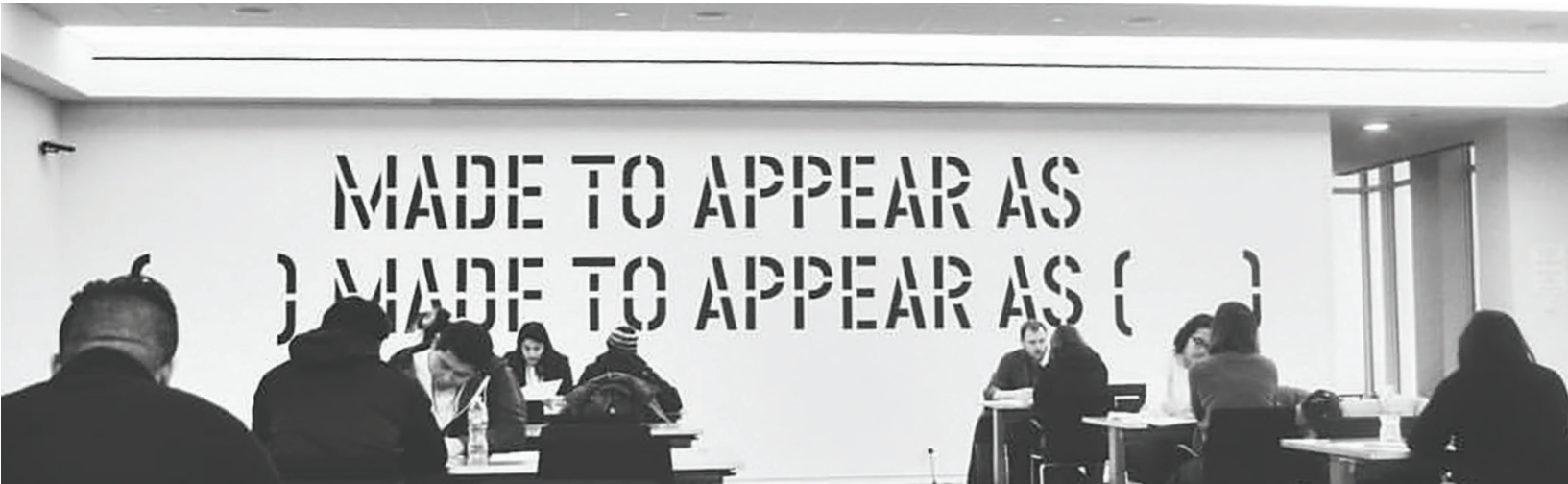
Iris’s case is one example of the direct impact our Fellows’ work is having on the lives of immigrant clients and the communities they live in. None of this work would be possible without the generous support of our funders!

# MEET THE FELLOWS



Name	University	Host Organization	Incoming Class
Arturo Urena	John Jay College of Criminal Justice	Part of the Solution (POTS)	*
Cassie Chee	Furman University	CARECEN	*
Geovanni Gutierrez Vivar	Hunter College	Public Health Solutions	*
Karen Normil	Brown University	Brooklyn Public Library	*
Kujegi Camara	Princeton University	Sauti Yetu	*
Sandra Guzman	University of California Berkeley	Legal Services of NY	*
Sergio Rodriguez Camarena	Pomona College	Project Hospitality	*
Shuping Deng	Franklin & Marshall College	Chinese Planning Council	*
Susanna Booth	Duke University	Arab American Association	*
Allie Mandeville	Yale University	Immigrant Justice Corps - AWC Project	
Anahi Mendoza	Harvard University	Human Rights First	
Danyeli Rodriguez del Orbe	John Jay College of Criminal Justice	Public Health Solutions	
Ethan Schneider	Yale University	Chinese Planning Council	
Jennifer Perez	University of Berkeley	Neighborhood Defender Service	
Joan Fernandez	Princeton University	CARECEN	
Mayra Melendez	Salisbury University	Empire Justice Center	
Omar De Los Santos	Yale University	Project Hospitality	
Paula Garcia Salazar	CUNY Macaulay Honors College	Part of the Solution (POTS)	
Stephanie Park	CUNY Macaulay Honors College	MinKwon Center for Community Action	
Whitney Braunstein	Tulane University	Brooklyn Public Library	

**Third-year Community Fellow:** Allison Gao (Atlas: DIY)







## ALUMNI REPORT

In August 2017, IJC graduated its second class of Fellows. Virtually all Justice Fellow alumni have remained in the field of immigration law, taking jobs as staff attorneys, officers with the Refugee Division of USCIS and Department of Labor, clerks with immigration courts, in academia and in private immigration practice. Our Community Fellows are also seeding the legal field; most Community Fellow alumni have taken the Law School Admissions Test. Five have already enrolled in law school.



**92%** of Justice Fellows and **70%** of Community Fellows continued in the immigration field.



Immigrant Justice Corps Alumni network includes **50** Justice Fellow Alumni and **21** Community Fellow Alumni.

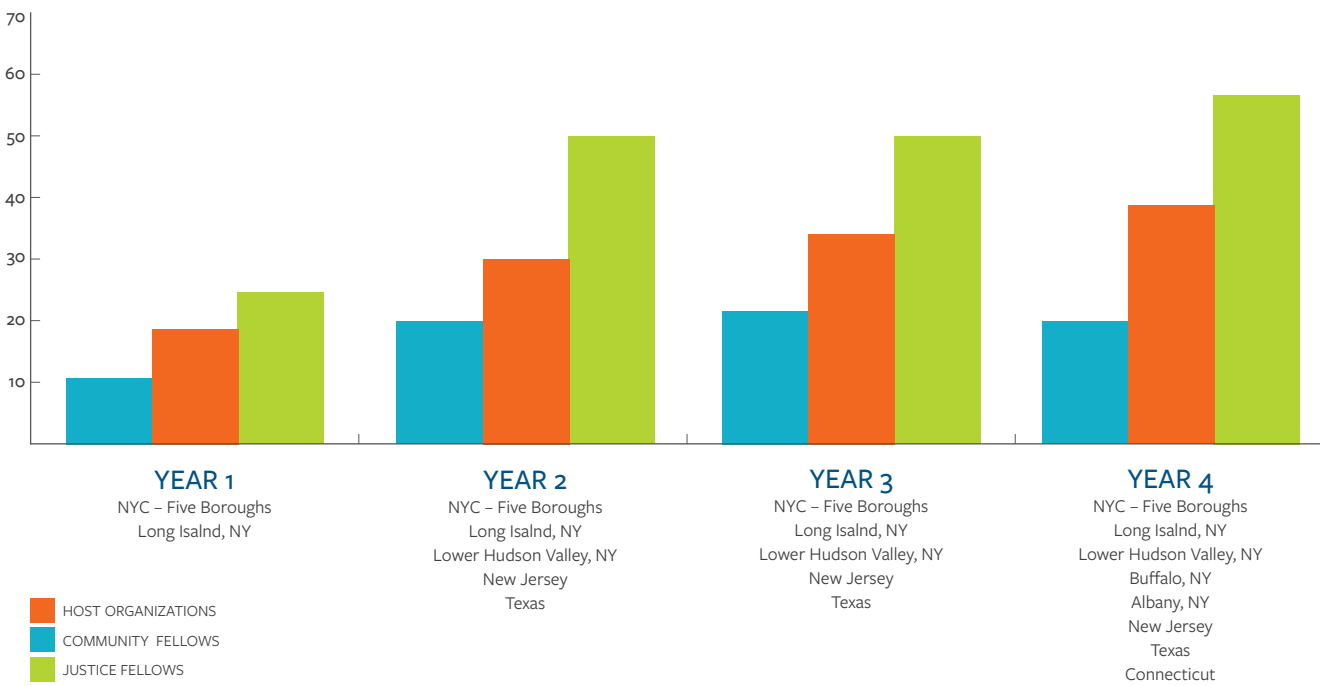
## IJC EXPANDS ACCESS TO COUNSEL

By placing Fellows where the need for immigration lawyers is extraordinary and availability limited, IJC has expanded access to counsel and improved the quality of representation.

The number of host organizations partnering with IJC has doubled, to 39 not-for-profit legal service and community-based organizations at the beginning of IJC’s fourth year, up from 18 at our inauguration in 2014. IJC has built capacity at small, medium and large organizations, with annual budgets ranging from \$500,000 to

\$20 million and staff sizes from 5 to 45. IJC has helped several small organizations create immigration practices from scratch.

Since 2015, Justice and Community Fellows have traveled to Karnes, Texas, on two-week and three-month rotations to provide critical legal assistance at the Karnes Family Detention Center. Fellows helped more than 1,000 detained Central American mothers and children who were at risk of deportation, despite having viable asylum claims.



“

The addition of two IJC Justice Fellows has made a significant impact in RAICES’ ability to serve detained families. The fellows have reenergized our team with new ideas and insight, and have taken on challenging and difficult legal issues with ease, demonstrating their high skill sets and ability to zealously represent our clients. We are grateful to IJC for providing this support to the mothers and children detained in Texas and hope that this partnership will continue.

”

– Manoj Govindaiah, Director of Family Detention Services, Refugee and Immigration Center for Education and Legal Services (RAICES) in San Antonio, Texas.



# LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

In 2015, Immigrant Justice Corps engaged with The Bridgespan Group, a non-profit consulting organization, to recommend strategies for expanding IJC’s program.

Bridgespan identified regions in the U.S. with the greatest need for immigration legal services. In launching its fourth year, IJC placed newly-recruited fellows in several of those regions: in New Haven, Connecticut; in Buffalo, Albany and Kingston, New York; and in San Antonio, Texas.

- In considering opportunities for future expansion, IJC looks for regions with:
- High demand for immigration legal assistance;
  - Strong host organizations with the ability to mentor IJC fellows;
  - Sustainable funding.



# LOW BONO PRACTICE

In September 2018, IJC plans to launch a low bono practice that will offer high-quality legal services to immigrants with incomes that make them ineligible for pro bono services.

- The practice will:**
- Meet demand for quality representation in underserved locations;
  - Train committed young attorneys and legal representatives to run a high-quality private practice, and;
  - Develop a sustainable, replicable business model based on reasonable fees and exceptional management.

IJC is uniquely positioned to pioneer a low bono practice because of its expanding talent pool, robust network of partners and record as a champion for justice.

# OUR STAFF & BOARD MEMBERS

- IJC STAFF**
- Jojo Annobil, Executive Director
  - Victoria Neilson, Legal Director
  - Emily Bormann, Operations Specialist
  - Samuel Palmer-Simon, Supervising Attorney
  - Harold Solis, Supervising Attorney
  - Leyda Taveras, Administrative Coordinator
  - Rosanna Eugenio, Part-time Supervising Attorney

- IJC BOARD MEMBERS**
- Sarah Burr, Assistant Chief Immigration Judge (Ret.)
  - Alina Das, Associate Prof. of Clinical Law and Supervising Attorney, NYU School of Law
  - Robert A. Katzmman, Chief Judge for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit
  - Stephani Khurana, Managing Director, Draper Richards Kaplan Foundation
  - Steve Kuhn, Co-Founder and President, ASK Charitable Foundation
  - Robert Morgenthau, Of Counsel, Wachtell, Lipton, Rosen & Katz
  - Robie Spector, Director, Robie & Scott Spector Charitable Fund
  - William Zabel, Partner, Schulte, Roth & Zabel

# DONOR LIST

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