



## 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

### **OUR MISSION:**

*To provide professional legal services to those who come from foreign lands who lack sufficient means to obtain representation without regard to faith or national origin.*



## ARCHDIOCESE OF MIAMI

*Office of the Archbishop*

Dear Friends,

Last year, we celebrated the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the incorporation of Catholic Legal Services Archdiocese of Miami. Actually, the organization is a bit older than that. In 1994, when I was pastor of the Notre Dame d'Haiti Mission, I invited Randy McGrorty to organize the GWL Legal Project within the Mission's Human Services Division. Since its founding, CLS has consistently served immigrants with respect and compassion and represented them with intelligence and professionalism. The agency conducts outreach sessions across the Archdiocese, advising immigrant groups of changes in U.S. policies and regulations. It solicits, organizes, and supports *pro bono* work among local attorneys and law students; and it actively collaborates not only with other legal service organizations but with social and health services and with government agencies to address the needs of the vulnerable.

Catholic Legal Services has won recognition from the legal profession, the church, and from local government for its excellence, and it has become one of Florida's leading non-profits in immigration law. Sadly, though, its work is both increasingly needed and more difficult as federal regulations become more restrictive and federal policies become more confrontational. Your support is now more vital than ever.

May the Lord continue to bless you and your loved ones abundantly. With personal good wishes,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Thomas Wenski  
Archbishop of Miami

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# Milestones in the History of Catholic Legal Services

2018	Florida Senator Daphne Campbell issued a proclamation to “recognize the outstanding achievements of Catholic Legal Services, Archdiocese of Miami”
2018	The City of Miami recognized Catholic Legal Services for its role in promoting and supporting naturalization, as stated in the City’s proclamation of September 18 <sup>th</sup> as <i>Constitution and Citizenship Day</i>
2015	<i>Named Pro Bono Hero of the SE Region</i> by the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA)
2014	<i>Organized</i> a six-agency collaborative to provide unaccompanied children with representation; <i>won</i> legal AmeriCorps grant on behalf of the collaborative
2014	<i>Selected</i> as one of the three law firms to pilot EOIR-funded representation of mentally incompetent detainees
2013	<i>Proclamation</i> of Catholic Legal Services Citizenship Day, June 22, 2013 by the Mayor of Miami-Dade County Carlos A. Gimenez and the Board of County Commissioner Chairwoman Rebeca Sosa
2012	<i>Proclamation</i> of the City of Miami recognizing the agency for “outstanding public service” presented by Mayor Tomas P. Regalado
2011	<i>Selected lead organization</i> of the New Americans Campaign (NAC)
2010	<i>Began</i> the nation’s most productive and successful Haitian TPS program in the nation
2009	<i>Community Advocacy Award</i> presented by the Legal Aid Service of Broward County
2007	<i>Saint Vincent De Paul Award</i> for faithful and compassionate service to those who seek sanctuary, shelter, and security in their new land by the Archdiocese of Miami
2006	<i>Adalsinda Lomangino Award</i> for outstanding contributions to the field of immigration law presented by the South Florida Chapter, American Immigration Lawyers Association
2003	<i>National Award for Excellence In Advocacy</i> , US Conference of Catholic Bishops
2003	<i>Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce NOVO</i> award for innovative excellence in delivering services to the community
2000	<i>Proclamation of Catholic Charities Legal Services Day</i> by the Mayor of Miami-Dade County, as one of the vital organizations whose contributions served to enrich the fabric of life in South Florida’s community
2000	<i>Commendation</i> by the Mayor of the City of Miami for its major contributions to the Miami-Dade community
1999	<i>Admitted into</i> the Haitian-American Grassroots Coalition
1998	<i>Incorporated</i> as Catholic Charities Legal Services of the Archdiocese of Miami
1994	<i>Established</i> as the GWL Legal Project of the Notre Dame d’Haiti Mission, Human Services Division

## What We Do

Our mission is to provide professional immigration services to South Florida's refugee and immigrant communities, both application assistance and attorney representation before the Citizenship and Immigration Services, the Immigration Courts and the Board of Immigration Appeals. We provide a wide variety of services. The agency continues to assist individuals seeking to reunite with their families; political and religious refugees seeking safety and security; essential religious workers seeking to minister to U.S. religious communities; battered spouses and their children. These individuals confront a complex immigration law and a confusing bureaucracy. Many have unhealed wounds from a painful past. Many encounter unexpected bigotry and barriers as they adjust to a new culture and a new way of life. They face an uncertain future.

Without CLS's assistance, too many deserving immigrants and refugees lose the opportunity to avail themselves of the laws enacted for their protection. Others fall prey to schemes of unscrupulous and unlicensed immigration hucksters capitalizing on the naiveté, poverty, and desperation of the newcomer. However, with our help, many deserving immigrants and refugees persevere and realize their dreams for a bright and secure future in the United States.



CLS is a nationally recognized agency with an experienced team of attorneys and immigration professionals. In addition to its professional competencies, CLS staff reflects the diversity of the population it serves, allowing for culturally sensitive and linguistically appropriate services. Cubans and Haitians have historically formed our largest client groups. But in recent years, increasing numbers of Central American unaccompanied children and adults with children fleeing violence and poverty in their homelands have come to us for help. Large numbers of Venezuelans have also fled to South Florida. Most have engaged private attorneys, but increasing numbers are leaving without the resources to do so.

The agency also continues to serve many immigrants from across the Americas and around the world.

*[During 2018, Catholic Legal Services, Archdiocese of Miami, Inc. provided legal consultations and initial meetings to 20,684 individuals in its 3 offices – This number does not include the community outreach & education, commonly called “Know Your Rights”, conducted in various areas throughout South Florida; citizenship activities, outreach and workshops; citizenship fast track; self-help workshops; legal orientations/legal clinics for programs for children and adults with children (see below for details). CLS provided 11,943 services to 6,614 new clients from 105 different countries and 5 continents. This represents a 9.8% decrease in number of services and a 9.2% decrease in number of clients from 2017. This decline is largely due to the termination of the wet foot/ dry foot policy in 2016 and subsequent executive orders and policies restricting entry and parole. A 99% reduction in Requests for Parole Cards (as compared to 2017) is indicative of the significant reduction of Cubans entering the United States during 2017. Close to 55% of the clients are Cubans (30%) and Haitians (25%). Other nationalities with significant numbers include Hondurans (7%), Venezuelans (6%), and Colombians (4%). Most clients are from Latin America and the Caribbean (97%).*

*On average, Cuban clients served in 2018 have resided in the United States for 15 years and Haitians for 9 years. This represents an 50% increase in the time that both Cuban and Haitian clients served have lived in the United States.*

*Application for Employment Authorization is the most common service provided (15% of all services) not counting Fee Waiver Requests (19%). The other services with significant numbers include Attorney Consultations (14%), and Application for Residency (8%), Naturalization (7%), and TPS (6%). In total, CLS provided more than 96 different types of immigration related services.]*

## 2018 Environment and Challenges

Last year's *Annual Report* described "a cascade of political and administrative changes that caused confusion, anxiety, and even panic among immigrants in South Florida and across the nation". In 2018, the situation became yet more dire;

- The administration announced plans to end the DACA program, under which undocumented immigrants who were brought here as children and met other conditions (the "Dreamers") are able to avoid deportation and receive work permits for 3 year renewable periods. These plans remain suspended because of a temporary injunction issued by Federal court;
- The administration also planned to eliminate temporary protected status (TPS) for a variety of nationalities, after a final renewal period. However, on Oct. 3, 2018, in *Ramos, et al. v. Nielsen, et al.*, No. 18-cv-01554 (N.D. Cal. Oct. 3, 2018) (PDF, 458 KB), the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California enjoined the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) from implementing or enforcing the determinations to terminate TPS for Sudan, Nicaragua, Haiti, and El Salvador, while the case continued its way through the legal system. South Florida has the nation's largest Haitian, Salvadoran, and Nicaraguan communities and a huge Guatemalan community (in early 2019, the administration announced a further six-month extension of TPS for these four groups because the court case remains ongoing. TPS is now scheduled to end in 2020).
- In his 2018 State of the Union address, President Trump called on Congress to (1) eliminate the family reunification program for parents, adult children, and siblings. Family reunification petitions would be confined to those for spouses and minor children. (2) Eliminate the visa diversity lottery program. (3) Create a wall along the southern border and expand funding for border security.
- In its call to eliminate "chain migration", the administration said that immigration should be "merit based", including such factors as employability, education levels, and English fluency. However, it also announced reductions and restrictions to the H1B visa program, and it eliminated the spouses of H1B visa holders to work. In 2018, industry requests for H1B visas for their employees are more than double the supply.
- New federal policies established a minimum number of cases that each immigration court judge had to adjudicate each year. This meant that judges would have to conclude more than two cases per day to meet department requirements, thus infringing on due process for immigrants with attorneys and likely rendering many without attorneys devoid of an effective hearing.



## Naturalization and De-Naturalization

The government announced it tapped a group of lawyers and investigators, operating under Customs and Immigration, to review naturalization procedures. USCIS staff has been reviewing potential cases for citizenship revocation since January 2017, the agency's director, L. Francis Cissna, told The Associated Press. (The Miami Herald, 08/15/18).

- The Department of Homeland Security (under which USCIS operates) also plans to devote more than \$207.6 million in a separate initiative involving the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). ICE is using the funds to hire new agents for the National Security Investigations division to look for possible citizenship and green card fraud, according to ICE's budget plan for 2019.
- One of the tasks is to identify applicants who were ordered to leave the country but stayed behind and naturalized under another identity.
- To determine possible cases of fraud, researchers focus on fingerprint records on deportation orders from the 1990s and prior years, which were not digitized. This information is now being compared with more recent files. The authorities planned to refer about 1,600 of these types of cases to the DOJ.
- Efforts to revoke citizenship are not new but have accelerated under the current administration.

In 2016, The U.S. admitted nearly 85,000 refugees, a number that declined to fewer than 54,000 refugees' FY 2017, the lowest number in a decade after the current administration reduced the cap on refugee admissions via executive order.

- For FY 2018, the administration further reduced the refugee admission cap to 45,000, the lowest since the enactment of the Refugee Act of 1980. However, the cap represents the maximum number of refugees that may be resettled in a year; the actual number resettled in 2018 was 33,000.



## Families/Asylum Seekers

- South Florida has a large number of Central American and Haitian families seeking asylum (and many requesting CCLS services). News and issues concerning their plight is of great concern in the refugee and/asylee/entrant communities we serve. The past quarter has seen a number of such items emerge:
- In June 2018, Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced that “Generally, claims by aliens pertaining to domestic violence or gang violence perpetrated by non-governmental actors will not qualify for asylum”. The latest action by USCIS not only asserted that Sessions' decision was "binding" but also provides broad discretion for immigration officers weighing other potentially valid applications.
- Specifically, it allows officers to consider refugees' illegal entry to the U.S., as a mark against them even for otherwise viable applications. (USA Today, 7/12/18). Potentially valid claims could be denied. This contravenes international law and has been challenged in the courts.
- President Trump signed an executive order directing the administration to keep children with their parents in immigration detention while they were working their way through the court system. (Vox, 06/20/18). However, newspaper reports indicated that this policy is not always being adhered to.
- New asylee claims have been fast-tracked, making it more difficult for claimants to gather the documentation they needed. At the same time, older asylum cases were deferred, making it more difficult for those claimants to show that the grounds for their claims remained valid.
- The current administration instituted a zero-tolerance policy, meaning they are prosecuting all undocumented adults who are trying to cross the border. (USA Today, 06/19/18).
- Initially, President Trump's policy ordered prosecutors to immediately adopt a zero-tolerance policy for illegal border crossings including parents traveling with their children as well as people who subsequently attempted to request asylum. (National Public Radio, 06/19/18).

In its report, *Family Separation: Broken Systems, Broken Families* (2019), Americans for Immigrant Justice described the plight of arriving children and families. Here are a few extracts;

...we have never seen anything like the policy employed by U.S. officials in response to families seeking asylum near the U.S. border: the forcible separation of thousands of immigrant children from their parents regardless of their manner of entry.

...Government officials acknowledge that more than 2,600 children, some as young as two, were forcibly removed from their parents. Once separated, most children were sent to distant states with no way to contact the mothers or fathers who had brought them to the United States. Parents had no idea where their children were, and many were tricked into giving up their asylum cases and agreeing to quick deportation in exchange for being reunited with their children — only to be deported alone, their children left behind in shelters or foster homes.

The struggle to help children separated from their families is far from over. Removing young children from their parents is a trauma from which some may never recover. While many of the children have now been reunited with their parents thanks to a federal court ruling, countless children remain separated as their cases proceed in court. A November 25, 2018, 60 Minutes report noted that information from “various agencies shows at least 5,000 children have been held since Mr. Trump’s inauguration.” The 60 Minutes piece concluded: [G]iven the bungled record keeping, and no public accounting of the mysterious El Paso pilot program during July to November 2017, there may never be an accurate count of how many children were taken from their parents.

## Services to the Medically Needy and Disabled

This program was established in August 2017 to help the disabled and medically needy in Miami-Dade County with the assistance of a two-year, non-renewable major grant from the Allegany Franciscan Ministry of Florida. The stability and access to care of the disabled and medically needy may sometimes depend on immigration assistance:

The Allegany grant allows CLS to serve disabled immigrants (DIs) from all nationalities with serious medical conditions whose health would be jeopardized if deported (e.g., immigrants on dialysis whose homeland do not provide access to that treatment) as well as for immigrant caregivers whose US or LPR relatives, due to the medical needs, depends on the caregiver. The goal is to help disabled immigrants obtain temporary work permits to enabling their social workers to help them obtain services. It also provides assistance to disabled immigrants with deportation orders (DIDOs) to obtain work permits or status in order to receive/maintain their health benefits.

CLS understands disabled immigrants must be treated with dignity, compassion, patience, caring, and understanding. In addition to serving disabled immigrants at its office, once a week, CLS goes to Camillus House, a homeless shelter, to serve those with specific needs, limitations, and capabilities. This helps disabled immigrants reduce their commute when seeking immigration help, ease their anxiety since they are familiar with the shelter. It also helps CLS staff to have access to the disabled immigrants' social workers when assistance is needed for their immigration case.

Since April 2018, CLS has been providing services to Chapman residents twice a month. Given the overwhelming need to assist DIs/DIDOs, CLS expanded the Allegany program to Chapman Partnership in 2018. Also in 2018, CLS began to plan for the expansion of the program to Lotus House, a Miami woman's shelter serving many abused immigrants and their children. Starting March 14, 2019, CLS will expand this program to Lotus House residents. For its 2017- 2018 fiscal year, CLS helped 349 DIs/DIDOs and provided 564 services.

Given the overwhelming success of this program, CLS is eager to continue to assist DIs/DIDOs. However, the Allegany program will expire in August 2019. CLS is trying to partner with Camillus House, Chapman Partnership and Lotus House for a new grant to continue to assist DIs/DIDOs.

## **New American Defenders Program**

The American Defenders Program (NAD Program) was established in July 2017 through a grant provided by a new foundation, the Immigration Partnership and Coalition Fund (IMPAC). IMPAC, itself, was established by a group of local donors led by Mike Fernandez and who were alarmed by the environmental challenges in immigration described above. CLS was one of two agencies to receive initial IMPAC grants.

The NAD Program incorporates community outreach and education, legal screenings, and direct representation to immigrants in the jurisdiction of the Miami Immigration Court. None of these program elements are unique to NAD. Rather, we believe we were selected by IMPAC, because of our expertise in these activities. The community outreach and education element, commonly called “know your rights”, provides immigrants with a broad overview of their rights and responsibilities under U.S. immigration law, actions to take to prepare themselves (e.g., what documentation to maintain and where they might seek free or low cost representation) or to avoid (e.g., cautions against using “notarios”). Legal consultations are initial meetings between immigrants and an attorney in which the immigrant explains his/her concerns and the facts of the case and the attorney clarifies the law, legal options and procedures appropriate to the case. Consultations can also serve as a screening process in which the attorney may determine client eligibility for free representation, such as meeting the criteria to be covered under the NAD program. To be eligible for NAD representation, clients must have legal relief available to them (1) face potential removal from the United States, (2) have significant family and community ties or vulnerable characteristics, (3) be found unable to afford a private attorney and (4) No NAD client may have a serious criminal record.

## **Know Your Rights Presentations**

Ninety-one (91) NAD Know Your Rights (KYR) presentations were conducted to 2,010 attendees in 2018. KYR presentations are conducted in various areas throughout South Florida. In addition to the three counties of the Archdiocese (Broward, Miami-Dade, and Monroe) events were held in Collier, Lee, Martin, Hendry, and Palm-Beach County, Florida. Immigrants are given vital information on how to behave and interact with immigration agents. KYR presentations are also tailored to the attending audience in Spanish or Creole as needed.

CLS conducted a legal screening event on August 4, 2018 at Mision Nuestra Señora De La Altagracia, a parish of Corpus Christi Catholic Church in Miami-Dade County, Florida. Approximately one hundred (100) people attended the event. A KYR was conducted and a general Q and A session followed that lasted about 1 and a half hours. The parish requested attendees receive a detailed information session about asylum law and procedure. The New American Defender Program (NADP) continues to see many Venezuelan asylum seekers in the

community who have many questions about the asylum process and are in desperate need of getting legal advice about their case.

Many KYR presentations are held in churches; others were on college campuses or at Florida Department of Health facilities or at organizations such as Centro Campesino. While all contained a general orientation, some focused e.g., on asylum, TPS holders, or Dreamers as events or host organizations indicated most appropriate. Here are some highlights:

- CLS conducted a legal screening event on March 10, 2018 at Don Bosco Ministry, Our Lady of Guadalupe church in Doral, Florida. Sixty-six (66) people registered for the event. Attendees were divided into two groups, each assisted by an immigration attorney. Participants received a KYR presentation followed by a detailed information session on asylum law and procedure. All were given the opportunity to speak to an immigration attorney. Many were genuinely interested in hearing about asylum and were enthusiastic in participating at the clinic. Many of the attendees were Venezuelan nationals and given the conditions in Venezuela, most considered filing affirmative asylums.
- CLS conducted a legal screening event on April 14, 2018 at El Rey Jesus, a mega church located in south Miami-Dade County, Florida. A line of about two hundred (200) people formed before the event was scheduled to start. Close to four hundred (400) people showed up for the event.
- The NAD Program was able to reach a wider audience through a WLRN radio interview on May 21, 2018.
- El Nuevo Herald hosted a Face Book Live interview with NAD staff on May 24, 2018. The program was specifically geared to TPS holders from countries scheduled for TPS termination.

KYR presentations are offered to all Catholic parishes through the assistance of the Archdiocese of Miami. They were also held at non-Catholic churches such as Ministerios El Señor es mi Roca and Coral Gables Congregation, United Church of Christ. Meetings have been held with Catholic priests and clergymen of other faiths to share information and strengthen collaboration in helping vulnerable immigrant communities.

## Consultations and Case Assessments

NAD consultations totaled 1,090, and 316 case assessments were completed. Most were held at partner organizations hosting KYR presentations. Consultation rooms assured participant privacy.

As the NAD program has expanded and become better known throughout the community, more organizations have been willing to join us as hosts and collaborative partners. Increasingly, the NAD is receiving inquiries from people interested in attending future legal screening clinics.

## Legal Representation Based on Family Unity

Attorneys through the NAD Program are legally representing 98 cases at this time.

### Cases:

- Miguel, a Mexican man who has been in the U.S. since he was 11 years old was detained for driving without a license. He has two US citizen daughters. He could not get a valid license, because he did not have lawful “presence” in the State of Florida and he had to drive to be able to work and feed his family. He had been detained for over 10 months at the Broward Transitional Center (BTC) when a NADP attorney went to see him in the detention center. The NADP attorney told him he could apply for Cancellation of Removal for Certain Nonpermanent Residents (EOIR-42B). The Immigration Judge in the case refused to let Miguel out on bond. The NADP attorney filed the application for relief and represented Miguel at a merits hearing. The immigration judge denied the case. The NADP attorney appealed the Immigration Judge’s decision and also appealed his bond denial twice to the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA). Miguel was finally released from detention after the attorney notified the BIA of ethical misconduct on the part of the Immigration Judge. Miguel was released in time to be able to spend Christmas with his family.
- Venezuelan journalist, Victor, was represented in his affirmative asylum by a NADP attorney who took his case after seeing Victor at a legal screening event in August 2018. Victor had been physically attacked by collectives while trying to begin a radio broadcast against the government and received threats from *Chavista* journalists and even from the mayor of his town. Evidence of persecution of critical journalists in Venezuela and of his own background as a vocal critic of the régime was presented. Victor’s asylum application was prepared and filed. He attended the inter-view with his attorney and was granted asylum in December 2018.

- An 11 year old Salvadoran girl by the name of Maria received a Notice of Intent to Deny by USCIS regarding her application for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS). The attorney filed a formal response to explain the reasons why the case should not be denied with the assistance of Wendi Adelson, the Executive Director for IMPAC and with Wendi's help, USCIS reversed its stated intention and granted Maria her SIJS application. This means that Maria now has a very good chance to become a lawful permanent resident of the United States since she cannot become a resident without the SIJS application being approved.

## Citizenship Activities and Programs

### Services

CLS provides naturalization activities and services under three programs and funding streams: (1) the New Americans Campaign or NAC; (2) as the legal services component of the Miami-Dade County Fast Track program and (3) as one service within the Employability Status Assistance Legal Services program organized by the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) under contract with the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement. In the DCF program, naturalization is one of a variety of services provided to qualifying refugees, asylees, and Cuban/Haitian entrants.

Total number of **N-400 completed applications: 1,379** (including 129 under DCF; 180 under Fast Track; and 1,070 under NAC). Total Number of Derivatives for the year is 81.

Total number of **I-912 completed applications: 367** (including 76 under DCF; 79 under Fast Track; and 212 under NAC)

The following is a summary of activities performed this past year.

### The New Americans Campaign

**The New Americans Campaign - In August 2011, CCLS was selected to lead the New Americans Campaign (NAC) in greater Miami.** Currently, NAC partners are located in over 20 metropolitan areas across the U.S. and comprise more than 200 organizations,. The NAC was developed to encourage a diverse pool of eligible legal permanent residents (LPRs) to become U.S. citizens, assist them with the process, and promote community capacity to provide such assistance. Other members of the Miami NAC include: Hispanic Unity of Florida (HUF); Florida Immigrant Coalition (FLIC); Center for Immigrant Advancement (CIMA); Florida Asian Service (FAS); NALEO Educational Fund(NALEO).



During 2018, Miami NAC members organized a series of outreach workshops and built effective networks and naturalization coordination. NAC activities are sponsored projects of a group of foundations, including Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Knight Foundation.

### **Outreach**

CLS lead and hosted the Miami NAC 2018 Mega Event at MDC InterAmerican Campus where over 1,000 participants attended and 613 applicants were assisted. The event took place on Saturday, February 10, 2018 and required the participation of 400+ volunteers which included legal and non-legal volunteers from our National New American Campaign Partners. The Mega Event was preceded by the New Americans Campaign Best Practices Conference, which was hosted by the Catholic Legal Services and the Miami NAC.

Twenty-three (23) information sessions were held throughout Miami Dade County. The New Americans Campaign was expanded to include the New American Workforce. This expansion has enabled our team to assist employers such as the City of Miami Beach, J.W. Marriott Marquis, The Betsy, The Standard Spa Hotel, and Intercontinental Miami. The agency developed plans and an agreement with the Miami International Airport to conduct employee information sessions there in 2019.

On behalf of the City of Miami, Mayor Francis Suarez and Ken Russel the Commission Vice-Chair, issued a proclamation declaring September 17, 2018 as Constitution and Citizenship Day. CLS and its NAC partners were cited in the proclamation for the excellence of their work in promoting citizenship and facilitating naturalization, and the NAC partners were invited to attend the award ceremony.

### **Fast Track**

A CLS accredited representative continued providing her weekly outreach sessions at adult education locations through the Miami Dade County Public School (MDCPS) system, resulting in over 180 adult education students receiving orientation and/or instruction about the naturalization application process.

## **Programs for Children and Family**

Since 2014, the CLS Children's Program has grown to meet the ever-increasing need and challenges. CLS now serves both Unaccompanied Minors and Women with Children family units facing immigration proceedings. In 2018, we faced more challenges in response to the "Zero Tolerance" policy at the Southern US Border and Ports of Entry such as Miami International Airport. The CLS Women and Children's program contains many programs for unaccompanied minors and families: the Legal Orientation Program for Custodians (LOPC), the Office of Refugee Resettlement Safe Passages program, the Children's Legal Services program funded by the Florida Bar Foundation, the Young Women with Children program funded by the Paul Palank Memorial Foundation and the Batchelor Foundation, which helps directly represent the most vulnerable mothers and young children in their immigration court proceedings; and the Immigration Court Help Desk pilot program, which allows CCLS to provide legal orientations, guidance, and assistance for vulnerable individuals facing immigration proceedings without representation.

### **Legal Orientation Program for Custodians**

#### **Introduction**

The Legal Orientation Program for Custodians ("LOPC") is a program that was created in 2010 by the Executive Office of Immigration Review ("EOIR") in order to "provide legal orientation presentations to the adult caregivers ("custodians") of unaccompanied children in removal proceedings." CLS has provided LOPC services to the South Florida area since 2011.

This program was created in order to inform custodians of these unaccompanied minors of their responsibilities in caring for the child and in ensuring that the child is present at each and every immigration court hearing scheduled. Apart from emphasizing the importance of complying with the court process, LOPC is also in place to protect the unaccompanied minors from exploitation and Human Trafficking related situations. CLS LOPC provides legal orientations, friend of court services, intake clinics and self-help workshops to serve over 10,000 juveniles facing removal without representation in the Miami Immigration Court.

## **Legal Orientations**

CLS LOPC conducts legal orientations for custodians of unaccompanied minors released to the South Florida Area. CLS LOPC conducts two orientations a month; one at each CLS office location. In 2018, CLS LOPC gave Legal Orientations to over 951 Unaccompanied Minors, their custodians and families.

Unaccompanied children travel alone to the United States fleeing gang violence, threats, indigenous marginalization, poverty, child abuse, or seeking family reunification. When they arrive to the United States are processed through various Office of Refugee Resettlement (“ORR”) shelters located across the nation. These children will be released in the care of ORR approved custodians and will be scheduled for an LOPC presentation depending on where the child’s custodian resides.

The LOPC presentations at CLS focus on the responsibilities of the custodians of the unaccompanied minors. The presentation covers how the immigration court process works as well as the forms of immigrations relief available to unaccompanied minors in removal proceedings. Over all, the CLS LOPC presentation highlight the importance of the unaccompanied minor’s presence at every immigration court hearing and stresses the consequences of failure to appear to any scheduled court hearing.

The CLS LOPC program educates custodians of applicable programs and intended to protect unaccompanied children from mistreatment, exploitation, and human trafficking, and inform the custodians of available resources to assist the minors in this respect.

## **Friend of Court**

In 2018, CLS LOPC continued to work closely with the Miami Immigration Court conducting LOPC orientation at the court and appearing as “Friend of Court” (“FOC”) with unrepresented children during the juvenile dockets so that no unaccompanied child is forced to appear alone at a removal hearing before an Immigration Judge.

CLS continued to provide FOC services at initial and reset dockets before Immigration Judge Sanders, Judge Balasquide, Judge Rodriguez de Jongh, Judge Videla and Judge Alexander. In addition to the judges CLS already provided FOC services to in the past, CLS helped with new judges who have had some initial dockets. However, due to scarce resources and an overwhelming need, CLS is working with other organizations such as the Cuban American Bar Association (“CABA”) Pro Bono Project and Americans for Immigrant Justice (“AIJ”) to ensure that no unaccompanied minors docket went forward without FOC services.

### **Intake Clinics**

CLS LOPC also aids interested custodians in locating pro bono counsel for the children in their care. Once a month at the Miami CLS office, our LOPC attorneys screen unaccompanied children for legal relief and refer them to pro bono attorneys. Immigrant families, Immigration Judges, practitioners and caseworkers continue being an important source of referrals for CLS LOPC. People in the community continue to trust our initiative. Furthermore, CLS LOPC mentors the pro bono attorneys matched with a child's case. Additionally, when applicable, CLS LOPC addresses other non-legal social service needs of custodians caring for immigrant minors such as referring them to social service providers in the South Florida area.

### **Self Help Workshops**

The CLS LOPC program assists children who cannot be placed with an in-house or pro bono attorney, in completing applications for relief, e.g. asylum, pro se. This assistance extends from the initial filing step to final interview. Our goal was to serve as many unaccompanied children as possible, assisting them in presenting their claims while contributing to Miami Immigration Court's efficiency. In 2017 and 2018, several minors were granted asylum based on pro se applications filed with CLS LOPC assistance. CLS both informed these children of their right to file pro se applications and provided the technical guidance required to enable them to do so effectively, so that they succeeded on the merits.

During spring break, student volunteers contribute to these efforts thanks to CLS collaborations with university programs. Under the supervision of CLS attorneys, students help conduct pro-se asylum workshops to serve unaccompanied minors who have not been able to obtain legal representation in their immigration court cases.

## **Unaccompanied Refugee Minor Program**

### **Introduction**

Catholic Charities' Unaccompanied Refugee Minors Program (URMP) helps immigrant unaccompanied children who enter the United States without a parent/guardian. These children may be refugees, asylees, entrants, or victims of human trafficking. They can also be victims of abuse, abandonment, or neglect by their parents or caregivers and as such qualify for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status.

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Miami maintains a foster care program for these children and provides them with housing assistance, case management as well as psychological and social services. URMP caseworkers place younger children in the care of foster families.

Older children, between the ages of 18 and 23, receive assistance through placement in independent living arrangements.

### **Legal Services**

Apart from the services provided to the children through the URMP caseworkers, CLS provides children in the program with legal services and support in obtaining legal status in the United States. CLS provides legal representation before juvenile court, the Miami Immigration Court, and USCIS. During Juvenile Court proceedings, CLS assists URMP social workers, case managers and program directors with case plans, judicial reviews, and independent living status updates of URMP children. CLS also provides legal assistance with work permits, special juvenile immigrant visas and adjustment of status. Lastly, CLS provides assistance to children in the program with their naturalization applications before they age out of the URMP program at age 23.

CLS remains in constant contact with URMP directors and staff in order to zealously represent the children within the program and update the courts and USCIS new developments to the URMP program.

### **2018 Case Highlight: B.S. (Refugee Client)**

“Marco” was a 17 year-old native and citizen of Guatemala. He entered the United States and was transferred to ORR foster care. Marco was declared dependent by an Arizona state court based on neglect and was granted special immigrant juvenile status by USCIS. With an approved SIJS and no sponsor available to care for him in the US, the URMP in Miami accepted him for placement. At his dependency court hearing in Miami, the judges and the Department of Children and Family were reluctant to accept jurisdiction of this minor child because he had already been adjudicated dependent in another state. However, after multiple hearings, the court accepted jurisdiction and granted legal custody of the child to the URMP five days before the child turned 18. This means Marco has the opportunity to obtain an education (including English fluency), health care access, a home, and a welcoming foster family. Otherwise, he would have been homeless in Florida on his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

## **Immigration Court Help Desk**

The Immigration Court Help Desk Program is a program that was piloted in 2016 by the Executive Office of Immigration Review (“EOIR”) in order to provide information and assistance at the immigration court for unrepresented Respondents. CLS Miami was one of five locations chosen to initiate this program. Since then, the program has helped over 1500 individuals get information and assistance in navigating the complex immigration court system.

Apart from emphasizing the importance of complying with the court process, ICH is also in place to protect Respondents from exploitation by unscrupulous legal service providers as well as from labor exploitation and trafficking.

ICH staff is available at the court 2-3 days a week and provides orientation sessions at our offices in Spanish and Creole, as well as advanced self-help workshops on asylum, employment authorization, and other forms of relief. In the coming year, we hope to adjust our services to provide self-help workshops on the Cuban Adjustment Act, as well as cancellation of removal. In addition to orientations, legal screenings, and self-help workshops, ICH works to match Respondents with pro bono representation, whether it be in-house at CLS or with pro bono volunteers. We have had several volunteers win asylum claims for domestic violence victims for Central America, among others. The ICH program works closely with the YWC program to refer cases and ensure that the most vulnerable individuals get access to counsel, due process, and the social services they need.

## **Separated families Crisis**

CLS Miami constantly aims to meet the ever-changing needs of South Florida immigrants despite funding shortage and overwhelming demands. Since 2014, there has been an influx of Central American unaccompanied children and family units seeking asylum in the United States due to increased violence and political instability in the Northern Triangle. CLS has been on the forefront of responding to these families; their children qualify for no special federal programs to provide representation because the children entered with a parent. In 2015, we established the first Adults with Children attorney; in 2018, we represented more than 60 families in their asylum claims.

The federal government established a “zero tolerance” policy along the Mexico-Texas border, in the spring of 2018. Family units apprehended crossing the border were split up, held in family detention centers. Children, including non-verbal infants and toddlers, were removed from their parents and placed into shelters as unaccompanied minors, while their parents faced federal charges and were detained separately. If the parents were released, they had to get fingerprinted and background checks in order to get their children released back to them. Even worse, some parents were deported while their children languished in shelters. Referrals flooded in from many volunteers at the border that were responding to the crisis, but there was no centralized management or coordination either on the part of providers or the government.

Chaos and public outcry ensued for several months until the policy was formally ended, thanks to class action litigation. The impact of this cruel policy radiates all over the country even months after its formal demise. In the following months, families were slowly reunited and released to face deportation proceedings outside of the detention setting. Some families could not be reunited: their parents were deported while their children remained in the US alone.

Other children were not properly tracked or have not been identified. These children of these families are in a limbo. Exposed to trauma and torn from their parents, they now face an intimidating and disorganized court system to seek protection and stability.

A high proportion of those families that were successfully reunited were released in Florida, frequently in rural areas with few resources. Many are Guatemalan indigenous language speakers.

### **CLS's Response to the Separated Families:**

As a response to the need for legal representation and information, CLS Miami has worked, without funding, to identify and screen families for immigration relief and to start to place them with pro bono counsel. CLS recruits, mentors, and supports pro bono attorneys for a full variety of cases, and such counsel have often proved invaluable, as the following two cases illustrate;

- Our volunteer attorney, Jeff Dean, has taken an extraordinary number of pro bono cases, especially adults with children, on in the past 2 years. He won 2 families asylum in the beginning of 2019, as he passionately argued for asylum with innovative arguments and his strong background in criminal law. Jeff has truly been a gift to our pro bono team!
- Appeals Project: Starting in 2018, CLS began to match pro bono volunteers with appeals to the Board of Immigration Appeals. This proves a great match as the firms have the necessary skills to dive in deep to the record and provide support our staff attorneys would otherwise not be able to undertake without this support. Firms that have taken appeals so far include Greenberg Traurig, Holland Knight, and Kozyak Tropin & Throckmorton.
- CLS placed the case of an Adult With Child, D.L.C.R., with a pro bono volunteer, Carol Cope. D.L.C.R. is a young mother from Honduras, with a daughter under ten years old. With the assistance of mentors from CLS, Carol quickly filed their asylum applications and helped them narrowly avoid missing their one year deadline. Since taking D.L.C.R.'s case and getting to know her and her daughter's story, Carol has felt compelled to go the extra mile for this family. Carol has also agreed to represent D.L.C.R.'s younger sister, *pro bono*, in her asylum claim.

In 2018, CLS held two special intake clinics explicitly for separated families, and also spread the word of its regular monthly intake clinics to help ensure as many families as possible have a legal screening and attorney consultation. CLS began these efforts in July of 2018. It continues to conduct special intake clinics and to place families with counsel.

To further help these families, CLS cooperates and coordinates its' efforts with a variety of organizations. Our national partners include the Catholic Legal Immigration Network (CLINIC),

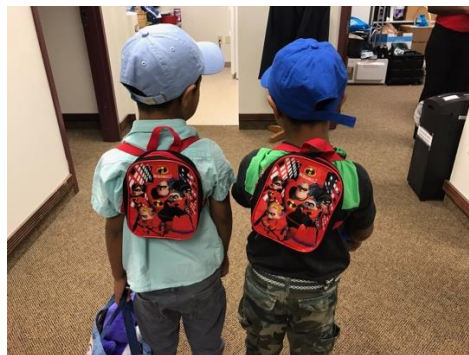


Asylum Seeker Advocacy Project (ASAP), American Immigration Council (AIC), and American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA). Among our Florida partners are Catholic Charities Legal Services of Central Florida, Redlands Christian Migrant Association (RCMA), Catholic Charities of Northwest Florida, and Jacksonville Legal Aid. All of our partners are working to establish resources for the separated families. Our efforts include coalition calls and establishing referral mechanisms. CLS plans to expand its' representation services to families who have to go before an immigration Judge to defend themselves from deportation.

### **Case study:**

Following the implementation of the "zero tolerance plan" in 2018, we learned about a Guatemalan family that had been separated at the border. One young mother, Amalia, had fled a lifetime of domestic violence. She brought her two little boys (7 and 8 years old). Their native language is K'iche', and when they sought asylum at the US border, they were separated and given five minutes to say goodbye. Amalia didn't know when she would next see her sons, and it would be 2 months and thousands of miles before she saw them again.

Amalia was desperate and afraid for her sons, she wrote a letter that somehow got to the media, and a coalition of mothers (complete strangers) from New York learned about Amalia's story and started an online fundraiser to help her post bond. They raised nearly \$26,000 for her bond and to help her reunite with her sons. A little magic ensued as over 10 individuals or families volunteered to help her get from Eloy, Arizona to South Florida where her boys were being held at a shelter for unaccompanied minors. Some drove her as far as 7 hours to get to the next good Samaritan that would take her on the next leg of her trip.



When Amalia finally got to South Florida, CLS took on her representation and helped her get reunited with her sons. ORR treated her as a normal sponsor of her sons would be, even though they were her biological children and she had entered the country with them. After 11 days and a nation-wide injunction on family separation, she was finally able to take them out of the shelter. They were so happy to be reunited.

Their next challenge was to fight their deportation. The Immigration Court has fast-tracked all Family Unit cases to be scheduled and heard quickly. CLS was able to help her prepare her asylum case and present it to the court. She was scheduled for a final hearing in less than 5 months. (We are happy to report that in March of 2019 she and her boys were granted asylum, despite all the odds against them!).

## **Unaccompanied Minors Program:**

Since 2014, CCLS has served the unique needs of Unaccompanied Children fleeing harm in Central America and seeking refuge in the United States with a dedicated team of attorneys and paralegals. The program is managed by the Vera Institute of Justice under the model of universal representation which seeks to promote immigration reform. CCLS has 5 full-time attorneys as well as one paralegal working on this project with support from other staff. The attorneys provide direct representation to Unaccompanied Children who have crossed the southern border without a parent or legal custodian and now face deportation before the Miami Immigration Court. CCLS attorneys predominately file applications for asylum and seek state court orders necessary to obtain Special Immigrant Juvenile Status in addition to other forms of relief.

During 2017, CCLS attorneys continued representation of over 300 Unaccompanied Children. What has been noted widely in the media as a “surge,” children have been fleeing in droves as the conditions in the Northern Triangle countries of Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador worsen. The US government has prioritized Unaccompanied Children’s cases and expedited their immigration court proceedings thus creating many challenges for attorneys as they work to file for time-sensitive cases. Aside from the legal demands of this work, staff are also tasked with supporting these children who often find themselves in precarious situations here in the Miami area. This team has won many asylum grants at the Asylum Office and obtained Special Immigrant Juvenile Status and even Legal Permanent Resident Status for many others. While CCLS has worked hard to meet the demand for representation, thousands of children remain unrepresented in the Miami Immigration Court.

### **Case studies:**

- At the beginning of March 2018, we provided pro se I-589 assistance to two brothers “Julio” and “Carlos”, 20 and 18 year old Hondurans, with upcoming master calendar hearings. They had fled Honduras after their uncle was brutally murdered by the gangs and their family began receiving death threats. Although the crime was reported to the local police, no investigation was done in Honduras. Both had entered the US as Unaccompanied Children (UC) and were never able to find legal representation. Post *Matter of Castro-Tum* and with the current changes accepting post-18 year old I-589s for UCs, we helped these brothers prepare and file their asylum applications with the Miami Immigration Court. They are now entitled to present their asylum cases before an immigration judge. LOPC is currently trying to place the children with a pro bono attorney via referral.
- P.U.T., a young man from Guatemala, was granted LPR status after a lengthy five-year legal process, overseen by several attorneys at CLS, and involving zealous advocacy with USCIS. Because Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) applicants are not entitled to work authorization while awaiting their green cards, those without resources had no option but to seek work without legal protections. P.U.T. was at the mercy of an unscrupulous employer, who made him move to different cities along the West coast of Florida depending on where the next job was. This meant that P.U.T. seldom had a reliable mailing address during CLS’s representation of him. Thus, the agency lost contact with him for an extended period of time. At one point, counsel realized that the address he was receiving mail was being sent to a restaurant. Now that he has successfully obtained his green-card, he is no longer at the mercy of his former employer, and can choose where he wants to work and in which city he wants to stay. It’s a freedom that many of us take for granted, but to P.U.T., it means a great deal.

### **Paul Palank Memorial Foundation Pro Bono project**

In 2018, CLS continued its work on developing a robust pro bono project to augment and expand our reach through volunteer efforts. In response to the Separated Families crisis in 2018.

## **Programs for Haitians and Cubans**

Cubans and Haitians have formed Miami-Dade's two largest immigrant groups, and at various times the U.S. government has recognized their distinctive status and needs, although in 2017 the distinctive statuses enjoyed by members of both groups has been under attack or even disappeared. Catholic Legal Services has programs and services to assist these populations.

### **Services for Recent Haitian Arrivals**

CLS continues to implement a monthly Know Your Rights ("KYR") presentation. KYR is specifically designed to address the needs of recent Haitian arrivals. It informs them about their rights and the immigration process in the U.S. CLS discusses the immigration process from being apprehended at the US border or entering lawfully to obtaining relief in immigration court and the Board of Immigration Appeals ("BIA"). CLS also discusses the possible forms of relief that recent arrivals may be eligible for. Individual consultations are conducted after the presentation where some attendees are able to ask questions specific to their cases.

With the continued influx of Haitians migrating from Brazil, Haiti and other South American countries, Creole KYR presentations continue to be a vital program within CLS. They not only educate Haitians about the immigration proceedings, avoiding notaries, they also provide an outlet where attendees can express their frustration or/and concerns. Attendees are engaged during KYRs because they are conducted in their native language. In 2018, CLS was able to conduct 12 presentations for recent Haitian arrivals.

## **Temporary Protected Status for Haitians**

On January 12, 2010, Port-au-Prince and its environs suffered devastation in the form of a major earthquake. More than 310,000 Haitians lost their lives in the quake and 1.5 million were displaced. The earthquake destroyed the nation's infrastructure, including government offices, hospitals, and roads. Shortly thereafter, the Secretary of Homeland Security announced that Haitians present in the US prior to the earthquake would be permitted to apply for temporary protected status (TPS), and later HS further re-designated TPS for Haitians, permitting those who entered on or before January 12, 2011, remained continuously in the US, and otherwise qualified to apply for TPS. With this, victims of the earthquake who had entered the US became eligible for TPS for the first time. Limited relief in the form of deferred action was made available for earthquake victims beginning in June 2010. CLS, serving the nation's largest Haitian community and with its own roots there, quickly organized its Haitian Emergency Legal Program (HELP) and became a national leader in securing this relief.

On January 18, 2018, the Department of Homeland Security (“DHS”) announced it will terminate TPS for Haiti on July 22, 2019. On March 12, 2018, the ACLU Foundation of Southern California, with the National Day Laborer Organizing Network (NDLON) and the law firm of Sidley Austin LLP, filed a lawsuit in federal court on behalf of nine people with Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and five United States citizen children of TPS holders against the Department of Homeland Security to stop the unlawful termination of TPS for more than 300,000 people living in the U.S. and to protect the tens of thousands of U.S. citizen children whose parents would be forced to leave under the administration's policy.”<sup>1</sup>

On Oct. 3, 2018, in *Ramos, et al. v. Nielsen, et al.*, No. 18-cv-01554 (N.D. Cal. Oct. 3, 2018) (PDF, 458 KB), the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California enjoined the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) from implementing or enforcing the determinations to terminate Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Sudan, Nicaragua, Haiti, and El Salvador, while the case continued its way through the legal system. DHS may not terminate TPS for these countries while the order remains in effect. The order also requires DHS to continue the validity of documentation showing lawful status and work authorization for affected eligible TPS beneficiaries from those countries.<sup>2</sup>

Beneficiaries under the TPS designations for Sudan, Nicaragua, Haiti, and El Salvador will retain their TPS while the preliminary injunction remains in effect, provided that an individual’s TPS is not withdrawn under INA section 244(c)(3) or 8 CFR 244.14 because of individual ineligibility<sup>3</sup> (in 2019, the Department of Homeland Security announced that it would reauthorize TPS for the four above countries for a six-month period, so that termination is now scheduled for 2020).

USCIS has previously automatically extended the validity of certain employment authorization documents (EADs) issued under TPS Haiti through Jan. 17, 2019.<sup>4</sup>

CLS continues to help Haitian TPS applicants. In addition to keeping current TPS holders updated on their status, CLS continues to successfully respond to numerous RFEs, filed work permits and travel documents. In addition, CLS has partnered with other non-profit organizations and local Haitian communities to rally for immigration reform and conducted outreaches to intake Haitian nationals to find alternative forms of relief while the injunction is still in effect.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.aclusocal.org/en/cases/ramos-v-nielsen>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.uscis.gov/update-ramos-v-nielsen>

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

## Haitian Family Reunification Project

The Haitian Family Reunification Parole (“HFRP”) program allows certain eligible U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents to apply for parole for their family members in Haiti. If granted parole, these family members can come to the United States before their immigrant visa priority dates become current. Once in the United States, these individuals may then apply for work authorization while they are waiting to apply for lawful permanent resident status. CLS continues to assist Haitian families with HFRP related services.

### **Case:**

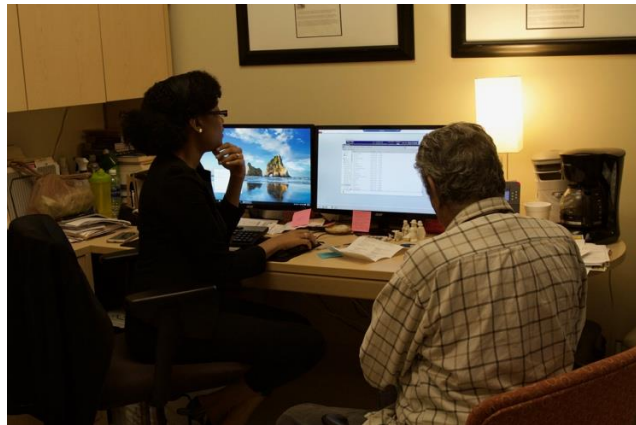
Marie is a native of Haiti. She entered the United States on December 14, 2015 under the Haitian Family Reunification Program (HFRP). In May 2017, Marie’s priority date became current. Marie sought help from CLS to adjust her status. CLS informed Marie she will need a co-sponsor prior to filing her application. If not, USCIS will issue a RFE requesting for a co-sponsor. CLS explained to Marie that RFEs have a deadline to submit the requested documents. As such, CLS strongly advised Marie to get a co-sponsor prior to mailing her application. CLS understood Marie’s willingness to mail her without a co-sponsor since she has been unsuccessful in getting a co-sponsor for months. Marie agreed to sign a disclosure notice acknowledging CLS’ recommendation and her decision to mail her application without a co-sponsor. As CLS predicted, USCIS issued a RFE requesting a co-sponsor. Marie could not find a co-sponsor in time of the RFE deadline. CLS requested an extension of the RFE explaining Marie’s diligent effort to open a co-sponsor. CLS mailed the extension request timely. Luckily, Marie was able to get co-sponsor a week after her RFE deadline. CLS promptly prepared the necessary paperwork and was able to overnight the co-sponsor’s affidavit of support before USCIS issue a decision on her RFE. Marie’s case is currently pending.

## Cuban Family Reunification Project

Although the Department of State announced that it will maintain the Cuban Family Reunification Parole (“CFRP”) program, CLS did not receive any new cases under CFRP in 2018. CLS continues to follow up with NVC on pending CFRP cases.

## Cuban Parole Program

On January 12, 2017, the Obama administration rescinded the Cuban parole program, also known as the “wet foot, dry foot” policy. This entailed that Cuban nationals who entered without a visa or some other permission to enter legally, will no longer be automatically paroled at their time of entry without further process or request a parole at a later date. Cubans who were present or paroled prior to the recession date of the Cuban parole program, can still apply or renew their parole.



Since its recession, CLS has been unable to assist Cubans who entered on or after January 12, 2017, in applying for initial parole requests. CLS continues to assist Cubans who entered prior to January 12, 2017 in applying or renewing their parole request. In 2018, CLS assisted in 64 parole requests. During CY 2018, we provided a total of 3,957 services for 2,192 Cuban Clients. However, we only had two Parole Renewals and eleven I-131s during that period.



# Programs for Detainees

CLS operated two federally funded programs for detainees:

## Legal Orientation Program (LOP)

The LOP program provides a variety of services to new detainees at the Krome and Broward detention centers. These include:

- Group Orientations, in which CLS attorneys provide a general orientation to US immigration law and procedures and detainee **rights and responsibilities/ Presentations are followed by Q&A, and individual orientations normally follow.**
- **Individual Orientations.** Each detainee meets with an attorney who explains that s/he is not there to provide representation. The detainee explains the facts of the case, and the attorney the relevant law and legal options. A case file is prepared.
- **Pro bono recruitment.** The LOP attorneys seek to recruit pro bono attorneys, and they provide case information and mentoring services to those recruited.
- **Pro se assistance and workshops.** LOP attorneys provide assistance to detainees without attorneys so that they may complete applications for relief. However, LOP attorneys must adhere to federal program limitations on the types of assistance permitted.

## National Quality Representation Program (NQRP)

In 2013, Krome formed a 30-bed unit for the mentally ill who cannot be kept in the general population but do not require acute hospitalization. The AILA Krome Mental Incompetency Project (AKMIP) has been providing pro-bono legal representation to the mentally ill population at Krome since 2011. AKMIP's 8 pro-bono attorneys (2 from CLS) have served many severely ill Krome Detention Center detainees.

Building on the expertise gained through AKMIP and LOP, Catholic Legal Services positioned itself to effectively represent this often marginalized population. The Executive Office for Immigration Review, contracting through VERA, initiated the National Qualified Representative Program (NQRP) to provide *pro bono* representation to respondents found to be mentally incompetent to represent themselves in removal proceedings. VERA contracted with CLS to expand services offered at Krome. This expansion ensures that the rights of a special class of immigrants, often most needing of our services will receive competent legal counsel at no cost to them. In 2018, CLS represented several mentally ill clients under the NQRP program.

## Victims of Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is the trade in human beings, commonly for sexual slavery, forced labor, or the extraction of organs. It garners an estimated \$32 billion annually worldwide (Wikipedia). Its victims are often lured by false promises (such as good jobs elsewhere) or abducted, then maintained in bondage by threats or other forms of coercion. Victims are commonly women, children, and immigrants, especially the undocumented. To help combat this menace, Congress has passed legislation to grant legal status to undocumented victims if they cooperate with authorities in the arrest or prosecution of their traffickers. Catholic Legal Services helps immigrant victims of trafficking obtain legal status under these laws.

CLS represented several victims of violent crimes and filed their petition for U Nonimmigrant Status during the calendar year of 2018. The Victims of Trafficking and Violence Prevention Act (VTVPA) allows victims of certain crimes, who have suffered substantial physical or mental abuse, reported the crime to the law enforcement agents and cooperated with the investigation of the crime, to file for U Nonimmigrant Status. The required forms must be filed with supporting documents such as police reports, psychological evaluations and an affidavit from the victim. Once the petition is approved, the person must live in the United States for three years before filing the application for adjustment of status. When the applicant for Nonimmigrant status has qualifying relatives, the applicant can include them as derivatives.

## Victims of Violence

Immigration law recognizes the special claims of abused women and children, yet they remain the most vulnerable immigrants with nowhere to turn to escape exploitation and mistreatment because they remain ignorant of their rights and without the resources to exercise them. These women represent some of the poorest members of the South Florida community and have little hope of escaping their abusive situation or of changing their economic situation without obtaining legal status in the United States. Their irregular immigration status increases their vulnerability in that their abusers exploit their lack of immigration status and threaten deportation to prevent the victim from seeking outside help and protection. Abusers manipulate the fear and isolation of the immigrants to perpetuate the abuse.

CLS provides them with free legal assistance to obtain legal status under the Violence Against Women Act and other statutes and refers them for job assistance and social services. In 2018, CCLS represented several women who were victims of domestic violence by filing their self-petitions before USCIS.

## **Division of Religious Immigration Services**

The DRIS enables CLS to continue its mission by demonstrating support towards the Roman Catholic Church in the United States. It assists the Archdiocese of Miami, many other dioceses, eparchies, religious institutes, religious organizations and charitable organizations with their immigration needs. The DRIS provides legal representation and assistance in bringing foreign-born priests, religious men and women, ministers and seminarians from around the globe for formation, education, and/or ministry. It also provides legal representation and assistance for those who are currently present in the United States and assists with student visas. The DRIS provides consultation on religious immigration matters, representation of clients as necessary, preparation of various forms, and on-going management of clients' cases. It maintains contacts with various U.S. Consular offices abroad. It engages in significant outreach efforts.

## **The Broward Office**

The Broward office is staffed by a multicultural, multilingual and professional staff with extensive immigration expertise. It includes a managing attorney, two staff attorneys, two Immigrant Justice Corps Fellows, one Equal Justice Works Fellow and four para-professionals. The Broward office is a full service arm of the agency; its services include: the of filing of Petitions and applications, attorney representation before all the immigration authorities including the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the United States Customs and Border Protection (CBP), the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR), the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA), the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO). The people served by the Broward office include applicants for employment authorization, holders of Temporary Protected Status, victims of certain serious crimes, and applicants for asylum, and citizenship.

The Broward office has had the great privilege of serving those women, men, and children affected by domestic violence. Immigration law now recognizes the special claims of the victims abuse, yet they remain the most vulnerable immigrants with nowhere to turn to escape exploitation and mistreatment because they remain ignorant of their rights and without the resources to exercise them. These individuals represent some of the poorest members of the South Florida community and have little hope of escaping their abusive situation or of changing their economic situation without obtaining legal status in the United States. Their irregular immigration status increases their vulnerability in that their abusers exploit their lack of immigration status and threaten deportation to prevent their victims from seeking outside help and protection. Abusers manipulate the fears and isolation of the immigrants to perpetuate the abuse. Fortunately, the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), among other statutes, provides these individuals the opportunity to gain employment and autonomy from their abusers.

The Broward office is also committed to serving the detained immigrant population of Broward County. Through the Legal Orientation Program (LOP), staff attorneys at the Broward office help detained immigrants understand their legal rights and provide them with information on how to navigate the very complex removal process. This past year, Broward office incorporated two new initiatives to the program in its mission to further serve the detained population of Broward County. First, the office added two new Immigrant Justice Corp Fellows through whom we provide direct representation before Immigration and Customs and Enforcement and the Immigration Court at the Broward Transitional Center (BTC) in Pompano Beach. A third Fellow was added through the Equal Justice Works program also to provide direct legal representation to the detained population at BTC. All representation of detained immigrants by the three Fellows are provided on a pro bono basis and at no cost to the detained immigrant.

Finally, through DCF-ORS funding, the Broward Office has continued to offer pro bono services to Broward Haitian, Cubans, refugees and asylees in the areas of employability, legal permanent residency and naturalization. One such recipient of the services we offer at CLS' Broward office is Mr. Luc Raymond whom with his wife and eldest son is pictured here with the managing attorney Peterson St. Philippe.



Mr. Raymond is a 51-year-old native of Haiti. Mr. Raymond and his eldest son fled Haiti in 2016 leaving behind his wife and four younger children. Mr. Raymond was a pastor and worked as a civil registrar in his hometown in Haiti for more than 20 years. Seeing how local government failed his beloved hometown over the years, he decided to run for mayor. Members of the ruling party noticed the momentum Mr. Raymond's campaign was gaining, so they started to target him, his family and his supporters. Corrupt government officials threatened to jail him for participating in peaceful protests against government abuses. Mr. Raymond's wife was even terminated from her job as a result of her husband's bid to become mayor. Fearing violence, Mr. Raymond fled Haiti.

With the help of Catholic Legal Services, Mr. Raymond and his eldest son was granted asylum by an immigration judge. A few months later, Catholic Legal Services was also able to secure

asylum for Mr. Raymond's wife and four other young children. After being in Asylee status for the statutorily required year plus one day, Mr. Raymond and his entire family returned to Catholic Legal Services for assistance with their request to adjust their asylee status to that of lawful permanent residents. Mr. Raymond and his entire family are now permanent residents of the United States less than 3 years after they faced life threatening circumstances in their native Haiti, all with the professional and quality representation of CLS staff.

## **The Doral Office**

The Doral office is located within the offices of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). Its accredited representative staff provides legal assistance to the predominantly Cuban community in the area. It accepts referrals, most notably from the Refugee Resettlement Office operated by USCCB. Our Doral Office also provides assistance to this same population with their adjustment of status applications after a year of their arrival so they can become legal permanent residents. Subsequently, after their five years as legal permanent residents, it provides them assistance for naturalization. Moreover, our staff at the Doral Office assists Cuban nationals who are legal permanent residents or U.S. citizens to reunify with their family members who are in Cuba through Family Relative petitions and the CFRP program; which has enable our Doral Office to be a one-stop center for the Cuban population of South Florida by meeting all their primary immigrations needs.

In 2017, staff executed hundreds of work permits, parole requests, and fee waiver requests for Cuban arrivals in order for them to have the right tools to start their new life in the United States. However, determination of "wet foot/ dry foot" and subsequent policies implementing the new administration's executive order have meant that Cuban paroles declined by 99% in 2018, and Cuban adjustments began a sharp decline.

## **Staff Self-Care**

CLS recognizes that vicarious trauma (VT) is a real phenomenon among people who work with the victims of torture and abuse and detainees suffering from family separation, the loss of work, and the threat of being permanently uprooted from the communities of which they have become a part. Studies indicate that attorneys/DOJ-accredited representatives may be at special risk of VT. VT can lead to intrusive imagery, burnout, and even disruptions in living relationships with spouses and children. Those measures an individual undertakes to reduce and deal with negative impact of VT are collectively referred to "self-care."

CLS has undertaken several interlocking strategies to promote self-care: (1) New staff learn about VT at orientation, to become aware of its signs and symptoms, and recognize that it is natural for people who work with people who have suffered trauma and torture. (2) We also explained the importance of creating a sense of balance of stress and relaxation both at work and at home.

## Statement of Financial Position

Assets	JUNE 30, 2017	JUNE 30, 2018
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Cash	\$497,510	\$501,897
Accounts receivable net of allowance for doubtful accounts of \$43,822 & \$43,793	43,793	43,120
Grants Receivable	442,093	475,484
Prepaid expenses		5,853
Security Deposit	60,304	30,354
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>1,043,700</b>	<b>1,056,708</b>
Property and equipment, net	26,685	26,504
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$1,070,385</b>	<b>\$1,083,212</b>
<b>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>		
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$190,695	\$228,563
Notes Payable	430,364	190,621
Compensated absences	103,198	110,788
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<b>724,257</b>	<b>529,972</b>
Notes payable, less current maturities		221,576
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>\$724,257</b>	
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		
Temporarily restricted	\$109,253	\$168,341
Unrestricted	236,875	163,323
<b>TOTAL NET ASSETS</b>	<b>346,128</b>	<b>331,664</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>\$1,070,385</b>	<b>\$1,083,212</b>

## Statement of Activities

Support & Other Revenue	JUNE 30, 2017			JUNE 30, 2018		
<b>SUPPORT:</b>	<b>Unrestricted</b>	<b>Temporarily Restricted</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Unrestricted</b>	<b>Temporarily Restricted</b>	<b>Total</b>
Grants	\$2,657,264	137,500	\$2,794,764	\$2,553,100	506,575	\$3,059,675
Client Contributions	602,680	-	602,680	531,157	-	531,157
Fundraising	83,125	5,500	88,625	169,056	5,720	174,776
Contributions	119,100	-	119,100	114,704	-	114,704
Net asset released from restriction	103,010	(103,010)	-	453,207	(453,207)	-
Interest income	27	-	27	7	-	7
<b>TOTAL SUPPORT &amp; OTHER REVENUE</b>	<b>3,565,206</b>	<b>39,990</b>	<b>3,605,196</b>	<b>3,821,231</b>	<b>59,088</b>	<b>3,880,319</b>
<b>EXPENSES:</b>						
<b>PROGRAM SERVICES:</b>						
Immigration services	2,813,449	-	2,813,449	3,247,729	-	3,247,729
<b>TOTAL PROGRAM SERVICES</b>	<b>2,813,449</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,813,449</b>	<b>3,247,729</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3,247,729</b>
<b>SUPPORTING SERVICES:</b>						
Management & general	496,011	-	496,011	572,680	-	572,680
Fundraising	23,587	-	23,587	74,374	-	74,374
<b>TOTAL SUPPORTING SERVICES</b>	<b>519,598</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>519,598</b>	<b>647,054</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>647,054</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>3,333,047</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3,333,047</b>	<b>3,894,783</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3,894,783</b>
Change in Assets	232,159	39,990	272,149	(73,552)	59,088	(14,464)
Net (deficiency) – beginning of year	4,716	69,263	73,979	236,875	109,253	346,128
Net assets – end of year	\$236,875	\$109,253	\$346,128	\$163,323	\$168,341	\$331,664



*Special Thanks To Archbishop of Miami,  
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*With Humble Gratitude to All Our Staff!*

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## **Catholic Legal Services Archdiocese of Miami, Inc.**

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28 West Flagler Street, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor

Miami, Florida 33130

Phone: 305-373-1073 \* Fax: 305-373-1173

### **Broward Office**

6565 Taft Street, Suite 401

Hollywood, Florida 33024

Phone: 1-954-306-9537 \* Fax: 1-800-691-5203

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7855 NW 12<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 114

Miami, Florida 33126

Phone: 305-887-8333 Fax: 305-541-2724

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