Overview of Achievements, 2018-2019

The work done by Catholic Charities Community Services (CCCS) is rooted in the mission to uphold the dignity of every immigrant and build a just, compassionate society. Our immigration services include advice and counsel; assistance with immigration applications and deportation defense; a robust information and referral system; and community education about immigration law and policy developments. During the reporting period, CCCS continued to complement traditional direct legal services with innovative service delivery methods - including community legal clinics in underserved areas, self-help workshops, telephonic legal orientations, and phone banks - to:

- Intake 7,114 people in need of immigration advice and provide 4,517 with in-depth legal counsel and advice on a rolling basis at 10 sites in NYC and the Lower Hudson Valley, NYC public schools, rotating monthly community legal clinics, and the Immigration Court Helpdesk.
- Close 1,436 immigration cases (1,253 through administrative agency decisions and 183 through immigration and family court decisions), obtaining legal benefits that include 312 naturalizations, 171 green cards, 195 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals renewals and 64 asylum grants.
- Accept close to 1,300 new cases for representation, provide more than 1,875 additional legal services to existing clients, and file more than 3,800 legal submissions.
- Provide Know Your Rights presentations to close to 3,600 New Yorkers about changes in immigration policy, how to prepare for immigration enforcement actions, and how to avoid being defrauded by unscrupulous immigration providers.
- Provide telephonic orientations to 2,173 custodians of unaccompanied minors throughout the US.
- Partner with other agencies and ethnic-language media to conduct 3 phone banks that answered close to 3,000 calls about NaturalizeNY (a program that helped low-income New Yorkers pay for their citizenship applications) and the proposed public charge regulations.
- Operate the NYC Immigration Court Helpdesk, a program that leverages staff expertise with volunteer lawyers and law students to orient unrepresented immigrant respondents to the deportation hearing process, inform them about their rights and possible relief from removal, provide targeted referrals, and assist those who cannot secure legal representation through self-help workshops that provide pro se assistance with applications for asylum and work authorization, motions to reopen, motions to change venue, and changes of address with the immigration court.

Population Served: Low Income Immigrants and Refugees

Area Served: New York City and 7-County Area of Lower Hudson Valley

Total Funding: $7,420,994

Total IOLA Grant: $160,000

Staffing - Full Time Equivalents:

- Total Staff: 75.00
- Lawyers: 27.00
- Paralegals: 16.00
- Other: 32.00
Amina is a democracy activist who has been calling out the government of Niger for their human rights violations and their crushing of political dissent. Members of her family had been detained, tortured, and assassinated by the ruling government because of the family’s support for an opposition party. CCCS represented Amina before the Asylum Office, which granted her asylum application in the spring of 2018. CCCS is now assisting Amina with an asylee relative petition for her minor child, who is in hiding. Through CCCS, Amina was placed at a woman’s shelter and was assisted by our Refugee Resettlement Department to access the benefits she is entitled to as an asylee and which are helping smooth her transition to life in the US: Medicaid to treat a chronic condition, and resume and career counseling. Amina is also enrolled in a full-time English-language program. When she is not learning English, working, or focusing on her health, Amina is advising and empowering other members of the Nigerien community in New York to advocate for change.

Melanie is a Guinean woman who has undergone female genital mutilation (FGM), and has been very ill with AIDS and hepatitis B. Many years ago, she applied for asylum but was ordered deported. Another organization had obtained deferred action for her three times but this did not seem to be a possibility under the current administration. Our lawyer submitted a motion to reopen her deportation order to the Board of Immigration Appeals, which was granted based on the severity of her diagnoses and new case law on FGM. The case will likely be remanded back to the NJ Immigration Court where the deportation order was issued. Our strategy going forward is to move to change venue to NYC and to renew the request for asylum based on her medical records and new case law.
Other Services...

Number of People Benefitted by Services Other Than Direct Legal Representation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Number of People</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>31,616 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community legal Education</td>
<td>15,849 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro Se Assistance</td>
<td>15,767 people</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Overview of Legal Related Services

CCCS legal staff continuously engages in community legal education, providing information to immigrant communities and agencies that serve these communities, on issues including: paths to lawful immigration status and/or citizenship; recent changes in immigration policies, such as proposed public charge regulations; rights during immigration enforcement actions, avoiding and combating scams against immigrants, etc. During the reporting period, CCCS conducted 62 Know Your Rights presentations, reaching close to 3,600 people and distributing more than 7,160 informational materials developed by our staff and other agencies on immigrant rights during raids and stops, the proposed public charge regulations, and how to avoid becoming a victim of immigration services fraud.

CCCS also provides pro se assistance through the Immigration Court Helpdesk (ICH) and distributes self-help printed materials through its LOPC Call Center. ICH self-help workshops expand access to justice for those who face deportation proceedings without representation. Under current law, asylum applicants must submit their applications within one year after arriving in the US. Given ever-growing backlogs in immigration court, which have been exacerbated by the government shutdown in the winter of 2018-2019 and by the increasing number of asylum-seekers, meeting this deadline has become nearly impossible for those who are unrepresented and thus unaware of the requirement, how to complete the application in an unfamiliar language, or filing procedures. During the reporting period, through the ICH self-help workshops, CCCS attorneys assisted with 313 pro se applications and motions, including applications for asylum and work authorization, motions to reopen, motions to change venue, and changes of address with the immigration court.

Since 2013, the LOPC Call Center has played an important role in linking custodians (and the minors entrusted to their care) with sources of legal information about the immigration court process, eligibility for immigration benefits, and ways to protect minors from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and trafficking. Originally charged with setting up appointments for Know Your Rights presentations to parents and custodians of unaccompanied immigrant children at 15 different locations in the US, the Call Center also sends out self-help packages and provides telephonic orientations to minors and custodians who cannot attend legal orientations in person because they are hundreds of miles away from one of the 15 existing locations. During the reporting period, the Call Center mailed self-help packages to 15,436 custodians and minors, almost double the number sent during the previous year.
Other Legal Related Services Examples

- In April 2018, conducted 2 trilingual presentations – English, Spanish, and French - on the law and process of naturalization for 63 ESOL students of the Mid-Manhattan Adult Learning Center.

- In the summer of 2018, started to provide updates about important immigration changes - including the new USCIS policy of placing certain immigrants in removal proceedings upon denying their applications, the new policy of denying applications without asking for additional evidence if that evidence was not submitted with the initial application, and the proposed public charge rule – while people waited to be seen during our weekly Thursday intake sessions. Between July 26 and September 27, more than 500 immigrant New Yorkers were informed about these policy changes.

- In March 2019, following a call from an immigrant patient afraid that he would be deported for accessing medical services, presented on recent developments affecting NYC immigrants, including the proposed public charge changes, to 40 department heads at the NYU Langone Hospital in Sunset Park, Brooklyn.

Significant Collaborations

- **ActionNYC** is a multi-pronged citywide initiative providing immigration legal services at scale and to build capacity within legal and community-based organizations by supporting those organizations and partnered legal service providers to conduct targeted outreach, comprehensive immigration legal screenings and application assistance. For the last 3 years, CCCS has participated in this innovative, coordinated citywide initiative, on several levels: i) 2 teams of CCCS attorneys and paralegals rotate through community schools with high foreign-born populations to provide free immigration legal screenings, application assistance, complex representation before immigration authorities and NYS family courts for immigrant students and their families; ii) CCCS operates the citywide scheduling system for ActionNYC appointments; and iii) CCCS attorneys assist with training new ActionNYC staff and volunteers.

- **Phone Banks.** The New Americans Hotline regularly partners with the media and legal staff from other non-profits to set up large-scale, televised informational phone banks in response to developments that affect immigrant communities. Phone banks are held during prime-time hours on 2-3 consecutive evenings; during this time, CCCS staff and volunteers from partner agencies answer hundreds of calls, providing accurate information and referrals to non-profit legal service providers. In addition to answering calls, CCCS reaches a much wider audience: during phone banks, our attorneys give live interviews related to immigration policies and developments; the broadcast also features interviews with our legal staff that are pre-recorded in anticipation of the event; and some phone banks culminate with a Facebook Live panel of experts answering questions posed online. In response to the government issuing proposed changes to the “public charge” regulations in September 2018, CCCS worked with the NY Immigration Coalition, partners at other non-profits, city and state agencies, and Univision and *El Diario*, to host a “public charge” phone bank on the evenings of October 2 and October 3, 2018 followed by a Facebook Live panel of experts on October 4. With the assistance of more than 25 volunteers, the Hotline answered more than 830 calls in about 6 hours and provided more than 1,230 referrals to callers. The Facebook Live one-hour segment, during which 3 experienced attorneys answered questions about the proposed changes, reached more than 14,100 people and got more than 4,100 views.
Other Services...

Technology and Other Innovations

In February 2019, CCCS formally launched a new platform to support its statewide pro bono program: CatholicCharitiesNYProBono.org. The platform provides volunteers the ability to review new cases, sign up to take cases, sign-up to participate in community legal clinics in their area, and access training materials and practice templates. The platform is expected to greatly assist CCCS in its support of pro bono volunteers, putting many of the training and substantive resources they need to provide quality representation at their fingertips. CCCS’ pro bono team will continue to supplement online resources with technical assistance and specialized supervision.

Trainings

CCCS offers training and professional development to its managers. Trainings are conducted in person and are typically single day, six hour-long sessions. Topics offered include Sexual Harassment, Behavioral Interviewing, Managing within the Law, Diversity, Workplace Etiquette, Training for 1st-Time Managers, Teambuilding and Coaching, etc. All CCCS staff members are required to attend a safe environment training that covers valuing diversity, harassment awareness, confidentiality and ethics.

In addition, all of CCCS’ legal staff undergo thorough and continuous legal immigration training, mostly through free and low-cost legal trainings offered by the NY Immigration Coalition and the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC). During the reporting period, 54 staff members attended 70 trainings on various immigration topics, including legal ethics, advanced issues in asylum law, immigration consequences of criminal convictions, working with victims of trafficking and sexual violence, etc.

In February 2019, CCCS partnered with CLINIC and NITA to provide a 3-day intensive training for 32 attorneys – mostly from CCCS, but also other local service providers – on trial skills. One attendee stated “The course was extremely helpful – as someone who did not take any trial advocacy classes in law school, I found this to be effective, well-timed and a good crash course in trial advocacy.”

CCCS also organizes, facilitates and encourages its legal staff – and in particular those who work with unaccompanied minors, victims of torture and victims of domestic violence – to attend mindfulness and self-care trainings which are offered at our main office.

Last but not least, CCCS encourages its administrative support staff to attend webinars through Skillpath, on topics ranging from clear communication to supporting multiple projects. Once per year, CCCS hosts an all-day workshop for its administrative and support staff on a topic such as business writing or working with EXCEL.
Pro Bono Volunteer Involvement

During the reporting period, CCCS hosted 86 law student volunteers – including 10 interns from the St. John's Law School full-year immigration clinic, each of whom spent 12 hours per week working on cases in our office – who provided more than 12,000 hours of assistance with various CCCS initiatives, including the Immigration Court Helpdesk. CCCS uses Liberty Defense Project funding to develop and manage a statewide pro bono program and to recruit volunteer attorneys for our community legal clinics. CCCS’ Pro Bono team places cases both internally with supervised law student interns and externally with volunteer attorneys recruited from across the state. These volunteers are lawyers of all stripes – large law firm attorneys, solo and small firm practitioners, nonprofit legal service attorneys who wish to do pro bono work in an area outside of their regular practice, and attorneys who use their education and skills to work in professions outside of the law. Unlike the majority of other pro bono referral projects, nearly 60% of our volunteers are solo or small firm attorneys who do not come from large law firm practices. About 46% of these practitioners hail from outside of NYC, from the Hudson Valley to Onondaga County.

During the reporting period, 61 lawyers donated 651 hours of their time to CCCS clients. The law students and volunteer lawyers were aided by 300 other volunteers, who assisted with interpretation, document translation, and administrative and logistical support for the Immigration Court Helpdesk and the community legal clinics for a total of more than 4,360 hours.

Pro Bono Statistics

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<th>Category</th>
<th>Volunteers</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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<td>Attorneys</td>
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<td>657</td>
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<tr>
<td>Law Students</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>12,037</td>
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<td>Other Volunteers</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>4,366</td>
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Sources Of Funding

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<tr>
<th>Source</th>
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<td>State Funding</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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Catholic Charities Community Services, Archdiocese of New York.