

*A Legacy  
of Welcome*

# ANNUAL REPORT 2023

JUNE 2024

**Catholic  
Legal  
Services**

ARCHDIOCESE  
OF MIAMI, INC.





A dark, semi-transparent collage of various people, including a woman in an orange blazer, a man in a suit, and a group of people in a meeting, serves as the background for the page.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>4</b>	Letter from the Executive Director <b>Randolph "Randy" McGrorty, Esq.</b>
<b>5</b>	Letter from the Board President <b>Jordan P. Dollar, Esq.</b>
<b>6</b>	Mission and Vision
<b>7</b>	Overview of Catholic Legal Services
<b>8</b>	Programs and Services
<b>32</b>	Board of Directors
<b>34</b>	Financial Overview
<b>36</b>	Connect with Us



# LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## RANDOLPH "RANDY" MCGRORTY, ESQ.



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Courthouse Plaza, 28 W Flagler Street, Suite 1001, Miami, FL 33130

June 1, 2024

Dear Friends and Supporters,

As we reflect on the past year, I am honored and humbled to share with you the remarkable journey of Catholic Legal Services. Your support and commitment to our mission have profoundly impacted the lives of countless individuals and families in need.

In 2023, we proudly celebrated the 25th anniversary of Catholic Legal Services. This journey, marked by a quarter-century of dedication to justice and service, stands as a testament to the enduring impact we've made in our community. Throughout the year, we reflected on the progress made, the lives touched, and the countless stories of hope and transformation that have defined our quarter-century legacy.

Over the past year, our dedicated team has worked tirelessly to uphold our commitment to justice, compassion, and service. Through our various programs and services, we have witnessed powerful stories of resilience, hope, and transformation. From assisting vulnerable immigrants with legal representation to advocating for those facing injustice, your support has been the driving force behind our successes.

I extend my deepest gratitude to each one of you who has contributed to our cause. Your belief in the power of justice and compassion has allowed us to provide vital legal services, create positive change, and uphold the dignity of every individual we serve.

Looking ahead, we are energized by the possibilities that lie before us. The challenges may persist, but so does our unwavering commitment to creating a more just and compassionate society. With your continued support, we aspire to reach new heights, expand our reach, and touch even more lives in the coming year.

As we embark on this journey together, I invite you to join us in fostering a community where justice, equality, and compassion prevail. Your involvement, whether through financial support, volunteerism, or advocacy, plays a crucial role in shaping the future we envision.

Thank you for standing with us and being an integral part of the Catholic Legal Services family. Together, we will continue to make a difference, one life at a time.

With gratitude and warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Randy McGrorty'.

**Randolph "Randy" McGrorty, Esq.**

Executive Director

Catholic Legal Services, Archdiocese of Miami, Inc.

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# LETTER FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

## JORDAN P. DOLLAR, ESQ.



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Courthouse Plaza, 28 W Flagler Street, Suite 1001, Miami, FL 33130

June 1, 2024

Dear Supporters, Friends, and Beloved Community,

I am thrilled to extend heartfelt greetings to you on behalf of the Board of Directors of Catholic Legal Services. It is with immense joy and gratitude that I share this letter as we reflect on the celebration of our 25th anniversary in 2023.

Having once been an employee of Catholic Legal Services, this journey is deeply significant for me. As we mark this remarkable 25-year milestone, I am reminded of the tireless efforts and unwavering dedication that have characterized our organization's rich history. From its early days to the present, Catholic Legal Services has been a force for good, advocating for those in need and providing crucial legal services to vulnerable individuals and families.

Our 25th anniversary is a testament to the collective efforts of our passionate staff, committed volunteers, and generous supporters. The impact we have made over the years is not just a measure of time, but a measure of lives touched, stories rewritten, and justice served. It is a testament to the resilience and strength of the communities we serve.

To our valued supporters, both old and new, your belief in our mission has been the driving force behind our accomplishments. Whether you have been with us from the beginning or have recently joined our cause, your support has been instrumental in shaping the legacy of Catholic Legal Services.

To each member of the Catholic Legal Services family – past and present employees, volunteers, donors, and community partners – thank you for your unwavering support. Together, we have created a legacy of compassion, justice, and hope that will continue to inspire generations to come.

Here's to 25 years of impactful service, and to the many more years of making a difference in the lives of those we serve. Together, we write the next chapter of our story, united in our commitment to justice and compassion.

With gratitude and warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jordan P. Dollar'.

**Jordan P. Dollar, Esq.**  
President, Board of Directors  
Catholic Legal Services, Archdiocese of Miami, Inc.





# MISSION AND VISION

## MISSION

Legal representation and immigration services to those who come to South Florida from foreign lands.

Professional assistance to those who lack sufficient means to obtain legal help; and

Quality services without regard to faith, race, national origin, or any other distinguishing characteristic.

## VISION

Catholic Legal Services is a non-profit agency that commits to justice and the alleviation of human misery through the promotion of the principle of equal access to the system of justice and the provision of legal services.

We focus exclusively on helping poor immigrants obtain asylum, establish legal residency, become citizens, reunite families and understand immigration law and policies by providing public education. As a provider of legal assistance and representation for immigrants, refugees, and impoverished people in South Florida, CLS provides a full range of immigration-related legal services, from initial advice, to assistance, to full representation, to a low-income clientele.



# OVERVIEW OF CATHOLIC LEGAL SERVICES

***"Justice will never be fully attained unless people see in the poor person, who is asking for help in order to survive, not an annoyance or a burden, but an opportunity for showing kindness and a chance for greater enrichment."***

**— St. John Paul II**

Incorporated in 1998, Catholic Charities Legal Services, Archdiocese of Miami, Inc. (hereafter "CCLS") is a nationally recognized agency with an experienced team of attorneys and immigration professionals whose mission is to provide professional legal services, both application assistance and attorney representation before the Citizenship and Immigration Services, the Immigration Courts and the Board of Immigration Appeals, to those who come from foreign lands who lack sufficient means to obtain representation without regard to faith or national origin. In addition to its professional competencies, CCLS' staff reflects the diversity of the population it serves, allowing for culturally sensitive and linguistically appropriate services. In 2023, CCLS provided more than 26,000 services to more than 11,300 clients from 101 different countries and territories.



HAITI (30%)



CUBA (26%)



NICARAGUA (7%)



HONDURAS (6%)



COLOMBIA (5%)



VENEZUELA (5%)



GUATEMALA (3%)



PERU (2%)

***"The bosom of America is open to receive not only the Opulent and respected Stranger, but the oppressed and persecuted of all Nations and Religions; whom we shall welcome to a participation of all our rights and privileges..."***

**— President George Washington**



# PROGRAMS AND SERVICES



# WHO WE SERVE

We humbly share the tapestry of lives touched by our commitment to compassionate advocacy. Each story represents a unique journey, a testament to our mission to provide unwavering support to those navigating the complexities of immigration. From asylum seekers seeking refuge to families yearning for reunification, these narratives embody the resilience, hope, and strength of the individuals we proudly served in 2023.



Individuals seeking asylum due to persecution based on political, religious, or social factors in their home countries



Families forced to flee conflict zones, seeking refugee status and resettlement in a safe environment



Children arriving in the U.S. without parents or legal guardians



Individuals who have escaped human trafficking situations



Religious workers seeking to minister to the faithful



Families working towards reunification



Minors who have been abused, neglected, or abandoned



Immigrants who have been victims of certain crimes



Individuals seeking asylum, fleeing their home countries due to persecution



Individuals granted TPS due to conditions in their home countries



Individuals pursuing U.S. citizenship



Individuals facing deportation or removal



Clients working towards adjusting their immigration status



Immigrants who have suffered substantial physical or mental abuse



Individuals who are unsheltered and in need of safe and affordable housing



Individuals sponsoring extended family members for immigration



Individuals applying for work permits to become productive members of society.



Older adults facing immigration challenges and access to healthcare and social services



Young immigrants protected under DACA, seeking legal guidance and support to pursue opportunities for a better future



Unaccompanied minors and vulnerable children seeking protection and legal representation

# REFUGEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LEGAL)

The Refugee Assistance Program (RS) is federally funded by the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) within the Department of Health and Human Services. It is administered in Florida by the Department of Children & Families to provide various services to refugees. Our program provides employment-related immigration services to refugees, asylees, Cuban and Haitian Entrants, and others. The program enables us to provide an array of legal services to individuals from Cuba and Haiti. These services encompass various legal proceedings, ranging from submitting FOIA requests, to learn more about their immigration history, to offering comprehensive representation in asylum cases, to helping someone complete their migration journey by applying for naturalization.

In 2023, two significant announcements by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) fundamentally altered and broadened the scope of our services.

In January 2023, DHS announced a humanitarian parole program for qualifying Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans and Venezuelans (CHNV Parole) with U.S.-based supporters.

DHS also implemented the modernized Cuban Family Reunification Parole Program ("CFRP") and Haitian Family Reunification Parole Program ("HFRP"). The CFRP and HFRP Programs allow certain eligible U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents (LPRs) to apply for parole for their family members in Cuba and Haiti. Once in the United States, CFRP and HFRP Program beneficiaries may apply for work authorization while they wait to apply for lawful permanent resident status.

In 2023, we successfully delivered **2,735** services under the Refugee Assistance Program, which is triple the number of services that we completed last year under this program.



CCLS Paralegal, Anthony Tadal, educates new clients about eligibility for the DCF program.

## CLIENT SUCCESS STORIES



### A COMPASSIONATE JOURNEY TO STABILITY

Marline\* and her one-year-old son, Mark,\* Haitian nationals, entered the United States through Eagle Pass in March 2023. Granted parole upon entry but without immediate housing, a family in North Carolina graciously offered them shelter. Eventually relocating to Miami, they faced challenges when their immigration court was scheduled in North Carolina, posing financial hurdles for Marline. Unable to afford travel expenses and lacking income, they relied on the kindness of strangers. Seeking assistance, Marline attended one of our Know Your Rights (KYR) sessions at Notre Dame d'Haiti Catholic Church. Recognizing her urgent needs, our staff swiftly facilitated a change of venue for their court proceedings to Miami. With CCLS support, Marline and Mark

applied for work authorization, and remarkably, Mark received his permit within a month. Marline expresses immense gratitude for our assistance in navigating these challenges.





## OVERCOMING ODDS

*Dan, \* a Cuban national who, initially, faced challenges after his parole entry and subsequent parole revocation by ICE. Upon learning of his ineligibility for the Cuban Adjustment Act (CAA), Dan sought assistance from CCLS. Facing potential deportation in immigration court, our dedicated staff conducted a thorough review of his case and strategically filed a motion to terminate, citing his status as an arriving alien. With CCLS's unwavering support, not only were Dan's apprehensions addressed, but he also successfully applied for adjustment of status under the CAA, securing a work permit. This marked a significant stride towards his prosperous future.*

## SPECIAL PROJECTS

### A HUB IN LITTLE HAITI: HAITIAN CREOLE LANGUAGE SERVICES AT NOTRE DAME D'HAITI CATHOLIC CHURCH



*CCLS Senior Paralegal, Cassy Pierre, conducting a KYR presentation at Notre Dame d'Haiti Catholic Church*

This special project provides Know Your Right presentations ("KYR") to recently arrived Haitian migrants. To respond to the increasing demands for immigration services, CCLS relocated its KYRs from the Miami office to Notre Dame d'Haiti Catholic Church in Little Haiti. CCLS conducted KYR presentations three times a month that served 20-30 migrants each session, averaging 60-100 participants a month.

The KYR provides legal screenings, intakes, legal orientations, friend of court services, individual consultations and pro se assistance to thousands of Haitian migrants facing removal without legal representation in Immigration Court or who must report to Immigration Customs Enforcement ("ICE"). The KYR also provides referrals to social services around the community.

### LEGAL PROJECT WITH THE CITY OF NORTH MIAMI

In July 2023, CCLS partnered with the City of North Miami to address specific immigration issues faced by its constituents. Recognizing the immigration needs of their constituents, CCLS established a weekly presence in the City. This strategic decision has enhanced accessibility and convenience for the constituents seeking immigration assistance.



*CCLS staff conducting intakes with North Miami residents at the City North Miami Library.*

***"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."***

**— Mahatma Gandhi**



## THE JOY OF GIVING

### 2023 THANKSGIVING

The staff of Catholic Legal Services pulled together and purchased all the components for a traditional Thanksgiving meal for 150 disadvantaged families recently arrived.

At Notre Dame d'Haiti Catholic Church, we distributed meals to 55 families. We are extremely thankful to Angels for Humanity who made it possible for an additional 100 families to receive meals for the Thanksgiving holiday.

***"Charity isn't about pity; it is about love. Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love. The fruit of love is service, which is compassion in action".***

**— St. Teresa of Calcutta**



#### CLIENT TESTIMONY

*"My name is Solange\*. Since fleeing Haiti to live in the U.S., it has been very difficult to find great services provided by people that I can trust. I'm thrilled to say I received great service from CCLS. I needed help applying for my work permit and the customer service was superb. The staff treated me with respect and made me feel very comfortable. They took their time to answer all my questions and to explain the process. "*

*\*name changed for privacy*



#### ONEL JOSEPH, SENIOR PARALEGAL

*"I have really enjoyed participating in the outreach clinics. It is an excellent opportunity to connect with specific populations needing immigration services. Most of the clinics are held in locations that are very accessible to them. It is a blessing I have been able to help and contribute to such a noble cause."*

***"Where there's despair in life, let me bring hope..."***

**— St. Francis of Assisi**





In September 2023, CCLS was again awarded a grant by the Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners. The Immigration Services program was derived from a previous grant exclusively dedicated to providing TPS related services to Miami-Dade County residents. Understanding the increasing need for a variety of services across the County, CCLS advocated for and expanded the program to include general immigration services, including providing free legal consultations.

CCLS developed Community Immigration, Refugee, Citizenship and Lawful Employability Services (CIRCLE Services), which incorporates community education, legal screenings, targeted legal assistance in clinic settings and provides direct representation to individuals in Miami-Dade County. Along with our seven funded partners (AIJ, HUF, SANT LA, HLA, FLIC, FANM) and one unfunded partner, ONA, we have exceeded our target goal for this project by more than 200% in every aspect. As a collaborative, we served more than 2047 individuals throughout 41 clinics countywide. In our office, we have served more than 2364 individuals of varying nationalities and completed more than 1992 applications.

Through the CIRCLE Services Project, we are addressing growing and well-founded deportation fears with a four-part approach:

- Educating migrant, refugee and immigrant communities in community settings regarding immigration law, practices, policies and procedures;
- Offering advice and counsel through individual consultations and case assessments;
- Conducting targeted legal clinics for eligible individuals for specific forms of immigration relief; and,
- Representing individuals who have been determined eligible for immigration relief based on family unity, community ties, or vulnerable characteristics.



## NATURALIZATION PROJECT

At Catholic Legal Services, our commitment to justice extends to our Naturalization Project, a cornerstone initiative that strives to empower individuals on their journey to becoming proud citizens of the United States. As a testament to our dedication to this cause, Catholic Legal Services proudly serves as the site leader for the New Americans Campaign (NAC) Miami site.

Our Naturalization Project ensures that eligible individuals have access to legal assistance, guiding them through the intricacies of the naturalization application process. Our dedicated team of legal professionals works diligently to address concerns and provide clarity at every step.

### NEW AMERICANS CAMPAIGN (NAC) MIAMI SITE LEADERSHIP

Led by the Immigrant Legal Resource Center, the New Americans Campaign (NAC) is a diverse nonpartisan national network of respected immigration organizations. It is committed to connecting lawful permanent residents (LPRs) to trusted legal assistance and critical information that simplifies the naturalization process.



As the site leader for the NAC Miami site, we play a pivotal role in coordinating and facilitating the naturalization process for eligible immigrants. Through this initiative, we leverage partnerships, expertise, and resources to assist individuals in navigating the complexities of the naturalization process.

### ANNUAL NATURALIZATION APPLICATION GROUP PROCESSING WORKSHOPS

Each year, the Miami NAC hosts the highly anticipated Naturalization Mega Event, which brings together our community to celebrate the achievements of those on their path to citizenship. In a powerful collaboration with ONA and the Miami New Americans Campaign (NAC), CCLS proudly hosted a transformative four-day Citizenship Clinic. This event, held from September 21 to September 24, was designed to assist eligible lawful permanent residents in applying for naturalization, bringing essential services to diverse communities.

The clinics incorporated various modalities, including completely virtual sessions and a hybrid approach, blending virtual and in-person engagement. With the invaluable support of the City of Lauderdale Lakes, Miami-Dade College Wolfson Campus, thanks to the collaboration with their iCED Program, Tabernacle of Glory in North Miami and Sinai SDA Church in Plantation, we were able to meet the unique needs of different communities and provide support where it was most needed.

Through this partnership, the Miami NAC has been able to extend crucial assistance to nearly 750 individuals during our annual event, marking a significant milestone in our commitment to facilitating the naturalization process.





**FORT LAUDERDALE-HOLLYWOOD  
INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT**  
BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA

## MIAMI NAC'S STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP WITH AIRPORTS

To promote the Naturalization Mega Event, the Miami NAC proudly established a groundbreaking partnership with Miami International Airport and Fort Lauderdale International Airport, a collaboration that has brought the message of naturalization to new heights—quite literally. Through this innovative initiative, we successfully reached more than 10,000 people, making naturalization a visible and integral part of the everyday lives of those who live, work, and play in South Florida.

## A TRIBUTE TO THE LEGACY OF HAITIAN BOAT PEOPLE



For the first time since its inception, Miami NAC proudly dedicated its annual event to South Florida's vibrant Haitian community, paying tribute to a momentous occasion—the 50th Anniversary of the first successful arrival of Haitian "Boat People" to the shores of South Florida on December 12, 1972. Recognizing the profound contributions of the Haitian community to South Florida's cultural tapestry, the Miami NAC made it a priority to honor and commemorate the legacy of this resilient community during our annual event.



## FAST TRACK TO CITIZENSHIP



## FAST TRACK TO CITIZENSHIP PROGRAM

In collaboration with Miami-Dade County Public Schools (MDCPS), CCLS has proudly provided services under the Fast Track to Citizenship Program for more than ten years. The Fast Track to Citizenship Program is hosted at strategic locations—north, south, and central Miami-Dade County—chosen in collaboration with MDCPS to maximize reach within communities with a significant population of LPRs.

In 2023, more than 150 participants benefited from the intensive citizenship education component, provided by MDCPS, and the naturalization application preparation services provided by CCLS. This collaboration with MDCPS strengthens our commitment to community education.



## MIAMI OPPORTUNITY SUMMIT

In response to the recent surge in migration to the United States, CCLS organized the inaugural Miami Opportunity Summit. This significant event has played a pivotal role in reshaping the narrative surrounding new arrivals in our community. In collaboration with esteemed partners, including the American Business Immigration Council (ABIC), the DoubleTree by Hilton Grand Hotel Biscayne Bay, FWD.us, and with the support of Miami-Dade County Mayor Daniella Levine Cava, the Archdiocese of Miami, and the Miami-Dade Beacon Council, the summit aimed to alter perceptions around the influx of new migrants. Emphasizing their presence as an opportunity rather than a crisis, the Miami Opportunity Summit positioned Miami-Dade County as a model of welcome and inclusivity.

The summit served as a catalyst for transformative conversations, emphasizing the collective effort required to unlock the potential and talents of newcomers, thereby creating opportunities that contribute to the prosperity of our community.

The summit successfully brought together a diverse array of participants, including representatives from faith-based organizations, business leaders, and professionals in the public sector. This gathering symbolizes a collaborative effort to establish a robust ecosystem that supports the seamless integration of new arrivals into the workforce.

Throughout the summit, stakeholders engaged in meaningful conversations, shared insights, and collaboratively devised strategies to advocate for positive change. The discussions were geared towards recognizing the untapped potential within Miami-Dade County and South Florida, firmly believing that new arrivals possess the skills and talents necessary to fortify our local economy.

The summit empowered us to collectively build bridges, dismantle barriers, and shape a future where every individual, regardless of background, can thrive. Together, we can forge a path towards a more inclusive community where the talents of new arrivals are recognized and opportunities are intentionally crafted for the benefit of all.



The poster features a vibrant background with a gradient from yellow at the top to purple at the bottom. Silhouettes of palm trees are scattered across the scene. The main title is written in a large, white, cursive font with a purple shadow effect. Below it, the year '2024' is displayed in a very large, bold, white sans-serif font with a blue shadow effect.

# *Miami Opportunity Summit*

# 2024

Your presence and dedication are key elements  
in shaping a brighter future for our community.

Join us as a partner for the

**2024 Miami Opportunity Summit.**

For more information, contact:

**[opportunity@cclsmiami.org](mailto:opportunity@cclsmiami.org)**

or visit **[www.cclsmiami.org/opportunity](http://www.cclsmiami.org/opportunity)**.

# IMMIGRATION COURT HELP DESK

The Immigration Court Help Desk ("ICH") educates and provides limited legal advice to non-detained respondents in removal proceedings about the immigration court process. This court-based educational program is implemented by the EOIR to improve the efficiency of immigration court hearings by increasing access to information and raising the level of representation for individuals appearing pro se before the EOIR/BIA. In the interest of the efficiency and protection of fundamental rights of respondents appearing pro se before the Immigration Judges, ICH educates and provides limited legal advice to non-detained pro se respondents in removal proceedings about the immigration court process and dynamics. ICH provides individuals with the tools to make informed decisions about their legal cases. The program provides legal orientations (GIS, IIS and SHW), friend of court services, intake clinics, pro-bono attorney referral and placement, outreach, and pro-se assistance in completing motions and forms of relief to serve over 313,637 pro se respondents appearing in the Miami Immigration Court.

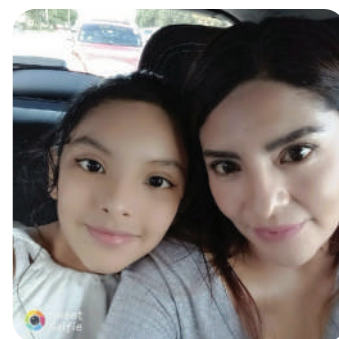
In 2023, ICH - administered by CLS in Miami - served 7,929 participants. ICH has in person services at the Miami Immigration Court two times a week and has in person services at CLS offices in Miami and Hollywood but continues to provide some of its services remotely through electronic documents, applications, and video conferencing.

TYPE OF SERVICE	NUMBER OF SESSIONS
Group Information Sessions/ "Know Your Rights" Presentations (KYRs)	148
Self-Help Workshops	32
Individual Information Sessions	2891
Friend of Court	261

# FAMILY GROUP LEGAL ORIENTATION PROGRAM

Like our Immigration Court Help Desk program, the Family Group Legal Orientation Program ("FGLOP") provides legal orientations (MFGO, SFGO and SHW), friend of court services, pro-bono attorney referral and placement, outreach, and pro-se assistance in completing motions and forms of relief to serve families. In 2023, the Miami Immigration Court had almost 30,500 dedicated docket cases, most of who are from Honduras, Peru, Colombia and some Brazilians. In 2023, FGLOP served over 172 families. The dynamics on Dedicated Docket are fast paced because immigration judges are supposed to render a decision on asylum claims within 300 days (about 10 months) and counted from their first Master hearing.

In both ICH and FGLOP programs, CLS authorized providers assist immigration courts with effective and efficient case management as Friend of the Court (under FOTC program). As such, they are a valuable tool to the immigration judges, assisting pro se respondents in navigating the complex immigration court system, and thereby creating greater efficiency and fairness by helping respondents to better understand court proceedings and ensure maintenance of a clear understanding of their rights, obligations, and relief for which they may be eligible.



*Sullanet, and her daughter, Valentina, were granted Asylum in August of 2023. Sullanet represented herself during her removal proceedings with the help of FGLOP services provided by CCLS Miami.*





## UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN'S PROGRAM

The Unaccompanied Children's Program ("UCP") team represents hundreds of children who have been released from the office of Refugee Resettlement custody after having entered the United States without their parent(s). We offer comprehensive, compassionate removal defense representation before the Executive Office of Immigration Review, US Citizenship and Immigration Services, and the Board of Immigration Appeals. We work to provide holistic representation and give all of our clients the opportunity to connect with our social services department, which regularly receives requests to assist with school enrollment issues, food insecurity, and psychological wellness.

In 2023, our team secured a slew of State Court custody and paternity orders, giving our clients and their custodians peace of mind, knowing that they could remain together with the backing of the State Courts. In particular, our team excelled at securing these State Court orders even after the client had turned 18. A combination of creative lawyering, legal research, and determination have led to success in the courtroom.

Given the overwhelming need in South Florida to serve vulnerable immigrant populations, the UCP team expanded capacity in 2023 by adding an Immigrant Justice Corps ("IJC") Fellow. IJC Justice Fellows serve host organizations for two years and provide quality legal representation to children in removal proceedings.

Thanks to the hard work of our team, dozens of children saw their immigration court cases get dismissed and administratively closed through exercises of prosecutorial discretion. We also represented several individuals in their asylum merits hearings, helping them tell their stories to the Immigration Court.

To round out the year, the UCP team partnered with a couple other teams within CLS and the nonprofit organization, "This is About Humanity," to celebrate the Christmas season in style with our clients, their families, and Santa Claus! Our clients were treated to a private screening of the Trolls movie and enjoyed popcorn, goody bags, and items from their personal wish list. It was a big moment for many of our clients who had never been in a movie theater, and a wonderful chance for the legal staff to bond and celebrate with their clients outside of the office setting.

# LEGAL ORIENTATION PROGRAM FOR CUSTODIANS

Legal Orientation Program for Custodians ("LOPC") who have been released from the Office of Refugee Resettlement custody and are currently in immigration court proceedings and cannot afford an attorney. Immigration courts do not provide pro bono counsel to indigent respondents and so the LOPC is crucial in helping minors navigate the complex legal system of their removal proceedings.

The goals of the LOPC are to (1) reduce the number of in absentia removal orders by educating custodians on their role and responsibilities, the immigration process, and potential forms of relief, and (2) protect children from mistreatment, exploitation, and harm. In 2023, we completed more than 437 individual orientations, 286 legal screenings, and 148 pro se workshops. We served more than 751 individuals (both adults and children) in our Know Your Rights presentations and placed 33 children with pro bono attorneys from the community.

Our office maintains the Miami Friend of the Court Program for dedicated immigration judges that handle juvenile dockets. During these juvenile dockets, unaccompanied alien children are scheduled to appear in their removal proceedings before the EOIR. Our program serves children without attorney representatives so that they do not have to attend these hearings alone. We provide pro se court services such as change of address, change of venue, and even advocate for prosecutorial discretion. In 2023, we served 151 unrepresented alien children at the Miami Immigration Court.

The LOPC program is also responsible for mentoring interns and private pro bono attorneys in the South Florida region. This involves heavy mentoring and training of private attorneys on asylums, special immigrant juvenile visas, U-visas, T-visas, and state court proceedings. Since the LOPC deals with vulnerable populations who have been victims of abuse and trauma, they also offer non-legal referrals in areas such as therapy, health care, food aid, school enrollment/placement, and rent assistance.

***"There is no better exercise for your heart than reaching down and helping to lift someone up."***

**— Bernard Meltzer**

# UNACCOMPANIED REFUGEE MINORS PROGRAM

The Unaccompanied Refugee Minor Program ("URMP") is designed to meet the needs of children from other countries whose circumstances require foster care support services because their families are either temporarily or permanently unavailable due to political circumstances, economic hardship, or abandonment, or they are unable or unwilling to provide parental care and supervision.

The program provides substitute living arrangements and culturally sensitive services to achieve a balance between ethnic identity and adaptation to a new socio-cultural community. Upon release into our program, these children are represented by our attorneys in dependency court in Miami-Dade County where they are provided the same benefits as any child in state foster care. We are one of the few programs nationwide that assists these URM's on an emergency basis – to avoid any detention by ICE once they turn eighteen. These youths are then eligible for extended foster care after their 18th birthday. We represent them before USCIS and before the EOIR.



## AFGHAN MINOR ASYLUM GRANT



"Thank you to everyone at Catholic Legal Services. At the beginning of my migration, I left my family in Afghanistan, and I was in the U.S. alone. With the legal help and guidance of CLS, I won my asylum case, and I am back in the warm embrace of my family in the U.S. Winning my asylum case made me feel like now everything will be possible, and I can start pursuing my goals."

*Testimonial from Afghan URM who won asylum within one year of arrival.  
He is now reunited with his family.*

The URMP is a program that can help youths from all over the world including Cuba, Venezuela, Afghanistan, Guatemala, Honduras, EL Salvador, and Mexico to name a few. In 2023, we had approximately 43 URMP cases – both new and old – and all the URM cases were granted or are pending the grant of their immigration benefits. None of the URM cases actively in our program are facing removal thanks to our legal representation.

**"Safety and security don't just happen; they are the result of collective consensus and public investment. We owe our children, the most vulnerable citizens in our society, a life free of violence and fear."**

**— Nelson Mandela**

## NATIONAL QUALIFIED REPRESENTATIVE PROGRAM

Many persons detained in the local detention facilities suffer from mental illness. Many of them have mental health issues serious enough for an immigration judge to find that they are incompetent to represent themselves. The National Qualified Representative ("NQR") Program is a public defender model for detained individuals found to be incompetent.

Immigrants represented under the NQR are people with serious mental or developmental disabilities and have often suffered persecution and torture in their home countries because of their mental disabilities. The NQR affords a meaningful opportunity to be heard by shifting the burden of representation from the immigrants themselves to highly-qualified attorneys and BIA Accredited Representatives to help ensure fair and efficient removal proceedings.

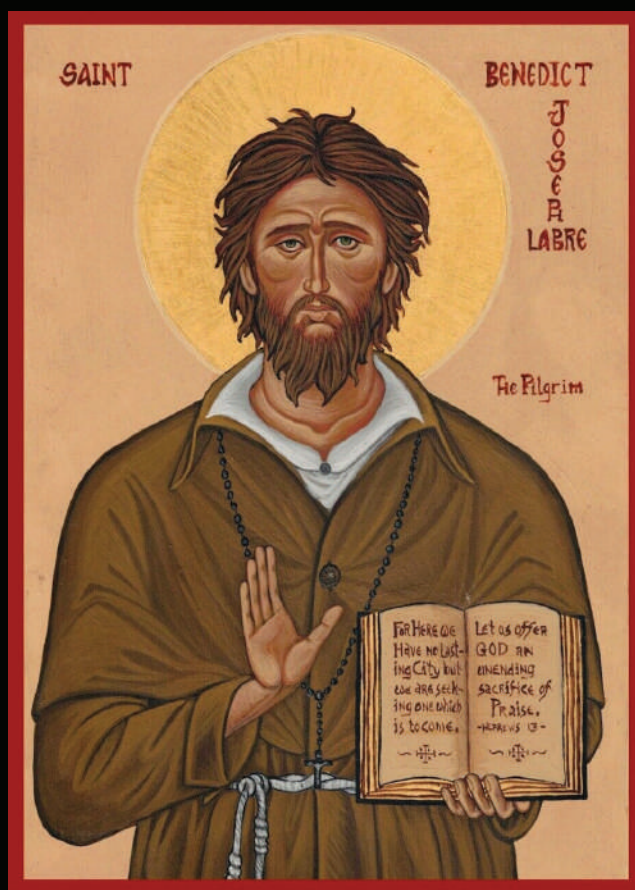
**Resilience and Victory Beyond Bars:** *Gamboay,\* came to the U.S. as a refugee and later adjusted his status. Drama with the mother of his child found him behind bars, sitting in jail, after she attempted to run him over. As many accused individuals do after waiting for trial for long periods of time while incarcerated, he accepted a plea deal. However, his plea rendered him removable and limited his options to remain in the U.S. Now facing removal at Krome SPC, our office was appointed to represent Gamboay after the judge found indicia of incompetency. We receive about two dozen appointments per year. Through zealous advocacy, our office was able to successfully withhold Gamboay's removal. The NQR provided Gamboay with the necessary safeguards, procedural protections, and guaranteed the overall fairness of removal proceedings.*



# SUPPORT THE LABRE PROGRAM

## SUPPORT IMMIGRANT HOMELESS COMMUNITIES IN SOUTH FLORIDA

### LABRE PROGRAM



The LABRE Program is named for St. Benedict Joseph LABRE, patron saint of the homeless. Hailing from a middle-class French family in the 18th Century, St. LABRE chose to live as a mendicant, focusing all of his energy on adoration and spiritual devotion. He is the patron saint of the homeless.

Taking inspiration from his life, The LABRE Project was founded to serve the immigration needs of the homeless in South Florida. The program represents clients before the Immigration Court, USCIS, and ICE across various shelters. Attorneys and paralegals currently provide direct services at Camillus House, Chapman Partnership, and Lotus House, in addition to receiving unhoused clients in the office on Mondays and Tuesdays in the main downtown office.

The LABRE Program also serves the medically vulnerable who have immigration legal needs. For example, the program helps individuals living abroad apply for humanitarian paroles when seeking life-saving medical treatments in the United States. The team also represents individuals in removal proceedings who have mental-health issues.

Last year, the LABRE Program added a new location – Corpus Christi Catholic Church, a parish community that is home to many immigrant families. Twice a month, The LABRE Project provides orientations and direct services onsite at the parish with a dedicated team of lay volunteers.

Finally, the LABRE Program houses many cases which cannot be assigned to the many grant programs at CCLS, but which need to be taken because of compelling circumstances, such as victims of crime and abuse.

In 2023, the LABRE Program provided 1900 services, including 290 attorney consultations, 100 residency applications, 33 asylum applications, and 400 work permits.

As many clients have told us, “Without my ID card, I can’t get my disability benefits, and I could even lose my house.” Continuing this important work is essential for making sure that the Miami-Dade Homeless Community has access to basic resources.



# LABRE FOR CHILDREN & YOUNG ADULTS

## (PREVIOUSLY SERVED UNDER THE FBF CHILDREN'S LEGAL SERVICES GRANT)

Previously known as the Children Legal Services Grant, LABRE allows us to offer legal assistance to children in critical areas which affect their safety, wellbeing, and future development. Through this grant, our office can assist and directly represent unaccompanied alien children who are released from the Office of Refugee Resettlement. Our representation consists of advocating for custody and placement in either family court, probate court, or children's court and then filing relief and representing these children before USCIS and EOIR.

In 2023, our office directly represented approximately over 70 new cases while maintaining a total running of 118 previously opened cases. Many of which have won special immigrant juvenile designation, asylum, and or T-nonimmigrant status. We also assist these children in the initial and renewal filing of their employment authorization cards and more.



**Two designated unaccompanied alien children are now two of the many young adults that have received their lawful permanent status this year. They are now secured in their legal status and have the ability to petition their spouses.**

## PROGRAM GOALS FOR 2024

The LABRE Program hopes to raise \$150,000 this year in order to fully fund one full-time attorney and paralegal, which may actually be divided among several people.

Another goal is for the program to branch out into representing noncitizens before Social Security and other federal agencies. There is a gap in service for noncitizens because current federal funding for nonprofit legal providers specifically excludes noncitizens. Given that Miami has a unique, aging immigrant population that is technically eligible for public benefits, there is going to be a growing need for representation in this area.

**How can you help?** – it's important to understand how much of the homeless problem in Miami-Dade County is due to bureaucratic processing requirements and delays. Those who want to help improve the homelessness issue in our community can donate to the program and can also advocate for universal ID cards and more user-friendly public benefits portals.

## MANAGED-SERVICES PROGRAM

The Managed-Service Program provides low-cost and free legal services for clients who do not qualify under one of the agency's many grants. During the calendar year 2023, the Managed-Service Program ("MSP") provided 6,728 services. Approximately one-third were employment authorization (34%), attorney consultations (14%), TPS applications (10%), and Know your Rights Presentations (8%). The MSP also did a significant number of Humanitarian Parole CHNV applications (236), and Applications for Residence (95). We provided more than 86 different types of services under the Managed-Service Program in 2023.

**Reunited – From Detention to Family Reunification:** *The program represents individuals in removal proceedings, including bond hearings. One man – "Papa Hien" – was apprehended and held by ICE at Krome SPC. He was separated from his family after his 13-year-old stepdaughter, who he had raised since she was a toddler, lied to the authorities about how he disciplined her. When the truth came to light during his bond hearing, our office successfully obtained a low bond on his behalf. Papa Hien is now reunited with his family while waiting for his next court hearing.*

# BROWARD OFFICE



CCLS' Hollywood office (known as the "CCLS Broward" is staffed by a multicultural, multilingual, and professional staff with extensive immigration experience. Specifically, the staff includes a Managing attorney, a Detention Program Supervising Attorney, four staff attorneys, four paralegals and one receptionist/administrative assistant. The Hollywood office is a full service arm of the agency that offers services which includes the 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), and the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO). The people served by the Broward office includes applicants for adjustment of status, employment authorizations, Temporary Protected Status, asylum, victims of certain serious crimes and marital violence, naturalization, petitions for family-based applications and individuals in removal proceedings.

## VICTIMS OF CRIMES

Immigration law now recognizes the special claims of abused women, men, 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 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 the victim from seeking outside help and protection. Abusers manipulate the fear and isolation of the immigrants to perpetuate the abuse. CCLS Broward has had the great privilege of serving those men, women and children that are victims of these crimes. The CCLS Broward staff attorneys often represent victims of crimes in their immigration matters before the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service and the Immigration Court. The cases range from U-Nonimmigrant Status for victims of certain serious crimes, VAWA Self-Petitions for victims of Domestic Violence and Petitions for Removal of Conditions based on being subject to abuse or extreme cruelty by their U.S. Citizen or Legal Permanent Resident spouses. Crime victims living in shelters or earning below the poverty guidelines are often afforded a full range of immigration representation for themselves, their spouses and children. When grant funding is available and awarded to CCLS, we also use it to provide pro bono representation for these clients. With the Broward office's help, these individuals often gain legal status, employment and autonomy from their abusers.

**Reclaiming Justice—From Incarceration to Renewed Hope:** *In February 2023, David (not real name) came to the Broward Office after having been released from prison for a crime he was found not guilty of committing. Prior to being sent to prison, David had filed a petition as the victim of abuse from his US Citizen spouse under the Violence Against Women Act ("VAWA"). As a result of being incarcerated and his failure to follow up with requested documents, USCIS denied David's VAWA petition. CLS Staff assisted David in filing a new petition along with applications for residency and employment authorization with USCIS. David has now received notifications from USCIS confirming their receipt of his petition and applications and is very thankful to CLS staff for their assistance in getting his case on track with USCIS.*





## DETAINED PERSONS

The Broward office is also committed to serving the detained immigrant population of Miami-Dade County and 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. In the past year, more than 2,500 detainees across South Florida's detention facilities received legal orientation through CLS' Legal Orientation Program (LOP). CLS attorneys remained committed to the program even when the COVID-19 pandemic forced authorities to cease outside access to the facilities. CCLS attorneys quickly adapted and worked with the facilities to deliver LOP services remotely through prerecorded videos, Skype, and by phone. With the return of in person services, the LOP CLS attorneys have resumed the provision of weekly Legal Orientation services to the men and women being detained at these detention facilities.

In addition to the provision of legal orientation services, individuals also receive assistance with the filing of motions, preparation of applications for relief, translation of documents and research in support of their claims with the Immigration Court. The Legal Orientation Program also allows attorneys to conduct workshops designed to provide detained individuals with the tools and knowledge to represent themselves in Immigration Court proceedings.

## SERVING THE SERVANTS IMMIGRATION PROGRAM

The Serving the Servants Immigration Program (SSIP) enables CCLS to continue its mission by demonstrating support towards the Roman Catholic Church in the United States. The SSIP assists the Archdiocese of Miami, many other dioceses, eparchies, religious institutes, religious organizations, and charitable organizations with their immigration needs. The SSIP 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 SSIP provides consultation on religious immigration matters, representation of clients as necessary, preparation of various forms, and ongoing management of cases.



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*celebrated*  
**25**  
*years of service*

*to the immigrant, migrant, and refugee community in 2023.  
Please support our work among the most vulnerable.*

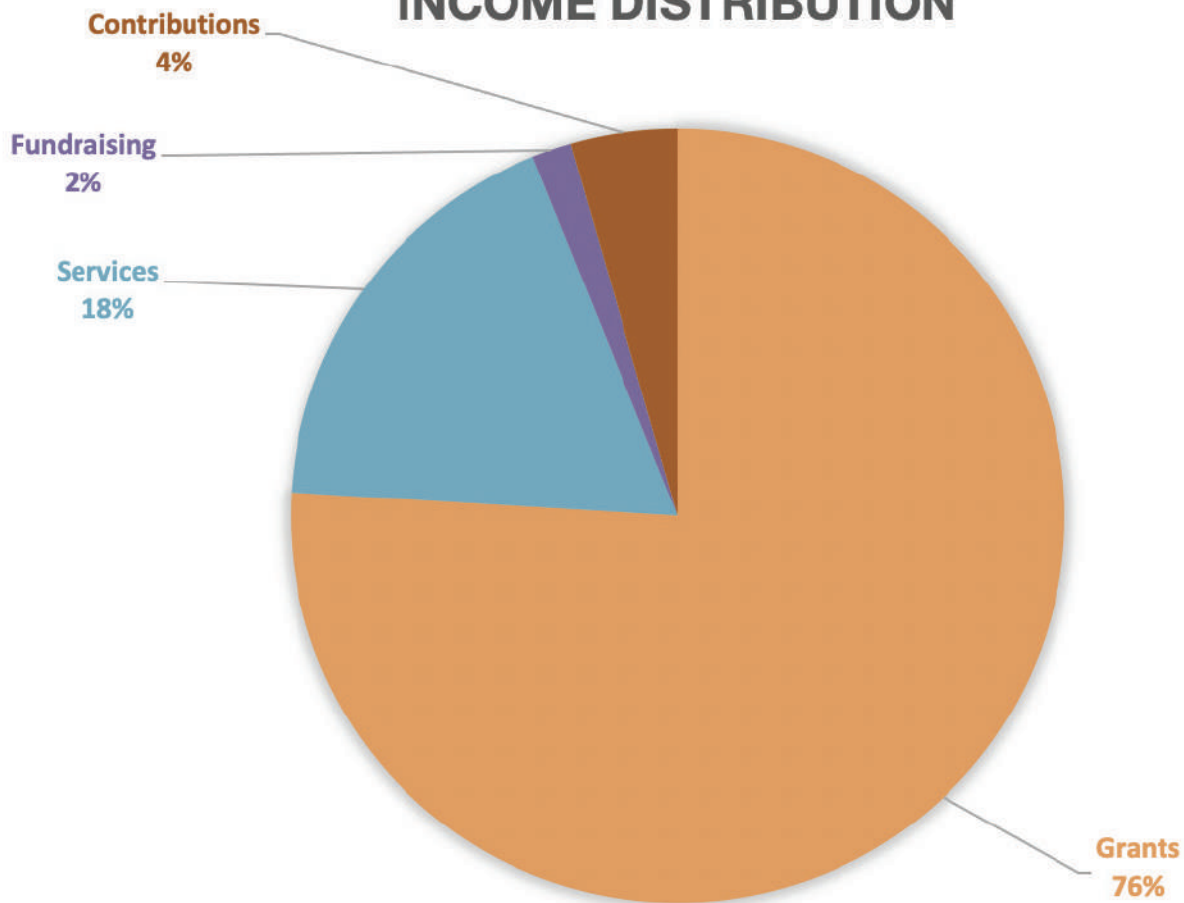
*[www.cclsmiami.org/donate](http://www.cclsmiami.org/donate)*



# FINANCIALS

REVENUES	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
Grants	\$4,714,831	\$942,973	\$5,657,804
Services	\$935,788	-	\$935,788
Fundraising	\$32,682	-	\$32,682
Contributions	\$138,106	\$24,700	\$162,806
Interest	\$97	-	\$97
Net asset released from restriction	\$542,161	(\$542,161)	-
	<b>\$6,363,665</b>	<b>\$425,512</b>	<b>\$6,789,177</b>

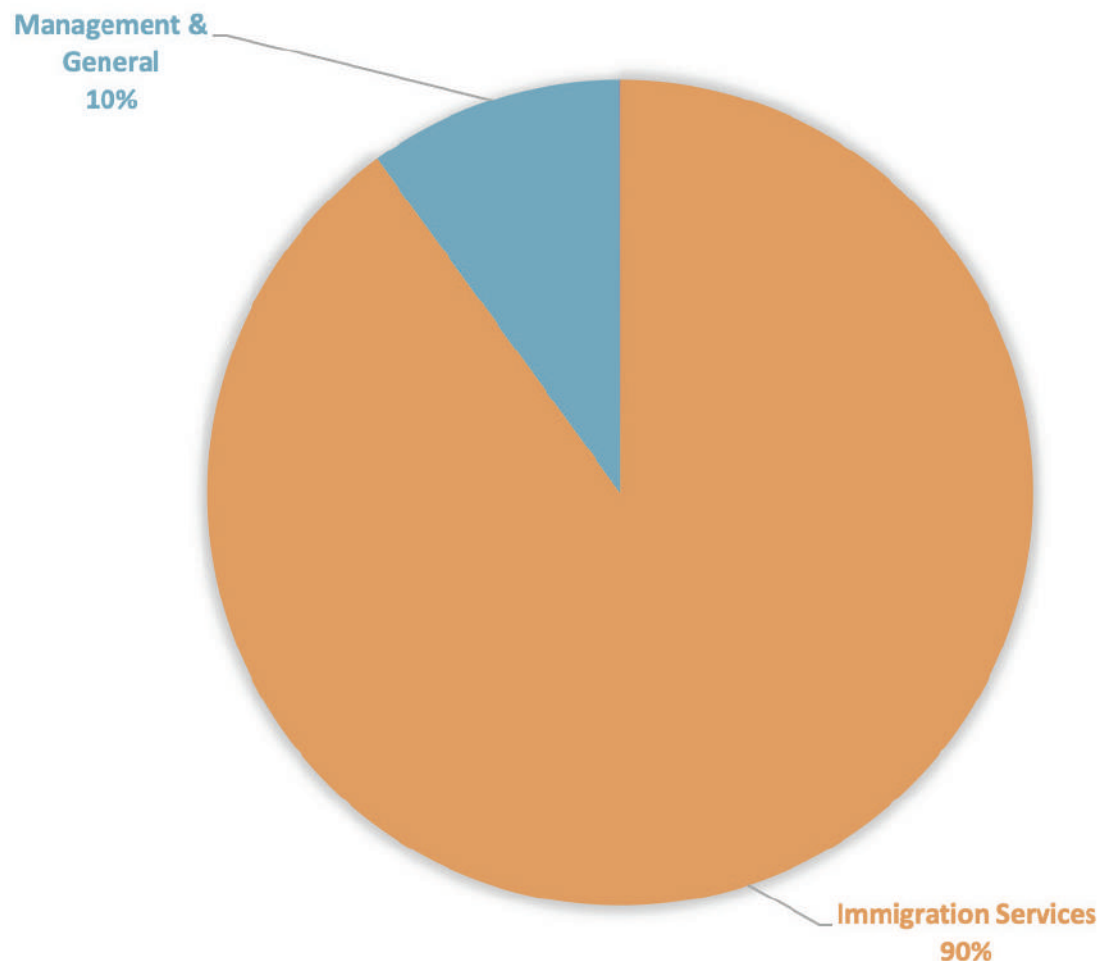
## INCOME DISTRIBUTION





EXPENSES			
<b>PROGRAM SERVICES:</b>			
Immigration Services	\$5,004,334	-	\$5,004,334
<b>TOTAL PROGRAM SERVICES</b>	<b>\$5,004,334</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$5,004,334</b>
<b>SUPPORTING SERVICES:</b>			
Management & General	\$613,697	-	\$613,697
Fundraising	\$4,390	-	\$4,390
<b>TOTAL SUPPORTING SERVICES</b>	<b>\$618,087</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$618,087</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$5,622,421</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$5,622,241</b>
<b>Change in Assets</b>	<b>\$741,244</b>	<b>\$435,512</b>	<b>\$1,166,756</b>
<b>Net assets – beginning of year</b>	<b>\$871,253</b>	<b>\$58,173</b>	<b>\$929,426</b>
<b>Net assets – end of year</b>	<b>\$1,612,497</b>	<b>\$483,685</b>	<b>\$2,096,182</b>

## EXPENSES DISTRIBUTION



# FUNDERS

**Acacia Center for Justice**

**Archdiocese of Miami**

**Bank of America**

**Catholic Charities**

**Catholic Legal Immigration Network (CLINIC)**

**City of North Miami**

**Equal Justice Works (EJW)**

**Executive Office of Immigration Review (EOIR)**

**Florida Blue Foundation**

**Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF)**

**Funding Florida Legal Aid (FFLA),  
formerly The Florida Bar Foundation**

**Miami-Dade County**

**Miami-Dade County Public Schools**

**Office of Legal Access Programs (OLAP)**

**Raskob Foundation**

**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services,  
Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR)**



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