



PIRC

Pennsylvania Immigration
Resource Center

Educating, advocating, ensuring access to justice.

2016 ANNUAL REPORT

COMMITTED TO THE STRUGGLE

LETTER FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

In 2016, we celebrated PIRC's 20th anniversary, reflecting on our founding and our journey over the past 20 years. Beginning with a group of passionate advocates determined to protect asylum-seekers, PIRC has been sustained by a strong commitment to take up that struggle each day. This commitment is made by our staff, volunteers, donors, and the tenacious and brave immigrants we have been privileged to serve. It is an alliance of will, a journey we walk together.

In 2017, we face new challenges. PIRC's mission is more important than ever. We will continue to stand with immigrants — those who struggle in the face of adversity, such as asylum-seekers like Mobo (page 3) as he seeks freedom and refuge, and survivors of violence like Azmera (page 5), showing us again how asking for help is the first step in a journey of courage. We hope you will join us in this commitment.

Kind regards,



Andrew Mahon
Board President

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Educating, advocating, ensuring access to justice.

A photograph of a man with short dark hair and a young girl with dark hair tied in a bun, hugging each other outdoors. The man is wearing a brown sweater and the girl is wearing a white long-sleeved shirt. The background is a soft-focus green and yellow bokeh.

WHO WE ARE

PIRC VALUES

WE BELIEVE:

- ♦ EVERY PERSON DESERVES to be treated with respect and dignity
- ♦ IN FAIR AND CONSISTENT ACCESS FOR ALL to America's system of justice
- ♦ EVERY PERSON'S CONTRIBUTION COUNTS in creating a shared prosperity in our community
- ♦ IN SUPPORTING FAMILY UNITY, as strong families make for strong communities
- ♦ IN PROVIDING LEGAL PROTECTIONS to vulnerable immigrants that create safety for themselves and their families
- ♦ IN HELPING IMMIGRANTS OVERCOME BARRIERS to services such as physical isolation, language, and culture

MISSION STATEMENT

The Pennsylvania Immigration Resource Center (PIRC), a nonprofit organization founded on the belief of equal access to justice, works to protect immigrants' rights to freedom and opportunity in the United States and saves the lives of the most vulnerable immigrants and their families. PIRC provides free, effective legal representation, legal services, legal counsel, education, and advocacy to help immigrants obtain or protect their legal status.



EMPOWERING IMMIGRANTS IN DETENTION WITH EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY

Mobo's Journey to Hope

Mobo never imagined that he'd have to flee his home and risk his life getting to America, only to be put in prison when he got here.

Mobo grew up in Nigeria, where he knew he had to hide the fact that he was gay. Upon hearing about his sexual orientation, his father disowned him. The elders of his village found him "guilty" of being gay and banned him from the village. He was beaten in public by his brothers, and narrowly escaped getting killed by various individuals who heard about his sexual orientation. Mobo was fearful of going to the police because he knew some individuals who had been beaten and killed by police for the very same reason.

Fearing for his life, he fled the country and made the long journey to the United States, getting robbed along the way. He requested asylum at the southern border, but because he had no visa to enter, he was sent to York County Prison.

It was there he met with a PIRC attorney who listened to his story and took on his case. Together, they stood in front of the immigration judge, recounting the atrocities that Mobo had suffered and the constant threats on his life he was still receiving. With the help of our attorney, Mobo was granted asylum and freed from detention. He now has lawful status and authorization to work. Most importantly, he is finally free to live in safety.

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"Commitment is what transforms a promise into reality."

— Abraham Lincoln

DETAINED PROGRAMS

For immigrants in civil detention in the York County Prison and the family detention center in Berks County, PIRC provides life-saving education, advocacy, and legal services.

EDUCATION

Legal orientation classes educate immigrants in detention about what to expect in immigration court, their rights, and potential legal options. This critical education empowers immigrants navigating a complicated immigration legal system on their own.

PRO SE ASSISTANCE

Many of the immigrants detained in York County Prison or at the family detention center in Berks County are asylum-seekers who fear returning to their home country and are faced with representing themselves in court, pro se. As possible, PIRC provides support services including document translation, legal and country conditions research, hearing prep, and support with applications, briefs, and the appellate process.

DIRECT REPRESENTATION

PIRC attorneys represent and advocate for immigrants, including those who have mental health challenges, who are illiterate, and who have fled trauma, torture, and persecution in their home country.

ADVOCACY

Detained immigrants face language barriers, isolation, and limited understanding of their rights and U.S. laws. PIRC advocates for equitable treatment with the courts, prison facilities, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

BY THE
NUMBERS:

2,000+ INDIVIDUALS

— in detention —

**BENEFITTED FROM
LEGAL EDUCATION**

84% OF IMMIGRANTS

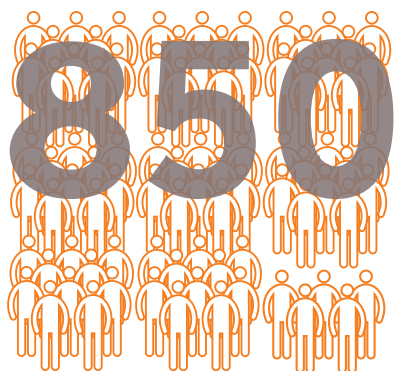
— appear in court —

WITHOUT AN ATTORNEY

**82 IMMIGRANTS
ADVOCATED FOR**

through pro bono
representation or
pro se assistance

Imagine having suffered trauma, narrowly escaping harm and battling through a grueling journey, only to end up in prison, faced with the task of representing yourself in court before an immigration judge when you don't know the law, the culture, or the language. When you have limited access to the outside world, little to no money. When you have one chance — sometimes only a few minutes — to tell your story to an immigration judge who will decide your fate. PIRC's pro se assistance provides research support, application assistance, translation of documents, and connections to other resources critical to their defense.



**IMMIGRANTS
IN DETENTION
IN SOUTH CENTRAL PA
ON AVERAGE EACH DAY**

4 
**PIRC ATTORNEYS
TO MEET THIS NEED**

IMMIGRANTS WITH LEGAL REPRESENTATION ARE

10.5x  **MORE LIKELY TO
SEEK RELIEF
SUCH AS ASYLUM**

**AND 6X MORE LIKELY
TO SUCCEED**





PROVIDING IMMIGRANTS IN OUR COMMUNITY WITH HOPE

Azmera and Mia and Their Journey to Safety

Azmera was studying at a university in West Africa when she met a naturalized U.S. citizen from her country. After a brief courtship, she traveled to the United States on a fiancé visa.

Although her fiancé was kind and respectful during their courtship, he assaulted and abused her from the first day she arrived in the United States. He kept her locked in the house with no phone and forced her to work all day.

She became pregnant and during one of her prenatal visits was able to talk about the violence she was

experiencing. A PIRC attorney met with Azmera and explained that American laws would allow her to file for immigration status — that there was a way to safety that would allow her to remain in the United States with her daughter.

PIRC connected Azmera to support and shelter and filed for her immigration status. Azmera was approved for a work card and now lives in her own home where she and her daughter, Mia, can live without violence. She is hoping to someday pursue her dream of becoming a nurse.

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COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

In the community, we provide legal protections to immigrant survivors, legal clinics for low-income residents seeking immigration legal advice, and advocacy.

IMMIGRANT SURVIVORS PROJECT

PIRC meets with courageous immigrant survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence, and human trafficking to educate them about the laws that protect them. As in Azmera's case, their lack of immigration status can become a way for abusers to threaten to have them deported, separating them from their children here in the U.S. PIRC's free legal services provide the protection of American laws and help survivors to obtain work authorization and lawful status. The Immigrant Survivors Project also partners with domestic violence and sexual assault agencies in nine counties in South Central Pennsylvania to ensure that immigrant victims receive the critical array of restorative victim services available.

LEGAL CLINICS

With partners in the community, PIRC provides free immigration legal clinics to immigrants seeking legal advice and assistance with becoming U.S. citizens.

ADVOCACY

PIRC advocates for language access by providing education and training for community service providers, sharing tools that can bridge language and cultural gaps. As a member of community task forces, PIRC also advocates for access to these services for immigrants in the community.

SERVED BY FREE LEGAL ASSISTANCE

191 IMMIGRANT SURVIVORS

59 FAMILY MEMBERS 

183 CITIZEN CHILDREN

100% of domestic violence victims who applied **FOR WORK CARDS WERE APPROVED**



COUNTIES SERVED



Based on the results of the York County Bar Foundation's economic impact study, **every dollar invested in PIRC results in an estimated nine fold economic benefit to the community.**



TOGETHER, WE CREATE IMPACT

“Everybody can be great, because anybody can serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love.”
— Martin Luther King, Jr.



We could not serve vulnerable immigrants without the support of dedicated volunteers. Thank you for the time and talent you give to create significant impact for immigrants seeking the protection of asylum... for immigrant survivors seeking the safety and stability of a work card or a green card... for the many immigrants who know they are not walking alone in their journey. **Your service to vulnerable immigrants is a legacy of hope.**

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

GIVING TIME, GIVING HOPE DR. ANNE MIDDAUGH

Psychologist Anne Middaugh has demonstrated her commitment through several years of incredible volunteer service, work that is often complex, meticulous, and heart wrenching. Despite this, Dr. Middaugh has time and again aided immigrants who need her support.

Her work with Margarita is but one of the many examples in which she has made lasting impact on immigrant lives.

PIRC first met Margarita in 2016. Margarita had fled gang persecution in Mexico and was sexually assaulted by gang members who continued to stalk her after she attempted to escape. The PIRC attorney representing Margarita asked Dr. Middaugh to meet with Margarita and provide a

psychological evaluation that could be entered into evidence in Margarita's asylum case. Dr. Middaugh met with Margarita, earned her trust, and was able to document horrific circumstances and the impact they had on Margarita's life.

Her forensic report shed light on the emotional scars that Margarita suffered and how this impacted her ability to tell her story. Dr. Middaugh not only documented the PTSD Margarita suffered but also the cultural issues of shame that had caused Margarita to withhold the sexual assault in prior accounts of her experiences.

With the support of Dr. Middaugh's report, Margarita was granted asylum and is finally safe in the United States.

LIGHT OF LIBERTY AWARD RECIPIENTS:

Pro Bono Attorney of the Year

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Law Firm of the Year

Asylum and Human Rights Clinic,
University of Connecticut
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From translating a document to advocating before an immigration judge, volunteers demonstrate the impact one person can make. Your commitment to serving immigrants is inspiring!

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John Stauffer
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Villanova University
Arno Vosk
John Woldebruk Negussie
Lindsay Zimlik

Your commitment
makes a difference

\$230,000

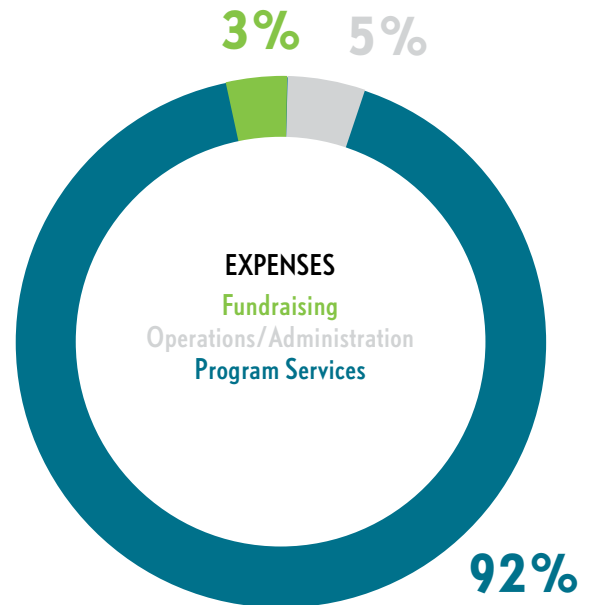
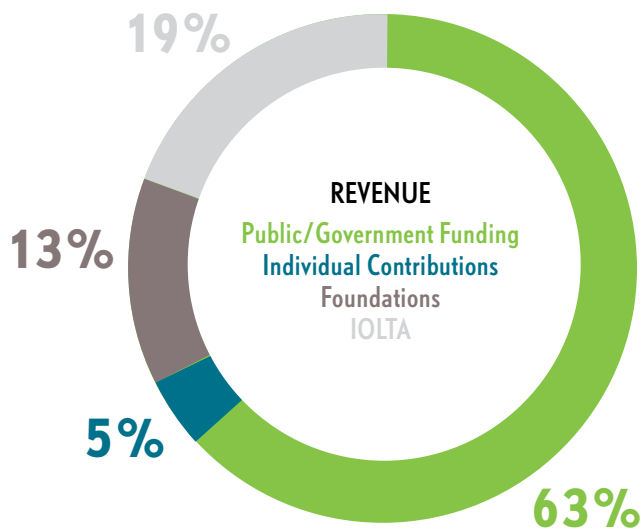
— value of services —

PROVIDED BY VOLUNTEERS

40

Attorneys,
psychologists,
psychiatrists,
bilingual community members,
and passionate advocates
comprise PIRC's volunteers

2016 AT A GLANCE



THANK YOU

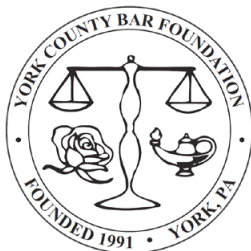
PIRC is grateful for the continued commitment of our donors to empower and protect vulnerable immigrants. You sustain our mission. Individually and together, you made a positive impact in the lives of thousands of vulnerable immigrants in 2016, and the ripple effects of your generosity will carry forward for generations.

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**"I am so grateful to have found PIRC and
for all the work they have done for me.
Now I know I can provide a better life
for my two-year-old daughter."**

**— Jorge, survivor of domestic violence,
proud parent**

Throughout this report, we've changed the names of those we serve to protect their identity.

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