

2023

ANNUAL REPORT



TEACHING INTERPRETING & CHANGING LAW SINCE 1979

The Immigrant Legal Resource Center (ILRC) is one of the nation's premier sources for analysis of immigration law and policy, helping to improve access to American civic life for immigrant communities across the United States. In addition, we provide resources for practitioners working on complex issues in immigration law, and we advance immigrant rights through strategies such as policy analysis and advocacy, civic engagement, and capacity-building with legal service providers.

- **Policy Analysis & Advocacy:** We seek progressive reform of immigration laws and policies at the local, state, and federal level.
- **Naturalization & Civic Engagement:** We educate newcomers about their rights and responsibilities in a democratic society, promote the pathway to naturalization, and advocate for increased access to citizenship and naturalization.
- **Education & Capacity Building:** We provide technical legal assistance, trainings, publications, and resources to pro bono and community-based immigration lawyers, defense attorneys, paralegals, and advocates.
- **Shaping Public Opinion:** We support grassroots leadership to bring the voices of newcomers to the public dialogue and policy decisions that affect their lives.

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AREAS OF EXPERTISE

The ILRC's legal team holds expertise in:

- Naturalization and citizenship, and the processes of granting or transmitting U.S. citizenship to foreign-born individuals.
- The complex intersection of criminal and immigration law and how the criminal legal system can affect immigration eligibility and status.
- Immigrant post-conviction relief, including clean slate and other record clearance remedies.
- Family-based immigration, which allows close relatives of U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents to unify with their loved ones.
- Public charge—a bar to certain forms of immigration status based on receipt of means-based benefits, and how recent public charge rules and policies affect immigrants.
- Special challenges facing immigrant youth, including youth detention and policies regarding unaccompanied minors.
- Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS), a form of legal relief for youth who have been abused, abandoned, or neglected.
- Defense of immigrants in removal proceedings who, unlike in the criminal court system, are not provided an attorney, and special forms of relief, such as cancellation of removal and asylum, which are only available in immigration court.
- Immigration detention and bond eligibility.
- Asylum for people who come to the United States seeking protection from persecution due to race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a social group, and related forms of immigration relief such as withholding of removal.
- Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), temporary relief that provides access to education and employment for young immigrants who were brought to the United States as children.
- U Visas, a form of immigration status for survivors of serious crimes.
- T Visas, a form of immigration status for survivors of trafficking.
- Protections under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) which recognize that undocumented status is often used to trap victims of domestic violence in abusive relationships.
- Temporary Protected Status, which is a temporary protection for nationals of certain countries experiencing humanitarian crises.
- Parole and other temporary forms of immigration status that can be used to address humanitarian crises and achieve family reunification.
- Freedom of Information Act Requests for immigration cases.
- The grounds of inadmissibility and deportability, potential waivers, and how these all factor into eligibility for immigration relief and removal defense.
- Immigration enforcement that is prone to overreach and leaves immigrant communities terrified and unwilling to trust local law enforcement.
- Policy and advocacy efforts throughout the United States with a particular focus on local policy work in Texas, local and state policy work in California, and policy advocacy at the federal level.
- Organizing, a critical component to how community-led change happens in social justice movements to maximize the effectiveness and impact on immigrant rights.

MESSAGE FROM THE ILRC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



I am proud that the Immigrant Legal Resource Center has shown great resiliency in the face of some hateful and racist policies and legislation. Our work is challenging and I am so grateful for the grit and determination shown by the incredible ILRC staff as we continue to fight for the communities we serve as we continue to work to defeat anti-immigrant policies and rhetoric.

We are constantly inundated by bad news when it comes to immigration. I'd like to share some positive news. While our Texas team has faced an onslaught of vehement anti-immigrant legislation being implemented by Governor Abbott, they have worked very hard making sure our communities are educated and empowered to demand change, provided trainings for public defenders and prosecutors to aid immigrants by instilling compassionate humanity in their work, been involved in many coalition events and news conferences, given testimony before the State Legislature, and visited our border communities.

Like their counterparts in Texas, our Central Valley team is often in their cars, driving to coalition meetings, visiting parents at schools, and making sure the cohorts participating in the Immigrant Legal Fellowship Program—California's first-ever state funded program for attorneys committed to providing legal services to immigrants. During the two-year fellowship, lawyers and recent law graduates receive intensive training and mentorship to prepare them to provide removal defense legal services to immigrants in two underserved areas of the state – the Central Coast and Central Valley. Our Central Valley team has also visited lawmakers in Sacramento and begun a congressional outreach project to make sure their elected federal lawmakers are aware of the critical issues in their communities.

We remain frustrated with the Biden Administration's unwillingness to be bold on immigration and have pushed back hard on policies that are hurtful to immigrant communities. We did have some policy wins: We led the charge to get the pilot naturalization test stopped; we've done a lot of positive work on the naturalization disability waivers; and we are succeeding in getting some USCIS forms changed through our comment advocacy efforts.

We held several incredible convenings and conferences in 2023:

- The NAC team held a convening in May in San Francisco and an extremely successful conference in October in Houston attended by more than 260 people. Thirteen ILRC staff also attended.
- Since 2011, NAC partners have completed over 617,000 naturalization applications; completed over 217,000 fee waivers and reduced fee requests; saved the immigrant community over \$680 million in legal and application fees, and held over 10,800 naturalization events.
- The Immigrant Justice Network held a convening and congressional visits in March in Washington to mark the reintroduction of The New Way Forward Act.

ILRC staff presented numerous webinars and trainings, many thanks to the attorneys and our Training team for this incredible work and support:

- There were a total of 58 grant-based trainings, which included 26 in-person trainings and 32 Zoom trainings. We had 1,066 people attend in-person trainings and 946 participated via Zoom. There were 43 trainings in California with over 1,300 participants, and there were 13 trainings in Texas with over 500 participants. There was one in-person training outside of California and Texas—it was held in Colorado and was a two-day naturalization training.
- For the 2023 calendar webinars, we produced 33 webinars and approximately 9,500 people attended these.

I'm proud to say that all this work continues in 2024, with the goal of protecting positive immigration policies and laws to withstand any efforts by officials to eradicate the rights of the communities we fight so hard to protect every day.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Eric Cohen".

Eric Cohen
Executive Director
Immigrant Legal Resource Center

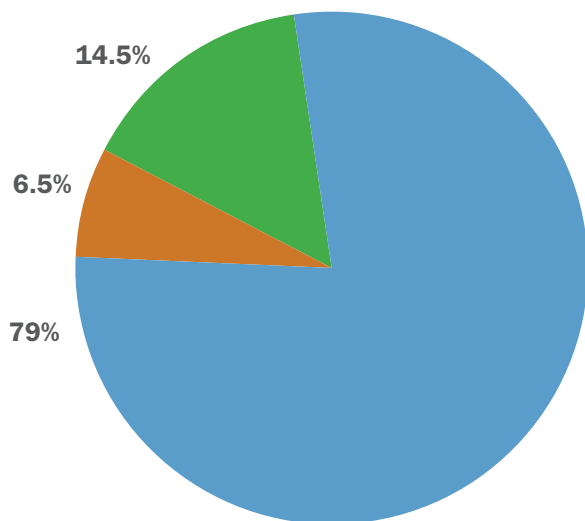
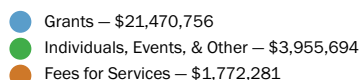
2023 FINANCIAL POSITION

The ILRC continues to grow as an organization impacting policies and communities across the country. In 2023, the ILRC spent 87 cents of every dollar raised on program delivery and 13 cents of every dollar was spent on administration and fundraising. For reference, nonprofit organizations target spending 75 cents or more on program delivery each year, which is considered a best practice across the industry.

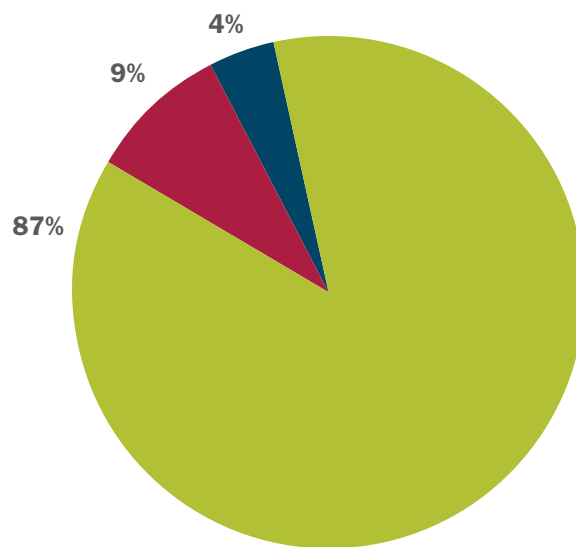
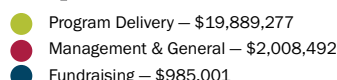
The ILRC continued its robust regrants program in 2023. The ILRC regrants approximately half of its program budget to partner organizations in the field. It is one of the ways that we pursue our mission to build the immigration legal and immigrant rights fields. While most think of our technical assistance and training programs, regrants funds is another way to ensure partners have the resources they need to provide direct legal services and other support for immigrant communities. In 2023, the ILRC supported the work of 81 grassroots organizations with 106 grants distributed.

Cash and Investments	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●	\$	39,654,134
Current Grants Receivable	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●	\$	6,297,141
Other Current Assets	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●	\$	703,498
Long-term Grants Receivable	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●	\$	3,074,650
Net Property and Equipment	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●	\$	78,270
All Other Assets	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●	\$	1,002,715
TOTAL ASSETS	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	\$	50,810,408
Available for Operations	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●	\$	19,303,077
Board-designated Reserves	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●	\$	5,800,000
Temporarily Restricted	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●	\$	18,774,986
TOTAL NET ASSETS	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	\$	43,878,063
Payables and Accrued Expenses	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●	\$	292,647
Current Re-Grants Payable	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●	\$	2,669,504
Accrued Vacation	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●	\$	971,639
Other Liabilities	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●	\$	2,998,555
Loan Payable	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●	\$	0
TOTAL LIABILITIES	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	\$	6,932,345

Donations and Revenue



Expenses



2023 POLICY WINS HIGHLIGHTS

In 2023, our federal advocacy and policy team was successful in gaining some wins despite the Biden administration's unwillingness to be bold on immigration. We began the year by issuing a Platform for the executive actions the administration could and should take to advance the needs of immigrant communities. In addition, we led the charge to ensure barriers to naturalization were not increased by advocating against a pilot test that would have made naturalization less accessible; we've done a lot of positive work on the naturalization disability waivers; and we are succeeding in getting some USCIS forms changed through our comment advocacy efforts. In Congress, the New Way Forward Act of 2023 was reintroduced; this bill reimagines our immigration system to be rooted in compassion, fairness, and humanity.

Our Crimes Team continues to build advocates' capacity to fight for immigrants' rights in the immigration and criminal law systems. The team conducted two crim/imm "boot camps" to train immigration advocates and public defenders. We continue to work intensively with Padilla defenders statewide, and in October convened a two-day "Padilla Palooza" conference attended by 32 Padilla attorneys from 20 counties. Working in coalition, we restored \$50 million to the state budget to fund defenders' work on PCR, and we offer free AOD service to indigent defenders and nonprofit staff doing this work. We have provided technical support for post-conviction relief leading to the release of numerous clients from ICE custody including two lawful permanent residents that were resentenced under the new felony murder law after serving over a decade in prison. Due to our assistance these individuals were able to return to their families rather than face deportation after release from state prison.

The Central Valley team made sure the voices of the communities are being heard. They have visited lawmakers in Sacramento and begun a congressional outreach project to

make sure their elected federal lawmakers are aware of the critical issues in their communities.

Through our work with the Dignity Not Detention coalition, the Healthy Economies Adapting to Last (HEAL) proposal made it into the state budget approved by Governor Newsom this summer. This campaign will go a long way toward making positive changes in communities that have relied on detention centers for jobs and economic security by transforming the six remaining immigrant detention centers in the state into facilities that will benefit communities.

Governor Newsom signed AB 1261 into law—the ILRC was a co-sponsor of this bill along with the Los Angeles Center for Law and Justice, Public Counsel, CAST, and the Los Angeles District Attorney's Office. Our Immigrant Survivors team provided great feedback and input that made this bill stronger. This bill will strengthen U/T certification law in California and increase access to immigration relief for immigrant survivors of crime.

ILRC BY THE NUMBERS 2023

525,000

Know Your Rights
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124

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



86

Community
Meetings

hosting

4,305
Attendees

hosting

16,805

Legal Practitioners

8,875

Attorney of the Day



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