



**Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc.**

*2015 Annual Report*

“

*We must not be taken aback by their numbers, but rather view them as persons, seeing their faces and listening to their stories, trying to respond as best we can to their situation. To respond in a way which is always humane, just and fraternal.*

”

## Visit from ‘a child of immigrants’ sets the tone

*Taking our cues from Pope Francis’s powerful statements in support of migrants*

Opening his remarks to the United States with the simple statement, “I am a child of immigrants,” Pope Francis laid out in clear terms the core of CLINIC’s mission. Speaking the next day to the assembled members of Congress, he said:

“On this continent, too, thousands of persons are led to travel north in search of a better life for themselves and for their loved ones, in search of greater opportunities. Is this not what we want for our own children? We must not be taken aback by their numbers, but rather view them as persons, seeing their faces and listening to their stories, trying to respond as best we can to their situation. To respond in a way which is always humane, just and fraternal.”

In the training programs CLINIC offers each year to thousands of nonprofit immigration organization employees, in its advocacy before government agencies and legislative bodies and in its outreach in support of legalization efforts, CLINIC focuses on the faces and stories of immigrants and tries to respond to their situations with humanity, justice and a sense of fraternity.

Pope Francis’ September visit to Washington, Philadelphia and New York provided a whole series of encouraging references, as the pontiff endeavored to change the tone of the national debate about immigration.

“[W]hen the stranger in our midst appeals to us...we must ... educate new generations not to turn their back on our ‘neighbors’ and everything around us.”

*Joint Meeting of Congress, Sept. 24, 2015*



Leading up to his visit, CLINIC prepared background materials for the press and the public about Catholic teaching on migration. As pilgrims walked from Pennsylvania to Washington for papal events, CLINIC staffers met the immigrant women on their journey. After providing food, drinks and other support items, some CLINIC employees joined them for a portion of their 100-mile pilgrimage to bring focus to the detention of women and children.

With advocacy efforts throughout the year, CLINIC worked to protect or enact state laws that allow certain undocumented immigrants to obtain driver's licenses. Other state and local-level efforts backed alternatives to detention of immigrant families seeking asylum, supported refugee resettlement and sought to block efforts to end so-called sanctuary cities.

Pope Francis' call to protect migrants and to recognize their suffering was made clear earlier in the year in his apostolic exhortation, "Laudato Si."

Many migrants "are not recognized by international conventions as refugees; they bear the loss of the lives they have left behind, without enjoying any legal protection whatsoever.... Our lack of response to these

tragedies involving our brothers and sisters points to the loss of that sense of responsibility for our fellow men and women upon which all civil society is founded."

*Laudato Si (#25), June 18, 2015*

That call influenced CLINIC's creation of a prayer guide for the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. "Praying the Rosary with Our Lady of Guadalupe and Tales of Immigrants – The Luminous Mysteries." The beautifully illustrated booklet—available in English and Spanish, as a printed brochure and online—combined the hopeful messages of the Rosary with stories from clients provided by CLINIC affiliates. The pairing of the classic Catholic prayer with the struggles of the Latin American immigrants spoke to people around the world. Social media postings about the guide went viral and it was downloaded by individuals, groups and parishes for broad distribution.

Throughout the year, CLINIC's everyday work focused on helping the nation's "strangers" feel more at home. Whether through legal representation, integration assistance or advocacy with the right agencies, CLINIC worked to follow the path set out by Pope Francis. The following are a sampling of the work done in that spirit throughout 2015.

# Pro bono work changes lives of immigrants

*“Let us treat others with the same passion and compassion with which we want to be treated.”*

---

In his remarks at St. Patrick’s Cathedral Sept. 24, Pope Francis spoke to the blessings that come from “closeness to the poor, the refugee, the immigrant, the sick, the exploited....” Through CLINIC’s two pro bono projects, volunteer attorneys step away from their normal work to respond to the needs of especially struggling immigrants. Both projects have high rates of success, proving the simple fact that having legal representation can mean the difference between safety and life-threatening danger, between starting a new life and being deported back to the life one fled.

The CARA Pro Bono Project was launched in early-2015 as a collaboration among CLINIC and three other nonprofit immigration organizations to provide legal representation to the families being held in detention at the South Texas Family Residential Center.

The joint effort by CLINIC, the American Immigration Lawyers Association, Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services and the American Immigration Council relies upon a steady stream of volunteer attorneys and non-attorneys to help the families detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement at the residential center in Dilley, Texas. It opened in December 2014 in response to the arrival in the United States of tens of thousands of families who were fleeing harsh conditions in their home countries of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. The center has a capacity of 2,400 women and children.

In the first months of the CARA Project, CLINIC staff members went to Dilley as part of the hundreds of volunteers who assisted with filing documents, court appearances, credible fear interviews, case questions and medical concerns. The project was serving an average of 100 clients each day, while as many as 1,900 women and children were being held at a time.

In a blog about her experiences as a Dilley volunteer, CLINIC staff attorney Jennifer Riddle wrote: “The population at Dilley is in constant flux. On any given day, countless families are being deported or released while new families are arriving. Only some of the thousands of women who have been detained at Dilley are lucky enough to access the CARA Project. While word spreads quickly to some new arrivals, non-Spanish speakers, families facing health issues, and recent transfers from Karnes County Residential Center...may face heightened barriers to learning about the project. Even those actively seeking pro bono assistance must be granted permission to visit the legal trailer, and deportation officers may not facilitate access before a woman has her credible fear interview.

“Even for the mothers the CARA Project helps, the challenges of ensuring due process are immense. Explaining the terms ‘persecution’ and ‘particular social group’ to immigrant clients is a daunting task, even in an office setting with a qualified interpreter. Imagine trying to convey such complicated legal concepts to traumatized women with limited education and language abilities, many dealing with the stress of physical or mental health issues on top of their legal cases, and all deeply concerned about their children. How do you coax a young mother you just met into recounting the most painful events of her life with her 4-year-old son in her lap, repeating the words he hears—pandillas...violación (gangs...rape)? How many weeks will it take a woman to obtain a letter from her relative with the required information to support a bond request when she has no funds in her commissary account to make a call and attorneys can’t bring in cell phones?”

CLINIC staff created a private Facebook page to help the women released from the center maintain contact with each other and with legal professionals who help them understand their proceedings.

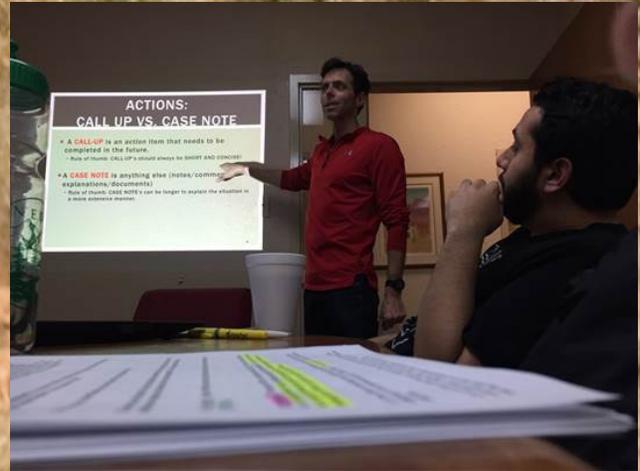
The CARA Project partners also worked together to raise public awareness about family detention and advocated with the federal government for the release of mothers with their children.

CLINIC's BIA Pro Bono Appeals Project matches vulnerable immigrants with pro bono counsel to defend their cases before the Board of Immigration Appeals. Most cases involve challenging clients' deportation orders. Many result in authorization to live and work in the U.S. permanently, vastly improving the lives of the immigrants and their families. Clients are three times more likely to have a successful outcome than without representation.

Protecting the rights of those with limited mental capabilities is a priority for the project, especially clients like Josue.\* As a young adult, he began to show signs of severe mental illness, including auditory hallucinations. He said the voices in his head told him to kill people. Despite government health records identifying his psychotic disorder, he was deemed competent to attend the proceedings without a representative. The judge believed Josue when he said he did not need Zyprexa, a powerful psychotropic medication, and that he could block the voices on his own.

Josue's pro bono attorney realized Josue's needs were not being heard or met. He convinced the Board of Immigration Appeals to send the case back to an immigration judge. The new immigration court ordered court-appointed representation for Josue and, later, dropped the deportation effort.

Josue's story, like many pro bono cases, reinforces the importance of advocacy alongside a strong legal defense.





## Trainings help educate the network

*“...the gravity and the urgency of these challenges demand that we pool our resources and talents, and resolve to support one another.”*

---

The bread-and-butter of CLINIC is its extensive program of training. From the full course work required for non-attorneys to become Board of Immigration Appeals accredited representatives, to webinars explaining the latest decisions by the Department of Homeland Security, CLINIC has a well-earned reputation for providing the best training to nonprofit immigration legal service agencies.

The November 2014 announcement by President Barack Obama of new forms of administrative relief for some undocumented immigrants led CLINIC and its partners in the Committee for Immigration Reform Implementation to host a nationwide conference about what to expect. The Ready America: Implementing Immigration Action conference in February brought more than 400 people representing 240 agencies in 35 states to the Washington suburbs.

Programming ranged from substantive training in immigration law to financing and managing immigrant-assistance services.

Participants included community organizers, advocates, educators, legal representatives, consular officials and representatives of government agencies. Top-level speakers included Alejandro Mayorkas, the deputy secretary

of DHS and Lucas Guttentag, senior counsel to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service.

Later in the year, CLINIC’s annual Convening and the Immigration Law and Policy Conference it cosponsors provided opportunities for hundreds of people who work with immigrants to hear from some of the top experts in the field.

The 17th annual Convening in Salt Lake City, Utah, in May hosted plenary speakers Juan Osuna, director of the Executive Office for Immigration Review and León Rodríguez, director of U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services. Nearly all CLINIC staff attended and the Affiliate Advisory Council met to offer feedback on the prioritization of CLINIC’s resources and participate in a focus group to help inform CLINIC’s future strategic plan.

The Immigration Law and Policy Conference, cosponsored with the Migration Policy Institute and Georgetown Law in September, proved to be a hot ticket, with speakers including Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson and U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres. In addition to 450 attendees, the event was a social media hit, as Twitter followers in the audience kept #immconf as one of the top hashtags in the Washington area throughout the day.



# Amplifying our voice through partnerships

*“Many of you have emigrated to this country at great personal cost, but in the hope of building a new life. Do not be discouraged by whatever challenges and hardships you face. I ask you not to forget that, like those who came here before you, you bring many gifts to your new nation...”*

---

Since Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, known as DACA, was first announced and implemented in 2012, CLINIC and its affiliates have been extensively involved in the implementation of the program to defer deportation for hundreds of thousands of young people who were brought to the U.S. as minors. In addition to providing training and public information, CLINIC worked with the Committee for Immigration Reform Implementation to seek expansion of the program

When President Barack Obama in November 2014 announced plans to expand DACA to a broader population, change some of its restrictions and create a parallel program for the parents of U.S. citizens or lawful permanent resident children, CLINIC and many other agencies geared up to help people apply. But legal challenges in 2015 soon stopped implementation of both programs. A temporary injunction in February blocked the programs from proceeding and a ruling by the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the injunction and set the case on a path to be decided by the Supreme Court.

By then, some immigrants had already applied for and received the expanded, three-year grants of DACA and its accompanying work authorization. As the litigation progressed, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service “recalled” more than 2,600 grants of DACA and work authorizations that were mistakenly issued by USCIS after the injunction was in place.

That meant those thousands of young people who had been issued three-year protection from deportation and work authorization were required to return their documents to USCIS for the original two-year documents in short order or face complete loss of the privileges they provided, regardless of eligibility. The affected DACA participants who neglected to return their documents faced the possibility of home visits by federal agents.

CLINIC staff from across the organization united to address the issue. Public resource materials were made available on a web page and in outreach flyers. Affiliates were provided with a webinar, regular email updates and individual case support. In response to CLINIC’s recommendations, USCIS provided DACA recipients with a tool to help immigrants determine whether they were affected by the recall. Ultimately, 99 percent of the documents were returned.

CLINIC leveraged partnerships with the Department of Homeland Security and USCIS to explain the implications of the recall. That feedback and recommendations helped to mitigate the problems that the recall of no-longer-valid three-year documents could have caused. Staff also worked with CLINIC’s network to provide information about the state of the programs given the lawsuit and federal court rulings, and to educate immigrants about what options they might still have as the legal challenge proceeded.

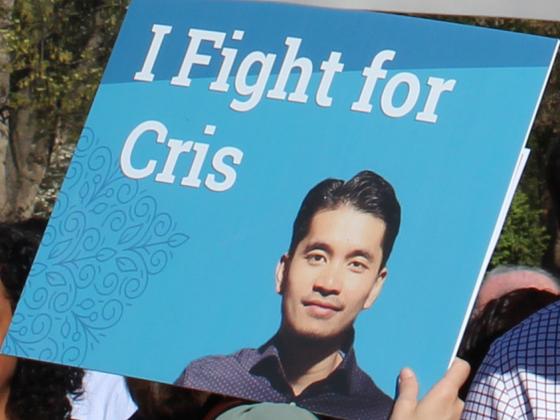
Often, CLINIC’s advocacy efforts are nationwide in scope. Sometimes advocacy is about how relationships with government officials can be brought to bear for an individual with challenges due to from agency processing problems. Increasingly, CLINIC is receiving requests for case intervention from affiliates when their efforts to settle problems have been unsuccessful.

For one immigrant family, CLINIC’s outreach to USCIS helped with a situation across the sea. An affiliate asked for help when a U.S. citizen client was told she had to provide a DNA sample from her father within six weeks or risk the denial of an application for him to obtain a visa. However, the client’s father was working aboard a ship at sea that was prevented from returning to port in Sierra Leone as a protection from the outbreak of Ebola. Due to CLINIC’s intervention, once the situation was explained, an extension was granted and the application proceeded.

"I was a  
stranger  
and you  
welcomed me.



M  
A  
T  
T  
H  
E  
W  
B  
R  
N  
S  
I  
N  
S



# Preparing the way for religious workers

*“I know that it is not easy to have to move... The good thing is that we also make new friends. We meet people who open doors for us, who are kind to us.”*

---

Ramon Flores, an immigrant from Mexico, turned to CLINIC as part of his journey to answer a higher calling—to become a priest.

His case came to CLINIC’s Religious Immigration Service appropriately enough during the Year of Consecrated Life set by Pope Francis for Nov. 30, 2014 through Feb. 2, 2016. CLINIC staff participated in several activities to raise awareness about and encourage those who serve the church as clergy and vowed religious throughout the year. But handling Flores’ case epitomized the way CLINIC supports those in religious life every day.

Flores had dreamed of becoming a priest from his childhood, even pretending to celebrate Mass with his friends and cousins. Born in Mexico, he immigrated with his family at age 12 to the United States without authorization. To respond to God’s call, Flores began volunteering as a religious educator at Sacred Heart Church in Compton, California. He also took advantage of the mentorship of the Missionary Servant priests who staffed the parish to discern that he was indeed being called to the priesthood.

His status as undocumented was a barrier to the higher education he needed. After months of prayer and consultation with his family, he left the U.S., eventually beginning studies at the Missionary Servants’ novitiate in Mexico. He knew that federal laws would bar him from reentering the United States for 10 years; plus the undocumented members of his family would be unable to travel outside the U.S. to see him.

Nevertheless, Flores spent some time studying and working among impoverished communities in Costa Rica and eventually began studying at the Missionary Servants’ novitiate in Mexico. Following his profession of vows, the religious order asked Flores to continue his theology studies in New Jersey.

However, he was still barred from entering the United States. That’s when his religious community contacted CLINIC for help. CLINIC worked with the Missionary Servants to begin the waiver and student visa process through the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City.

After months with no word about his application, Flores’ superiors decided to send him to Colombia to continue his studies. Then, three days before he was to travel to Colombia, the U.S. Embassy emailed Flores, asking for his Mexican passport to complete the waiver and visa process. He was overjoyed.

Brother Ramon called that “an answer to prayer. I’m eternally grateful to my community and CLINIC. Without their legal assistance, I would not be in the U.S. studying theology. Additionally I was able to travel to California during spring break to visit my family after nearly five years. Praise be God!”

“ *I’m eternally grateful to my community and CLINIC. Without their legal assistance, I would not be in the U.S studying theology...Praise be God!* ”

Brother Ramon Flores



# CATHOLIC LEGAL IMMIGRATION NETWORK, INC.

Drawing on our unparalleled network, the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. empowers communities to welcome immigrants through our proven expertise, innovative programs and advocacy rooted in faith. Our network of nonprofit immigration programs—more than 300 organizations in 46 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico—is the largest in the nation.

8757 Georgia Avenue, Suite 850  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

301-565-4800

[cliniclegal.org](http://cliniclegal.org)

[fb.com/cliniclegal](https://fb.com/cliniclegal) | [twitter.com/cliniclegal](https://twitter.com/cliniclegal)

## 2015 Financial Highlights



Total Revenue: **\$9,070,925**

**48%**  
Foundations

**25%**  
USCCB  
Support

**19%**  
Services

**4%**  
Federal Awards

**3%**  
Other  
Contributions

**1%**  
Other Income



Total Expenses: **\$7,490,390**

**87%**  
Program  
Services

**10%**  
Management  
and General

**4%**  
Fundraising and  
Development