Safe Horizon is the nation’s largest victim service provider. During the period of April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022, the Safe Horizon Domestic Violence Law Project (DVLP) and the Immigration Law Project (ILP) provided high quality, comprehensive legal information, brief services, and representation to 2,295 survivors throughout New York City. DVLP provide services in the areas of family law and matrimonial law, while ILP provided services in the areas of immigration and nationality law.

Specifically, DVLP litigated 22 family law cases and provided brief services, including advice and counsel to 1435 clients. DVLP/ILP also provided trainings to communities throughout New York City on the basis of family law, housing law, and public assistance.

ILP conducted 833 telephonic consultations and screenings and represented 5 clients in humanitarian-based benefits, including U visas, VAWA self-petitions, asylum, battered spouse waivers, petitions for Special Immigrant Juvenile status (SIJS), as well as adjustment of status “green card” applications, naturalization applications and defense in removal proceedings.

IOLA funding allowed the DVLP/ILP to provide victims of domestic violence holistic services by ensuring legal services virtually at Safe Horizon’s numerous programs including our Community Programs, Domestic Violence Shelters, and Court Programs. The continuum of services received by victims helps make certain that their safety needs will be met. By providing virtual legal services at Safe Horizon’s various programs, the DVLP/ILP ensures that victims are aware of their legal rights and remedies. Victims are then able to access the justice system in an informed manner.

IOLA funding allows the DVLP/ILP to provide training to case managers and social workers throughout the city that work with victims of violence. These trainings provide social services staff with information about client’s legal rights in order to ensure that clients are receiving competent information.

Population Served: General Low Income Population

Area Served: New York City Metropolitan Area

Total IOLA Grant: $237,500

Staffing Full Time Equivalents:
- Total Staff: 14
- Lawyers: 12
- Paralegals: 1
- Other: 1
Overview of Achievements

During this reporting period and due to the ongoing health-crisis, DVLP provided virtual trainings to client-facing staff at the New York City Family Justice Centers, Safe Horizon Crime Victim Advocate Programs, and Safe Horizon case managers and social workers. DVLP staff also provided trainings to community-based organizations around the various boroughs who serve victims of domestic violence.

ILP provided virtual trainings to the Manhattan Child Advocacy Center as well as the Brooklyn Nurse Family Partnership, a division of the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, on forms of relief available to survivors of violence, abuse, trafficking and torture, so potential referrals can be identified and made to ILP.

Through DVLP’s representation in matrimonial, child support, and spousal support cases we were still able to secure positive financial outcomes for some clients as the court’s operations slowly ramped up in this reporting period. DVLP was able to secure $22,544.11 in back awards and $910.00 in monthly benefits which provided our clients and their families with economic stability.

Direct Legal Services: Cases

Family Law/Domestic Violence:
Safe Horizon Domestic Violence Law Project (DVLP) represents Mona* (name changed to protect client confidentiality) in her child support case in the Bronx Family Court. Safe Horizon DVLP appeared with Kathy at her second court appearance back in November 2021 as we were retained after her first court appearance. At that court appearance, the client had not been receiving any child support from the opposing party and was in dire financial need. She was working three jobs and supporting two children on her own. DVLP requested that the court inquire as to the opposing party’s income since the opposing party did not supply the court with any of his financial documentation to show his income. Once the opposing party stated his profession and income on the record, DVLP was able to confirm it since he was a city worker, and his income was public record. DVLP urged the court to enter a temporary order until the next court date and made an application to the court to mark the next court date as final for the opposing party to submit his financial documentation. The court granted our application and marked the case down for trial. At the next court date in March 2022, the opposing party again did not provide any of his financials. DVLP asked that the court commence fact-finding. The DVLP attorney called our client as a witness, entered her tax returns, pay stubs and financial disclosure affidavit into evidence. The DVLP attorney then cross-examined the opposing party. DVLP was able to try the matter in an hour and the court issued a new order shortly thereafter awarding our client a higher award of child support than what was given in the temporary order.
Mona was relieved to finally have a final order of support that was payable to the Child Support Collection Unit. She was also thankful that DVLP was able to go to trial in a speedy and efficient manner and that the court pushed this case along so it did not have to engage in protracted litigation.

**Immigration:**
In November 2021, we met a 20-years-old man, U, who came to the U.S. from El Salvador fleeing the abuse of his step-father. U was abandoned by his father when he was 1-years-old and left with his mother who struggled to make ends meet, and his step-father. U’s step-father frequently beat him and refused to allow him to go to school. Instead, he forced U into child labor and savagely beat and insulted U when he did not bring home “enough money”. He also beat his mother in front of U often. One night, while U was asleep, his stepfather tried to sexually abuse him. This was the last night that U spent at his mother house. He ran away the morning after and came to the U.S. in 2018 in search of his sister M. U stayed with his sister M when he arrived. ILP was the first legal service provider they turned to. We determined that U was SIJS eligible and explained the procedure and process. However, U would “age-out” soon, when he turned 21 on his birthday in December, making him ineligible to apply for SIJS and so we worked quickly to file a petition for guardianship with an Order to Show Cause explaining the time deadline to the court. The Order to Show Cause was granted, a virtual hearing held in early December and the Special Finding Order needed for SIJS was granted. Soon thereafter, we filed the petition for SIJS with USCIS and that petition was granted. U is now eligible to adjust status, (aka, get a “green card”), once visa numbers become available.
Other Services: Overview

The DVLP/ILP routinely presents at community meetings throughout various New York City communities to provide information on domestic violence and the services provided by DVLP/ILP. Safe Horizon is the largest provider of victim services throughout New York City. DVLP/ILP utilizes this established infrastructure to reach people in need of services. DVLP/ILP staff Attorneys regularly provide trainings at Safe Horizon’s community programs, precinct programs, shelters and child advocacy centers. All of these presentations have occurred virtually due to the on-going pandemic.

Safe Horizon DVLP has continued to receive referrals from the family courts throughout New York City for the past year to assist the courts in providing services to litigants throughout New York City. Safe Horizon DVLP continues to assist in the drafting of family offense, custody and child support petitions throughout New York City in the last year. These petitions include: orders of protection, writs of habeas corpus and any emergency motion a litigant requests. Safe Horizon DVLP continues to provide this assistance to the courts as the court clerks capacity has greatly diminished over the past year.

Safe Horizon DVLP partnered with the Queens County District Attorney’s Office and the Queens Family Justice Center and provided a training on the difference between criminal and family court orders of protection and the ways in which these cases proceed in the different courts. The audience was mainly sergeants from the different Queens police precincts in the county. Since many referrals come from DV officers and advocates within the various police precincts it was important to understand the current state of the family courts and the main differences in how these courts progress. The DVLP attorney provided their contact information to participants for any follow-up after this training and for distribution to individuals who may need to contact DVLP for advice, counsel or representation in the future.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Legal Education</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro Se Assistance</td>
<td>10</td>
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</table>

116 People Benefitted by Services Other Than Direct Legal Representation
Other Services: Technology and Other Innovations

DVLP/ILP continues to use email, Skype, Microsoft Teams and Zoom to communicate with other Safe Horizon programs and social services organizations. When it is safe, DVLP/ILP often can communicate with clients through email or text as well. DVLP/ILP staff attorneys have access to online legal research programs and services such as LexisNexis and the New York Law Journal. Access to such services dramatically increases the ability of DVLP/ILP attorneys to effectively represent clients.

All DVLP/ILP staff and interns have an individual computer with access to the internet and LexisNexis. All computers contain the Microsoft Office Suite, including Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, and Access and are used on a daily basis. The staff uses PowerPoint presentations to conduct trainings for advocates, attorneys, and clients. Adobe Acrobat Reader has allowed staff to create, edit and collaborate PDF files more effectively and utilize features such as electronic signatures.

Further, the Safe Horizon website provides detailed information about the various services the agency provides, as well as program-specific descriptions organization-wide.

DVLP/ILP use a client management and data collection system specifically designed for the program. This allows DVLP/ILP to keep more accurate and comprehensive data.

Additionally, all communication for DVLP and the courts has been done primarily on the Microsoft Teams application which each attorney has access to. Our attorneys have also ensured that our clients have access to this application on their phones and/or computers. For ILP, immigration court hearings have been conducted on WebEx and ILP staff have ensured that our clients can seamlessly access the courts through this system.

Other Services: Trainings

DVLP/ILP attorneys regularly attend trainings for continuing legal education credit and to increase their knowledge and expertise in the area of family and immigration law, which is constantly and rapidly changing. DVLP attorneys and staff engaged in a two-part training offered internally: “Race, Racism, Power and Privilege: Concepts and Action series that focused on discussions about microaggressions, racial harm, and racial healing, conversations about power, privilege and oppression related to race and ethnicity and how to apply an anti-racist lens to the work we do.

Most of the trainings attended by ILP attorneys are targeted at experienced attorneys and discuss the latest immigration law and policy changes as well as the best practices and strategies in responding to them. ILP attorneys attended the virtual two-day annual PLI Immigration Law Conference in December 2021.
Impact Cases

Safe Horizon ILP is currently engaged in impact litigation (FOIA lawsuit) to compel DHS and USCIS to disclose records relating to a shift in practice relating to its adjudication of U visas and U visa-related applications. Safe Horizon ILP retained a law firm to assist in the matter pro bono. ILP had filed a FOIA requesting the records and when DHS and USCIS failed to comply, ILP filed a complaint in March 2021 in the Southern District of New York to compel compliance. Since then, ILP has been reviewing records released by DHS pursuant to our FOIA request. Any responsive records ILP obtains as a result of this FOIA could impact hundreds of U visa applicants and their advocates across the country.

Significant Collaborations

Safe Horizon ILP’s collaboration with the KCDA, BLS and Shorefront YM-YWCA, is the most significant collaboration this fiscal year. As a result of this collaboration, we were able to assist over 300 Ukrainians seeking information about TPS eligibility. This collaboration sparked new collaborations, and ILP will partner with other law firms, legal service providers and community-based organizations to provide other trainings and TPS application assistance programs to benefit other groups in our communities. The event in March 2022 will be followed by another event benefitting Ukrainians and future events will target other groups, including Haitians and Afghans.

Safe Horizon DVLP has collaborated with many community-based organizations specifically in Queens County to ensure that survivors needs beyond just legal needs were being met during this pandemic. Additionally, Safe Horizon has collaborated with all of the New York City Courts to ensure that every survivor who wants access to justice is afforded that opportunity. During the past year, DVLP collaborated with the New York City Bar Association and The Fund for Modern Courts in providing recommendations to the New York City Family Courts and the Office of Court Administration in ways in which the family court could improve operations to better service clients going forward.
Pro Bono Volunteer Involvement

DVLP/ILP maintains strong relationships with New York City’s law schools and utilizes law students to meet the needs of domestic violence victims. During the summer, four law student interns volunteer full time for ten weeks at DVLP and two law students volunteer full time at ILP, averaging thirty-five hours per week. Due to the pandemic the internship program last summer 2021 was virtual and is expected to be virtual again this year. ILP law student interns maintained the same hybrid work model as the rest of the ILP staff.

At the beginning of the internship program, interns are provided with a DVLP/ILP training manual created by staff. The manual includes office policies, how to operate the Legal Helpline, and detailed information on family law matters. The internship begins with a three-day intensive training provided by different legal service organizations in the city covering relevant areas, including family law, criminal law, immigration law, domestic violence, housing, and other related topics. Also, in order to help interns understand other issues that affect clients’ lives, DVLP provides ongoing training with an emphasis on implicit bias and trauma-informed interviewing along with a weekly brownbag lunch discussion which addresses other relevant areas. Examples of brownbag lunches include presentations in Government Affairs, issues addressing violence in the LGBT Community, Consumer Debt/Credit, trafficking, the New York District Attorney’s Office Sex Crimes Unit, the Legal Aid Juvenile Rights Division, the Bronx County District Attorney’s office, and a mental health counselor discussed the possible mental health implications subsequent to a domestic violence incident. One of the brownbag lunch discussions is allocated to a session on career development, including what an ideal resume and cover letter would look like.

At the DVLP, each attorney supervises one or two interns and also serves as a mentor. At ILP, the interns are managed by a staff attorney coordinator, who also supervises and mentors the interns. At both DVLP and ILP, the mentors meet with the interns on a regular basis to review their progress and address any issues that may arise. Attorneys closely monitor interns during the course of the internship and two formal evaluations are conducted at the midpoint and final point of the internship program. The DVLP/ILP attorneys complete an evaluation form on each intern’s performance for the intern’s work to their corresponding law school professor.

2 Attorneys volunteered 40 hours

4 Law Students volunteered 400 hours
## Sources of Funding

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<th>Source</th>
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