

Safety & Fairness for Everyone (SAFE) Initiative: Long Beach

In 2019, Long Beach was selected to join the Vera Institute of Justice’s Safety and Fairness for Everyone (SAFE) Initiative—a unique collaboration among governments, immigration legal service providers, and advocates working together to build a movement for universal representation—a public defender system for all immigrants facing deportation.



Why representation matters

Because immigrants facing deportation do not have the guarantee of an attorney to represent them, 70 percent of detained immigrants face deportation alone.¹ Deportation can result in physical exile from home, separation from family, loss of employment, and even violence or death in a country of origin. The stakes for people in immigration detention are even higher, where people face inhumane conditions; increased vulnerability to contracting serious illness, including COVID-19; and additional barriers to accessing counsel. Immigrants who are represented are 3.5 times more likely to be released from detention on bond and up to ten times more likely to establish a right to remain in the United States.² In addition to helping secure release of people from detention, universal representation advances shared values of due process and justice, builds community trust, keeps families together, and makes communities stronger.

SAFE Program Description: Long Beach, California

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|---------------------------------------|---|
| Legal Service Providers: | Immigrant Defenders Law Center |
| Populations Served: | Residents of Long Beach or those employed in Long Beach; those who were residents of, or were employed in, Long Beach immediately prior to detention by ICE |
| Detention Centers Served: | Adelanto Detention Facility (Adelanto, CA) |
| Method of Identifying Clients: | Legal Orientation Program at Adelanto Detention Center; Community referrals |

Sources

1. Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse (TRAC):
“Details on Deportation Proceedings in Immigration Court,” accessed September 19, 2019, <https://trac.syr.edu/phptools/immigration/nta/>
2. Ingrid V. Eagly and Steven Shafer, “A National Study of Access to Counsel in Immigration Court,” *University of Pennsylvania Law Review*, 164, no. 1 (2015), 1-91, <https://perma.cc/82F5-WE2D>.

Making an Impact in Long Beach



24
Clients represented in Long Beach, CA



16
Children with a parent represented in Long Beach



18
Average years living in the United States

*Data as of 10/31/2020

Referrals

Sources of referrals (non-exhaustive list):

- Long Beach Immigrant Rights Coalition (LBIRC)
- Legal Orientation Program at Adelanto Detention Facility
- Los Angeles Justice Fund legal service providers
- Calls to Immigrant Defenders Law Center’s central phone line and walk-ins by clients or family members of clients
- Referrals from current clients, including detained individuals who may know another individual with Long Beach ties that could benefit from program
- Various stakeholders within Long Beach including the City of Long Beach and Long Beach Immigrant Rights Coalition or Long Beach Community Defense Network

| | Number of Cases |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| Accepted Cases | 25 (61%) |
| From LBIRC | 20 |
| From Other | 5 |
| Pending Cases | 0 (0%) |
| From LBIRC | 0 |
| From Other | 0 |
| Declined Cases | 16 (39%) |
| From LBIRC | 16 |
| From Other | 0 |
| Total | 41 (100%) |

Client Story

Alfonso* is a legal permanent resident who grew up in the City of Long Beach. After being convicted of joyriding, the federal government tried to deport Alfonso. A conviction for joyriding does not automatically make someone deportable; however, a sentence of more than one year does. Alfonso’s criminal defense lawyer did not tell him that ICE could deport him if he accepted a plea bargain that had a sentence of over a year—as criminal defense lawyers are required to do under the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in *Padilla v. Kentucky*. Alfonso’s attorneys at ImmDef, who were provided by the Long Beach Justice Fund, were able to win his case after lengthy negotiations with the Orange County District Attorney’s office and advocacy before the criminal court to lower Alfonso’s sentence. After the reduction in sentence, Alfonso no longer qualified for deportation. An immigration judge terminated his case and Alfonso was released from Adelanto Detention Center, where there was an ongoing COVID-19 outbreak. Alfonso currently lives in Long Beach with his family, including his U.S. citizen children. Alfonso is now back in school and is applying for U.S. citizenship.

*The name of the individual featured here has been changed to a pseudonym to protect their identity.