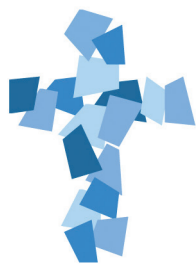


2017 IMPACT REPORT



CATHOLIC
MIGRATION
SERVICES

catholicmigration.org

ABOUT CATHOLIC MIGRATION SERVICES



OUR MISSION

Catholic Migration Services is committed to “welcoming the stranger in our midst,” by empowering underserved immigrant communities in Brooklyn and Queens. We provide high quality legal services, know-your-rights education, and advocacy to immigrants to advance equality and social justice in a changing and diverse population.

Our services are available without regard to national origin, religion or immigration status.

OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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MEETING THE CHALLENGE



Dear Friends of Catholic Migration Services:

Catholic Migration Services is pleased to provide this report on our activities for the year ending March 31, 2017, a very challenging period for immigrants in our Brooklyn and Queens communities. For over 46 years, our mission has been to welcome the stranger in our midst, and we have been privileged to collaborate with many others to accomplish this mission.

As you will see from the report that follows, our dedicated staff, with help from many volunteers, provided legal advice and assistance to more than 3,000 Brooklyn and Queens residents on immigration, housing and employment matters. Catholic Migration Services helped educate immigrants on changing policies; and navigate the changing landscape of US immigration, with the goal of keeping families together. In addition, we helped tenants come together to preserve affordable housing, and educated thousands of people at community presentations about their rights.

We are grateful for the support of our many donors; both those who give their financial support and those who give their time. Your support throughout the year helps us to fulfill our mission of welcoming and empowering immigrants throughout Brooklyn and Queens.

Sincerely,



Very Reverend Patrick J. Keating
Chief Executive Officer

IMMIGRATION

OVERVIEW OF OUR LEGAL SERVICES

Catholic Migration Services provided free legal advice and representation on immigration matters to more than **2,000** New Yorkers in this past year. Our team tackled a wide array of matters to help immigrants fight deportation, gain lawful status, and reunite with family members. Our work included:

CITIZENSHIP

We helped more than **500** lawful permanent residents apply to become U.S. citizens.

FAMILY REUNIFICATION

We helped more than **100** United States citizens and permanent residents obtain immigration status for their family members and reunite in the United States.

ASYLUM

We helped **20** immigrants obtain asylum in the United States and avoid further persecution in their home country based on race, religion, political opinion, or membership in a social or political group.

DACA

We obtained DACA status for **45** childhood arrivals. DACA status provides these children and young adults with some assurance that they will not be deported, and allows them to obtain work authorization.

PROTECTING VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

Catholic Migration Services obtained protections under our immigration laws for dozens of abused and neglected children, victims of trafficking and other serious crimes, and survivors of domestic violence.



MEETING NEW CHALLENGES

The past year has been a very challenging period for immigrants, with unprecedented levels of anxiety and fear permeating New York's immigrant communities. Catholic Migration Services stepped up to the plate to meet these challenges with several critical efforts:

Our lawyers gave **community presentations** to more than **3,700** Brooklyn and Queens residents. These presentations informed immigrants about changes in Federal immigration policy, and ways to avoid frauds and scams that target vulnerable immigrants.

Our attorneys handled hundreds of phone calls from distressed immigrants seeking reliable information about immigration changes and help to assess their risk of deportation.

We launched a program to assist undocumented parents who are at risk of being separated from their U.S. citizen children. We trained more than 50 volunteer lawyers to aid in this effort.



REAL STORIES

MAKING A
DIFFERENCE

Although the stories are real, the names have been changed to protect the privacy of our clients.

SAYMA, a 45 year-old Muslim teacher from Pakistan, was forced to flee her home country after being physically attacked by extremists. Sayma was targeted because she educated girls and did not adhere to traditional gender roles. Despite constant threats she continued to teach and she bravely spoke out against these militants, challenging their social views and fundamentalist interpretation of Islam. She eventually was forced to flee the country after the militants physically attacked her. Catholic Migration Services successfully advocated to the Department of Homeland Security on Sayma's behalf, and she received asylum in March, 2017.

ADOLFO is a sixteen-year old boy from Mexico. He fled from Mexico after enduring years of psychological and physical abuse by his adult caretakers, including beatings by his grandparents. He came to the U.S. to be reunited with his parents and sibling. Catholic Migration Services helped Adolfo obtain legal status in the United States and escape the abuse he endured in Mexico.

YASMINE came to the U.S. in 2012 fleeing persecution in Burkina Faso. She grew up in a devout Muslim family and was subjected to Female Genital Mutilation as a young girl. She has vivid memories of this torture and has medical and psychological trauma from the circumcision. Her brother, who became the head of the household when her father died, sent Yasmine to the U.S. to study English. While she was in the U.S., Yasmine learned that her brother planned to force her to marry. Having seen how her older sisters suffered from forced marriages, Yasmine sought assistance from Catholic Migration Services to apply for asylum. With our assistance, Yasmine won a grant of asylum following a hearing in front of an immigration judge.

**ATTORNEY
PROFILE:**



CARLA TAVERAS

Carla Taveras, a graduate of St. John's University School of Law and an attorney at Catholic Migration Services for three years, has known since childhood that she wanted to help immigrants in their new home. Carla immigrated to the United States from the Dominican Republic with her parents and recalls vividly her parents' naturalization ceremony. "I was 10 years old and the ceremony left a big impression on me." Not only did Carla become a citizen, the ceremony also led to her interest in immigration law.

Since joining Catholic Migration Services in 2014 as an Equal Justice Works fellow, Carla has focused on representing immigrant minors in deportation (removal) proceedings. Many of these children are from Central America, and crossed several borders in order to seek asylum in the U.S. and find safety from violence in their home countries. Others immigrated to the U.S. seeking to be reunified with family after having experienced abandonment, neglect, or the death of a parent in their home country. Carla provides these children with the legal services needed to obtain various forms of immigration relief, including asylum, Special Immigrant Juvenile Status, T/U Visas, as well as defending them in deportation proceedings.

TENANT REPRESENTATION AND ADVOCACY

OVERVIEW OF OUR LEGAL WORK

Our Immigrant Tenant Advocacy Project advises and represents hundreds of tenants each year on a wide range of housing-related matters. Our work preserves the limited supply of decent, affordable housing in Queens and Bushwick, and ensures that tenants are not wrongfully evicted or overcharged. We do so by preventing evictions, forcing landlords to provide repairs and essential services, and helping senior citizens and the disabled to obtain exemptions from rent increases. Some highlights of our work this year include:

WEEKLY HOUSING CLINIC

We provided free legal advice to almost **400** tenants this year through our weekly clinics held in Sunnyside, Queens and Bushwick, Brooklyn.

MONTHLY COMMUNITY MEETINGS

We held monthly meetings for tenants in both Queens and Bushwick at which we discussed housing issues and other concerns affecting the communities we serve.

PREVENTING EVICTIONS

We prevented or delayed **15** evictions, enabling tenants to stay in their homes and avoid homelessness.

RENT REDUCTIONS AND FREEZES

Our lawyers and paralegals helped seniors and disabled tenants win rent freezes, and helped tenants get refunds when they were unlawfully overcharged by their landlords.

STANDING UP TO SLUMLORDS

We helped **15** tenants win critically necessary repairs of sub-standard and hazardous housing conditions.



EXAMPLES OF OUR WORK

ELENA’S husband, who was the tenant of record for their apartment, passed away in 2016. At that time, her husband had a Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (“SCRIE”), which froze their rent at an affordable level. However, without a lease in her name, Elena would be unable to keep her husband’s SCRIE. Although we helped Elena obtain a lease in her name, her application to succeed to her husband’s rent increase exemption was initially denied because she had not reached the minimum age required for that benefit at the time of her husband’s death. On appeal, however, we convinced the agency to reverse its decision, arguing successfully that Elena was entitled to succeed to her husband’s SCRIE because she had reached the minimum age at the time she submitted her application. Subsequently, we helped Elena reduce her frozen rent amount because, given her husband’s death, her household income had decreased substantially. As a result, Elena was able to remain in her apartment at an affordable rent.

RAKESH is a low-income Rent Stabilized tenant, whose landlord had agreed to charge him a “preferential” rent, an amount that was less than the maximum rent allowable for his apartment. Although preferential rents may make apartments affordable temporarily, they are a threat to long-term affordability because, under the law, and with certain exceptions, a landlord may end a tenant’s preferential rent at the end of the tenant’s lease term. When Rakesh came to Catholic Migration Services for help, he had just signed a lease renewal with no preferential rent and his landlord had commenced a nonpayment proceeding against him, seeking \$10,000 in alleged rent arrears. After taking on his case, we negotiated a favorable settlement in which the landlord agreed to accept payment of only \$5,000 to settle its rent claim, provide Rakesh a preferential rent for the duration of his lease, and make a number of much-needed repairs in his apartment.

Although the stories are real, the names have been changed to protect the privacy of our clients.



TENANT ORGANIZERS ACHIEVE BIG WINS

Our tenant organizers, in partnership with a dedicated group of tenant leaders from the Queens and Brooklyn communities, achieved some important results this year that will benefit tenants citywide.

The Right to Counsel for Tenants in Housing Court. Our tenant organizers and leaders played an important role in the Right to Counsel Coalition's successful effort to win access to free representation for low-income New York City tenants in eviction proceedings. The City is implementing this landmark program over a five year period. Catholic Migration Services will continue to advocate for tenants to ensure that the program is implemented effectively.

Rent Freeze for Rent Stabilized Tenants. Catholic Migration Services successfully advocated for a rent freeze for rent stabilized tenants during hearings held by the City's Rent Guidelines Board in June 2016. Our work won recognition from the citywide Rent Justice Coalition and enabled thousands of low-income tenants to remain in their homes.



REPRESENTING IMMIGRANT WORKERS

OVERVIEW OF OUR WORK

Each day millions of low wage and immigrant workers struggle to make ends meet. Their struggle is made immeasurably more difficult when these workers perform the work that they have been hired to do, but their employers refuse to pay them in full, either by withholding wages for some or all of the hours worked, failing to pay the minimum wage, or refusing to pay overtime premiums when employees' hours exceed 40 in a week. Each year, the Immigrant Workers' Rights Program (IWRP) recovers thousands of dollars in unpaid wages to workers, allowing hard working New Yorkers to pay their rent, cover their bills, and put food on the table.

The goal of the IWRP is to strengthen the enforcement of workers' rights through affirmative litigation, policy reform, individual representation, and community education. In the past year, our team has provided advice and counsel to hundreds of individuals who have called our free bilingual hotline, recovered more than two hundred thousand dollars in unpaid wages to low wage and immigrant workers, presented "Know Your Rights" trainings at churches and community centers, and assisted victims of workplace crimes and trafficking with their petitions for U and T Visas.



A photograph of a man and a woman looking at a document together. The man is on the left, wearing a dark sweater over a checkered shirt, and the woman is on the right, wearing a plaid shirt. They are both smiling and looking down at the document. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people in a room.

EXAMPLES OF OUR WORK

VICTOR, a Mexican immigrant, came to Catholic Migration Services when he was fired from a local hair salon. Throughout his employment as a masseuse at the salon, he typically worked well over forty hours per week, but was never compensated with proper overtime pay. In addition to the wage violations, Victor was consistently ridiculed by his employer due to disfigurement and loss of vision in one of his eyes. Although he was popular with customers, the employer terminated him due to this disability and national origin. Catholic Migration Services reached out to his employer and negotiated a settlement with the salon. With the settlement money and through a referral by Catholic Migration Services, Victor is now taking classes at a local community college that will assist him in finding more gainful employment in the future.

ANGELICA, an immigrant from El Salvador, called our hotline after being terminated from her job at a daycare center in Brooklyn. She had previously complained to her employer about the lack of paid sick days, which are required under New York City law, and the employer's failure to pay the new New York minimum wage that took effect on December 31, 2016. Angelica suspected that she was terminated in retaliation for complaining to her coworkers and supervisors about these violations. IWRP immediately assisted Angelica in obtaining unemployment insurance benefits. We then filed a complaint with the Department of Consumer Affairs for retaliation. As a result of our complaint, the employer agreed to pay Angelica two weeks of severance pay as well as an additional \$500 in damages. Angelica was satisfied with the outcome and is now contemplating resuming her college education.

Although the stories are real, the names have been changed to protect the privacy of our clients.

ETHNIC MINISTRIES

Catholic Migration Services is committed to collaborating with and serving the diverse ethnic ministries of our community through pastoral services for immigrants. This preserves the cultural traditions and heritage of our people by ensuring ongoing fellowship and spiritual growth in the life of the Church.

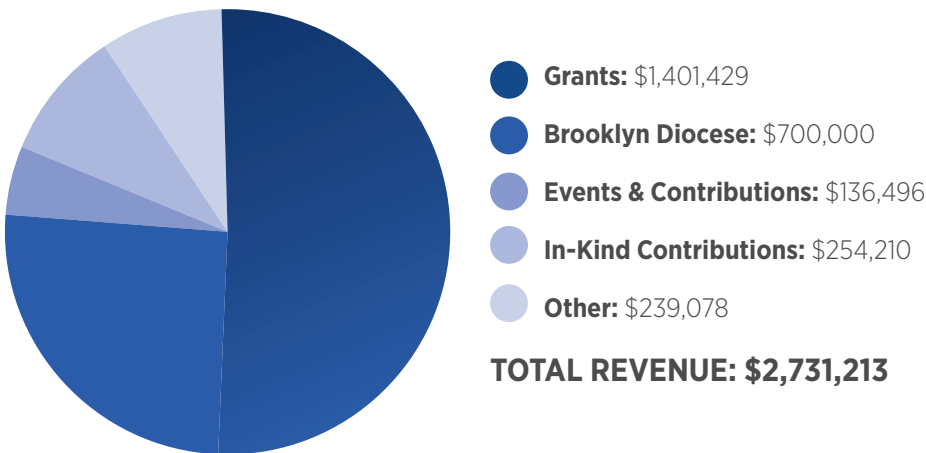
Our annual Shining Star awards recognize the hard work and dedication of immigrants in each of the ethnic ministries served within our communities.



FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

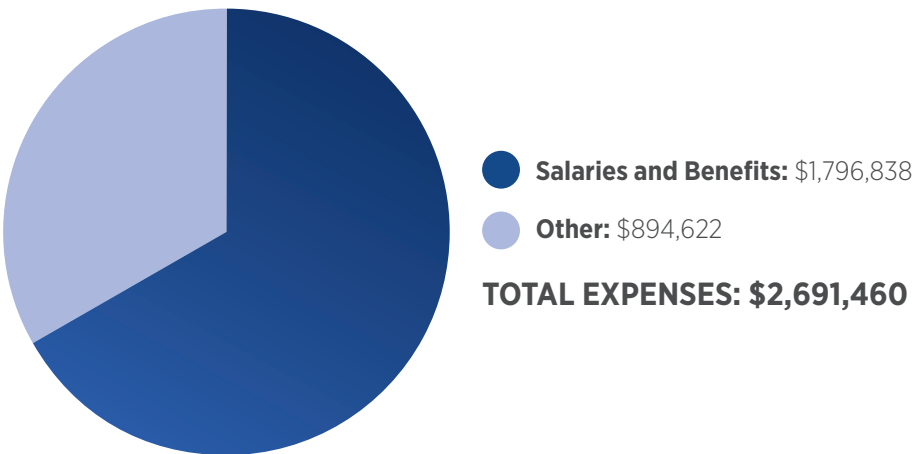
Revenue

(CALENDAR YEAR 2016)



Operating Expenses

(CALENDAR YEAR 2016)



OUR TEAM

Natasha B. Venegas Abarca, External Relations Associate
Sr. Joan Anzalone, Immigration Counselor
Victoria Arrao, Administrative Assistant
Magdalena Barbosa, Managing Attorney, Workers' Rights
Xiomara Bustamante, Immigration Counselor
Marisol Canales, Lead Immigration Counselor
Meihwa Chow, Paralegal
Amy Collado, Tenant Organizer
David Colodny, Director of Legal Services
Alice Davis, Senior Staff Attorney
Stephani Espinal, Volunteer, Center for Neighborhood Leadership
Joseph Farmer, Volunteer, Mercy Volunteer Corps
Erin Fitzgerald, Operations Coordinator
Alexandra Goncalves-Peña, Supervising Attorney
Michael Holland, Volunteer, Ignatian Volunteer Corps
Christopher Holtz, Supervising Attorney
Valerie Jean, Volunteer, Jesuit Volunteer Corps
Sharone Kaufman, Managing Attorney, Immigration
Very Rev. Patrick J. Keating, Chief Executive Officer
Andrew Lehrer, Managing Attorney, Tenant Advocacy
José León, Senior Staff Attorney
Maria Londano, Custodian
Lorena Lopez, Tenant Organizer
Samantha Lyons, Staff Attorney
Mariam Magar, Senior Staff Attorney
Chloe Moore, Naturalization Coordinator
Nanette Morales, Receptionist
Aida Ocasio, Receptionist
Carlos Ortiz, Tenant Organizer
Nancy Pardo, Executive Assistant
Thomas Power, Poverty Justice Solutions Fellow
Héctor Rojas Olivo, Staff Attorney
Ellen Ryan, Development Officer
Rebecca Rybaltowski, Outreach Coordinator
Jeanne Sanon, Immigration Counselor
Katherine Searle, Americorps Vista Volunteer
Amandeep Singh, Immigrant Justice Corps Fellow
Carla Taveras, Staff Attorney
Caitlin Wright, Volunteer, Jesuit Volunteer Corps
Noelle Yasso, Immigrant Justice Corps Fellow

List current as of December 2017



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