

# ANNUAL REPORT 2021



**PIRC**

Pennsylvania Immigration  
Resource Center

*Educating, advocating,  
ensuring access to justice.*

This past year was PIRC's 25th Anniversary – it was supposed to be a celebration of its humble beginnings as a community effort to help refugees held at the York County Prison. Irony would have it that in this year, ICE ended its contract with the York County Prison and moved all its detainees out. Unfortunately, this did not mean that immigrants were no longer being detained – they were just moved to other locations. PIRC immediately jumped into gear and found out that even more immigrant detainees will be held elsewhere in the state, and that there is not a network of immigration attorneys and services in that area. True to its mission of providing access to justice to vulnerable immigrants, PIRC has already made arrangements to serve those detainees. PIRC is also going to provide services to the newly reopened Berks County Women's Center. And it will continue all the community programs it was already involved in and more. In other words, in a difficult year, PIRC has shown its adaptability to changing circumstances while never losing sight of its mission. I am proud to be President of the Board of Directors of this fierce organization that always perseveres to provide services and support for its clients. Please read this Annual Report which showcases all the amazing work that is being done!

Clasina B. Houtman  
Board President

Hello All,

This year, PIRC celebrated 25 years of serving immigrants in our community. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, we were unable to celebrate PIRC's anniversary in the fashion we hoped but it was a year full of successes and overcoming challenges. I wish to share a few of the organization's accomplishments from 2021.

PIRC was founded on providing legal services to detained immigrants at the York County Detention Center. The end of immigration detention at the York County Prison in August 2021 was a major challenge to PIRC's Removal Defense Program (formerly Detained Services). However, PIRC quickly realized that York County's decision to step away from immigration detention was not the end of detention in Pennsylvania. PIRC entered negotiations to provide legal services at a newly opening site in Philipsburg (Moshannon Valley Correctional Facility). PIRC worked with stakeholders and secured approval to provide immigration legal services to detainees at the new facility. The negotiations proved a long and complicated journey but detained immigrants in Pennsylvania continue to have access to quality immigration legal services.

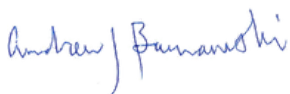
PIRC's Community Programs experienced a major win during 2021 with the success of the program's U Visa Mandamus filings. PIRC and David Freedman, a partner at Barley Snyder, recruited 21 pro bono attorneys from York, Lancaster, and Dauphin County Bar Associations. These attorneys filed Mandamus Actions in the Middle District Court of Pennsylvania on behalf of 20 clients and their derivatives. These actions are filed to compel USCIS to act and place U Visa applicants on the U Visa waitlist so that the client has protection from deportation and work authorization. PIRC's pro bono attorneys were successful in filing these actions on behalf of our clients. These efforts gave PIRC clients new hope and the possibility of closure to a traumatic period of their life.

The continued COVID-19 pandemic regularly challenged program staff and administration. The pandemic continued to disrupt outreach and fundraising. However, our local community remained committed to funding PIRC's immigration legal services. PIRC had a successful Give Local York, Lancaster ExtraGive, and Light of Liberty in 2021. PIRC's virtual Light of Liberty event had approximately 70 attendees and many event sponsors. Strong community engagement during the past year provided both needed financial support and tremendous hope for PIRC's long-term viability.

As these 2021 highlights reveal, PIRC had a memorable 25th anniversary year. Both PIRC's program areas demonstrated significant resolve in their fight for justice. Furthermore, PIRC started planting the seeds for its next stage of life. PIRC began work in late 2021 on a new strategic plan (to be finished in 2022). PIRC Board and staff members recognize that PIRC must be fully prepared to effectively guide the organization into the future.

The past year was challenging for PIRC, but the organization was effective in fulfilling its mission. I applaud all PIRC board, staff, and community members for your generous support and commitment during the past year. I am humbled to be part of this amazing organization and look forward to taking it into its next stage of life.

Thank you all,



Andrew Baranoski  
Executive Director

2021



## 2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Clasina Houtman, Esq.**, President  
York County Public Defender's Office

**Angus Love, Esq.**, Vice President  
Pennsylvania Institutional Law Project

**Marilyn Neuburger**, Secretary  
Teacher of English as Second Language

**Andrew Mahon, Esq.**  
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**Dr. George Stoltzfus**  
Retired Physician and Administrator

**Leanne M. Miller, Esq.**  
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**Amy Chamberlin**  
Family First Health

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Millersville University

**Mr. David Corman**  
York County History Center

**Ms. Rebecca Garcia**  
Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN)



## 2021 STAFF

**Andrew Baranoski**, Executive Director  
**Dr. Jasmine Greene**, Development Director  
**Jessica Snyder**, Human Resource Manager  
**Samantha Naranjo-Gonzalez**, Office Manager

### COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

**Whitney Phelps**, Managing Attorney  
**Diana Bieber-Locke**, Supervising Attorney  
**Tamara Shehadeh-Cope**, Supervising Attorney  
**Ashley Springsteen**, Staff Attorney  
**Yudelkys Rodriguez De Vargas**, Staff Attorney  
**Sarah Martin-Torres**, Statewide Liaison/Department of Justice Accredited Representative  
**Nadia Leon**, Program Assistant  
**Rosa Perez-Lupian**, Legal Advocate/Department of Justice Accredited Representative  
**Karla Rios Orenge**, Legal Advocate/Department of Justice Accredited Representative  
**Jazmin Hernandez**, Citizenship Coordinator/ Department of Justice Accredited Representative

### REMOVAL DEFENSE PROGRAMS

**Ryan Brunsink**, Managing Attorney  
**Ben Hooper**, Supervising Attorney  
**Melissa Vega**, Staff Attorney  
**Alissa Cardenas Harrison**, Staff Attorney  
**Fernanda Hernandez**, LOP Manager/DOJ Accredited Representative  
**Karina Suarez**, Program Coordinator



## ABOUT PIRC

On June 6, 1993, the Golden Venture ship ran aground with approximately 286 Chinese nationals aboard. Within two days, these men and women were transported by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) to the county jail in York, Pennsylvania, and other detention facilities across the country. Fleeing political persecution and coercive population control policies, these individuals seeking asylum had no voice in the complicated American immigration legal system.

The York community responded to the indefinite detention of the Golden Venture passengers with impassioned legal advocacy and a vigilant spirit of community support. Their outrage fueled a shared commitment to the words inscribed on the Supreme Court entrance: Equal Access to Justice. Each person in our nation shall have equal access to justice. From this resolute belief in justice, the Pennsylvania Immigration Resource Center was formed with the mission of providing equal access to justice to those who have no voice. Today, PIRC continues to serve as a light in the darkness, a voice for the most vulnerable among us, and an advocate for those least able to access justice.

## PIRC MISSION

*The Pennsylvania Immigration Resource Center (PIRC) provides high quality legal services so that vulnerable immigrants and their families have access to justice and a more secure future.*



## PIRC VALUES

### *Integrity*

We strive to embody honesty, respect, transparency, and accountability.

### *Team Communication*

We openly provide and accept responsibility, feedback, and support, rooted in trust and safety.

### *Flexibility*

We adapt, in work and in life.

### *Immigrants*

We work in partnership to foster strength and empowerment.

### *Growth*

We challenge ourselves, others, and our organization to excel through innovation and courage.

### *Purpose*

We are intentional and resourceful in our efforts to create change.

## PIRC SERVICES AND VISION

*PIRC provides access to justice for vulnerable immigrants in detention and in the community through legal services, education, and advocacy. PIRC's vision is a Pennsylvania where every immigrant has access to justice and quality legal services.*

*Our programs strive to ensure access to justice for vulnerable immigrants at risk of detention or removal, immigrant survivors of violence, and lawful permanent residents seeking to naturalize.*

PIRC's programs include:

### LEGAL ORIENTATION PROGRAM

The Legal Orientation Program (LOP) provides legal education to detained immigrants regarding their rights, court procedures, and potential legal relief from deportation. LOP services are the only legal assistance many will receive before appearing pro se in immigration court. Approximately 86% of detained immigrants in removal proceedings, many of whom are fleeing torture and violence, appear pro se. Thus, the LOP remains critical.

### REMOVAL DEFENSE REPRESENTATION

The National Qualified Representative Program (NQRP) provides legal representation for detained immigrants determined to be incompetent to represent themselves due to mental illness or other capacity limitations. These cases are complex due to communication and comprehension barriers as well as limited resources available.

The Pennsylvania Immigrant Family Unity Project (PAIFUP) project strives for universal representation of detained immigrants in removal proceedings in Pennsylvania. Cases are selected on a merits-agnostic basis, screened only for income-related eligibility. The long-term goal is to scale up the project using data on program efficacy to show the difference that representation makes to individuals facing deportation without counsel.

PIRC also provides direct representation to select individuals who are identified as particularly vulnerable for reasons such as trauma due to past persecution or torture, language access needs, illiteracy, medical concerns, and other factors.

### PRO BONO PLACEMENT

PIRC recruits pro bono attorneys to provide representation in cases where PIRC is unable to do so. If an identified case is not matched, PIRC often provides expanded pro se assistance to the litigants. PIRC leads a Pro Bono Bond Project for limited representation of bond-eligible Pennsylvania residents held in immigration detention, partnering with law firms to refer bond - or parole - eligible individuals who would otherwise challenge their custody on their own behalf. Additionally, PIRC collaborates with law schools and non-profits to provide direct representation, pro se assistance, and psychosocial assistance to immigrants in detention.

PIRC, in partnership with the Lancaster, York, and Dauphin County Bar Associations, has recruited 22 pro bono attorneys to represent immigrant survivors in Mandamus actions before Federal District Court. These actions have resulted in PIRC clients receiving work authorization and protection from deportation while the applications for U Nonimmigrant status are pending.

### IMMIGRANT SURVIVORS PROJECT

The Immigrant Survivors Project (ISP) is a unique provider of immigration legal services for immigrant survivors of violence in Pennsylvania. ISP partners with domestic violence and sexual assault agencies and pro bono and legal aid attorneys in a unique model of service delivery that provides immigration and family law legal services, public benefits advocacy, victim services, and education to immigrant survivors. This survivor-centered approach profoundly impacts the lives of immigrant survivors of violence and their children as they create a new life of safety, economic well-being, and stability. This in turn creates a positive impact in the community.

### IMMIGRANT SURVIVOR ADVOCATES NETWORK

The Immigrant Survivors Advocate Network (ISAN) is an alliance of domestic and sexual violence victim service agencies from across Pennsylvania coordinated by the Immigrant Survivors Project of the Pennsylvania Immigration Resource Center. ISAN's mission is to increase the safety and autonomy of immigrant survivors and their families by ensuring that culturally and linguistically appropriate victim services, as well as high-quality immigration legal assistance, are available and accessible throughout the Commonwealth.

### CITIZENSHIP PROJECT

Launched in November 2018, PIRC's Citizenship Project serves lawful permanent residents in Southcentral Pennsylvania. Since 2018, PIRC has screened and provided services to approximately 450 permanent residents with close to a third resulting in submitted Naturalization packets.





### Program Highlights

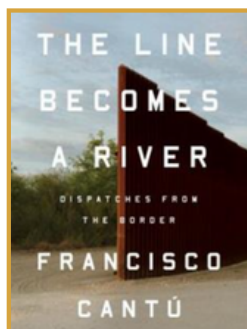
#### COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

- ✓ Citizenship Program has expanded to provide naturalization services to lawful permanent residents living under 187.5% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines throughout Southcentral Pennsylvania
- ✓ Citizenship Program screened approximately 170 lawful permanent residents for naturalization eligibility and filed 57 applications for Green Card Renewals, Naturalization, and for Certificates of Citizenship.
- ✓ ISP filed approximately 75 applications for relief on behalf of immigrant survivors
- ✓ ISP closed 26 Advice Only cases, 13 Brief Service cases, and 80 Direct Representation cases

#### REMOVAL DEFENSE

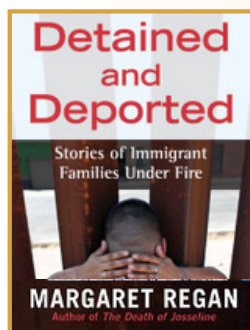
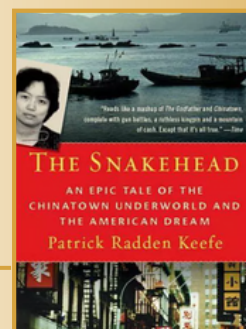
- ✓ PIRC's Removal Defense Programs (formerly Detention Programs) underwent significant changes in 2021.
- ✓ York County Prison ended its contract with ICE in August 2021—the site of most of PIRC's detention work over the past 25 years. The LOP will continue at Berks, Clinton, and Moshannon Valley in 2022.
- ✓ PAIFUP work continued, advancing a universal representation model across the state as a part of a larger national movement, in collaboration with partner Legal Service Providers and Community-Based Organizations.
- ✓ PIRC won a precedential Third Circuit Court of Appeals case bolstering language access protections for limited English proficient individuals in immigration court.

### Anniversary Events



March 17, Virtual Book Club: The Line Becomes a River

June 16, Virtual Book Club: The Snakehead featuring panel discussion with Jeff and Cindy Lobach, Mary Studzinski, and Byron Borger

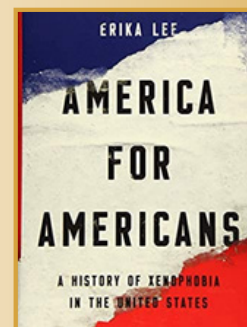


September 15, Virtual Book Club: Detained and Deported: Stories of Immigrant Families Under Fire



September 22, Virtual Light of Liberty Award Ceremony with Keynote Speaker Judge Craig T. Trebilcock

December 15, Virtual Book Club: America for Americans



## LIGHT OF LIBERTY

PIRC began awarding several awards at its annual Light of Liberty award ceremony beginning in 2012. For the first time since its inception, the 2021 Light of Liberty award ceremony was held virtually due to ongoing COVID-19 concerns. PIRC is grateful for the continued support of its incredible community.

| AWARD                              | 2012              | 2013               | 2014          | 2015              | 2016                       | 2017                        | 2018                  | 2019   | 2020 - 2021                          |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------|-------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| LAW FIRM/ LEGAL ORG.               | CGA               | Akin Gump          | Barley Snyder | Akin Gump         | Villanova Law Clinic       | UConn                       | Chan & Assoc.         | Penn State Law's Center for Imm. Rights Clinic | The Pepper Center for Public Service |
| ATTORNEY, DETAINED PROGRAMS        |                   | Suzanne Smith      |               | Elizabeth Hoffman | Joe Hohenstein             | Rosina Stambaugh            | James Gillespie       | David Freedman                                 | Sozi Tulante                         |
| ATTORNEY, COMMUNITY PROGRAMS       | Michelle Pokrifka |                    | Leanne Miller | Andrew Mahon      | David Freedman             | Rosina Stambaugh            | James Gillespie       | David Freedman                                 | David Freedman                       |
| PROFESSIONAL / COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER | Mary Studzinski   | Anne Middaugh      | Arno Vosk     | Judy Eidelson     | Susanna Francies           | Anne Middaugh               | Suzan Greenberg       | Dr. Julie Drolet                               | Dr. Sonya K. Del Tredici             |
| PRO BONO INTERPRETER               |                   | Christopher Jacobs | Vanessa Diaz  | Michelle Diaz     | Tesfagiorgis Ghebreslassie | Rosalyn Groff               | Ahlan Mohammed        | Sirac Berhe                                    |                                      |
| VOICE OF COURAGE                   |                   |                    |               |                   | Mayra Medina               | Josia Nunes                 | Mikembi               | Maria Flores Garcia                            | Fawziah Barghoutt                    |
| DONOR (Org)                        |                   |                    |               |                   | York County Bar Foundation | Philadelphia Bar Foundation | Kaplan Foundation     | Rehmeyer Trust                                 | CGA Law Firm                         |
| DONOR (Individual)                 |                   |                    |               |                   | Charles and Toni Rausch    | Jill Family                 | James and Denise Wade | Craig and Terrie Trebilcock                    | Joseph Baker                         |

Our 25th anniversary was a special year for us. Thank you to our event sponsors for making it possible.

**troutman  
pepper**

**Barley Snyder**  
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

Jill Family and  
Nick Stapp

**CGA**  
LAW FIRM

**WELLSPAN<sup>®</sup>**  
HEALTH

**M&T Bank**

Adams County  
Bar Association

Carol Stowell and  
David MacVeigh

PIRC would also like to recognize the members of the 2021 Development Committee for their outstanding contributions to the 25th anniversary event schedule:

Marilyn Neuberger    Karina Suarez  
Zehao (ZZ) Zhou    Melissa Vega  
Linda Seligson    Ben Hooper  
Samantha Naranjo-Gonzalez

## REMOVAL DEFENSE PROGRAMS

On September 1, 2021, in *Byron v. Attorney General*, the Third Circuit Court of Appeals issued a precedential decision regarding language access for a client PIRC represented for BIA briefing and circuit representation, only after LOP services and an unsuccessful pro se case before the Immigration Court.

Before he was a client, Byron attempted to represent himself on a strong asylum claim in which he presented evidence that he was targeted for his political opinion after his brother had been executed as a result of their political demonstration. He had evidence that corroborated his brother's death, letters that corroborated his having been apprehended and harmed, a political affiliation identification card, and country conditions and news articles corroborating the political action and violent government response. Nevertheless, some of his strongest evidence was withheld by ICE who had confiscated it upon his arrival to the U.S. and he was forced to testify in standard English despite clear signs that he was not a native English speaker. The immigration court and BIA denied his claim, and he was ordered deported. PIRC took up his Third Circuit petition for review.

The Circuit Court remanded the case, holding that a limited English-proficient (LEP) respondent who spoke Cameroonian Pidgin English, an English dialect that is a distinct language from English, was entitled to interpretation as a matter of due process. The Court required only a showing of potential for prejudice rather than any specific showing of prejudice to the client, a requirement that had previously shielded immigration courts from stricter review. From the beginning of his case, the court and ICE did not appreciate that Byron was LEP, and his limitations in standard English colored their perception with respect to testimony and credibility. Additionally, ICE withheld significantly corroborating evidence that they had confiscated from Byron, even after repeated attempts to request it during his pro se case. With PIRC's representation and many others assisting on this case, Byron will finally have a fair shot at his rehearing.



"It always seems impossible until it's done."

NELSON MANDELA



### COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Claire was born in Egypt where she also met her husband Phil in 2015. Because he was studying in the U.S., they had a long-distance relationship. She found him to be a gentleman and supportive, and they had common goals of obtaining higher education and becoming professionals. They married a year later. During their honeymoon, they started arguing about some photos on his phone. During the argument, Phil heated a spoon and burned Claire's legs while hitting and insulting her. Their families did not support Claire when she needed them and instead told her that she needed to obey Phil. Claire and Phil stayed together, although their relationship remained long distance, and later she found that she was pregnant. Claire gave birth to their daughter Haley in 2017. Phil used their newborn daughter to control and manipulate Claire by threatening to leave Claire and to take the baby away from her.

A few months later, in 2017, Claire's conditional residence was approved. She moved to the U.S. with Haley and reunited with Phil. The domestic abuse situation worsened in the U.S. and Claire was particularly vulnerable to the abuse because she did not know the language and culture and she did not have any friends or family here. Phil prevented Claire from going outside the house, enrolling in school, taking English classes, and talking on the phone. She was expected to obey him and his family and take care of the house and Haley. The physical, verbal, and emotional abuse occurred on a daily basis. She had a miscarriage after Phil hit her stomach and back knowing that she was expecting their second child. The last incident of abuse occurred in 2019 when, during an argument, he burned her legs with a heated spoon, cut her arms with a knife, and punched and kicked her multiple times.

Claire managed to escape Phil with Haley and reported the abuse to the police. She obtained a Protection From Abuse Order against Phil. Claire was able to receive psychological therapy and victim services from one of PIRC's partner agencies, but continues suffering from anxiety, panic attacks and chest pain as a result of her trauma.

Claire was connected with PIRC to provide her with immigration legal services. In 2020, PIRC filed Form I-751, Petition to Remove Conditions on Residence with a Battered Spouse waiver. The Battered Spouse waiver allowed her to file the petition to remove the conditions on her green card without the assistance of Phil because of the abuse he had perpetrated against Claire. The case took more than a year to process, but after a very painful interview with USCIS, it was approved in 2021. Claire immediately filed for naturalization with the assistance of PIRC's Citizenship Project. She successfully passed the citizenship exam and her application for naturalization was approved in January 2022. She recently took her Naturalization Oath of Allegiance to the United States and is now a U.S. citizen.

"Justice is truth  
in action."

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

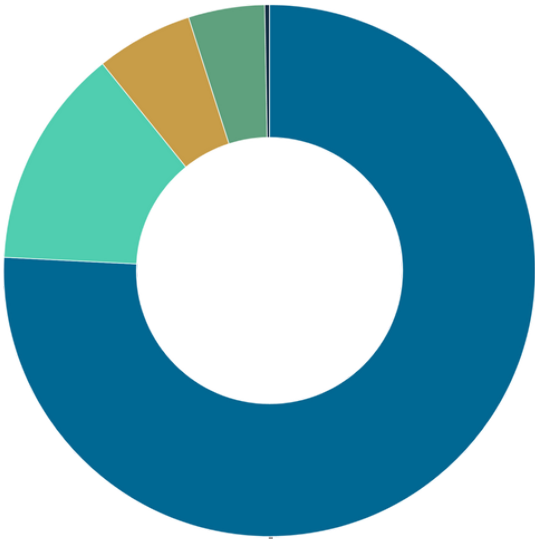


# 2021 FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

PIRC would like to thank our donors for their immense and unwavering support of our mission to ensure access to justice for immigrants in our community.

## 2021 REVENUE

|                                     |    |           |
|-------------------------------------|----|-----------|
| Public/Government Funding           | \$ | 1,431,391 |
| Individual Contributions            | \$ | 87,610    |
| Private Foundations & Contributions | \$ | 111,130   |
| Other Revenue                       | \$ | 5,423     |
| Subtotal                            | \$ | 1,635,554 |
| In-Kind                             | \$ | 252,846   |
| TOTAL                               | \$ | 1,888,400 |

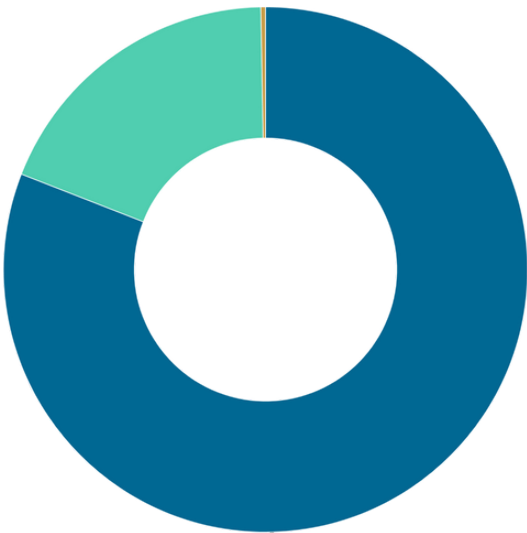


Public/Government Funding   Private Foundations & Contributions   Individual Contributions   In-Kind   Other Revenue

REVENUE  
\$1,888,400

## 2021 EXPENDITURES

|                                 |    |           |
|---------------------------------|----|-----------|
| Support Services/Management/Ops | \$ | 342,784   |
| Fundraising                     | \$ | 5,272     |
| Program Services                | \$ | 1,475,966 |
| TOTAL                           | \$ | 1,824,022 |



Program Services   Support Services/Management/Operations   Fundraising Expenses

EXPENDITURES  
\$1,824,022

We are grateful for the community of supporters who devoted their time and resources in 2021 to impact immigrant lives in Pennsylvania. Everything you do makes a difference.

### INDIVIDUAL DONORS

|                    |                      |                       |                      |
|--------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| M. Barnes          | D. Eichelberger      | T. Locke              | M. Newswanger        |
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| L. and N. Bieber   | D. and J. Freedman   | A. Mahon and A. Riley | G. Stoltzfus         |
| J. Blum            | W. Gierasch          | T. Mattes             | C. Stowell           |
| P. Britton         | T. Griffin           | L. Miller             | G. and M. Studzinski |
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| H. and G. Carney   | C. Houtman           | D. Milton             | K. Wasong            |
| J. Cox             | B. and K. Leatherman | M. and J. Morford     | And hundreds more... |

### ORGANIZATIONAL DONORS AND GRANTORS

|                                       |  |                              |
|---------------------------------------|--|------------------------------|
| Adams County Community Foundation     | Lancaster Law Foundation               | Philadelphia Bar Foundation  |
| County of York                        | M&T Charitable Foundation              | Phish -Waterwheel Foundation |
| Berks Youth Chorus                    | Philadelphia Foundation - PA is Ready! | The Pittsburgh Foundation    |
| The Henry Rhoads Charitable Fund      | People's Bank                          | York County Bar Foundation   |
| Lancaster County Community Foundation |  |                              |

### VOLUNTEERS AND PRO BONO PARTNERS

PIRC would also like to thank our volunteers and pro bono partners for their incredible dedication to vulnerable immigrants in Pennsylvania. Volunteers and pro bono partners provide priceless legal services, translation/interpretation support, medical and psychological services, and administrative support. Volunteers come from all walks of life – interns, undergraduate students, law students, doctors, community members. Your work is meaningful and appreciated!

*Thank you!*

### HOW TO BE AN ADVOCATE FOR IMMIGRANTS

There are many ways YOU can be an advocate for immigrants:

1. Listen to immigrants and refugees to understand their points of view and learn their stories.
2. Volunteer or get involved with PIRC and other organizations serving the immigrant community.
3. Contact your local and state representatives about issues affecting immigrants.
4. Participate in marches, protests, vigils, and other peaceful actions.
5. Educate others to improve public attitudes toward immigrants.
6. Donate to PIRC & other organizations serving the immigrant community.







SCAN ME



**PIRC**

Pennsylvania Immigration  
Resource Center

*Educating, advocating,  
ensuring access to justice.*

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