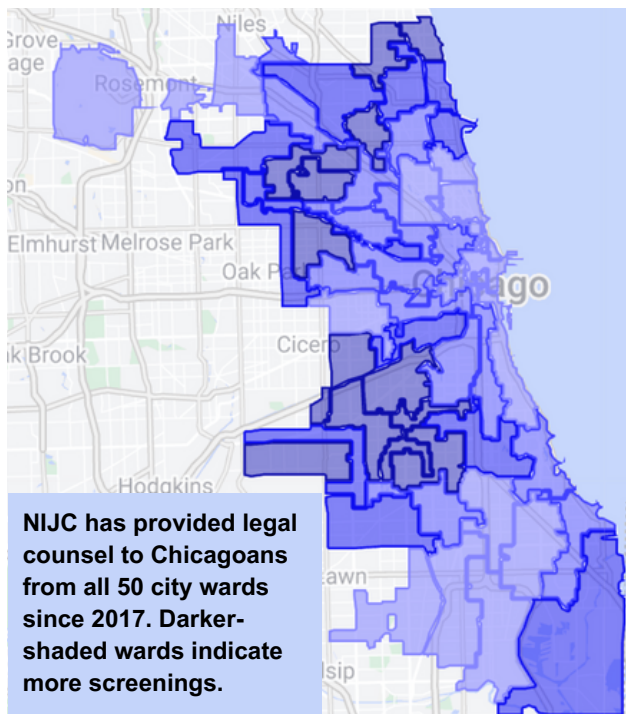


Seventh Annual Report of the Chicago Legal Protection Fund

Advancing Legal Access and Opportunity for Immigrant Chicagoans

In its seventh year, the Chicago Legal Protection Fund (LPF) continues to provide immigrants with access to education, system navigation, and free legal screenings and representation. Through LPF, the National Immigrant Justice Center (NIJC) helps ensure access to legal counsel for Chicagoans seeking a broad range of immigrant protections. The Resurrection Project (TRP) and 11 community navigator organizations ensure immigrants are informed of their rights and supported in accessing legal support and other critical services.

Since the start of LPF in 2017, NIJC has conducted more than 9,500 legal screenings and provided representation in more than 4,300 cases, serving Chicago residents from over 110 countries. In the first nine months of 2023, NIJC provided representation in about 450 cases and conducted more than 850 legal screenings under LPF.



View interactive ward maps at: immigrantjustice.org/LPFreport



★ **Work authorization for mother of three**

Maria is a Little Village resident who has lived in the United States for 23 years and has three U.S. citizen children. Maria sought NIJC's legal representation to apply for a U visa after one of her children was a victim of a violent crime. In 2023, NIJC helped Maria obtain a work permit through her pending U visa application. She can now provide more financial stability for her family while waiting for her visa decision. A U visa will allow her to one day apply for U.S. citizenship.

★ **Deportation defense keeps family together**

Pedro, a Lower West Side resident and a father of two U.S. citizen children, has resided in Chicago for 40 years. He is the primary breadwinner for his two U.S. citizen children. He sought NIJC's legal representation in 2017 when the immigration authorities initiated deportation proceedings against him. For the past five years, NIJC has been defending him against deportation in the Chicago immigration court. This year, the immigration judge granted Pedro cancellation of removal. He is now a lawful permanent resident and no longer fears family separation. In five years, he will be eligible to apply for U.S. citizenship.

★ **Reuniting family who fled their homeland**

Tony is a West Ridge resident, who fled his home country of Eritrea in 2014 and received asylum in 2017. In 2018, NIJC represented Tony to become a lawful permanent resident and in his petition to be reunited with his wife and two youngest children. After nearly 10 years of separation, the family finally reunited. NIJC continues to represent Tony in his case to reunite with his three older children.

All client names have been changed to protect their privacy.

Community Navigators

From January to August of 2023, LPF funded the recruitment and training of 254 community navigators. The Community Navigators reached 45,386 individuals through immigrant education presentations.

Community Navigator Organizations:

- *Centro de Trabajadores Unidos, United Workers' Center*
- *Centro Romero*
- *Enlace Chicago*
- *Erie Neighborhood House*
- *Haitian American Museum of Chicago*
- *HANA Center*
- *Indo-American Center*
- *Northwest Center*
- *Southwest Organizing Project*
- *The Resurrection Project*
- *United African Organization*

“The work of community navigators is so important for me because I live in Little Village – a community with so many immigrants – and I want to make sure we are all aware of our rights. I witnessed the power of this program when a community member called me in a panic that her family member was picked up and detained by Immigration. Within a few hours, I was able to contact a legal service provider through the Legal Protection Fund who walked us through what to do and we were able to locate their family member and work to make sure they weren’t deported. I later received a call from that community member thanking me because their family member made it out of detention and safely home with their family.”

Adriana Martinez, Community Navigator with Enlace Chicago



In 2023, NIJC’s legal services for migrants newly arriving to Chicago were supported under separate city funding and are not included in this report. In the fall of 2022, LPF allowed NIJC to provide legal orientations to more than 2,500 new arrivals.