Overview of Achievements, 2020-2021

Each year, The Door empowers 11,000 vulnerable New York City (NYC) youth to reach their full potential through an array of comprehensive services, including health and mental health care, career and education, legal services, crisis services, housing supports, arts, sports and recreational activities, and daily meals. Key to this continuum is the Legal Services Center (LSC), established in 1992. LSC staff ensure that low-income youth are provided with high-quality civil legal representation in matters including humanitarian immigration applications and public benefits. Fully integrated within The Door, all clients can be referred to any service, proving especially critical during the pandemic.

In the last year (4/1/20–3/31/21), we provided vulnerable low-income NYC youth (12-24) with critical support and resources to address civil legal needs. Specifically, we closed 1,433 cases, benefitting 1,638 people. Through clinics and assistance at Immigration Court, we provided pro se assistance to 8 youth, and we made 2,158 referrals to other services. We also educated 1,084 community members through trainings, workshops, and other forms of community education, and educated an additional 577 attorneys and law students (for a total of 1661 reached). We partnered with 270 pro bono attorneys and 8 law students, helping us expand our capacity to provide civil legal representation to immigrant youth.

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, we have remained responsive to young peoples’ needs by pivoting to a hybrid model, providing both remote and limited in-person services. This arrangement helped more clients access our services, as many juggle school, work, and personal responsibilities that ordinarily might prevent them from traveling to a meeting. LSC staff additionally recognized that the pandemic was negatively impacting other areas of youth’s lives, such as their employment, benefits, and basic needs, which made it difficult for them to fully engage in their legal cases. Staff focused on assisting youth in determining eligibility for public benefits, including unemployment and subsistence benefits. Additionally, we created a telephone hotline and COVID-19 Emergency Relief Fund, which distributed $13,000 to LSC immigrant clients in need who were largely excluded from government safety nets.

We have also continued to provide representation for unaccompanied children in federal custody through our Detained Minors Program, funded by the Vera Institute of Justice, through which we represent up to 300 children at four federal detention facilities. This past year, the LSC has also expanded our work with non-detained minors from Central America facing immigration proceedings and with immigrant youth who must affirmatively apply for relief. For example, we have partnered with Department of Education public schools to identify vulnerable students in need of immigration representation. To further expand our purview, we also hired a Managing Attorney for Policy and Special Projects to respond to policy changes through federal impact litigation, state and local legislative advocacy, and a sophisticated media strategy. Lastly, the LSC launched a project to conduct feedback loops to support immigrant youth who have been reluctant to connect other services at The Door, specifically mental health programming.

Population Served: Low Income Children and Youth

Area Served: New York City Metropolitan and Surrounding Area

Total Funding: $3,723,288

Total IOLA Grant: $137,500

Staffing - Full Time Equivalents:
- Total Staff: 39.00
- Lawyers: 23.00
- Paralegals: 8.00
- Other: 8.00
We are pleased to share two representative case studies (both immigration law) that highlight the critical and important work that IOLA has supported these past two years. Our Center’s Detained Minors Project took swift action to prevent the eleventh-hour deportation of one of our clients, a 14-year-old girl from Honduras who was in federal custody in New York. Our client fled Honduras after politically associated gangs killed her father, kidnapped and raped her sister, and stalked and threatened her entire family. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, ICE attempted to arrest and deport the minor in the middle of the night, with almost no warning. The Door filed for emergency relief in the Southern District of New York, and shortly before midnight (just a few hours before our client was to be put on a flight out of New York), a federal judge signed a Temporary Restraining Order enjoining our client’s removal. We are pleased that our LSC was able to prevent this minor’s wrongful deportation and that we can continue to support with services at The Door. This case also garnered national attention and her case, including her representation by The Door, has been featured on MSNBC, and profiled in The New Yorker.

Additionally, in the summer of 2020, a child was deported to Honduras based on a removal order he received through the Migrant Protection Protocol (MPP), just as he was on the verge of being released from federal custody and reunified with his aunt. After the Vera Institute of Justice connected the child with The Door’s LSC, we immediately accepted the case, and succeeded in reopening the child’s immigration court proceedings. Our team then worked tirelessly to negotiate with ICE and various embassies to issue the paperwork for the child’s return. Once the paperwork was ready in March 2021, the child’s attorney from The Door flew to Honduras to escort the child on his flight (as required by ICE), helped him through CBP in Atlanta (as a parolee), and then dropped him off at his aunt’s home in Long Island at 1:00 AM the following morning. The Door is now working on the child’s SIJS case and representing him in immigration court in New York. We are proud to have a small part in ensuring these children’s success in this country and to be able to offer them continued support.
## Other Services...

### Number of People Benefitted by Services Other Than Direct Legal Representation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Benefitted People</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,092 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Legal Education</td>
<td>1,084 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro Se Assistance</td>
<td>8 people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Other Legal Related Services: Overview

As a field leader in providing legal services for youth in NYC, we continued to offer a range of additional legal services in the past year, with most of these services being conducted remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Services included training workshops, referrals to other legal providers, and connections to social service supports, including mental health support groups. We provided community legal education and trained applicable providers and vested stakeholders on legal issues impacting youth in New York City, reaching a total of 1,084 people, including social service staff, youth, and other community members. Our usual targeted clinics for youth, the Emancipation and Runaway and Homeless Youth clinic, have been largely on pause this year due to the pandemic. We recently resumed virtual operations for the Emancipation clinic. We have also resumed the Runaway and Homeless Youth clinic, but because of the pandemic, this clinic, which largely depends on in person “walk-ins” and is not a natural fit for virtual services, has had low attendance. While our clinics provided pro se assistance to only 8 youth this year, with IOLA’s support over two years, we were able to surpass our goal of providing pro se assistance to 100 youth, as we have now reached 204 young people.

We also continued to refer youth to other supports this past year, including our on-site range of comprehensive services at The Door, in order to address other concerns while we pursue their legal cases. The Door’s LSC is unique, as we are embedded within a larger youth development agency. As such, all young people engaged in our services are aware of the resources within The Door’s suite of wraparound social services, which include career and education services, health and mental health care, crisis and runaway and homeless youth services, supportive housing, arts, daily nutritious meals, and a community of supportive staff and peers. This interdisciplinary structure and accessibility of our services provides an innovative and cost-effective way to serve youth impacted by social and economic instabilities.
Other Legal Related Services: Examples

In response to the new federal administration resuming DACA applications, we focused much of our training on providing DACA representation clinics to our pro bono partnering firms. Additional trainings we provided to community members included Know Your Rights trainings for youth and their families, and SIJS trainings on update policies relating to Family Court. All trainings have been conducted remotely as it remains unsafe to offer the trainings in person, due to the pandemic. However, we have found that offering virtual trainings increases participation and allows a great amount of people, no matter the location, to attend.

Additionally, in partnership with Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP, the Center offers a targeted Runaway & Homeless Youth (RHY) Clinic for youth who are without a stable home. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, this clinic was held on a walk-in basis during special programming hours at The Door’s RHY Drop-In Center—which typically serves 2,000 youth per year—to enable youth to meet with attorneys on their own terms and seek confidential support and advice, including aging out of the foster care system, criminal cases, name changes, and access to food stamps. During the pandemic, the RHY Clinic has operated virtually, and the pro bono volunteers work closely with our Senior Staff Attorney to appropriate schedule the clinic to best serve the target youth population. However, as explained above, this clinic has seen low attendance due to the pandemic.

Another service we offer is our bi-weekly Emancipation Clinic in partnership with Cahill Gordon & Reindel LLP, supporting foster case involved youth, youth who are living or independently from their parents, and youth without parental support. These clinics offer young people strategies and resources to access benefits, such as financial aid for college or public benefits. The clinics also offered youth alternative solutions for managing processes which usually require adult consent, such as enrolling in school. During the COVID-19 pandemic, in lieu of in-person clinics, our Senior Staff Attorney continued to provide legal services to youth remotely. The Emancipation Clinic began running again virtually in mid-February 2021, and we look forward to continuing to serve young people remotely in this manner.
**Impact Cases**

The Door is an institutional plaintiff in Immigrant Defenders Law Center, et al. v DHS, a case brought in the Central District of California to ensure that unaccompanied immigrant children, previously subject to the "remain in Mexico" or “Migrant Protection Protocols” (“MPP”), are given the full protections they are due under the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (TVPRA) the Due Process Clause of the Fifth Amendment to the United States Constitution, and the Flores Settlement Agreement. An Amended Complaint in this action was filed on February 12, 2021. If successful, this action could provide hundreds of unaccompanied children a path to having their immigration cases heard and decided on the merits, rather than being bound by any prior MPP procedures or outcomes.

The Door has submitted amicus briefs in Orellana-Medina v. Garland (3d Circuit) and Mateo Lucas v. Barr (10th Circuit), two cases challenging the government’s decision to issue orders of removal for children with approved Special Immigrant Juvenile Status, based solely on their inability to immediately adjust status, due to visa retrogression.

The Flores v. Barr and Lucas R. v. Azar cases are two actions in the Central District of California challenging the government’s treatment of minors in immigration detention. The Door has submitted several declarations in support of a motion for an emergency Temporary Restraining Order, demanding that the government promptly release children from detention due to the pandemic, and implement appropriate health precautions for detained children.

**Technology and Other Innovations**

We continue to offer multiple innovative ways for our clients to access services remotely, using technology, while the pandemic and public health guidance prevents us from operating full-time in-person services. The Center’s staff communicates with our young people via email, phone, and videoconferencing. As mentioned in Section A., the LSC also created a hotline to make our services more accessible for young people seeking civil legal assistance. The use of technology has improved our communication with clients in many ways, as they are able to access their legal services without having to sacrifice time in school or at work, and without the demands of often lengthy commutes.

Beyond our response to COVID-19, we make use of technology on a daily basis to deliver our range of services. We record and analyze data in Salesforce, which allows us to maintain data on client demographics, case notes, and case status, while maintaining client confidentiality. Through Salesforce, the Director is also able to track client outcomes and ensure case quality. We also use Salesforce to evaluate how our clients are accessing The Door’s services, to better support their overall health and wellbeing.
Significant Collaborations

In the last year, we initiated new collaborations to enhance our impact by working with other organizations committed to high-quality civil legal services. We also strengthened our existing collaborations with legal services providers, private bar organizations, and community-based organizations.

In the past year, our Managing Attorney for Policy and Special Projects focused on national collaborations by pioneering a new immigration policy and advocacy agenda, in partnership with nonprofits and community-based organizations, to address systemic injustices impacting the young people we serve at The Door. We met with the Health and Human Services Transition Team to advocate for the human rights of detained minors and for better oversight of the facilities that are charged with their care. Also, in February 2021, the Legal Services Center launched a national advocacy coalition to reform the Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) backlog, which prevents our clients from obtaining Green Cards, despite being legally eligible. The coalition includes lawyers, immigrant youth, child welfare organizations, cities, and other national stakeholders who are dedicated to ending the SIJS backlog.

In addition to these recent updates, we also continued to partner with other legal providers to respond to changes in immigration policy and provide additional support to immigrant youth through targeted referrals and advocacy. We work most closely with our partners in the ICARE Coalition to coordinate on the provision of legal services for unaccompanied minors, particularly in light of the very high numbers of minors crossing and anticipated to cross the border. We continued collaborations with numerous legal services providers to ensure that we are providing the best care for youth in detention through our work under our Vera Institute of Justice grant. On a local level, we collaborated with KIND and Catholic Charities to share best practices on direct representation and other legal services for youth in detention in NYC; and we also collaborated with the AG’s office, Disabilities Rights NY, and the New York Civil Liberties Union. Further, on a national level, we have launched a collaboration with the Young Center, which provides advocacy for youth in detention.

This past year, we also continued to work regularly with many organizations to provide educational referrals, foster care supports, health insurance and benefits enrollment, ESOL, and shelter services, including: New Immigrant Community Empowerment, Make the Road NY, the Hispanic Federation, Ecuadorian-American Cultural Center, La Casa de Don Pedro, NYC Office of Adult Continuing Education, York College Learning Center, Pathways to Graduation, NYC DOE Family Welcome Center, Asociacion de Tepeyac, Catholic Charities of NY, NYC Human Resources Administration, Lenox Hill Neighborhood House, NYC Health & Hospitals, Public Health Solutions, CAMINANDO, Terra Firma Clinic at the Children’s Hospital at Montefiore, NYC Administration for Children’s Services, Manhattan Comprehensive Night and Day High School, The High School for Health Professions and Human Services, City-As-School High School, the Covenant House New York, Ali Forney, and Manhattan Business Academy. Finally, the LSC’s four embedded licensed social workers have established partnerships with over 20 mental health providers for youth who may be suffering from extreme trauma and are in need of mental health supports.
We appreciate the help of many private attorneys and volunteers in delivering our wide array of legal services, especially supporting young people in need of legal assistance during a pandemic. We worked with 270 pro bono attorneys to help us ensure effective service provisions for NYC youth in need of civil legal services over the reporting period.

We are pleased to report that our Pro Bono Managing Attorney has continued to expand our reach in the provision of legal services for immigrant youth in NYC, enabling us to greatly increase our capacity to serve more youth. She has connected with firms’ pro bono counsel and circulated a monthly newsletter to prospective and partnering firms with success stories from partners, practice tips, and summaries of cases available for pro bono placement. As a result, she has increased our pro bono partnerships from 24 to 31 in the past year. She has also ensured that as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to prevent the re-opening of New York Family and Immigration courts, both clients and their attorneys are well equipped to spring back into action as soon as courts begin regularly hearing cases.

We also maintained partnerships with 2 firms and one retired attorney to continue offering legal clinics to support youth in exploring their legal options and needs. For instance, we offered an Emancipation Clinic in partnership with Cahill Gordon & Reindel LLP. Additionally, with Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP, we offered a weekly Runaway and Homeless Youth clinic. As noted above in Section C, these clinics were paused through much of the pandemic, but are starting to run again virtually. Finally, David Werber, our long-time volunteer partner and retired Legal Aid attorney, operated a weekly Street Law Clinic at our main headquarters and satellite Bronx Youth Center to support young people with crime-related matters.

We also relied on the support of 8 law student interns (both summer and term-time) and various Fellows, including two Fellows sponsored by Norton Rose Fulbright. The contributions of private attorneys and volunteers have been crucial to maintaining the high volume of cases we handle, and further support our clients gaining access to the highest quality of care.

### Pro Bono Volunteer Involvement

- **Attorneys:** 270 Volunteers, 6,750 Hours
- **Law Students:** 8 Volunteers, 2,546 Hours

### Sources Of Funding

- **IOLA Grant:** $137,500
- **Foundations:** $668,000
- **State Funding:** $176,186
- **City and County Funding:** $1,212,385
- **Other:** $1,529,217
- **TOTAL:** $3,723,288