

Communication from Public

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January 25, 2021

Los Angeles City Council
200 North Spring Street, Suite 470
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: Council File 17-0046-S2 Los Angeles Justice Fund

Dear Los Angeles City Council.

On behalf of the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA), I am writing to express our **full support** for the Los Angeles Justice Fund and to formally request this program become permanent.

Founded in 1986 CHIRLA is a California leader, with national impact, made up of diverse immigrant families and individuals who act as agents of social change to achieve a world with freedom of mobility, full human rights, and true participatory democracy, fully inclusive of refugees and immigrants. CHIRLA prides itself in its work to serve the immigrant community through civic engagement, community education, organizing, the provision of legal immigration services, and advocacy at the forefronts of local, state, and federal government.

With nearly 3.5 million immigrants living in Los Angeles and growing numbers of COVID 19 positive cases in California detention centers, including the Adelanto Detention Center where most LA residents are transferred to, it is imperative that the Los Angeles City Council approved funding today and make LAJF a permanent program. Since 2017, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has continued removal operations in Los Angeles. Unlike criminal proceedings, individuals in the immigration system are not provided court-appointed counsel to assist and represent them in their case. In Los Angeles

HEADQUARTERS

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1225 8th Street, Suite 240
Sacramento, CA 95814

NATIONAL OFFICE

740 15th Street NW, Suite 331
Washington, DC 20005

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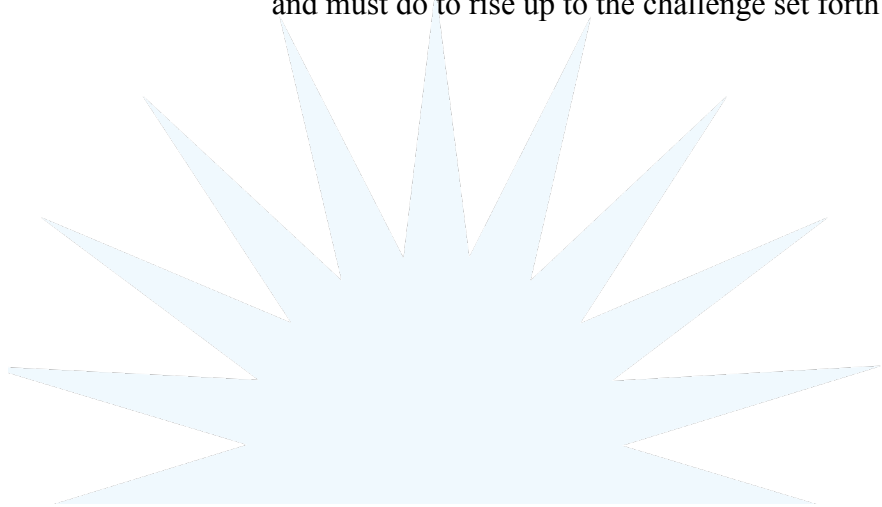


County approximately 68% of detained individuals and 26% of non-detained individuals lacked legal counsel. Evidently detained and released immigrants in Los Angeles who had legal counsel were five times more likely to win their case than those without legal representation. Among non-detained immigrants who had access to legal representation were four times more likely to win their case than those who were unrepresented.

It is important to note that the LAJF has been critical in responding and spearheading efforts to mitigate the draconian and inhumane policies of the US Immigration system. LAJF attorneys and advocates have provided and can continue to provide support and respite, as they are on the ground, in detention centers, and in immigration courts tracking cases, seeing the changing policies, and developing real-time solutions that can be best-practice models for others facing similar circumstances. **Both the CAO and the independent evaluation team, VERA, report that not only has LAJF met expectations, but also exceeded them AND that there still remains a critical need for this program to protect immigrant Angelenos. We need the LAJF to become a permanent program to ensure a just recovery for all Angelenos and to counter the cruel detention and deportation machine.**

Today, in the middle of a pandemic, LAJF attorneys continue doing the work. Despite our call to the federal government to free all individuals from detention that has not been the case. In complete opposite, detention centers like Adelanto are still considering expanding their number of beds. As a result, we write to respectfully urge your support for the funding allocated for the LAJF to ensure the protection of non-citizen Angelenos caught in the deportation machine. **We cannot stand by and watch our neighbors and families torn apart when we know that we have the ability to do something to protect them.**

The Los Angeles Justice Fund is an example of what the City of Los Angeles can and must do to rise up to the challenge set forth by our nation in this time of





CHIRLA

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Immigrant Rights



reckoning. The work for LA's immigrant community is unfinished. With your leadership and commitment to the LAJF, Los Angeles can continue to be a leader in fighting back against xenophobia and racism, and in furthering racial justice. We have a new president, but ICE and our dysfunctional immigration system are still here. Though a pause on deportations was enacted this will **ONLY** cover some people for 100 days. Deportations will continue to happen under the US immigration system founded on the basis of white supremacy. We must recognize that while some relief for our immigrant communities could be on the horizon, many of our community members are already facing deportation and need representation now. It will take a long time to unravel and reverse the damage created by a cruel enforcement regime that has been built up over decades. As long as we still have an immigration system based on deportation and detention -- with ICE continuing to terrorize our communities -- many more Angelenos will continue to face separation from their loved ones and community.

Thank you for your support. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions.

Respectfully,

Mariana Magana
CHIRLA Policy Advocate

