Overview of Achievements, 2018-2019

The Door empowers 11,000 vulnerable New York City (NYC) youth each year to reach their full potential by providing an array of comprehensive services, including health and mental health care, career and education, legal, runaway and homeless youth services, arts, sports and recreational activities, and daily nutritious meals, all in a single site. Our Legal Services Center (LSC) was established within The Door in 1992. Since then, attorneys and staff within the LSC work to ensure that low-income NYC youth are provided free, stable, and high quality civil legal representation and access to resources. Each year, the LSC provides youth with representation and support in a wide range of civil legal matters, including access to higher education and vocational services, lawful immigration status, public benefits, and the right to safe and supportive foster care placements. The LSC is fully integrated within The Door, and so all youth who engage with the LSC also have access to The Door’s full portfolio of social services.

The LSC took steps this year to deepen and expand our services in response to our awareness of the increased legal needs of youth in NYC, particularly for immigrant youth:

In response to the humanitarian crisis caused by the separation of children and parents at the southern border, the LSC’s attorneys provided direct representation for six separated children, and worked with four pro bono law firms to secure representation for an additional 12 youth under our guidance. We are pleased to report that all of those children have since been either reunified with their parent(s), or released from federal custody to a sponsor in the community. After reunification, most of the children left New York; in these cases, the LSC connected them with local pro bono legal services providers in their new jurisdiction. The LSC has continued full representation of the children who remained in New York.

Additionally, in order to expand the capacity of our LSC in response to continued high need, we hired a new Pro Bono Managing Attorney who works to strengthen existing partnerships with law firms and build relationships with new ones in order to increase our capacity to take on new cases. This past year, she oversaw 127 clients’ cases placed with pro bono attorneys, and has also conducted trainings, created an online resource library, and circulates a monthly newsletter to current and potential pro bono partners to attract and maintain engagement.

We also received funding through NYC HRA’s Immigrant Opportunities Initiative to provide full legal representation to 45 clients on a range of immigration-related matters. This grant enabled the LSC to hire an additional attorney, paralegal, and social worker to provide direct representation and support to youth. Finally, we welcomed a two-year Equal Justice Works Fellow to the LSC, who divides her time between immigration and education related legal services.

Population Served: Low Income Children and Youth

Area Served: New York City Metropolitan and Surrounding Area

Total Funding: $1,788,620

Total IOLA Grant: $190,000

Staffing - Full Time Equivalents:
- Total Staff: 16.00
- Lawyers: 11.00
- Paralegals: 2.00
- Other: 3.00
Together with their mother, Rosayra, Yordy (15) and his younger brother, Fernando (5), fled Guatemala together this past spring. The family crossed the US/Mexico border in April 2018 and was detained by immigration authorities. Pursuant to the Trump Administration’s “Zero-Tolerance” policy, immigration officials removed Yordy and Fernando from their mother’s care. The government sent Rosayra to a detention center in Arizona, and her children to an ORR shelter in New York. The Door met Yordy and Fernando while they were in ORR custody, and helped the shelter locate Rosayra and facilitate communication between the children and Rosayra. The Door also screened Yordy and Fernando for immigration relief, explained their rights and potential claims, and connected them with the supports and resources needed to ensure their overall health and well-being while they were separated from their mother. Ultimately, Rosayra was able to pass a credible fear interview and, with the help of a volunteer group in New York, pay her bond and come to New York. After almost three months of separation, she reunited with her sons on July 13, 2018. The family now lives in New York, and The Door is continuing to provide full representation to Yordy and Fernando in their immigration case: we have appeared with them in immigration court, and are representing them in their claims for SIJS.

Afua, who had previously been a client of ours, returned to the LSC in 2017 for help with a landlord-tenant matter. Afua had rented one room in a NYC apartment from the owner of the apartment building. Though Afua had always paid her rent on time, after a few months the landlord told Afua that she wanted her to leave. With the help of a lawyer the landlord sent Afua papers to leave on one month’s notice. Because Afua had no other place to live, she returned to the LSC for help. The LSC advised Afua that she could not be forced to leave the apartment unless the landlord obtained an order from the court. The LSC’s attorney learned that although the building was supposed to be occupied by only three households, there were six separate households living in the building. Based on that information, the LSC decided to represent Afua in court. In court, the landlord and her lawyer denied that there were six separate households in the building, and insisted that Afua move out. Since Afua and her landlord could not reach an agreement, the case was referred to a judge for trial. The LSC prepared Afua for trial and also prepared to question the landlord’s witness. After trial in spring 2018, the judge decided that Afua was right, and there were six separate households in the building at the same time. That made the building rent stabilized, which meant that the landlord could not make Afua move unless the landlord had a reason allowed by the law. As a result, the judge dismissed the landlord’s case, and Afua was able to continue living in her room. The result also benefited other tenants in the building, who now could also claim greater rights to stay in their apartments.
Other Services...

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,515 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Legal Education</td>
<td>1,393 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro Se Assistance</td>
<td>122 people</td>
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</table>

### Other Legal Related Services: Overview

As a field leader in the provision of legal services for youth, the LSC continued to provide a wide range of other legal services this past year. These services included training workshops, pro se clinics, referrals to other legal providers, and connections to social service supports. Specifically, 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 1,393 people, including lawyers, social service staff, law students, attorneys, and youth. The LSC also continued to offer a targeted set of legal clinics for youth, including an Emancipation clinic and our Runaway and Homeless Youth clinic. In total, our clinics provided pro se assistance to 47 youth this year. Finally, we offered assistance and provided handouts with legal referrals to 75 youth at New York immigration court.

We also continued to refer youth to other supports, including our on-site suite of comprehensive services at The Door, in order to help them to remain engaged and supported as we pursue their legal cases. The LSC is embedded within a youth development agency, which differentiates it from other legal service providers: all youth who engage with the LSC are proactively supported to connect with The Door’s suite of wraparound social services, including career and education services, health and mental health care, supportive housing, arts, daily nutritious meals, and a community of supportive staff and peers. Our interdisciplinary structure and the accessibility of our services is an innovative and cost-effective model for serving youth seeking to overcome social and economic instabilities.

### Other Legal Related Services: Examples

- This past year, the LSC continued to offer a weekly Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) Clinic in partnership with law firm Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP. This clinic is designed to support young people without a stable home. The Door is Manhattan’s largest designated Drop-In Center for runaway and homeless young people and also offers Street Outreach services, which, combined, attract nearly 2,000 of these vulnerable young people to The Door annually. This targeted and responsive clinic operates on a walk-in basis and is held during special programming hours so that young people can receive help overcoming legal issues they may be facing, including aging out of the foster care system, seeking to change their name, and accessing food stamps.

- The Center remains responsive to the increased services needed to support immigrant youth in New York City. As such, we provided several trainings to pro bono attorneys on representing children in immigration matters, as well as trainings to teachers and school staff on options for undocumented students. This year, the LSC also conducted a Know Your Rights training at our partner organization University Settlement, providing adult immigrants with legal advice on what to do if they are approached or questioned by ICE.
**Impact Cases**

- **RFM v. Nielsen** is a lawsuit filed by the Legal Aid Society and Latham & Watkins against Kirstjen Nielsen in her capacity as Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security. The lawsuit challenges the federal immigration agency’s change in policy to deny Special Immigrant Juvenile Status to immigrant youth who were 18, 19, or 20 years old at the time that a New York State court made a determination of dependency. The Door worked closely with Legal Aid and Latham & Watkins to craft the lawsuit. We are proud that one of our clients, RFM, was selected to serve as the named plaintiff in the suit and was featured in a New York Times article on the matter. Legal Aid filed the lawsuit in June 2018, and, on March 15, 2019, the court ruled in Plaintiffs’ favor and held that the government’s policy of denying >18 SIJS petitions was unlawful. We are still waiting for the judgment to be finalized, and to see how the USCIS will practically implement the court’s ruling, but we expect that well over a hundred current clients are affected by the decision.

- **Ms. L v. USCIS/MMM. v. Sessions**, Southern District of California are two lawsuits stemming from the federal administration’s unlawful separation of migrant families at the US/Mexico border. The ACLU filed Ms. L in February, 2018, against Jeff Sessions in his capacity as Attorney General. Hogan Lovells filed MMM later, on different grounds, and the district court joined the two cases. In November, 2018, The Door filed a declaration opposing the settlement of the two cases on the grounds that it would result in an illegal and harmful denial of the rights of separated children to seek asylum or pursue other grounds for remaining in United States. As a result of The Door’s declaration, and the declarations of other New York legal services providers, the proposed settlement agreement was modified to better protect the rights of separated children. The Door, along with other New York legal services providers (through the ICARE network), remains involved in this case and is actively negotiating with the government to develop a framework to govern any future family separations.

**Technology and Other Innovations**

The LSC makes use of technology on a daily basis to assist our delivery of services. We record and analyze data so that we can track and enhance our services and remain aware of all client needs and scheduling. Technology also helps us communicate with young people and conduct outreach. We also periodically enhance our processes to best support staff and clients. For instance, this past year, the LSC expanded its online content for new staff attorneys and pro bono attorneys by creating a library of resources including immigration law guides; topic-specific checklists; sample filings for family court, immigration court, and USCIS; and other materials. The LSC continues to rely on the Salesforce data management system to record and analyze data on youth who access our services. Salesforce allows the LSC to maintain data on client demographics, case notes, and case status, while maintaining client confidentiality. Through Salesforce, the Director is 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

This past year, the LSC found new ways to strengthen our impact by working with other organizations committed to high-quality civil legal services, and also worked to deepen existing collaborations.

For instance, this year, we began a new collaborative relationship with the Cyrus R. Vance Center for International Justice, which helps us better support our clients by connecting us to international pro bono legal networks. These networks assist the LSC’s clients with any on-the-ground needs in their home countries, such as obtaining or correcting identity documents, and gathering evidence that could be critical to a client’s United States immigration case. Additionally, we recently began collaborating with the Hispanic Federation to enroll immigrant youth who visit the LSC in a free soccer training program, giving them the opportunity to have fun, access a structured physical activity, and benefit from leadership coaching and team-building exercises. We also collaborated with CAMINANDO, a research project led by Dr. Manuela Orjuela of Columbia University, to study the effects of migration on the well-being of migrant Latino youth. We were involved in the development of the study in 2015 and continue to participate by consulting with the research team, and by welcoming researchers to come to The Door to recruit client participants.

Our staff continued to serve on numerous task forces and coalitions, including the Federal Bar Council’s Public Service Committee, the New York City Bar Association’s Committee on Family Court and Family Law, the Committee on Pro Bono and Legal Services, and the Immigration and Naturalization Committee, as well as Housing Court Answers, American Immigration Lawyers Association, and the Leap Coalition (comprised of small and midsized legal services providers in NYC).

This past year, the LSC continued to partner with other legal providers to collectively respond to changes in immigration policy and best support New York City youth through targeted referrals and advocacy efforts. For example, we continued to work closely with the ICARE Coalition—an innovative collaborative of six nonprofit legal service organizations designed to provide universal representation to unaccompanied children from Central America facing deportation. As of recently, several members of the ICARE coalition have also begun to provide direct representation for children who were separated from their parents at the southern border.

We also continued to work regularly with numerous organizations in order to provide educational referrals, foster care supports, and shelter services, including 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, DOE Family Welcome Centers and Pathways to Graduation, and the Covenant House New York. Lastly, our Center’s two 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 additional supports to assist them.
As in prior years, the LSC regularly leveraged private attorneys and volunteers to help deliver our range of legal services. During the reporting period, the LSC worked with 191 attorney and non-attorney supporters to help us ensure effective service provisions for NYC youth in need of civil legal services.

As mentioned above, in the last year, the LSC hired a Pro Bono Managing Attorney, who works to support and strengthen existing partnerships with law firms and build relationships with new firms to increase our capacity to serve youth in need of legal services; provide technical assistance and mentorship to attorneys who take pro bono cases from us; and maintains a small caseload. This staff member's work has been crucial in expanding our pro bono partner law firm network from 12 firms to 20, and in providing important ongoing guidance and mentorship to every pro bono attorney for the life of each case. By establishing a set of processes to recruit, train, and deploy pro bono attorney partners, this staff member ensures that clients are placed with attorneys who are best positioned to represent them, and that each pro bono attorney has all the information and assistance they need to best manage each client’s case.

We also maintained partnerships with 2 firms and 1 retired attorney to continue offering legal clinics to support Door youth in exploring their legal options and needs. In partnership with Cahill Gordon & Reindel LLP, we offered a bi-weekly Emancipation Clinic; with Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP, we offered a Runaway and Homeless Youth clinic; and long-time volunteer partner and retired Legal Aid attorney, David Werber, operated a weekly Street Law Clinic at our main headquarters and our satellite Bronx Youth Center to support young people with crime related matters.

Lastly, the LSC relied on the support of 8 law student interns and 4 Fellows this reporting period, including law graduates and attorneys sponsored by Norton Rose Fulbright LLP; Immigrant Justice Corps; and Equal Justice Works. The contributions of private attorneys and volunteers have been crucial to maintaining the high volume of cases The Door’s LSC handles, and further supports our clients gaining access to the highest quality of care.

### Sources Of Funding

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<th>Source</th>
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<td>IOLA Grant:</td>
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<td>Foundations:</td>
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<td>Other:</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,788,620</strong></td>
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### Pro Bono Volunteer Involvement

- **175** Volunteers, 4,375 Hours
- **14** Volunteers, 2,415 Hours
- **2** Volunteers, 676 Hours