



2019
**ANNUAL
REPORT**

Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc.

A Year of Transition: Thoughts from our Executive Director

As 2019 brought a continuing wave of administration policies that harm immigrants and their families, CLINIC stepped up. We added new projects, increased training opportunities, engaged in intensive advocacy and undertook new litigation challenging continued violations of the human rights of immigrants by this administration. We also grew. Our network expanded to include over 380 affiliates by the end of 2019.

As with our work to limit the damage caused by new public charge policies, our role in litigation was based on the strength, knowledge and expertise of a network that provides the heart, the human touch in immigration legal services.

I hit the ground running when I became executive director in February. It was an honor to join CLINIC and become immersed in the astonishing number of things we do. To learn the scope, I traveled to Texas, California, and New York. I visited the southern border region to meet with men, women and children stranded in Mexico and to understand the growing pressures on the asylum system. As I settled in at CLINIC, we also did some internal reorganization of staffing structure and engaged in a months-long process to create strategic goals to guide us through the next two years. This first year has shown me a network that stands alongside immigrants. Our staff builds up and empowers our affiliates, as they do the on-the-ground work to protect people's rights and dignity. I am humbled and moved by their dedication and commitment to our immigrant brothers and sisters and I feel more energized than ever to lead during these challenging times.



Anna Gallagher — Executive Director

A Board Chairman Bids Farewell; a Letter from Bishop Vann

CLINIC's mission on behalf of immigrants has always been grounded in Catholic social teaching's call to care for our sisters and brothers. For more than 30 years, an integral part of the network's mission has included providing compassion, comfort and the blessing of caring and faith-based relationships to low-income immigrants, along with unparalleled legal expertise. That makes the network continually pivot and adapt to changing circumstances. These adaptations come from deep concern for how best to protect people's dignity along with their legal rights. Lately that has been amid seemingly endless attacks on the asylum system, on family reunification and other pathways to legal status and citizenship.

In 2019, amid hostile efforts to force families apart, CLINIC conceptualized new approaches to help them be together — in line with the teaching of both *Familiaris Consortio*, of Saint John Paul II, and *Amoris Laetitia*, of Pope Francis. CLINIC continued to expand the capability of legal representatives to fight back in court, with training and accreditation, as well as with litigation as a key strategy and tool.

I'm endlessly proud of CLINIC's unceasing commitment to protect the legal rights and human dignity of our sisters and brothers from around the world, who show us the face of God in many and unexpected ways. It was a personal blessing, one of which I very proud, to have served as the Board Chair for CLINIC these past six years.



Kevin W. Vann — Bishop of Orange, California

RESPOND, PROTECT, DEFEND and IMPACT

Bridging the Gap in Representation Through Volunteers

THE BIA PRO BONO APPEALS PROJECT HAS SERVED MORE THAN 1,500 IMMIGRANTS SINCE 2001 CLINIC's BIA Pro Bono Appeals Project provides pro bono representation to some of the most vulnerable immigrants as they prepare to have their cases heard before the Board of Immigration Appeals. 113 cases were placed with quality legal representation from a cohort of attorneys on CLINIC's referral panel in 2019. CLINIC's BIA Pro Bono Project is grateful for the lifesaving work that its volunteers provide.

Martim fled Angola after being detained and tortured by a high-ranking police officer. Martim escaped to Cuba, traveled through Central American and finally arrived in El Paso, Texas. He applied for asylum, withholding of removal and protection under the Convention Against Torture, all of which were denied. With volunteer legal representation through CLINIC's BIA Pro Bono Appeals Project, the board found that the immigration judge had not properly considered Martim's evidence or eligibility for protection under the Convention Against Torture. The BIA remanded the case back to the immigration judge. Martim was granted relief and allowed to remain in the United States.*

Taking the Fight to Court Through Litigation

After two years as a project within Training and Legal Support, Defending Vulnerable Populations, or DVP, became a stand-alone department within CLINIC. DVP also began to take on strategic litigation efforts for CLINIC in a range of cases, acting as plaintiff and counsel, and signing on to or submitting amicus briefs.

Victories

- CLINIC, KIND, Public Counsel and Goodwin Procter had a litigation victory in *J.O.P. v. DHS*, on behalf of four child asylum seeker plaintiffs.
- In *Seattle v. DHS*, filed on Oct. 30, a preliminary injunction was granted on Dec. 9 to challenge the change in the government's fee waiver policy.
- In *Sebastiao v. Barr*, the plaintiff was granted asylum on Dec. 5 on remand after a successful motion to reopen.

Notable Briefs

- In an amicus brief for the case *Grace v. Barr*, CLINIC challenged *Matter of A-B-* and discussed additional contexts in which gender-based violence merits refugee protection.
- CLINIC signed on to an amicus brief to the Supreme Court with the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and other faith organizations in *DHS v. Regents* on Oct. 4. The case questions whether the administration can overturn DACA.
- CLINIC organized an amicus stressing practical difficulties faced by pro se asylum applicants in formulating particular social groups and suggesting the proper role of the immigration judge in *Campos-Tapia v. Barr*.
- CLINIC submitted an amicus brief, asking the Supreme Court to grant cert in the case of *Luna-Garcia v. Barr*. The brief discussed experiences of people forced to remain in Mexico under the Migrant Protection Protocols for the case about people who are unable to receive Notices to Appear because they lack addresses.



Advocating Over Policies

CLINIC works with federal, state, and local government agencies to solve systemic problems faced by low-income immigrants and our affiliated non-profit organizations that serve them. We also advise our affiliates and partners in planning and implementing their own advocacy efforts.

In 2019, CLINIC continued to lead or partner in advocating for Temporary Protected Status and Deferred Enforced Departure extensions and/or redesignations. CLINIC supported efforts to permanently protect foreign nationals affected by TPS and DED Decisions.

TPS was extended or redesignated for three countries in 2019 — Honduras, South Sudan and Syria. The historic passage of the Liberian Refugee Immigration Fairness Act in December 2019 enabled Liberians who have been continuously present in the United States since Nov. 20, 2014, to apply for green cards. The provision puts them and certain family members on the pathway to U.S. citizenship.

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**SIXTY FIVE
KNOW YOUR
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CONDUCTED AND
1,651 PEOPLE
SERVED FROM
9 COUNTRIES**

**440 CONSULTATIONS,
LEGAL CONSULTATIONS
PROVIDED TO HELP
1,358 PEOPLE FROM
10 COUNTRIES**

Estamos Unidos Asylum Project

In response to the surge of Mexican nationals being denied entry into the United States, the Estamos Unidos team responded by advocating directly with CBP officials to expedite the number of people who are allowed through a port of entry on any given day. Through accompaniments, staff and volunteers advocated directly with officials and serve as legal observers to ensure that individuals seeking asylum are allowed through the port of entry. During this period, there were at least eight separate accompaniments serving 110 Mexican nationals.

The Estamos Unidos project received assistance from 55 remote and in-person volunteers. 25 volunteers spent a combined 60 days in Ciudad Juarez, providing Know Your Rights presentations, consultations and other services. 17 of those volunteers were immigration attorneys who gave a combined 46 days of their time to working directly with asylum seekers. The project has a group of 30 remote volunteers assisting with document translations and data entry to enable the team to help as many people as possible.

*After several attempts to seek protection in her home country, **Blanca and her son** were forced to flee the imminent danger they faced. Blanca and her son entered the United States in the summer of 2019. She was devastated when they were returned to Ciudad Juarez and placed under MPP. She knew the persecution they suffered in their home country could occur in Mexico as well. She was one of the first people the team met on Estamos Unidos' first day of operation. In early September, volunteer attorneys met with Blanca and agreed to take on her case pro bono. Since then, these incredible attorneys have fought tooth and nail for Blanca and her son. In April 2020, the attorneys were successful in obtaining an emergency humanitarian parole for Blanca and her child. They are now safe and able to continue their asylum case in the United States.*



Training for the Best Representation

With a peerless history in the immigration field, CLINIC's reputation is that of subject matter experts. Trainings are a combination of foundational immigration law courses and timely responses to shifts in the immigration landscape. A significant part of CLINIC's work is training legal practitioners and immigration program managers. Trainings are available in a variety of formats — such as E-learning courses, webinars and in-person trainings. In 2019, more than 12,500 people participated in CLINIC trainings. As a result, thousands of immigrants will benefit from the education and analysis provided. CLINIC trainings facilitate our network's ability to provide high quality legal assistance to immigrant communities throughout the country.

The most concentrated training efforts from 2019 took place at CLINIC's Convening 2019 in Pittsburgh. There, 555 attendees — including affiliates, speakers, CLINIC staff and other immigration advocates — took part in more than 35 workshops. The annual gathering provides an opportunity for intensive legal training, with some sessions providing continuing legal education credits. CLINIC's Convening provides attendees with a centralized point for networking with other immigration legal service providers to share resources, strategies, challenges and successes.

Training: Seeing in the Fog

The Rev. Susan Brouillette, who leads the Lafayette Urban Ministry Immigration Clinic in Indiana, said with CLINIC support they "have been able to focus on serving clients and know we will be taken care of in this difficult journey. Like having eyes that are able to see in the fog, we are being thoughtfully guided in the right direction."

SERVE

Embracing the Gospel value of welcoming the stranger, CLINIC promotes the dignity and protects the rights of immigrants in partnership with a dedicated network of Catholic and community legal immigration programs.

Broadening our Reach with Accredited Representatives and a Screening Project

During 2019, CLINIC launched its third Partial to Full Accredited Representative Initiative, as part of its Defending Vulnerable Populations Program. This initiative is intended to help partially accredited representatives who want to qualify and apply for full accreditation to represent their clients in immigration court.

CLINIC also piloted its Mexican Screening Project nationwide to its affiliates with funding provided by the Mexican Consulate in Atlanta. The purpose of the project is to conduct immigration screenings for Mexican nationals, identify any form of relief and educate them on their rights through Know Your Rights presentations. In its first year of providing the program and a demographic study, CLINIC learned that potentially up to 18 percent of unauthorized immigrants may be eligible for a benefit leading to lawful permanent residence.

Enabling Immigrant Religious Workers to Serve in the United States

Clients with CLINIC's Religious Immigration Services immigrate from around the world to fulfill their faith mission. RIS attorneys and paralegals provide the legal representation needed to ensure religious workers are eligible to fulfill their noble calling amid the complexity of the U.S. immigration system.

Through RIS, CLINIC represented more than 2,500 religious worker clients. RIS staff prioritized renewing religious workers' visas as the debate on the public charge rule escalated through the year and it was unclear what the rule's impact would be on immigrant religious workers in the United States.



**57 AFFILIATES
PARTICIPATED IN
THE MEXICAN
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AND COMPLETED
MORE THAN 8,000
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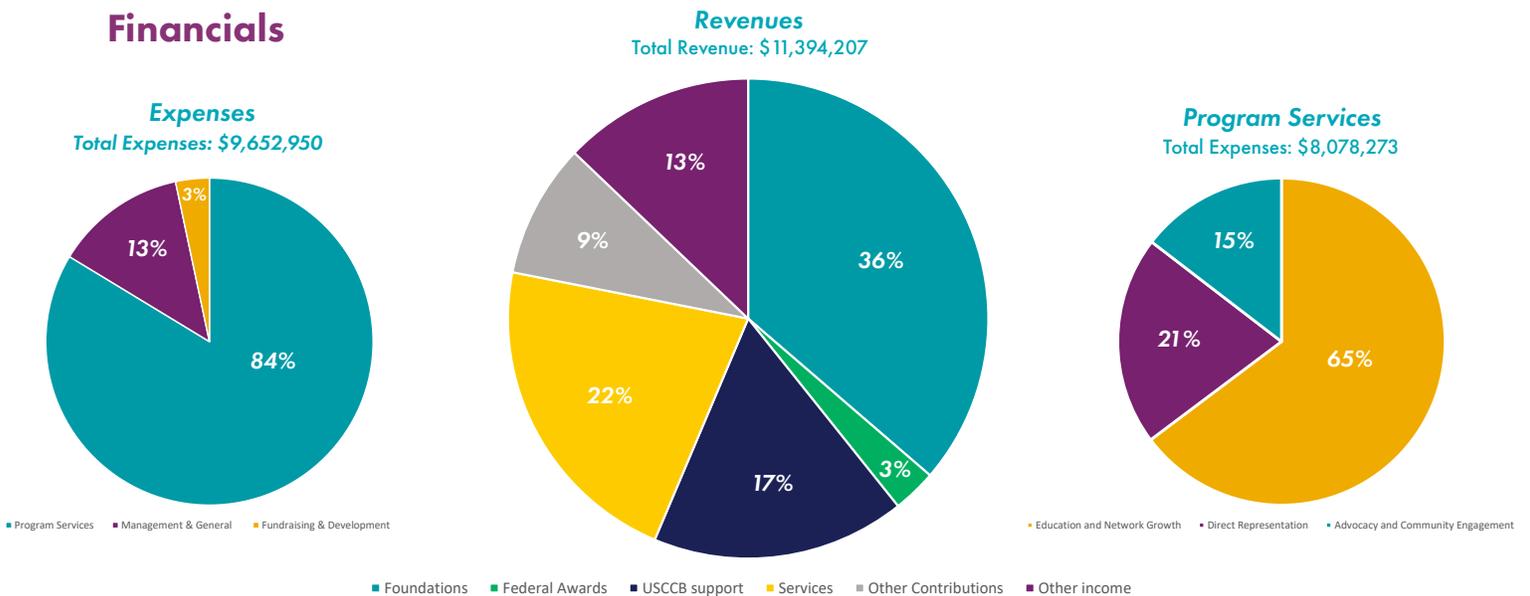


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Anticipate, Stimulate and Expand

Collaboration is at the core of our work to reach, serve and seek justice for poor and vulnerable immigrants. We thank all affiliates, corporations, foundations, individual donors, institutions and volunteers that supported CLINIC's work in 2019. Thank you to our supporters!

