IN HOUSTON: MOBILIZING IN DEFENSE OF THE IMMIGRANT COMMUNITY
OUR FRAMEWORK

The **vision** of the Collaborative is that no Houston immigrant goes without legal assistance while seeking legal status and navigating the complexities of the U.S. immigration system.

The **mission** of the Collaborative is to create a coordinated network of effective and efficient services to assist low-income immigrants access the information and legal representation that allows them to make choices in their own best interest.
OUR PLAN

Founded in 2013, the Collaborative works to implement our “Community Plan,” completed in October 2014 and revised in 2016. Areas of focus:

- Organizational Development
- Legal services capacity
- Access to services
- Communications

Read community plan @ www.houstonimmigration.org/about-us/
COMMITMENT TO QUALITY SERVICES

Collaborative members…

• provide high-quality services
• provide free and low-cost services
• work in clients’ best interests
• are successful at advocating for clients
• are trustworthy
• do not commit fraud or unauthorized practice of law
• have a demonstrated commitment to collaboration
• are committed to best-practices
ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Strategic Intention:
A strong and growing network of service providers and funders collectively identifies gaps in services, implements solutions, holds each other accountable for the quality of services provided, and ensures that the Collaborative provides benefits to its members.

Initiatives
• Became an official 509a3 Supporting Organization under the Greater Houston Community Foundation in 2016.
• Brought on a Legal Director in 2016 to provide mentorship and support to legal services non-profits.
• Developing new local funders. Have distributed over $1.2M in funding (direct and aligned) since 2014.
• Growing the Collaborative’s membership.
LEGAL SERVICES CAPACITY

Strategic Intention:
Increase the quality and quantity of high-quality, low-cost immigration legal service providers in the greater Houston region equipped to serve Houston’s low-income immigrant population.

Initiatives
• Connecting Collaborative stakeholders to training opportunities offered by technical assistance providers and local experts.
• In 2016, awarded $426,000 in grant funding to 6 Collaborative projects that support services for DACA 2012, DAPA outreach and fraud prevention, and other legal services.
LEGAL SERVICES CAPACITY

Initiatives Cont.

• Prepared **contingency plan** for multi-agency workshops/screenings for DAPA/DACA+

• Monthly **Pro Se Asylum Workshops** coordinated with volunteer attorneys and non-profits (Tahirih Justice Center & Human Rights First) provide limited legal assistance to asylum-seeking adults with children who do not have attorneys.
LEGAL SERVICES CAPACITY

Initiatives Cont.

• Host regular *trainings* for attorneys and BIA accredited reps on topics like: client interviews, self-care for attorneys, asylum strategy, screening clients for relief, etc.

• Provided support & training to 6 new organizations to become BIA (DOJ) *recognized*, able to legally offer limited immigration legal services.
ACCESS TO SERVICES

Strategic Intention:

Improve and streamline immigrants’ ability to access existing immigration legal services and ancillary social services to which low-income immigrants lack adequate access.

Initiatives

- Taskforce working on a coordinated screening and referral tool for immigrants seeking legal services in Houston.
- Partnering with Harris County Attorney’s Office & Hispanic Issues Section of State Bar of Texas to combat notario fraud.
- Pilot project with local mental health provider to provide free forensic health evaluations and counseling to clients of immigration legal services providers.
Strategic Intention: Be a source of timely and accurate information for members, stakeholders, and potential clients of immigration service providers.

Initiatives

• PSA runs regularly on ABC13 and Fox.
• Collaborative press statements
• Collaborative press conferences
• Host and participate in regular panels & KYR presentations about immigration policy and law.
• HILSC Twitter: @HTXimmigration
• HILSC website: www.houstonimmigration.org
PIVOTS IN 2017

• 2016/2017: Co-facilitated Welcoming Houston Initiative, a city-wide strategic planning project about how to make Houston more welcoming to immigrants and refugees.

• Texas Immigrant Rights Hotline: 888-507-2970. Hotline gives KYR, referrals to organizations, and updates on policy.

• Rapid Response: Family Preparedness Workshops, coordination of pro bono attorneys (airport response, workshops, CLE’s, etc), deportation defense training

• Creating resources for legal services providers and the community: http://www.houstonimmigration.org/resources/

• Ongoing discussions: expanding legal capacity to serve detained adults & inform impact litigation
COLLABORATIVE ORGS SPEAKING TODAY

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