

# We are Undeterred

*and*

**We Stand with**

**Immigrants**

**ANNUAL REPORT 2018**

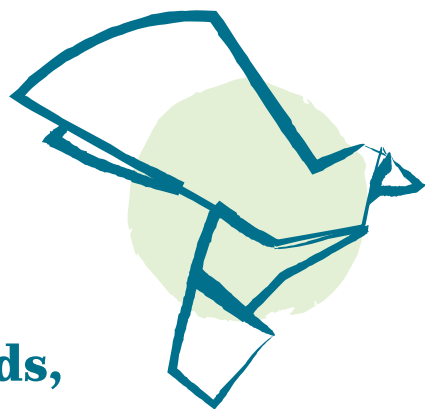


**PIRC**

Pennsylvania Immigration  
Resource Center

Educating, advocating, ensuring access to justice.





## Dear Friends,

In 2018, PIRC served a historic number of **vulnerable immigrants** – survivors of domestic violence/sexual assault, asylum-seekers requesting protection from persecution, and children separated from parents facing possible deportation. Immigration policies have had a dramatic impact on immigrants, with children, parents and communities suffering. Despite the obstacles and trauma immigrants experience, we are in awe of the enormous courage and resiliency they display.

As the need for PIRC’s services grew, we responded with our own growth, increasing staff and programs to meet the need. PIRC has expanded services to immigrant survivors in south central and communities in Pennsylvania; maintained legal education and assistance services to more than 2,500 immigrants in detention and the community; and launched a Citizenship Project, because all noncitizens are now more vulnerable to detention and removal.

**We could not provide these services without you.** At PIRC, we have felt the strong support of community allies and we are grateful for your continued support – through your words of encouragement, hours of volunteerism, and financial support.

**We remain undeterred in our commitment to immigrants and immigrant families,** showing those most vulnerable that they are not alone.

**Together we can work to create futures of empowerment and hope.**

  
**Andrew Mahon**  
Board President

  
**Mary Studzinski**  
Executive Director

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## Programs and Services

The current administration has subjected the immigration court to quotas and limited their judicial discretion, restricted access for migrants to request asylum, and instituted a broad expansion of the detention and deportation system in the US. We remain undeterred in our commitment to immigrants in civil detention in the York County Prison and the family detention center in Berks County, to immigrant survivors of domestic and sexual violence and human trafficking, and to immigrant families now more vulnerable.

### DETENTION PROGRAMS

- **Education in detention:** We strive to reach each immigrant in detention by providing legal education, legal assistance, and when possible, direct legal representation. In 2018, our Legal Orientation Program (LOP) provided services to more than 2,150 detained immigrants
- **Direct representation:** We identify the most vulnerable immigrants in detention for pro bono representation and refer cases to our legal staff or to pro bono attorneys and law schools. In 2018, we provided direct representation to 40 detained immigrants, pro se assistance to 52 detained immigrants, and assisted an additional 18 detained immigrants in partnership with pro bono attorneys and law students.

Through the National Qualified Representative Program (NQRP), PIRC is the designated legal services provider in removal proceedings for detained immigrants deemed not competent to represent themselves before the York Immigration Court.

- **The Community Defense Project** offers resources and education for immigrants in the community at risk of detention or deportation through free legal clinics and helps connect community members with general legal information and their loved ones in detention.

### COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

In 2018, the **Immigrant Survivors Project (ISP)** continued to receive a high level of requests for services. ISP provided direct representation to 262 immigrant survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking. Of these survivors, an additional 169 U.S. citizen children in these households benefited from the stabilizing legal services provided.

In November, we launched the **Immigrant Survivors Advocate Network (ISAN)** which formed an alliance of domestic violence and sexual assault victim services agencies across the Commonwealth. The network’s mission is to increase the safety and autonomy of immigrant survivors and their families by ensuring: culturally and linguistically appropriate victim services, and high-quality immigration legal assistance, throughout the state.



### Detention Story

PIRC met Miguel, a young man from Mexico, after being notified that he was suffering from paranoid delusions and was not competent to represent himself in removal proceedings. He continued to deteriorate during his immigration detention, as he was housed in segregation due to his fear of other detainees. Miguel’s mental health placed him at high risk for being harmed if he was forced to return to Mexico because of forced institutionalization and inadequate care for the mentally ill. A PIRC staff attorney represented him and prepared a strong case for humanitarian asylum. Miguel was awarded asylum and released from detention. As part of his post-release plan, PIRC worked with him to find temporary housing and additional support in the community.



# Rachel's Story

Rachel\* and Ricky\*, both born in Chile, met at school. They reunited 10 years later, were married, and had a daughter, Cami\*. Ricky moved to the U.S., searching for new economic opportunities. Rachel and Cami left everything behind and moved to the U.S. five months later to be reunited as family.



She is learning English, gaining back her confidence and self-esteem, and is planning to open her own restaurant...

Rachel was studying Food Quality Management at the university in Chile, but she put her family first so they could be together and have a better quality of life in the U.S.

As time went by, Rachel noticed changes in Ricky's attitude. Ricky was irritated and upset all the time, stealing money from work, and using cocaine. Rachel decided to end their relationship, but they continued living together because she had no other place to go and didn't speak English. Ricky could not accept the end of their relationship and became extremely controlling, harassing Rachel, following her everywhere and checking all her personal accounts and purse. Ricky verbally abused Rachel, telling her she was worth nothing and that she was a bad

mother. A few months later, Ricky sexually assaulted Rachel on three occasions. He threatened to have Rachel deported and to take their daughter away from her.

Eventually, Rachel managed to get out of this abusive situation, moved to a friend's house, and filed a petition for a protective order in Lancaster County. A final protective order was issued in Rachel's favor, along with Cami's custody, valid for three years. Rachel reported the sexual assaults to the police and right afterwards, Ricky left the country for Chile.

Rachel started receiving therapy from a sexual assault counselor due to her trauma and victimization. She had lost her confidence,

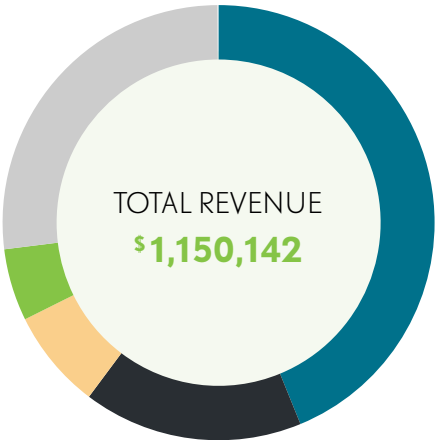
blamed herself for everything that happened, lost the ability to trust others, and was left with low self-esteem. PIRC met with Rachel and learned of her story and hopes for a safe future. PIRC submitted the U Visa application packet to USCIS based on Rachel's eligibility for U nonimmigrant status and included Cami as a derivative.

Rachel is now divorced from Ricky and has full custody of Cami. She is learning English, gaining back her confidence and self-esteem, and is planning to open her own restaurant to pursue her passion for the food industry. She and her daughter are now waiting for their work authorization and visa approvals, and Rachel is continuing to build a new life for herself and her family, free from abuse.

## 2018 AT A GLANCE

### Revenue

- Government \$503,904
- PA IOLTA \$189,000
- Foundations \$85,512
- Contributions \$61,708
- In-Kind \$309,054
- Other \$964



### Expenses

- Program Services \$1,079,782
- Development \$58,719
- Administration \$32,409



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# thank you

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**“Every time we turn our heads the other way when we see the law flouted, when we tolerate what we know to be wrong, when we close our eyes and ears to the corrupt because we are too busy or too frightened, when we fail to speak up and speak out, we strike a blow against freedom and decency and justice.”**

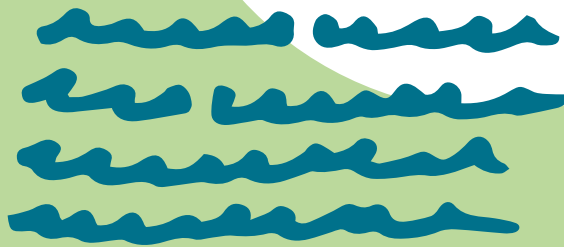
**Robert Kennedy**

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**“You have to  
understand, that no  
one puts their children  
in a boat unless the  
water is safer than  
the land.”**

**Warsan Shire**



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