



IMMIGRANT
JUSTICE
CORPS

2019-2020 Annual Report

Rosemary Gomez
Justice Fellow



Message from IJC's Executive Director

Dear IJC Family,

This past year has been momentous. We have seen huge victories and witnessed extreme courage in the face of injustice, but we have also experienced immense suffering and loss. In the fall of 2019, we welcomed our largest ever Class of Fellows and expanded our geographic footprint to 11 states and 33 cities. We moved into a brand new office to accommodate our growing staff and announced a groundbreaking two-year Access to Counsel Initiative in partnership with the Capital Area Immigrants' Rights (CAIR) Coalition. The initiative will build momentum for the universal representation movement and will provide representation to *all* Prince George's County, Maryland residents detained in immigration custody.


However, like the rest of the world, everything changed for us in March 2020 with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. We began working remotely and made the health and wellbeing of our Fellows, staff, and clients our top priority. We worked with our partners to advocate for common-sense policies regarding the operations of immigration agencies and adjudication of cases during the COVID-19 pandemic. We pushed for blanket extensions of deadlines, rescheduling adjudications with adequate notice, liberal granting of continuances, and waiving requirements difficult to comply with amid the current crisis, such as original photos.

In June, we were overjoyed by the U.S. Supreme Court's historic decision rejecting the Trump administration's attempt to terminate the DACA program. However, in response, the Trump administration has openly defied the Supreme Court by refusing to accept new DACA applications and announced plans to limit protections under the 2012 DACA policy.

Amid this news, the murder of yet another Black person at the hands of law enforcement sparked national outrage, and reopened conversations about the unique struggles of Black and Indigenous immigrants in America. Our work as immigration lawyers and advocates is rooted in fighting against systemic racism and systems of oppression and we stand in solidarity with those fighting for Black lives. We will continue to fight with them to achieve American ideals of justice, safety, and freedom.

I hope you will take a few moments to look at what we have accomplished together this past year. Through this unprecedented time we have remained committed to our mission. Now more than ever, we need passionate and well-trained advocates to hold our institutions accountable. We greatly appreciate your unwavering partnership and commitment to this critical work.

Onward,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jojo Annobil".

Jojo Annobil
Executive Director

About IJC

Immigrant Justice Corps is the first and only fellowship of its kind – recruiting promising new lawyers and advocates, training them to provide high-quality legal services, and mobilizing them to host organizations around the country to directly help immigrants in need.

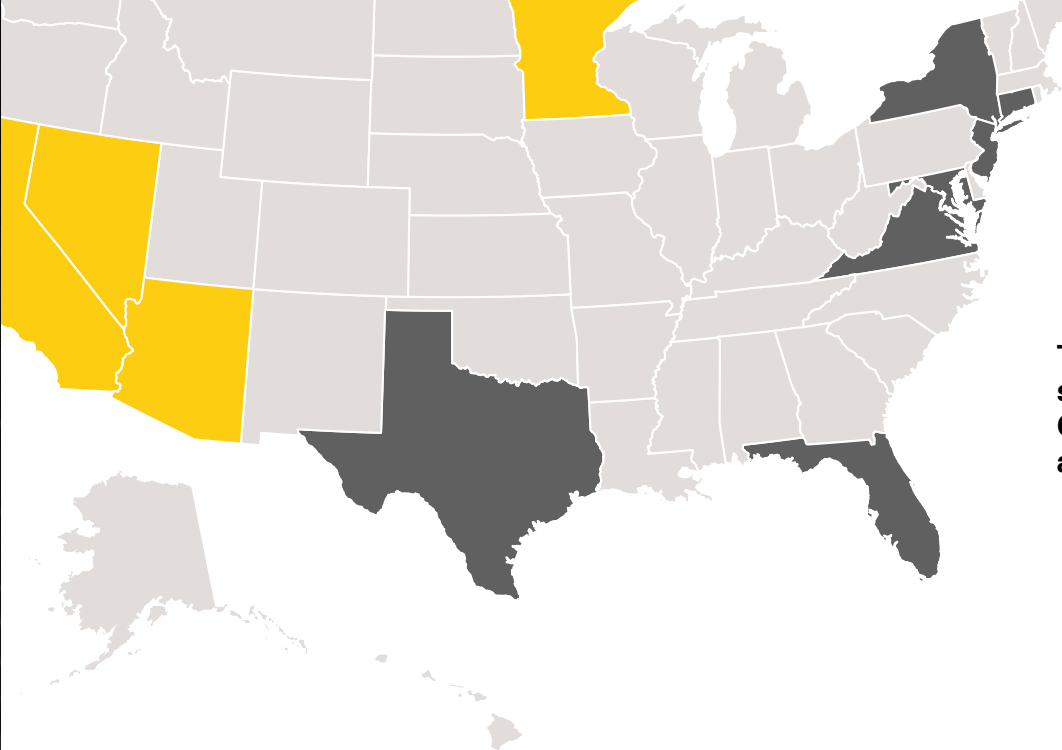
Immigrant Justice Corps is the visionary idea of the Hon. Robert Katzmann, of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, as a response to the crisis in legal representation for immigrants he saw every day as a federal judge. For immigrants facing the threat of deportation or pursuing lawful status and citizenship, quality counsel changes everything. Launched in 2014, IJC recruits and trains recent law school and college graduates annually and pairs them with premier legal services providers and community-based organizations for a two-year fellowship.

The Fellows have a 93% success rate in cases completed and closed.

Unlike in criminal and family court proceedings, immigrants facing deportation in immigration court do not have a right to counsel if they cannot afford one. Without counsel, most immigrants face a complex and adversarial system alone. Those with representation are six times more likely to see a successful outcome. IJC’s free counsel has delivered a 92% success rate in completed cases, in contrast to a 3% success rate when a detained immigrant is without counsel. All the Fellows are bilingual or multilingual, and many have first-hand experience with the immigration system, either as immigrants themselves or through their families. In the six years since its founding, IJC has trained over 200 lawyers and advocates, and is at this moment training 39 more - the incoming Class of 2020.

The Fellows have a 93% success rate in cases completed and closed, and 90% of the 125 Justice Fellows who have graduated from the program have secured employment in immigration or related fields, solidifying resources on the ground and ensuring that capacity is sustained. IJC Fellows are currently working in 33 cities across 11 states nationwide.

As the Fellowships help thousands of immigrants in need each year, IJC is developing the next generation of immigration lawyers and advocates and the shared knowledge of our growing coalition. Together, with our host organizations, we represent access to justice, hope for the future and the courage to stand up for what’s right. We believe that in ten years, every immigration organization in the United States will have been touched by an IJC Fellow.



This year we expanded services to Arizona, California, Minnesota, and Nevada.

Our Impact

75,000+
Since 2014, IJC has served over 75,000 immigrants and their family members.

92%
IJC Fellows win nearly 92% of the immigration cases they take on.

200+
IJC has trained and mobilized more than 200 Fellows to provide quality counsel and advocacy to date.

7,841
The number of clients served by IJC Fellows in 2019-2020

In 2019 – 2020:

- Fellows filed 389 fee waivers, saving clients over \$250,000.
- Justice Fellows screened 1,450 clients and opened over 1,300 new cases.
- Community Fellows screened 3,629 new clients and opened 976 new cases.
- Fellows closed over 1,000 full representation cases successfully, more than half of which were citizenship/naturalization cases.

Impact of COVID-19

The current health pandemic has impacted IJC's overall ability to provide services. COVID-19 and the resulting closures of USCIS have dramatically slowed adjudications of benefit applications and completely halted adjudications of green card and citizenship applications that require an interview. This development has exacerbated pre-existing issues at USCIS including long processing times, aggressive requests for additional evidence particularly in complex cases, and required interviews for a greater variety of application types - all of which require significant additional time and work of Fellows' and delay final adjudications.

A total of 21 immigrants, a third of whom had tested positive for Covid-19, died in detention this past year — the highest death toll since 2005.

Many of the immigration court non-detained dockets have been shut down since March and are slowly reopening. More than 365,000 immigrants have been impacted by the partial shutdown of the courts. An estimated 850,000 could be affected if the courts reopen immediately. This means that thousands of immigrants must wait three to four years to have their cases heard by an immigration court. The one docket not paused was the "detained docket" for immigrants held in ICE detention facilities, where there have been

reports of COVID-19 outbreaks. A total of 21 immigrants, a third of whom had tested positive for Covid-19, died in detention this past year - the highest death toll since 2005. Justice Fellows representing detained clients across the country have filed federal habeas petitions to obtain the release of clients to their families.

We are proud to highlight the excellent work that our Fellows have accomplished during this unprecedented time. Since March, our Fellows working with detained clients in California, New York, Florida, Maryland and Nevada have filed habeas petitions to obtain the release of hundreds of detained clients with the outbreak of COVID-19 at detention facilities. We have also held virtual clinics for unaccompanied children to ensure that they can apply for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) for children abused, abandoned or neglected by one or both parents. Community Fellows filed 17 emergency Temporary Protected Status (TPS) applications for New York City residents from Yemen after the application period was unexpectedly extended in February. In addition, IJC also rapidly shifted activities to protect its "DACA-mented" clients ahead of the Supreme Court decision on DACA in June 2020. We assisted all clients with employment authorization documents expiring in 2020 to submit their renewal applications before the Court's decision. Community Fellows are now focusing on renewing DACA for those with renewal dates in 2021, given the climate of uncertainty even after the Supreme Court ruling vacating the Trump administration's rescission of DACA.

Case Study

Janae Hakala Choquette
Class of 2019 Justice Fellow, Bronx Defenders

I represent a lawful permanent resident (LPR) from Jamaica who came to the U.S. when he was 17 years old. ICE detained him in September 2019 after calling and pretending to be police officers who needed his help with an investigation. Now ICE is trying to deport him based on a 13 year-old conviction. He only pled guilty because his father had a stroke during the year he spent in jail awaiting trial, which would have been his senior year of high school. His criminal defense attorney didn't warn him that the guilty plea would make him deportable, or ask about his immigration status. As a result, my client is also pursuing post-conviction relief in criminal court to vacate his conviction based on ineffective assistance of counsel.

We have raised several complex legal arguments challenging the government's charge that his conviction constitutes an "aggravated felony" or a "crime involving moral turpitude", deportable offenses under immigration law. The Immigration Judge denied our Motion to Terminate Proceedings (consisting of multiple briefs, hundreds of pages long) after allowing very limited oral argument and with no legal reasoning.

My client astutely observed, "*The DHS attorney might as well have been playing on his phone at the back of the room. He did and said almost nothing, and he knew nothing about my case. Your real opponent was the judge.*"

As a defense to deportation, we helped my client's father file a family petition for him. Once approved, this would allow my client to apply for adjustment of status with a criminal waiver, thereby becoming an LPR again. However, the Immigration Judge ruled that this form of relief was speculative because even if the family petition was approved it would take years for

an immigrant visa to become available for my client, due to a lengthy backlog. As a result, the Judge ordered my client removed.

We're in the process of appealing the Immigration Judge's decision. Recently, we had a small victory when the Board of Immigration Appeals remanded my client's case because the immigration judge failed to address one of the key arguments in our Motion to Terminate.

Because the Immigration Judge ruled that my client was subject to mandatory detention, he's been fighting his case from behind bars, through a pandemic, with no opportunity to request bond. Our team recently filed a habeas petition on his behalf in federal court arguing that my client's detention has become unreasonably prolonged in violation of his Fifth Amendment rights. We're hoping a federal judge will order a bond hearing soon.

Despite these hard and unjust circumstances, my client has shown incredible resilience. He is always cracking jokes, affectionately referring to me and my supervisor as "Superman and Wonder Woman," and constantly thanking us for our work on his case. He endures all of this for his family, especially his sick elderly father and 6 year-old son, who has been traumatized by the separation from his father.

My client would have been disqualified from New York's public defense program for immigrants facing deportation, known as NYIFUP, based on his conviction. My supervisor has said that no private attorney would have accepted his case because it's so complicated and labor intensive. **If it weren't for IJC, people like my client wouldn't have representation as they fight to stay with their families and communities.**

Justice Fellowship

Two-year Justice Fellowships are awarded to recent law graduates from around the country – individuals with tremendous talent, promise, and a demonstrated commitment to providing immigration legal services.

IJC matches Fellow candidates with our partnering host organizations based on the applicant’s experience and preference, gaps in services within the community, and particularized host organization needs.

Because our Fellows are placed at many different partnering host organizations, their experiences are almost entirely unique. Our host organizations’ practices span the gamut of immigration law specialties, serving an array of communities, working in a range of geographies, and focusing on niche areas of the law. Throughout the fellowship, Justice Fellows provide a broad range of aid to their clients – from removal defense, to affirmative and defensive asylum applications to securing special relief for juveniles and victims of crime, domestic violence or human trafficking.

First-Year Fellows

Name	School	Host Organization
Cindy Ramirez	UC Hastings College of the Law	BakerRipley (Houston)
Nora Searle	New York University School of Law	Bronx Defenders
Janae Hakala Choquette	Northeastern University School of Law	Bronx Defenders
Thomas Scott-Railton	Yale Law School	Bronx Defenders
Kevin Siegel	New York University School of Law	Brooklyn Defender Services
Jiyoon Kim	Northeastern University School of Law	Brooklyn Defender Services
Emilie Raber	University of Pennsylvania Law School	Building One Community
Rosemary Gomez	UC Hastings College of the Law	California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation (Fresno)
Jessie Boas	Fordham University School of Law	California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation (Sacramento)
Lesly Santos	Pace Law School	Catholic Charities Community Services of New York
Brenda Garcia	Michigan State University College of Law	Catholic Charities - Orlando
Tamara Anaie	Rutgers Law School	Center for Immigrant Representation
Amy Kimbel	UCLA Law School	Florence Immigrant Rights Project
Rebecca Taylor	USC Gould School of Law	Human Rights Foundation
Maya Sikand	New York University School of Law	Neighborhood Defender Services of Harlem
Rehana Jamal	Cardozo Law	New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG)
John Peng	University of Pennsylvania Law School	Prisoners' Legal Services of New York
Katrina Black	Harvard Law School	RAICES (Austin)
Mariana Negron-Quinones	CUNY Law School	Safe Passage
Alyssa Ramirez	New York Law School	The Door
Megan Eiman	The George Washington University Law School	The Long Island Project (IJC)
Paloma Guerrero	William S. Boyd School of Law at UNLV	University of Nevada Law, Las Vegas
Maria Marroquin	CUNY Law School	UnLocal
Emma Morgenstern	University of Pennsylvania Law School	Volunteers of Legal Service



Second- and Third-Year Fellows

Name	School	Host Organization
Ilana Herr	New York University School of Law	American Friends Service Committee
Erika Nyborg-Burch	Yale Law School	Bronx Defenders
John DeBellis	Columbia Law School	Brooklyn Defender Services
Marie Sutton	Chapman University Fowler School of Law	Capital Area Immigrant Rights' Coalition
Taqwa Elhindi	UC Berkeley School of Law	Capital Area Immigrant Rights' Coalition
Alejandra Aramayo	American University Washington College of Law	Catholic Charities Community Services of New York
Brizeyda Parada Umana	Elizabeth Haub School of Law at Pace University	Catholic Legal Services - Miami
Jasmine Brito	University of Florida Levin College of Law	Catholic Legal Services - Miami
Jose Miranda	Columbia Law School	Catholic Migration Services
Emily Niemel	Case Western Reserve, University School of Law	Kids in Need of Defense (KIND)
Emily Echeverria	Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law	Long Island Project (IJC)
Emerson Argueta	Fordham University School of Law	Long Island Project (IJC)
Diana Ricaurte	St. John's University School of Law	Long Island Project (IJC)
Lorena Espino-Piepp	Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law	Lutheran Social Services
Victor Cheng	City University of New York (CUNY) School of Law	Lutheran Social Services
Anjelica Mantikas	St. John's University School of Law	Make the Road New Jersey
Denia Perez	Quinnipiac University School of Law	Make the Road New York
Dalia Fuleihan	Boston University School of Law	New Haven Legal Assistance
Elizabeth Wu	Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law	UnLocal
Mary Slattery	Northeastern University School of Law	Prisoners' Legal Services of New York
Kate Richardson	Loyola University New Orleans College of Law	RAICES
Nicole Alanko	William & Mary Law School	Safe Horizon
Denise Feliciano	St. John's University School of Law	Safe Passage Project
Javeria Ahmed	Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law	Sauti Yetu
Allison Richman	Fordham University School of Law	The Door
Hanne Sandison	Harvard Law School	American Friends Service Committee
Dianna Michelle Martinez	Boston University School of Law	Central American Legal Assistance (CALA)
Kerry Battenfeld	University at Buffalo School of Law	Erie Volunteer Lawyers Project
Marisol Silva	University of Florida Levin College of Law	Immigrant Justice Corps
Sonya Chung	New York University School of Law	MinKwon Center for Community Action
Ben Haldeman	Univeristy of Connecticut School of Law	New Haven Legal Assistance
Elizabeth Fulton	Berkeley Law School	UnLocal

Community Fellowship

Community Fellows become partially accredited representatives through the Department of Justice’s Office of Legal Access Programs, allowing them to represent clients in legal matters before the Department of Homeland Security. They are placed in community-based organizations mostly in and around New York City as well as in other states.

Community Fellows spend most days meeting with clients, conducting legal screenings and completing applications for immigration benefits. Throughout the fellowship, Community Fellows carry their own caseloads and provide a broad range of representation, with the type of assistance depending on their host organization.

Some of our Community Fellows are “in-placed” which means that they are employees of IJC and work four days a week at a community-based organization or library site and one day a week at IJC headquarters where they receive supervision from IJC attorneys. Other Community Fellows are “out-placed” which means they become employees of their host organizations and receive supervision directly from legal staff at their host organizations.



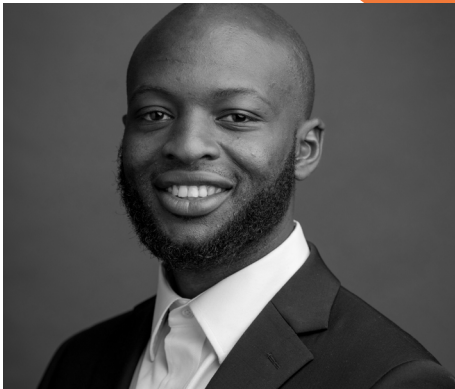
First-Year Fellows

Name	University	Host Organization
Sam Karnes	University of Texas at Austin	Arab American Association of New York
Ana Yanes Martinez	Carleton College	Brooklyn Public Library
Carlos David Aviles Castro	University of California Irvine	Building One Community
Patricia Wong	Williams College	Chinese-American Planning Council
ShoYoung Shin	Amherst College	MinKwon Center for Community Action
Cindy Zhunio	University of New Haven	New York Public Library
Jeffrey Vides Urrutia	Columbia University	Part of the Solution (POTS)
Rocio Mondragon	Georgetown University	Project Hospitality
Micaela Rodriguez Tovar	University of California, Santa Barbara	Queens Public Library
Abu Bakr Toure	Lehman College	Sauti Yetu
Brian Elizalde	Brown University	Texas RioGrande Legal Aid (TRLA)
Eduardo Garcia Castañeda	John Jay College of Criminal Justice	The Long Island Project (IJC)
Elisa Nunez Gutierrez	Brooklyn College	The Long Island Project (IJC)
Jacqueline Campos	Wellesley College	Unlocal

Second-Year Fellows

Name	University	Host Organization
Daad Sharfi	Yale University	Arab American Association of New York
Samantha Pascal	Columbia University	Brooklyn Public Library
Natali Limon	Columbia University	Center for Immigrant Representation
Neil Ren	Bucknell University	Chinese-American Planning Council
Diana Chacon	John Jay College	New York Public Library
Catalina Oido	Kenyon College	Part of the Solution (POTS)
Jacob Brescia-Weiler	Tufts University	Project Hospitality
Viridiana Inguanzo	UC Berkeley	Queens Public Library
Monica Naranjo	Wellesley College	The Long Island Project (IJC)
Geovanni Gutierrez-Vivar*	Hunter College	The Long Island Project (IJC)

*Denotes Fourth-Year Fellow



Our Host Organizations

American Friends Service Committee	Arab American Association of New York	BakerRipley (Houston)
Bronx Defenders	Brooklyn Defender Services	Brooklyn Public Library
Building One Community	California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation	Capital Area Immigrant Rights' Coalition
Catholic Charities - Orlando	Catholic Charities Community Services of New York	Catholic Legal Services - Miami
Catholic Migration Services	Center for Immigrant Representation	Central American Legal Assistance (CALA)
Chinese-American Planning Council	Erie Volunteer Lawyers Project	Florence Immigrant Rights Project
Human Rights Foundation	Immigrant Justice Corps	Kids in Need of Defense (KIND)
Long Island Project (IJC)	Lutheran Social Services	Make the Road - New Jersey
Make the Road - New York	MinKwon Center for Community Action	Neighborhood Defender Services of Harlem
New Haven Legal Assistance	New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG)	New York Public Library
Part of the Solution (POTS)	Prisoners' Legal Services of New York	Project Hospitality
Queens Public Library	RAICES	RAICES (Austin)
Safe Horizon	Safe Passage	Safe Passage Project
Sauti Yetu	Texas RioGrande Legal Aid (TRLA)	The Door
The Long Island Project (IJC)	University of Nevada Law, Las Vegas	UnLocal
	Volunteers of Legal Service	



Our Staff

- Jojo Annobil**
Executive Director
- Katherine Beck**
Supervising Attorney
- Andrea Bichan**
Development Director
- Christine Connolly**
Administrative Assistant
- Holly Cooper**
Communications Manager
- Julie Dinnerstein**
Supervising Attorney,
Center for Immigrant Representation
- Brenda Leon**
Office Manager,
Center for Immigrant Representation
- Shannon McKinnon**
Managing Attorney
- Sam Palmer-Simon**
Training and Capacity Building Manager
- Laura Shaw**
Data and Impact Analytics Manager
- Harold Solis**
Supervising Attorney
- Christa Stewart**
Deputy Director
- Leyda Taveras**
Operations Specialist
- Rosetta Williams**
Operations Director
- Wilfred Zamora**
Supervising Attorney

Our Board Members

- William Zabel**
Chair
- Rohit Sahni**
Treasurer
- Sarah Burr**
- Alina Das**
- Steve Kuhn**
- Robie Spector**
- Robert M. Morgenthau**
In Memoriam

Our Founder: Robert A. Katzmann

A black and white portrait of Paloma Guerrero, a woman with long dark hair, wearing a light-colored collared shirt, a dark tie, and a patterned blazer. The portrait is set against a dark background with diagonal stripes in orange, yellow, and light green.

Thank you to our incredible supporters, including:

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Zegar Family Foundation

Paloma Guerrero
Justice Fellow

The above are a selected list of institutions and individuals who contributed to IJC between September 2019 and August 2020, and do not represent all the incredible donors that supported our work this year. We apologize for any errors or exclusions and ask that you contact our team with any corrections at info@justicecorps.org.



Clockwise from top-left: Tamara Anaie, Justice Fellow; Elisa Nunez Gutierrez, Community Fellow; Eduardo Garcia Castañeda, Community Fellow; Lesly Santos, Justice Fellow.

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