

THE IMMIGRANT ADVOCATE

TEACHING, INTERPRETING, AND CHANGING LAW SINCE 1979

SUMMER

2021



MESSAGE FROM THE ILRC

I was working from my home in Washington, DC and began receiving calls and texts from family, friends and ILRC colleagues—asking me how I was and wanting to know I was safe. It was January 6, 2021 and I was watching the historic Capitol Riots unfold on TV a mere three miles away. I felt a sense of horror to know these attacks were happening in my city and despair as I wondered how to respond to the many questions my children immediately began asking.

Two weeks later President Biden was inaugurated. Our policy team had been preparing for the moment for weeks and on January 20, 2021 it did feel like the air we were breathing in DC was somehow different—more clean and able to fill our lungs with hope.


Over half a year in, the Biden administration has proven there is much to be hopeful for and our policy team has been busy delivering our demands to ensure not just a restoration of the standard norms Trump had turned his back on but rather building a new way forward toward dignity and justice.

We have been calling on Biden to ensure his administration returns the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to an agency that processes immigration applications in an effective, affordable, efficient, and equitable way. We have brought the demands of immigrant communities to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and identified immediate steps they must take to dismantle the immigration enforcement, surveillance, and detention systems. We are advocating with the Department of Justice to ensure they meet their obligation to make relief from deportation accessible. As well, we have been working with Congress to advance legislative solutions that are broad and inclusive, allowing all our community members to live and work with dignity and free from enforcement and detention.



By Sameera Hafiz | ILRC Policy Director

And though January 6th was several months ago, the work of our policy team feels categorically different. We are able to bring our expertise and experience in immigration law and policy to the government to ask for meaningful solutions. We are able to engage with government actors that are more likely to value the role of immigrants in the United States. Yet, we do not forget that January 6th was not that long ago. Though we have arisen from the despair of that day, there is much work to be done to ensure the administration fulfills the hope Biden's inauguration inspired. Our policy team continues, each day, to push back against complacency and ensure our community members and those impacted by the immigration system can bring forward solutions that work for them and that the policies we promote feed into our nation's greater challenge of dismantling the systemic racism infecting our criminal legal and immigration systems.

In the fall of 2020 we laid out the changes we wanted to see the Biden administration make in the **Blueprint for the Next Administration**, and we have already seen many of our recommendations implemented in the intervening months. We are proud of these policy victories - such as Biden's decision to abandon Trump's public charge rule and his commitment to preserving DACA—as they have deeply impacted the lives of many individuals in our communities. ILRC's policy team will continue pushing Congress and the administration until we have achieved the full vision we laid out in the Blueprint and truly forged a new way forward toward dignity and justice. Though we have much to do, the urgency of our work and your support keep us uplifted and ready to achieve even more policy wins. 

2021 VIRTUAL BURTON AWARDS: WE FIGHT TOGETHER

On June 24, the ILRC celebrated the 2021 Phillip Burton Immigration & Civil Rights Awards. Building on last year's online event, the ILRC—with the help of our volunteers, staff, board and supporters—produced a virtual program explaining why we fight for immigrant rights. The program was hosted by seven-time Emmy Award winning journalist, and 2017 Burton Award for Advocacy recipient, Thuy Vu. It included a spotlight on the work of the ILRC's organizers and a tribute to former ILRC advisory board member, Hon. Cruz Reynoso, from our founder, Bill Ong Hing.

The 2021 Burton Awards honored two outstanding advocates for immigrant rights: Congresswoman Sylvia R. Garcia and teen activist Crista Ramos; as well as the Founding Funders of the New Americans Campaign, which celebrates its 10th anniversary this summer.

While we were not able to meet in person, we were excited by the opportunity of sharing our mission with a new audience. As of this publication, over 300 people have viewed our virtual program. If you weren't able to join us live, [we invite you to visit our website](#) to watch the full event program, read more about our honorees, and learn about great work of the ILRC.

Once again, [our sponsors](#) showed us that—near or far—they're committed to fighting with us. We couldn't do this work without their generous support. ILRC's board members stepped up to provide a \$45,000 one-to-one match. The match deadline has been extended to September 30th—[it's not too late to double your gift to the ILRC today](#).

Thank you to everyone who supported the 2021 Burton Awards. We look forward to seeing you in person on Thursday, May 26, 2022.

**RECIPIENT OF THE 2021
NANCY PELOSI AWARD for POLICY**
UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE, TEXAS'S 29TH DISTRICT
SYLVIA R. GARCIA

Congresswoman Garcia is an original co-sponsor of the New Way Forward Act and is one of the first two Latina women to represent the state of Texas in Congress.



**RECIPIENT OF THE 2021
PHILLIP BURTON AWARD for ADVOCACY**
TEMPORARY PROTECTED STATUS (TPS)
ADVOCATE & LEAD PLAINTIFF IN RAMOS V. WOLF
CRISTA RAMOS

For the past four years, Crista Ramos has fought to keep TPS families together, has lobbied Congress for a pathway to permanent residency for TPS recipients, and has brought awareness to TPS all while attending high school.



**RECIPIENTS OF THE 2021
PHILLIP BURTON AWARD
for IMMIGRATION & CIVIL RIGHTS**
THE NEW AMERICANS CAMPAIGN
FOUNDING FUNDERS



THANK YOU

2021 Burton Awards Sponsors & Donors

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T S TAFAPOLSKY-SMITH LLP
Immigration is in our DNA

KAZANLAW.COM

WSM weaver schlenger LLP
business immigration law

Anonymous (2)

Evelyn & Walter Haas, Jr. Fund

Fellom & Solorio

Eva Grove*

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Karen Klein and Ben Golvin

Lisa Lindelef

Luca D. Mangini* and Siobhan Nolan Mangini

Anita Martinez*

Michelle Mercer* and Bruce Golden

Toni Rembe* and Arthur Rock

The Rock Foundation

Kristin Schlenger and Roy Ruderman

Van Der Hout LLP

Rick Blamey and Ginny Wright

Roger Wu*

*ILRC Board Members

200 PARTNERS IN 21 CITIES

In 2011, a group of dedicated national organizations, including the ILRC, and several dedicated funders, launched the New Americans Campaign that is now the largest nationalization collaboration in the country. Initial funding came from Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Evelyn & Walter Haas, Jr. Fund The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, Grove Foundation, and Open Society Foundations. The NAC would later welcome eight additional funders.¹

The NAC's collective goal was to build a ground-breaking network of non-partisan legal-service providers, faith-based organizations, businesses, foundations, and community leaders. Together, we would build a better road to citizenship across the country. It was a significant challenge. More than 8 million green card holders were eligible to naturalize, yet only 8% applied each year. Numerous barriers deterred aspiring U.S. citizens, including high application fees, a complex application process, unscrupulous attorneys, and poor English language skills. The NAC went to work modernizing and streamlining access to citizenship-support services.

¹ JPB Foundation, Wallace H. Coulter Foundation, California Wellness Foundation, Silicon Valley Community Fund—DAF, Bernard & Ann Spitzer Charitable Trust, The California Endowment, The Beacon Fund.



Thank you

10 national partners & 200+ local partner organizations

During the past 10 years:

- You've held 8,700+ naturalization workshops
- You've saved aspiring US citizens over \$456 million
- You've generated 500,000+ naturalization applications
- You've changed lives!

★ newamericanscampaign.org/10th-anniversary



BRINGING PASSION & INNOVATION TO NATURALIZATION SERVICES

Working with 200 partners across the country, the NAC encourages collaboration, innovation, and technology to transform the citizenship application process, making it easier, more accessible, and affordable. Over the past decade we promoted the award-winning CitizenshipWorks software that brought naturalization services online, and the USA Learns app that helps people prepare for the naturalization interview and citizenship test. We saw inspiring teamwork at “mega-workshops” that developed increasingly efficient ways to join the resources of multiple organizations and help hundreds of aspiring U.S. citizens with their applications. When the pandemic shut down in-person services, the collaboration continued. Partners shared best practices for online services, building trust and communication through technology and other creative workarounds. When it was important, we spoke out—demanding that the USCIS stop making a burdensome naturalization process more difficult, and encouraging state and local governments to help make the path to U.S. citizenship more accessible. Since 2011, we’ve helped more than 500,000 immigrants complete their naturalization applications. Many now have a voice in our democracy, the opportunity to engage fully in their communities and the freedom to help their families prosper.



"I had not decided to become a citizen. But then I met Natasha. She really encouraged me. My main reason was to vote and to contribute to my community in some way."

Toan Van Nguyen



I feel different now. I have the power to vote. I have more rights. I am happy and grateful for the work that DUSA did to help me. Now I am motivating other people to apply for citizenship. I have an ongoing campaign. I am motivating all of my family and friends. I tell everybody not to be scared. Do not wait. Just apply.

— ” —

Candida Almonte, U.S. Citizen since 2019

I want to tell people who are thinking of getting U.S. citizenship—get it sooner! I waited too long. Immigration law has been changing and it's getting more expensive and it's becoming more difficult to become a U.S. citizen. I thought that I would lose my identity if I became a U.S. citizen but in fact it is not true.

— ” —

Kimiko Olling, U.S. Citizen since 2019

WHAT'S NEW AT THE ILRC



NEW ILRC RESOURCES

HOW TO AVOID IMMIGRATION FRAUD!

Videos

(English and Spanish)

Short videos that highlight some of the biggest red flags to be aware of when seeking immigration legal services, along with some general tips to consider when searching for trusted sources of legal support. These videos are available on social media and YouTube and can be shared online or embedded on any webpage.

UPDATES ON DACA

The ILRC DACA Toolbox page is updated with resources for those seeking renewals and includes an FAQ for the current state of the program.

The ILRC's Ambassador Program is a program that lets you partner with the ILRC to fight for immigrant rights.

As an Ambassador, you would help to amplify immigration-related news, messages, and share resources with your networks on social media or email. The goal of the Ambassador Program is to work together to inform and educate as many people as possible about immigration issues and to activate a community of people to fight for immigrant rights.

Follow the ILRC on all of the social media you're on, like **Instagram**, **Twitter**, **LinkedIn**, and **Facebook**. Keep an eye on your email and the ILRC's social media for an opportunity to sign up to receive education and advocacy opportunities throughout the year. Whenever the ILRC posts on social media or sends you an email, share it with your networks!

Through the Ambassador Program, we can build an alliance of immigrant rights advocates committed to helping immigrants and their families can stay together in this country and thrive.

Ambassador Program

Save
the Date



Giving Tuesday 2021 will be held on Tuesday, November 30, 2021.

Join us on this day of giving and show your support for the ILRC by making a gift on this national day of philanthropy and sharing the ILRC's story with your networks.

This fall, the ILRC will host its Donor Conference Call series again in September, October, and November. We'll share our schedule soon and look forward to having you join us to learn the latest on important immigration topics.

2020

ANNUAL REPORT



MISSION

The mission of the Immigrant Legal Resource Center (ILRC) is to work with and educate immigrants, community organizations, and the legal sector to continue to build a democratic society that values diversity and the rights of all people. The ILRC works with immigrants, community organizations, legal professionals, law enforcement, and policymakers to help improve the lives of immigrants. Our work on a broad range of issues directly impacts immigrant families and the community through our three program areas.



MESSAGE FROM THE ILRC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

For many, the devastation of the pandemic, natural disasters, and economic collapse defined 2020. For the ILRC, 2020 forced us to reimagine the work that we do and how we do it. With a staff of over 50 people spread across the country, the ILRC was tasked with continuing our work virtually. Despite these challenges, we continued to do the work that has made us a trusted partner in the fight for immigrant rights. We produced resources for the community and advocates, updated our library of immigration law manuals, answered thousands of questions received through our Attorney of the Day program, interpreted countless xenophobic and ever-evolving Trump Administration immigration policies, and served as the legal expert to those in the movement. For many, juggling a virtual work environment and family care, was a huge adjustment, but we did it gracefully and effectively. I am proud of the team at the ILRC. They adjusted had an incredibly productive year, in grave circumstances. I hope our 2020 Annual Report demonstrates that.

The demands of the immigration legal and policy fields did not let up during the year. Many immigration-related issues were exacerbated by government agency shut-downs

and application processing slow-downs, which increased already bloated wait times. The Trump Administration did not let up on its attacks on immigrants, employing such inhumane tactics as the “Remain in Mexico” policy, forcing asylum seekers to remain in Mexico until their case for asylum was ready to be reviewed. The administration even tried to increase fees on immigration benefit applications to erect a paywall for immigrants and pricing lower income applicants out of the process altogether. On this last point, the ILRC, in partnership with several other non-profit organizations and represented by Sidley Austin LLP, led a federal lawsuit to challenge the proposed fee increases and we won! You can read more about that in our Policy Highlight for 2020.

The year served as a real test of this nation’s humanity and compassion. This nation is not perfect, but the ILRC is proud of its part to help make it more inclusive, welcoming, and just for immigrants and their families.

Eric Cohen



Our policy advocacy work focuses on addressing inequalities in the immigration system, particularly for individuals who have had contact with the criminal legal system; expanding laws and policies to offer greater protections to immigrants; and ensuring more immigrants can access legal services and engage in the political process. ILRC attorneys and strategists are experts in the field of immigration law and immigrant rights campaigns. Through our advocacy efforts at the local, state, and federal levels, we work to achieve the ILRC's mission of a more inclusive and democratic society.



We provide technical legal assistance, trainings, and publications to immigration law practitioners, pro bono attorneys, legal services organizations, and community-based organizations. The ILRC produces, updates, and publishes expert immigration practice manuals used by legal providers nationwide. Our catalog consists of 20 manuals. Our unique Attorney of the Day consultation service provides case-specific technical assistance to attorneys, nonprofit organizations, public defenders, and other immigration advocates. Our staff attorneys also conduct immigration law trainings on emerging issues, policy updates, and effective practices. One of our goals is to bolster the capacity of the immigration law field so that the field is better prepared to protect and defend its clients and the community.

ILRC PROGRAM AREAS



We engage immigrants in mobilizing and raising their voices on issues critical to their communities.

The ILRC believes that one of the most important ways immigrants can protect their rights and the rights of their families is to naturalize. The ILRC leads a national project called the New Americans Campaign. Founded in 2011, the New Americans Campaign has helped over 446,000 people complete naturalization applications and held over 7,700 naturalization workshops across the country as of December 31, 2020.

Other crucial projects of the ILRC are the Red Card program and the Know Your Rights (KYR) program. The ILRC's Red Cards help immigrants and citizens assert their constitutional rights and defend themselves in many situations, such as when ICE agents go to a home. The demand for Red Cards has substantially increased since 2016. The ILRC also hosts KYR presentations. These presentations give immigrants, their family members, companies employing immigrants, and others information essential to protecting themselves in an era of increased immigration status scrutiny, immigration enforcement, and deportations.



FINANCIAL POSITION

The Immigrant Legal Resource Center was able to have a solid financial year in 2020, despite the economic turmoil and amidst the global pandemic, thanks to the relationships it has fostered with institutional and individual donors. There were modest declines in institutional funding of 2% compared to 2019. Individual giving was down 1% compared to 2019. The ILRC also received \$1.8 million in in-kind contributions, an increase over 2019.

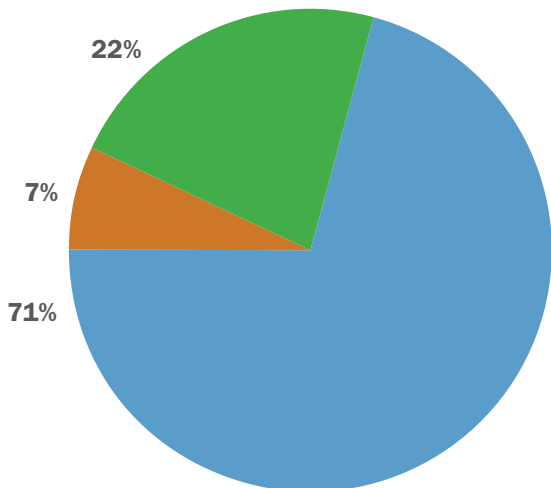
Almost 90.5 cents of every dollar raised by the ILRC was spent on program delivery in 2020, with the remainder spent on administration and fundraising. As a best practice, nonprofit organizations endeavor to spend 75 cents or more on program delivery each year.

The ILRC's regranting program continued in 2020. This program is administered by the ILRC and funded by institutional donors who trust the ILRC's depth of knowledge and relationships with grassroots partners in the field who help to move the needle on immigrant rights. The ILRC is regarded as an excellent steward of these regranting funds. The ILRC has the capacity and understanding of the field to distribute these financial resources to partners addressing the most critical needs and issues, particularly in some of the most underserved areas of our country. In 2020, the ILRC supported the work of 73 grassroots organizations with 101 grants distributed.

Cash and Investments	●●●●●●●●●●	\$	26,652,058
Current Grants Receivable	●●●●●●●●●●	\$	4,660,624
Other Current Assets	●●●●●●●●●●	\$	545,687
Long-term Grants Receivable	●●●●●●●●●●	\$	1,308,231
Net Property and Equipment	●●●●●●●●●●	\$	327,591
All Other Assets	●●●●●●●●●●	\$	91,606
TOTAL ASSETS	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	\$	33,585,797
Available for Operations	●●●●●●●●●●	\$	6,680,999
Board-designated Reserves	●●●●●●●●●●	\$	5,300,000
Temporarily Restricted	●●●●●●●●●●	\$	15,972,363
TOTAL NET ASSETS	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	\$	27,953,362
Payables and Accrued Expenses	●●●●●●●●●●	\$	315,437
Current Re-Grants Payable	●●●●●●●●●●	\$	3,484,890
Accrued Vacation	●●●●●●●●●●	\$	562,230
Other Liabilities	●●●●●●●●●●	\$	209,276
Loan Payable	●●●●●●●●●●	\$	1,060,602
TOTAL LIABILITIES	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	\$	5,632,435

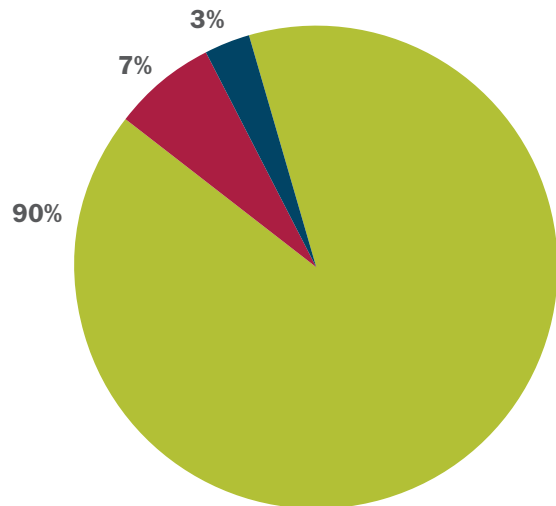
Donations and Revenue

- Grants (\$17,470,127)
- Individuals, Events, & Other (\$5,462,645)
- Fees for Services (\$1,596,784)



Expenses

- Program Delivery (\$20,279,550)
- Management & General (\$1,536,295)
- Fundraising (\$627,779)





2020 POLICY HIGHLIGHT: *ILRC V. WOLF*

In November of 2019, the ILRC learned that the Trump Administration was proposing to increase filing fees for many of US Citizenship and Immigration Services' (USCIS) immigration benefit forms, eliminate fee waivers, and transfer millions in funding to Immigration and Customs Enforcement. To the ILRC staff, this was another clear attempt by the administration to further disenfranchise immigrants, especially lower income immigrants, by imposing a "wealth test" on immigration benefit filings. The staff of the ILRC discussed that something should be done to thwart this effort, like sue the federal government.

These egregious proposed changes compelled bold action. In August of 2020, the ILRC joined a coalition of eight leading immigrants' rights organizations as plaintiffs to sue the Department of Homeland Security and USCIS to halt the proposed changes.

The ILRC was the lead plaintiff in the lawsuit and the firm of Sidley Austin LLP did an excellent job of representing the ILRC and the rest of the organizations on a pro bono basis.

The suit, *ILRC v. Wolf*, said that the Immigration and Nationality Act prioritized "family unity and diversity." The proposed changes would make obtaining immigration benefits nearly impossible for millions of immigrant families. The Trump administration's policy makes family separation inevitable, and violates statutory and constitutional law.

At the end of September 2020, the ILRC and its partners won an injunction of the fee rule. In December of 2020, the US Government voluntarily removed its appeal of the injunction.

ILRC BY THE NUMBERS 2020

547,750

Know Your Rights
RED CARDS
Distributed

302

Trainings, Webinars, Community Meetings, Task Forces, Workshops, Media Reports, and CRISP Meetings



hosting

24,799
Participants

5990

Attorney of the Day

Issues Answered for Non-Profits, Service Providers, and Pro Bono Attorneys

2020
ANNUAL REPORT

SPECIAL THANKS TO THE DONORS AND SUPPORTERS OF THE ILRC WHOSE INVESTMENT IN

Donors of \$100 or more are listed below.

Anonymous (28)	Crankstart Foundation	Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees	Annie Kirlin
American Civil Liberties Union Northern California	Julia Curry	Brian Kissel	Brian Kissel
ActBlue Charities	Kate Dahlstrom	Maria Kivel and Paul Barrie	Tobey T. Klass
AILA of Northern California	Elizabeth Dale-Deines	Tobey T. Klass	Karen B. Klein and Ben Golvin
AILA Texas Chapter	Viet Phuong Dao	Dr. Amy Greenstadt	Nancy Kleinberg
Katherine Alatalo	Margaret David	The Grove Foundation	Daniel Kleinman
William Alderman	Jac and KC de Haan	Eva Grove*	The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation
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American Endowment Foundation	Caroline Dellheim	Joseph Gunther	Pilar Kraman
Central American Resource Center	California Department of Social Services	Monica Gutierrez	Lita Krowech
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Judith A. Bloomberg	The East Bay Community Foundation	Judy Heyboer	Professor Gerald P. Lopez
Gail Chang Bohr and Richard Bohr	Ellen Edwards	Annette Hilton	Thomas V. Loran III
Catherine Bonnar	San Francisco City & County Office of Civic Engagement and Immigrant Affairs	Joyce Hing McGowan	Sabrina Ma
Borealis Philanthropy	Fawnee Evnochides	Professor Bill Ong Hing* and Lenora Fung	Rachel Magana
The Boston Foundation	Facebook, Inc.	Evelyn Ho	Mary Maguire-Fong
Professor Richard Boswell* and Karen Musalo	Edward Fair	Bill Hofmann	Make My Donation Inc.
Elizabeth Bradley	Lucee Rosemarie Fan	Brian Holt	Mako Foundation
Colin & Julia Breyer	Farella Braun and Martel LLP	The Honey Pot	Luca D. Mangini* and Siobhan Nolan Mangini
Bright Funds Foundation	Fellom and Solorio	Lisa Honig	Grace Mantus
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Alan Caplan	Roberta Furger	JPB Foundation	Cathie Mellon
The Carnegie Corporation of New York	Charles Gaenslen	JPMorgan Chase	Marinda Melonson
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Bay Area Census Funders Collaborative	Nadia Gareeb	Eloise B. Kaeck	Michelle Mercer* and Bruce Golden
Chan Zuckerberg Initiative	William Gasarch	Carol Kain	Zoe Mercer-Golden
Angela Chanitz	Marjorie Gelb and Mark N. Aaronson	Karen Backus	Mercury Foundation
Deborah A. Ching Fund	Margo George and Catherine Karrass	Prof. Terry Karl	Jeanne Merino and Russ Altman
Church & Society, The United Methodist Church	Jonathan Gibson	Manjot Kaur Pannu	Josh Merrick
Fund for the City of New York	Give Forward Foundation	Kazan McClain Satterley & Greenwood	Sarah Messer
Cloud Jupiter Gems	Denman Glanzman	Megan Keiler	Michael Wald
Jay Cohan	Ms. Laura Glass-Hess	Marjorie and Michael Kelly	Gregory Michalek
Eric Cohen and Gwen Naomi Sidley	Glowinski Naber Family Living Trust	Susan Ketcham Fund	Michiel E. Ultee
Community Health Charities	Terry and Steve Godfrey	Michael Kiarie	Susette Min
Elizabeth Conroy	Golden State Opportunity	Sallie Kim and Hubert Kim	Minneapolis Foundation
Danyel Copeland	Sarahbeth Golden	Uesin Kim	Anthony Mirasola
Wallace H. Coulter Foundation	Brian Goldman	Kim and Shirley Kinoshita	Eileen Mitchell
	Jesse Goss	Sally Kinoshita and Ted Lewis	
		Cambria Kirby	
		Linda Kirchman	

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

NOTE: This list includes funders who have made multi-year commitments to the ILRC and distributed funds to the ILRC in 2020 .

*Board member

OUR WORK ALLOWED US TO CONTINUE TO PROTECT AND DEFEND IMMIGRANT RIGHTS.

Carlos Moffat Varas
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 Mosaics and Brickz
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 Jeff Sloan
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 Debbie Smith and Lucas Guttentag
 Nora Sobolov
 Solidarity Giving
 Karl Sowa
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 Reginald D. Steer
 Martin Steinman
 Marvin E. Stender and Drucilla Ramey
 Stephen W. Rogers
 Sidney Stern Memorial Trust
 Beth Stickney
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MESSAGE FROM THE COMMS TEAM

During the Trump Administration, the ILRC, like many other progressive organizations, was constantly on the defense, having to react to the onslaught of horrible immigration policies unleashed on sometimes a daily basis. With the Biden Administration at the helm, the ILRC has been able to pivot to more of an offensive role in making sure policies are implemented that benefit all immigrants. While the ILRC does not agree with some of the federal policies set forth by the current administration, there is much more of a receptive audience than before on Capitol Hill for our Policy Team to make our demands known.

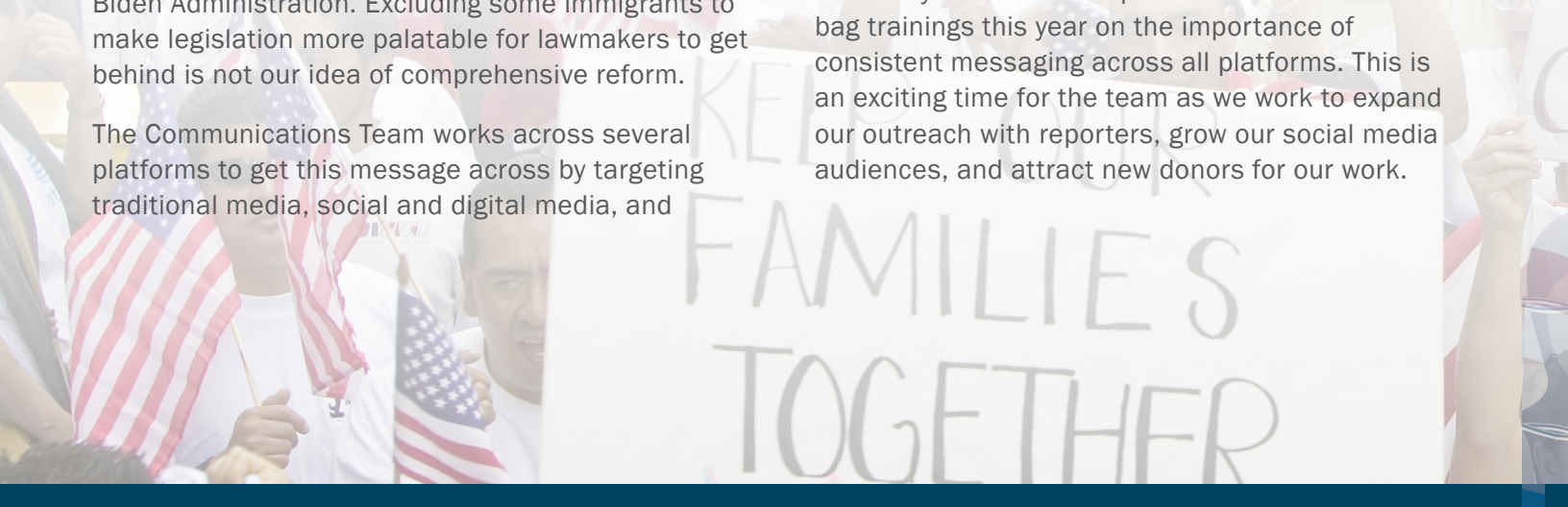
The Communications Team works closely with the Policy Team to help shape the ILRC's external messaging strategy for media, as well as communities. The Communications Team's goal in 2021 is to make clear that the ILRC will not stand for any legislation that excludes immigrants who have had contacts with the criminal legal system. We have made this message clear from the first day of the Biden Administration. Excluding some immigrants to make legislation more palatable for lawmakers to get behind is not our idea of comprehensive reform.

The Communications Team works across several platforms to get this message across by targeting traditional media, social and digital media, and

coalition work. The ILRC is well-regarded by journalists as being a resource to get accurate, clear, and concise analysis on immigration issues and court cases. ILRC Attorneys have been interviewed and quoted in major news outlets such as the Los Angeles Times, New York Times, Washington Post, The Hill, and Law360. Our message is consistent across our social media and digital platforms to reach the communities we serve.

The team consists of three people: Communications Director Donna De La Cruz; Communications Manager Carolina Chau; and Digital Communications Manager Juan Prieto. Donna has vast experience working on Capitol Hill as an Associated Press journalist, and in nonprofit communications, specializing in immigration rights. Carolina is very knowledgeable and experienced about Texas immigration issues, and Juan has vast experience working with our key California coalitions.

The team is proud to help lift up the ILRC's message on a daily basis and has plans to do several brown bag trainings this year on the importance of consistent messaging across all platforms. This is an exciting time for the team as we work to expand our outreach with reporters, grow our social media audiences, and attract new donors for our work.





YOUTH AT THE BORDER

BY RACHEL PRANDINI

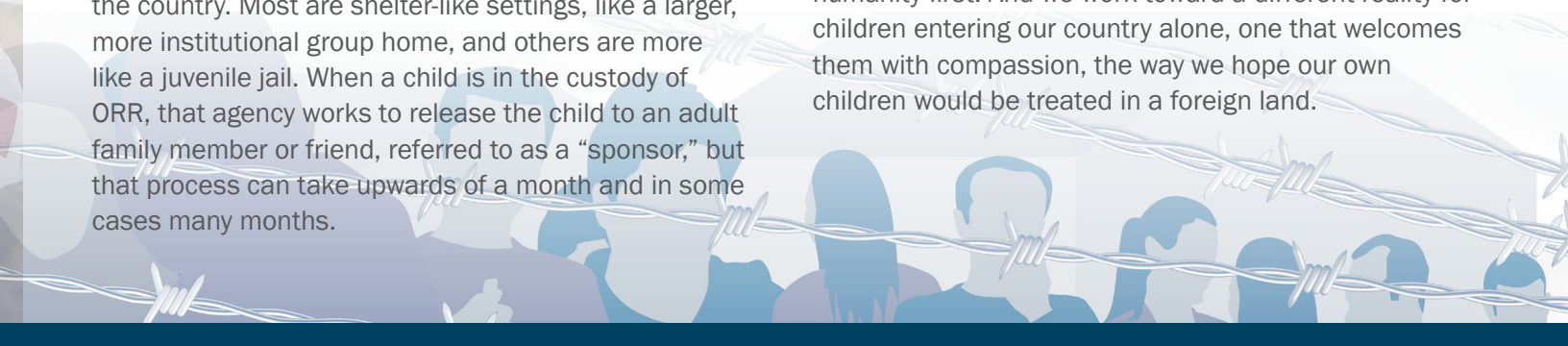
In recent months, high numbers of unaccompanied children have arrived at the southern border. Government officials and news outlets have described this as a “crisis.” This couldn’t be more wrong—this is a tragedy. It is a tragedy that children are in such desperate situations that migrating is safer than staying in their home countries. It is a tragedy that our own country’s history of destabilizing foreign policy in Central America has contributed to insecurity in that region. It is a tragedy that the Trump Administration spent four years employing criminalizing policies and rhetoric to manipulate the public into fearing rather than having compassion for children migrating alone. It is a tragedy that the Biden Administration has chosen to cling on to harmful Trump-era policies, including the near total closure of the border for the last year for COVID-related reasons that were later debunked by public health experts. And it is a tragedy that our government is resorting to tried and failed responses like large-scale “influx” facilities despite documented evidence that children receive inadequate care and are at risk of abuse in such settings.

You may be wondering how we got here. Under our current system, if a child or young person is arrested by immigration authorities (typically at the border), immigration officials will determine if the child is unaccompanied, meaning they do not have a parent or legal guardian who is available to provide for them at that time. In these cases, immigration officials must transfer the child to the custody of the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), which is part of the Department of Health and Human Services and is responsible for the care and custody of unaccompanied children. ORR operates youth immigration detention facilities all over the country. Most are shelter-like settings, like a larger, more institutional group home, and others are more like a juvenile jail. When a child is in the custody of ORR, that agency works to release the child to an adult family member or friend, referred to as a “sponsor,” but that process can take upwards of a month and in some cases many months.

Earlier this year, the Biden Administration began permitting unaccompanied children to enter the country again after many months of excluding them under the false pretense of public health. Because the federal government did not prepare to process and provide temporary housing for the thousands of children and youth now arriving without a parent or legal guardian, ORR ran out of space in the network of licensed facilities that it operates for children, and thousands of children were stuck in border patrol custody waiting to be transferred to ORR. Unsurprisingly, ORR then fell back on the use of huge influx facilities and emergency intake sites, some holding thousands of young people in one large space. There is no question that these facilities are better than border patrol custody. And yet, we also know that such settings are no place for children. We must ask ourselves—don’t we owe it to these children to do better?

At the ILRC, we are supporting advocates on the ground in California and Texas as they put pressure on elected officials to ensure that local communities have a say in whether these large facilities open in their communities, and if so, how they will be run, how children will be cared for, and what role the local community can take in ensuring that children are released quickly, and the facilities close as soon as possible. We are advocating at the national level, pushing our federal government to close these warehouse-like facilities and end Trump era policies that denied people the chance to seek asylum and sometimes lead to family separations at the border.

In the face of crises, people often panic, do the best they can, try to survive. But when we see tragedy, what do we do? At the ILRC, we remember our common humanity first. And we work toward a different reality for children entering our country alone, one that welcomes them with compassion, the way we hope our own children would be treated in a foreign land.



JOINING THE ILRC FAMILY



Carolina Chau | Communications Manager

Carolina is a media activist and the Communications Manager at the Immigrant Legal Resource Center. She helps develop and implement the ILRC's multi-faceted communications strategies, integrating messaging development, advocacy, and social media, to educate, motivate, and influence audiences.

Her passion for public interest communications coupled with the possibilities offered by new digital technologies - especially in the area of social justice - have led her to be a creator of initiatives that give quick and effective answers to pressing social needs around the globe. Prior to joining the ILRC in 2021, Carolina worked with a variety of nonprofits both in the U.S. and abroad, including RAICES where she led the organization's digital advocacy efforts as the Director of Social Media.

She holds two degrees — a BA in Media Production, Management, and Technology from the University of Florida, and an MSc in Digital Humanities from la Universidad de Los Andes in Bogotá, Colombia. Her thesis *Defender*, focused on the intersections between activism, interdisciplinary research and digital strategies to tell the stories of 3 human rights defenders in Colombia in the midst of a failing peace treaty. She is fluent in Spanish.



Jannet Esparza | Innovation & Learning Manager

An immigrant herself, Jannet dedicates her professional experiences to meet the needs of immigrants. She has served as a Policy and Programs Analyst for the Immigrations Service Bureau (ISB) of the California Department of Social Services, where she focused on implementing programs and funding initiatives to support access to legal services for immigrants. Prior to state government, she served as an OLAP Accredited Representative for the Council of Mexican Federations and Catholic Charities of Yolo and Solano, providing direct legal services in Naturalization, Adjustment of Status, and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals

Jannet holds a Master's in Sociology from the California State University, Sacramento. Her thesis analyzed the paradox of the immigration-industrial-complex in California. Her experiences and background as an immigrant have motivated her research and professional endeavors. Jannet's research interests include immigration, criminality, and race. She received her B. A. in Political Science and Communications with an emphasis in Broadcasting Journalism from the California State University, Fullerton.



Juan Prieto | Digital Communications Manager

Juan Prieto is a digital strategist and graphic designer based in Oakland, California. An immigrant from Mexicali, Mexico himself, he works to implement narrative shifting strategies in the context of crimmigration for the emerging world of digital communications. Juan's comprehensive understanding of the ways the digital space can be used to cultivate transformative change began when he was first targeted by far-right extremists after writing a series of opinion pieces for the New York Times.

Since then, he's helped train and empower young advocates across California to use digital communications to shift the public discourse around immigration, detention, and against the propaganda of criminalization. As the Statewide Communications Strategist at the California Immigrant Youth Justice Alliance (CIYJA), Juan led the digital communications efforts which helped free hundreds of people from detention centers across California under the banner to #FreeThemAll.

Juan holds a B.A. in English Literature from the University of California, Berkeley.

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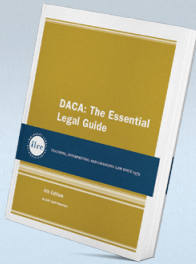


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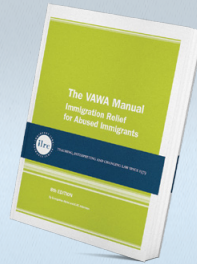
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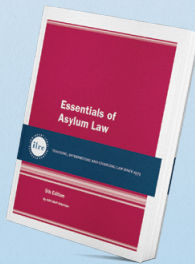
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- Virtual Burton Awards: We Fight Together
- 2020 Annual Report



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