Overview of Achievements

Each year, The Door empowers up to 11,000 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. The LSC ensures that low-income youth are provided with high-quality civil legal representation in matters including access to higher education and vocational services, humanitarian immigration applications, public benefits, and the right to safe and supportive foster care placements. Fully integrated within The Door, LSC clients can be referred to any service, proving especially critical during the continuing pandemic.

In the last year (4/1/21–3/31/22), we provided low-income NYC youth (ages 12-24) with critical support and resources to address civil legal needs. Specifically, we handled 2,336 matters and closed 2,216 cases, benefiting 2,347 people. We are proud to have made significant progress towards our goals of closing 2,400 cases, overall benefiting 2,800 people. We also provided pro se assistance to 45 youth and we made 2,944 referrals to other services. We educated 1,932 community members through trainings, workshops, and other forms of community education, and we also provided training to 176 attorneys, and conducted 159 meetings with Congressional staff. We partnered with 306 pro bono attorneys and 9 law students, helping us expand our capacity to provide civil legal representation to immigrant youth.

Population Served: Low Income Children and Youth

Area Served: New York City Metropolitan and Surrounding Area

Total IOLA Grant: $137,500

Staffing Full Time Equivalents:
- Total Staff: 43
- Lawyers: 17
- Paralegals: 12
- Other: 14
Direct Legal Services: Cases

Our LSC received a referral from a local high school, of a female student who was the victim of gender-based violence. We determined she was eligible for both asylum and SIJS but was about to age out of eligibility for SIJS. An LSC attorney quickly began preparing emergency guardianship and special findings hearings in Family Court and then filed her SIJS petition with USCIS.

While our LSC worked on her SIJS case, we partnered with a Pro Bono partner, Sullivan and Cromwell, to represent her on her asylum case. Our client was eventually granted both asylum and SIJS.

Unfortunately, our client learned that family members in her home country of Benin were unable to continue caring for her 3-year-old son and he was at risk of being placed in an orphanage. Our Pro Bono partners began prepping a Petition for Asylee Relative and a Humanitarian Parole application in order to promptly reunify our client with her young son. Our client was then illegally evicted from her apartment. Our LSC civil attorneys provided advice and counsel to the client on her options in housing court. She ultimately decided to move to a different apartment. We are pleased to have assisted our client in obtaining both SIJS and Asylum status, prepared petitions to reunify her with her 3-year-old son in the US, and to have provided her with advice and counsel on collateral civil needs.
Direct Legal Services: Cases

We also represented a young man from Bangladesh in removal proceedings. Although at the time he entered the US, he was a minor, ICE treated him as an adult, and he was placed in an adult detention facility. We later learned that ICE had subjected him to a dental scan and claimed that the dental scan demonstrated he was likely to be an adult, ignoring documentary evidence of his true date of birth. Sole reliance on dental scans as proof of age is no longer an accepted ICE policy. Nevertheless, USCIS relied on this scan to deny his SIJS petition, alleging he was not under the age of 21 at the time he submitted his petition. LSC worked with the Innocence Project to obtain an expert declaration regarding the faulty science used in the dental scans and prepared a motion to reopen and reconsider the denial. USCIS ultimately reopened his case and granted his petition for SIJS, permitting our client to now seek dismissal of removal proceedings before the Immigration Court.

Impact Cases

**Alvarado Alfaro v. AG**
The Door has submitted amicus briefs in Alvarado Alfaro v. AG, (3d Circuit), Galvez v. Renaud (9th 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 Door is also a Plaintiff in a Complaint filed in August 2021, by Millbank, following USCIS’ failure to comply with an April 2021 FOIA request for data that is necessary to examine trends in the treatment of immigrant children under the SIJS statute, a matter of urgent importance affecting the well-being of tens of thousands of vulnerable immigrant youth.

**Immigrant Defenders Law Center, et al. v DHS**
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. Plaintiff’s Renewed Motion in Support of Preliminary Injunction was filed on November 23, 2021, Plaintiff’s Reply Brief to the Government’s Motion to Dismiss was filed on June 3, 2021, and Plaintiff’s Reply Brief in support of Plaintiff’s Motion for Preliminary Injunction was filed on January 20, 2022. If successful, this action could provide hundreds of unaccompanied children with a path to having their immigration cases heard and decided on the merits, rather than being bound by any prior MPP procedures or outcomes.
Other Services: Overview

The Door continued to offer a range of additional legal services in the past year in order to provide NYC youth with holistic and comprehensive support. We offered training workshops, referrals to other legal providers, and connections to social service supports, including mental health support groups. We also provided community legal education and trained applicable providers and vested stakeholders on legal issues impacting NYC youth, reaching a total of 1,932 people, including social service staff, youth, and other community members. Our usual targeted clinics for youth, the Emancipation, Street Law, and Runaway and Homeless Youth clinic, were largely on pause in the past year; however, throughout the year we offered the Emancipation clinic virtually and we resumed the Runaway and Homeless Youth in-person clinics in March 2022. The clinics largely depend on in-person “walk-ins” and thus, are not a natural fit for virtual services. We hope to see additional youth attending the Runaway and Homeless youth clinic now that it is being conducted in-person. We are grateful to be able to continue providing pro se assistance to youth in the coming year, working towards our goal of serving 100 youth.

We also continued to refer youth to other supports this past year, including our on-site suite of comprehensive services at The Door, in order to address any barriers they may be facing while we pursue their legal cases. The Door’s LSC is unique as it is embedded within a larger youth development agency. This structure enables our staff to eliminate the silos in delivering coordinated, supportive services, and allows us to provide assistance for young people’s legal and other multi-faceted needs. As highlighted above, each time a young person completes an intake assessment with the LSC, they work with an attorney and a social worker in the process. Thus, the social worker can easily conduct warm hand-offs to The Door’s suite of wraparound social services, including 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.

Number of People who Benefitted from Services Other Than Direct Legal Representation

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<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Legal Education</td>
<td>2,091</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pro Se Assistance</td>
<td>45</td>
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2,136 People Benefitted by Services Other Than Direct Legal Representation
Other Services: Trainings

The Door continues to connect our staff with several internal and external training opportunities to promote their continued education and professional development. As in prior years, all staff receive a New Employee Orientation, which provides an overview of youth development principles that informs The Door’s direct service delivery and procedures for new staff, and all staff attend Trauma-Informed Crisis Intervention training. Additionally, in the past year The Door began offering monthly meeting for all managers to receive specific management training; so far, this group has discussed how to give constructive feedback and have been reviewing the RACI matrix. Within the LSC, we offered several trainings to new attorneys, which included overviews of our civil legal services, immigration relief pathways, best practices for representing clients in court, and best practices for maintaining clients’ case information. Staff are also trained by social workers in working with young clients, with an emphasis on cultural competencies and how to elicit sensitive information from trauma survivors. Newly implemented this past year, all new attorneys participated in a mock trial advocacy training covering topics like appearing in court and representing clients in adversarial trials, which we plan to conduct yearly. Staff also recently created a mentorship program in which senior legal staff match with new legal staff to provide mentorship and guidance with regards to professional goals.

We also welcomed experts from other departments and organizations to train our staff this past year. For example, LSC staff attended the New York Asylum & Immigration Law Conference, held by New York Law School, in which attendees discussed the ever-changing landscape of asylum law, particularly as it applies to the recent surge of Afghan asylum seekers. Further, we partnered with the SANAR Institute to offer staff individual wellness sessions and they conducted a mini retreat, in which attendees worked as a group to discuss how to make their work sustainable while working within the confines of our current immigration legal system. Staff wellness was an important priority for our department in the past year; we also partnered with the SANAR institute to provide trainings and resources for staff on vicarious trauma and boundaries.

Lastly, Racial Equity and Inclusion (REI) work is both a priority for the LSC and for The Door as a whole, so we invested in multiple opportunities over the past year to educate and train staff. We welcomed Kenya Crawford, a consultant on anti-racism, equity, and mental health, to train staff on REI principles, as they are relevant to our legal services provision. Additionally, the senior leaders of the LSC joined a two-day REI workshop, “Racial Equity in Practice: Building Blocks for Race Informed Work,” held by Race Matters Institute to learn how to provide culturally competent services for youth.
Other Services: Technology and Other Innovations

In response to pandemic-related restrictions, The Door has continued to expand our use of technology to offer multiple ways for our clients to access services remotely, even as we welcome youth back into our space. LSC staff have communicated with our young people via email, phone, and videoconferencing. The LSC also utilized our agency-wide text line and LSC hotline to contact youth and distribute information for young people seeking assistance. The use of technology has improved our communication with clients in many ways, as they are able to access legal services without having to sacrifice time in school or at work, and without the demands of often lengthy commutes.

Beyond our sustained response to the COVID-19 pandemic, 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, LSC leadership is able to track client outcomes and ensure case quality. We also use Salesforce to evaluate how our clients are accessing The Door’s additional services, to better support their overall health and wellbeing.

Sources of Funding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IOLA Grant</td>
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<tr>
<td>State Funding</td>
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<td>City and County Funding</td>
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<td>Federal Funding</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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![Pie chart showing sources of funding]

- Federal: 51%
- City: 26%
- Other: 16%
- IOLA: 3%
- State: 4%
Pro Bono Volunteer Involvement

We are grateful to partner with several private attorneys and volunteers as we deliver our wide array of legal services. In the last year, we worked with 306 pro bono attorneys to help us ensure effective service provisions for NYC youth in need of civil legal services. Our Pro Bono Managing Attorney continues to grow our reach in the provision of legal services and in training pro bono firms on the nuances of working with specific groups of immigrant 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, we continue to work in close partnership with 31 pro bono firms.

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. As highlighted above, this includes our Emancipation Clinic in partnership with Cahill Gordon & Reindel LLP; our Runaway and Homeless Youth clinic with Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP; and our Street Law Clinic, facilitated by David Werber, our long-time volunteer partner and retired Legal Aid attorney.

We also relied on the support of 9 law student interns (both summer and term-time) and 1 Fellow, provided by Norton Rose Fulbright, to assist us in supporting and representing immigrant youth. The contributions of private attorneys and volunteers have been crucial to maintaining the high volume of cases we handle, and further supporting our clients in accessing the highest quality of care.

306 Attorneys volunteered 7,650 hours

9 Law Students volunteered 2,818 hours

1 Other Volunteer volunteered 350 hours
Significant Collaborations

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

For example, our Managing Attorney for Policy and Special Projects expanded our work advocating for youth impacted by the SIJS backlog by creating the End SIJS Backlog Coalition. Now, the Coalition has grown to include over 70 organizations nationwide who are committed to ending the backlog that prevents our clients from obtaining Green Cards, despite being legally eligible. Together, The Door and Coalition members, including lawyers, immigrant youth, and child welfare organizations, educate and advocate on behalf of impacted youth to members of Congress and recently sued USCIS under the Freedom of Information Act to obtain a dataset of nearly 140,000 SIJS application, as well as 26,000 SIJS-based Green Card applications. They then wrote a report to illustrate the costs of the SIJS backlog to directly impacted children and related organizations and offer recommendations to end the backlog.

We also continued to partner with peer legal providers to respond to changes in immigration policy and provide additional support to immigrant youth through targeted referrals and advocacy. We work closely with our partners in the ICARE Coalition to coordinate the provision of legal services for unaccompanied minors, which includes direct representation, support groups, counseling, and referrals to social services. On behalf of ICARE, we also worked with Wellspring Consulting to create a strategy for the future of the Coalition, which included plans for sustainability, branding strategy, and the development of a strategic plan to grow and formalize the Coalition. Additionally, we continued collaborations with the Vera Institute of Justice and numerous legal services providers to ensure that we are providing the best care for youth in ORR custody. We also collaborated with the AG’s office, Disabilities Rights NY, and the New York Civil Liberties Union to advocate for the rights of detained minors. Further, we continued to partner with Restore NYC to refer Door youth who have experienced trafficking to their services.