



CATHOLIC  
MIGRATION  
SERVICES

2019

IMPACT  
REPORT



## 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 regardless of religion or ethnicity. 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 always free, and are available without regard to national origin, religion or immigration status.

## Our Board of Directors

Manuel Quintana, Esq., Chair  
Catherine L. Lou, Treasurer  
Very Reverend Patrick J. Keating Esq., CEO  
Andrea M. Alonso, Esq.  
Joseph Corozzo, Esq.  
Doris Rios Duffy, Esq.  
Craig Eaton, Esq.  
Vincent Iannelli  
Janet Marcic  
Robert McCreanor, Esq.  
Paul Michels, Esq.  
Sandra Munoz, Esq.  
Joseph Rosato, Esq.

## 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, 2019. For over 48 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 direct legal assistance to more than 3,100 Brooklyn and Queens residents on immigration, housing and employment matters. Catholic Migration Services also educated more than 3,400 immigrants on changing U.S. immigration policies, and helped more than 2,300 tenants come together to make their voices heard in the struggle to preserve affordable housing.

Our successes in 2019 are currently overshadowed by the devastating impacts of COVID-19 in Queens and Brooklyn. Immigrant communities are suffering tremendously, in terms of health, loss of income and economic instability. Catholic Migration Services continues to serve the community through this crisis to address the impacts of COVID-19, including assistance to workers who have lost their jobs, and to tenants who cannot afford the rent.

Your continued support will enable us to serve immigrants in need, including those impacted by COVID-19, and to fulfill our mission of welcoming and empowering immigrants throughout Brooklyn and Queens.

Sincerely,

Very Reverend Patrick J. Keating, Esq.  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



# IMMIGRATION

Catholic Migration Services' Immigration Legal Services Program is a local leader in responding to the ever growing need for quality immigration legal services. Catholic Migration Services' committed team of Department of Justice Accredited Representatives, attorneys, and service corps volunteers work collaboratively to serve immigrant communities while honoring the dignity of each person, advancing family unity, and supporting thriving communities.

## 2019 ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

### OVERVIEW

*Provided advice and representation to more than **2,300 individuals.***

### CITIZENSHIP

**600** lawful permanent residents obtained **U.S. citizenship.**

### FAMILY REUNIFICATION

**240** people became **lawful permanent residents**, ensuring family reunification and unity.

### DACA

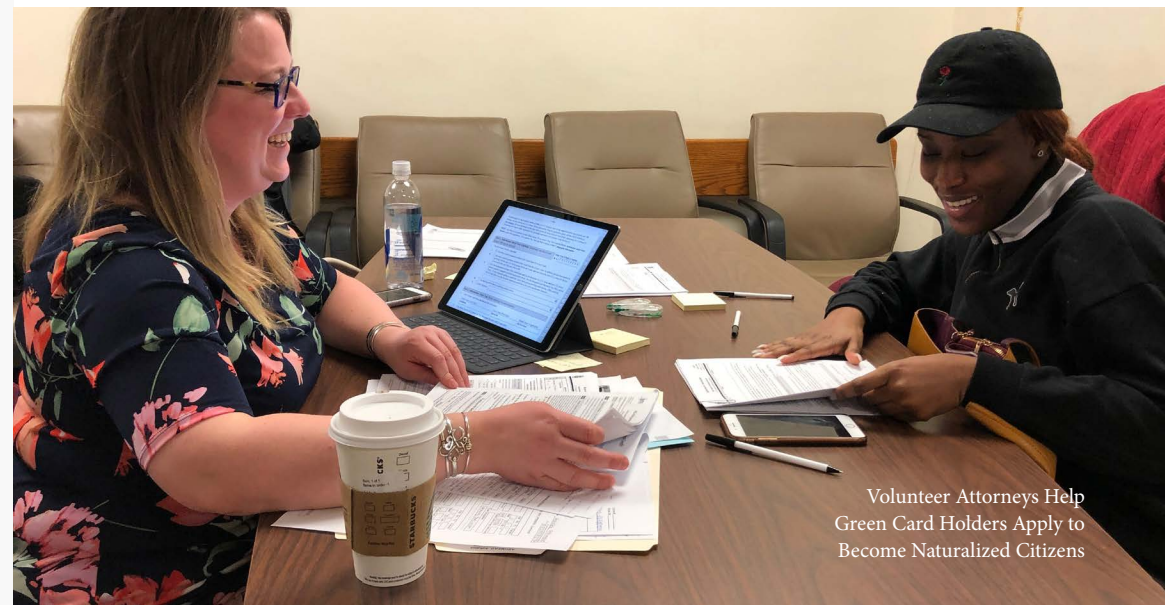
**130 DACAmented** individuals renewed their DACA status.

### ASYLUM

We won **31 Grants of Humanitarian Protection** for individuals fleeing persecution or torture.

### PROTECTING VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

**Defended more than 230 immigrants** in removal proceedings, ensuring their due process as they face potential separation from their families and communities.



Volunteer Attorneys Help Green Card Holders Apply to Become Naturalized Citizens





Left: Staff Attorney José Giovanni Miranda with his Client who Won Asylum;  
Above: Applying to Become a U.S. Citizen at a Naturalization Workshop

## REAL STORIES

### *Making a Difference*

Catholic Migration Services helped **ALEJANDRO** obtain his lawful permanent residence after U.S. Citizenship and Immigrant Services (USCIS) denied his petition for failure to show that he lawfully entered the country. Catholic Migration Services helped Alejandro find witnesses to testify about his entry, and demonstrated to an Immigration Judge that Alejandro had lawfully entered. The Judge granted Alejandro's petition, and Alejandro is now able to stay in the U.S. with his wife and children. He is on the path to U.S. citizenship!

**THE CHAO FAMILY** fled their home country after receiving death threats from members of its repressive government in retaliation for the family's complaints to human rights organizations and aid to pro-democracy advocates. The family of five left behind their businesses,

careers, and legal studies, seeking protection in the U.S. Catholic Migration Services represented the family in Immigration Court, and won asylum for all five family members. The family is now building a new life in New York City, free from death threats and persecution.

**ADRIANA** has been a Catholic Migration Services' client since 2012, when we helped her obtain status under DACA. Later, Catholic Migration Services helped her apply for permission to travel to her home country of Ecuador and re-enter the U.S. When Adriana returned to the U.S. and later married a U.S. citizen, she became eligible to become a lawful permanent resident herself. She would not have been eligible if she had not done things "the right way" with the assistance of Catholic Migration Services. Adriana received her conditional Lawful Permanent Resident status, and is on her way to citizenship!

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

# TENANT REPRESENTATION AND ADVOCACY

## Overview of Our Legal Work

Our Tenant Advocacy Program advises and represents hundreds of tenants each year on a wide range of housing-related matters. Our work helps to preserve the limited supply of decent, affordable housing in Queens. We do so by preventing evictions, ensuring tenants are not overcharged, forcing landlords to provide repairs and essential services, and helping seniors and the disabled obtain exemptions from rent increases. We also organize tenants so that they can use their collective power to win concessions from landlords and improve housing policies on a local and state level.

Tenant Organizer Amy Collado, Second from Left, Testifying at the City Council with Tenants



## 2019 ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

### PREVENTING EVICTIONS

**We stopped 23 evictions**, enabling families to stay in their homes and avoid homelessness. We delayed another 5 evictions, allowing families time to find other living arrangements.

### HOUSING CLINICS

Free legal advice at our **bi-weekly clinics** to more than **300 tenants** affecting **900 household members**.

### STANDING UP TO SLUMLORDS

We helped **12 households** win **critical repairs** of sub-standard and hazardous housing conditions.

### RENT REDUCTIONS AND OVERCHARGE RECOVERIES

We won more than **\$80,000 in rent reductions and overcharge refunds**.

### SUCCESSFUL ADVOCACY WINS

#### LANDMARK LEGISLATION

Working with a group of dedicated tenant leaders, we organized Queens tenants and successfully advocated with other organizations for the passage of the **Housing Stability and Tenant Protection Act of 2019**, landmark legislation that expanded the rights of both rent regulated and nonregulated tenants throughout New York State.



## REPRESENTING IMMIGRANT WORKERS

### Overview of Our Work

Using a combination of legal and legislative advocacy, our Immigrant Workers' Rights Program team helps low wage and immigrant workers to assert their rights, and achieve dignity in the workplace. We capped 2019 as our strongest year yet!

### Our 2019 Accomplishments Include:

Our team provided legal advice and representation to over 200 individuals, educated 200 more about their workplace rights, and won judgments and settlements totaling more than one million dollars. We strengthened our collaborations with workers center and community based organizations, including New Immigrant Community Empowerment (NICE), National Mobilization Against Sweatshops (NMASS), and Chinese Staff and Workers' Association (CSWA) by holding regular clinics and providing critical technical assistance on legislative campaigns to ensure that workers can recover their hard earned pay.

## REAL STORIES

### *Making a Difference*

Our attorneys recovered \$45,000.00 in unpaid wages for **CARLOS**, a dishwasher at a city restaurant. After receiving his hard earned wages, Carlos felt empowered to leave his workplace and invest in a small business. Carlos said, "Like many immigrants, I suffered a lot at my job. I came forward and my lawyer fought for me. Now I know that I have rights and that employers have to pay when they break the law."

**ZHONG**, a 70 year old Chinese immigrant worked as a building superintendent for over 25 years. After he was unlawfully terminated from his job, attorneys at Catholic Migration Services helped him obtain a settlement of over \$100,000.00 that will go towards a well-deserved retirement.

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

Below: Local Residents Come Together at one of our Monthly Community Meetings in Woodside, Queens





## 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.



### Staff Profile:

## JEANNE SANON

Jeanne Sanon, a Senior Immigration Counselor and U.S. Department of Justice Accredited Representative with Catholic Migration Services,

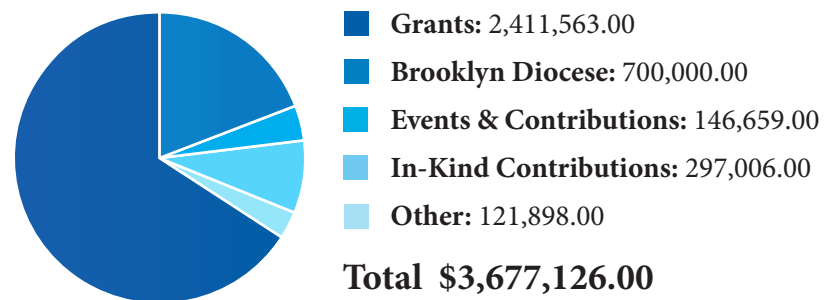
has advocated for immigrants since childhood. Jeanne immigrated to the United States from Haiti with her parents during a time when Haitian immigrants dealt with adversity while living in the U.S. Throughout the years she recalls watching Haitian politics and learning about the discrimination and stereotypes faced by Haitians. “As I grew up, I remember attending equal rights demonstrations with my father. Seeing what Haitians endured then, gave me a sense of empathy. As I matured I was determined to advocate for the immigrant community, especially Haitian immigrants.”

Since joining Catholic Migration Services Jeanne has assisted clients by preparing applications for Adjustment of Status, Naturalization, Green Card, VAWA, DACA and R1 Visa extensions. Many of these clients stay in touch with Jeanne and she has watched how they evolve in the U.S. to successfully complete their education, start a business and be reunited with their families. She has volunteered her time to adult literacy and Citizenship training for Haitian adults and has received several awards from the City of New York for her service. Jeanne doesn't see her clients as just immigrants but as human beings who are resilient people overcoming obstacles and trauma. This motivates her to evolve professionally to continue to serve her fellow neighbor under the Ubuntu belief that states there is a universal bond of sharing that connects all humanity.

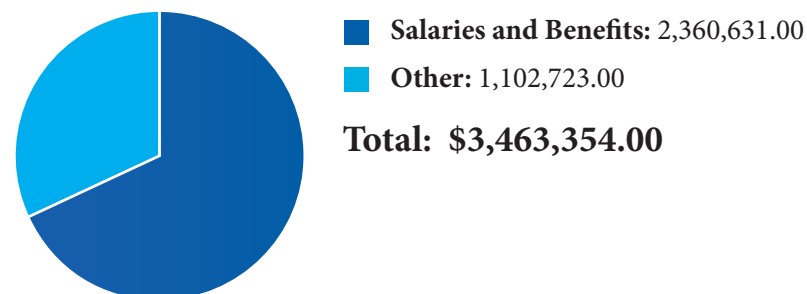


## FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

### Income:



### Operating Expenses:



Below: Public Service Award Honorees from the Law Firm of Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP with CMS Naturalization Team Staff

## OUR TEAM

**Sr. Joan Anzalone**, Immigration Counselor  
**Magdalena Barbosa**, Managing Attorney, Workers' Rights  
**Xiomara Bustamante**, Immigration Counselor  
**Marisol Canales**, Supervising Immigration Counselor  
**Amy Collado**, Tenant Organizer  
**David Colodny**, Director of Legal Services and Senior Vice President  
**Sandra Cordoba**, Law Graduate  
**Alice Davis**, Senior Staff Attorney  
**Stephani Espinal**, Tenant Organizer  
**Erin Fitzgerald**, Operations Coordinator  
**Maria Garcia**, Volunteer, Jesuit Volunteer Corps  
**Alexandra Gonçalves-Peña**, Managing Attorney, Immigration  
**Michael Holland**, Volunteer, Ignatian Volunteer Corps  
**Christopher Holtz**, Supervising Attorney  
**Very Reverend Patrick J. Keating**, Chief Executive Officer  
**Ellen LaCarrubba**, Executive Secretary  
**Ahren Lahvis**, Tenant Advocacy and Workers' Rights Paralegal  
**Andrew Lehrer**, Managing Attorney, Tenant Advocacy  
**José León**, Supervising Attorney  
**Maria Londano**, Custodian  
**Lorena Lopez**, Tenant Organizer  
**Samantha Lyons**, Staff Attorney  
**Mariam Magar**, Senior Staff Attorney  
**José Giovanni Miranda**, Staff Attorney, Immigrant Justice Corps Fellow  
**Emi Montenegro**, Volunteer, Jesuit Volunteer Corps  
**Chloe Moore**, Naturalization Coordinator  
**Nanette Morales**, Receptionist  
**Lynn Neugebauer**, Supervising Attorney  
**Sarah Newcome**, Volunteer, Mercy Volunteer Corps  
**Aida Ocasio**, Receptionist  
**Carlos Ortiz**, Tenant Organizer  
**Nancy Pardo**, Executive Assistant  
**Thomas Power**, Staff Attorney  
**Ellen Ryan**, Development Officer  
**Rebecca Rybaltowski**, Outreach Coordinator  
**Andrea B. Sánchez**, Volunteer, Mercy Volunteer Corps  
**Kylee Schunn**, Volunteer, Mennonite Voluntary Service  
**Jeanne Sanon**, Senior Immigration Counselor  
**Aviva Schaffer**, Staff Attorney  
**Michael Shannon**, Senior Staff Attorney  
**Nicole Steward**, Senior Staff Attorney  
**Michelle Vázquez**, Administrative Assistant  
**Natasha B. Venegas Abarca**, External Relations Associate  
**Joseph Weiman**, Immigration Paralegal  
**Caitlin Wright**, Immigration Counselor

List Current as of December 2019





A woman with short grey hair, wearing a blue suit jacket over a white lace top and a white scarf, is waving her right hand. She is holding a large bag with the American flag pattern. The background is a hallway with a door and a wall.

## BROOKLYN OFFICE

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## QUEENS OFFICE

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CATHOLICMIGRATION.ORG

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Photo: A New U.S. Citizen at Her Swearing in Ceremony!