

Civil Legal Aid for Immigrants and Refugees



Line Item 0321-1600

Civil legal aid helps immigrants with low incomes protect their rights, safety, financial stability, and legal residency status.

Immigration and naturalization cases have increased by 29% since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic (according to data from FY20-FY22).

Legal aid helps immigrants and refugees with:

- Ensuring fair treatment and due process
- Filing for DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) and TPS (Temporary Protected Status)
- Securing the right to live and work in the U.S. legally
- Understanding their rights and responsibilities through workshops
- Removing barriers to education
- Protecting access to safety net programs

People and families with incomes at or below 125% of the federal poverty level (\$37,500 per year for a family of four; \$18,225 for an individual) qualify for civil legal aid.

\$126 million

in estimated economic benefits were provided by civil legal aid to the Commonwealth and its residents last year, including:

\$105,259,736

in estimated benefits won for clients

\$21,647,960

in reimbursements and savings obtained for the Commonwealth

2,677

immigration cases were closed in FY22



Aruny* is a Cambodian woman who married a U.S. citizen. Soon after their wedding day, Aruny's husband became financially, emotionally, and physically abusive. She wanted a divorce, but felt scared because she had very little money of her own and was not proficient in English.

Aruny connected with the Cambodian Mutual Assistance Corporation, which provided support and referred her to **Northeast Legal Aid**. An immigration law attorney helped Aruny secure a green card and start a new, independent life. A family law attorney also helped Aruny with her domestic violence case. The attorneys both worked with a Khmer-speaking interpreter to communicate with Aruny so she was comfortable and well-informed about her case.

*Name changed for privacy