

## Section 7. Immigration Legal Services

*from*

# All in for a Thriving Connecticut

## Opportunities to Support Upward Mobility for the State's Immigrant Families

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## 7 Immigration Legal Services

For immigrant families in Connecticut, and across the country, access to immigration legal services is often crucial for stability and for their ability to navigate complex immigration processes. This is true for immigrants with various legal statuses and lengths of U.S. residence. For example, individuals with protection needs may need help filing for asylum; migrants in removal proceedings may need legal assistance in immigration court; immigrants eligible for work authorization may need guidance on completing the necessary paperwork; and legal permanent residents and U.S. citizens may want to sponsor family members to come to the United States. Unlike in criminal proceedings, migrants in civil immigration proceedings do not have a right to government-funded counsel. But access to legal assistance is nonetheless vital for helping noncitizens apply for immigration statuses for which they are eligible and for ensuring meaningful due process in removal proceedings in immigration court.

Representation rates for migrants in removal proceedings are low. As of March 2025, just 25 percent of the 40,144 immigration court cases pending in Connecticut involved migrants with legal representation, ranking 36th out of all 50 states and the District of Columbia.<sup>150</sup> According to the Vera Institute of Justice, between 2018 and 2023, there were 115 cases in the Hartford immigration court involving people in immigration detention, and 56 percent were unrepresented.<sup>151</sup> As the Trump administration ends grants of humanitarian parole for large groups, ends Temporary Protected Status (TPS) designations for nationals of certain countries, and works to arrest more unauthorized immigrants, the need for immigration legal services in Connecticut is growing.

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Though legal service providers have made some headway in meeting the needs of immigrants in the state, significant barriers remain. Geographic disparities and limited public transportation create service deserts. And capacity constraints due to limited funding, workforce size, and changing client needs make it difficult for organizations to keep up with demand. Changes enacted by the Trump administration, including major funding cuts, have had a jarring effect on legal service providers and reduced immigration legal services capacity in the state. The full impact of these changes is still unfolding.

### A. *The Landscape of Immigration Legal Services in Connecticut*

Within the state, affordable legal services are primarily provided by nonprofit, nongovernmental organizations. Some of these providers focus exclusively on immigration legal services, while for others, such services are a small part of their portfolio. There are also private immigration lawyers in the state, though interviewees noted that many are cost-prohibitive and warned of some bad actors, such as *notarios* who make false promises and charge high fees.<sup>152</sup>

150 These data are for representation during any part of a case, whether a single phase or the duration of the case. See Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse (TRAC), “Pending Court Cases by Immigrant’s Address,” accessed May 23, 2025.

151 Vera Institute of Justice, “The Movement for Deportation Defense: Information Hub,” accessed April 23, 2025.

152 Author interview with immigration attorney, August 7, 2024.

Different types of legal services also require different levels of resources. For example, a naturalization application is much less time-intensive than seeing a defensive asylum claim through immigration court—a complex process that can take months or years and may be emotionally taxing for legal service providers, given the high stakes and potential for a client’s deportation.<sup>153</sup> As a result, access to representation in immigration court proceedings is more limited than access to assistance with applications to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) such as for lawful permanent residence (often called a green card), naturalization, or even affirmative asylum claims. Only some immigration legal service providers in Connecticut will take on any removal defense cases, and most are only able to commit to a relatively small number of cases at a time.<sup>154</sup>

Geographic accessibility and transportation pose two logistical hurdles to legal services for immigrants in the state. The majority of legal service providers are located along the shoreline (in Fairfield and New Haven Counties), with others scattered throughout the state in cities such as Hartford and New London. Outside of these larger cities, affordable legal services are often unavailable or extremely limited. The state’s meager public transportation system makes accessing services all the more difficult. Since the only immigration court and USCIS office are located in Hartford, in-person hearings and appointments require practitioners and clients from most parts of the state to travel for more than an hour.

### **Funding constraints often dictate the breadth of services.**

Interviewees repeatedly noted that demand for legal services far outweighs supply.<sup>155</sup> The nongovernmental organizations that provide immigration legal services in Connecticut receive their funding from a patchwork of sources, including funding from foundations and religious institutions, some federal dollars for specific humanitarian populations, and grants and donations. Funds for family-based immigration and naturalization services are more widely available, while funding is much more limited for defensive claims (often asylum) in immigration courts. To supplement this funding, some organizations use sliding-scale fees to charge clients for services based on their ability to pay.

Given changes since the start of the second Trump administration, many federal funds have come to a halt, leaving organizations on the ground scrambling to quickly reorient to the new funding reality. Yet other funding sources also come with limitations. Donations from private individuals are often sporadic and vary in dollar amount, and funding from foundations is usually time-limited and geared towards specific legal services.

Legal service providers in Connecticut have been able to access some federal funding for services to immigrants lawfully in the country, though many of these funding streams may be winding down or facing cuts. For example, some organizations mentioned receiving funding via the *American Rescue Plan Act* and the Legal Services Corporation, dispersed through the state. The latter can generally only be used to provide legal services for lawful permanent residents, refugees and asylees, and immigrants who have applied for

<sup>153</sup> Defensive asylum claims are those filed by persons in removal proceedings as a defense against deportation, while affirmative claims are those filed with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services by individuals not in removal proceedings. For more information, see Kathleen Bush-Joseph, *Outmatched: The U.S. Asylum System Faces Record Demands* (Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute, 2024).

<sup>154</sup> Author interview with immigration attorneys, July 7, 2024; author interview with community organizer, March 13, 2025.

<sup>155</sup> Author interviews with immigration attorneys, June 24, 2024, July 10, 2024, July 15, 2024, and August 7, 2024.

permanent residence, but services related to domestic violence, trafficking, or assault may be provided regardless of immigration status in certain circumstances.<sup>156</sup>

The federal Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) has been funding local service providers to provide legal services for Afghan and Ukrainian parolees and at times has provided limited funds that can be used to help refugees more generally to apply for permanent residence and citizenship. The federal government had also provided funding for legal representation for unaccompanied minors in government custody, though the Trump administration has moved to end the contracts funding this work.<sup>157</sup> Federal funding has been available to support services to survivors of trafficking, which can include legal services.<sup>158</sup> And USCIS has funded organizations to assist legal permanent residents seeking to naturalize, though the Trump administration has also moved to end these contracts.<sup>159</sup>

Connecticut has rarely devoted any state taxpayer funds to immigration legal services. However, some organizations receive funding through an interest on lawyers' trust account—a type of account lawyers use to temporarily hold settlement or damages payments or other types of client funds, the interest on which is dedicated to various legal services programs in the state.<sup>160</sup>

Organizations also face funding challenges related to operational needs integral to their legal services. As the origins of immigrants in Connecticut have diversified, so too have their interpretation and translation needs, but specific funding for those services remains limited. Moreover, many organizations have difficulties recruiting and retaining staff. Connecticut's location between Boston and New York creates high attrition rates, with lawyers leaving the state for higher pay in those metropolitan areas. Organizations may also struggle to fund the hiring of full legal teams including paralegals and legal assistants, meaning lawyers are doing the full work of their cases, further stretching thin capacity.

### **Policy changes and backlogs at the federal level reverberate down to Connecticut communities, shaping service needs.**

In addition to funding, immigration legal service providers in Connecticut, like others throughout the United States, must continuously adapt to changing federal policies that shape immigrants' legal status opportunities. For example, as the Biden administration expanded who was eligible for TPS (a limited form of protection for migrants from certain designated countries who are present in the United States and unable to return their countries due to natural disasters, conflicts, or other conditions), service providers turned attention to TPS applications. And for migrants temporarily allowed into the country through

<sup>156</sup> National Immigration Law Center (NILC), *Overview of Immigrant Eligibility for Federal Programs* (Los Angeles: NILC, 2024).

<sup>157</sup> In January 2025, the Justice Department halted various funding streams for nonprofits that provide legal advice or representation for certain noncitizens facing removal proceedings, including unaccompanied children. The nonprofits sued and in July 2025, a federal court ruled in the Justice Department's favor, permitting the termination of contracts for legal services, however an appeal is ongoing. See Holly Straut-Eppsteiner and Hillel R. Smith, *Immigration Court Legal Access Programs: Terminations and Related Litigation* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2025), 2.

<sup>158</sup> For example, the Trafficking Victim Assistance Program and Aspire: Child Trafficking Victim Assistance Program, through the federal Office of Trafficking in Persons, provides funding for case management services, which can include legal services. And the Justice Department's Office of Victim Services funds comprehensive services for trafficking victims.

<sup>159</sup> Litigation over these grant terminations is ongoing. See Democracy Forward, "Court Allows Trump's Dismantling of Citizenship and Integration Grant Program to Continue as Case Moves Forward" (press release, May 20, 2025).

<sup>160</sup> For more information, see Connecticut Bar Foundation, "IOLTA/IOTA," accessed April 23, 2025.

humanitarian parole, service providers were often called on for assistance with submitting applications for work authorization. Now that the Trump administration has taken steps to end parole protections for large numbers of recent entrants and end certain TPS designations, service providers are focused on exploring other legal status options for which their clients may qualify, including by filing asylum applications. As federal policies continue to change, so too will the focus of this work.

Other challenges are long-standing. The backlogged and at times unpredictable U.S. immigration system means that both applications to USCIS and immigration court cases can stretch on for years.<sup>161</sup> These prolonged timelines make it hard for legal service providers to commit to taking on additional cases, or to find pro bono attorneys willing to commit to cases with indefinite durations.<sup>162</sup> In other cases, clients may have a short timeframe until their court date or be close to the one-year asylum filing deadline and need immediate assistance that lawyers cannot accommodate. Immigration court processes introduce additional complexities. Under the Biden administration, court practices meant to reduce the growing backlog had unintended consequences for legal practitioners. Last-minute case closures and efforts to speed up the adjudication of certain cases (such as those of families who crossed the southwest border without authorization) made representation in immigration court more challenging. Now, under the Trump administration, new practices including the closure of certain asylum cases before they receive a hearing, arrests made by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in immigration courts, and attempts to put migrants into a faster removal process called expedited removal are demanding increased time and expertise from attorneys.

### **Working across state agencies presents unique challenges for immigration legal service providers.**

Immigration legal service providers must often work directly or indirectly with various state agencies. When working with a client to apply for a U or T visa (for victims of crime or trafficking, respectively), practitioners often need to work with local law enforcement to obtain the required certification that the individual has been the victim of a qualifying crime and has been or is likely to be helpful to authorities' investigation. Interviewees described having varied working relationships with local police departments across the state, with some more willing to participate in such cases than others.<sup>163</sup>

Legal service providers also described other state agencies such as the Department of Motor Vehicles as lacking sufficient language access measures to effectively work with individuals with limited English proficiency or having misinformed clients on what services they can access. For example, although immigrants in Connecticut (as in many other states) can access state driver's licenses regardless of their status, some interviewees expressed concern that a bad experience at the Department of Motor Vehicles could affect an immigrant's access to a license and that an arrest for driving without a license could put them at risk of deportation or affect their future immigration claims.<sup>164</sup>

<sup>161</sup> For an in-depth discussion of these challenges, see Muzaffar Chishti et al., *At the Breaking Point: Rethinking the U.S. Immigration Court System* (Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute, 2023); Julia Gelatt, *Unblocking the U.S. Immigration System: Executive Actions to Facilitate the Migration of Needed Workers* (Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute, 2023).

<sup>162</sup> Author interview with immigration attorney, August 7, 2024.

<sup>163</sup> Author interviews with immigration attorneys, June 24, 2024, July 3, 2024, and July 10, 2024.

<sup>164</sup> Author interview with immigration attorney, June 13, 2024.

### **Some organizations are exploring creative solutions to legal services barriers.**

Since legal services are in greater demand than capacity allows, many organizations are turning to creative solutions to reach a larger number of clients. Some organizations have started offering limited representation, meaning they work on part of a client’s case but do not represent them for its full duration.<sup>165</sup> This can allow attorneys to take on more clients in the short term, without worrying about whether they have the capacity to follow up with each and every case over the long term. This may mean assisting a client with an application but not representing them in court.

Amid drastic changes in immigration policy and enforcement at the federal level, including ramped up immigration arrests, and high levels of anxiety in immigrant communities, some organizations are adjusting their models in an attempt to get accurate information to as many people as possible. This includes offering pro se (self-representation) clinics, where immigrants can fill out an asylum application with some assistance and have it reviewed by an attorney, and large-scale clinics for simpler types of applications such as for employment authorization documents.

One such initiative is the Red Folder Project, which helps noncitizens prepare a packet of information to be used in the event they are detained, including emergency contacts, copies of relevant immigration documents, standby guardianship agreements for children, and more.<sup>166</sup> Recognizing that the scale of available legal services is insufficient to meet community needs, advocates are focusing on providing know-your-rights information and helping noncitizens feel prepared in the event of an arrest, detention, or deportation.<sup>167</sup> A related example is the state-generated Family Preparedness Plan guidance developed by state agencies and offered by the governor’s office.<sup>168</sup> This packet, available in nine languages, provides recommendations of plans parents might make in case they are detained or deported, including which documents to gather, how to complete a standby guardianship agreement, and ideas for detailed information they might want to share with a future guardian. It also provides suggestions for vetting a potential immigration attorney.

Legal service providers in Connecticut have also begun meeting and developing ideas for how they can best coordinate to expand their reach in the face of greater need. These efforts include working to develop greater integration among providers to share resources and best practices; expanding community outreach and education; developing coordinated networks and perhaps even a coordinated workflow; and collaborating in identifying and advocating for sustainable public and private sources of funding for legal services.

### **The state has a large grassroots advocacy base around immigration matters that has pushed forth substantial changes, but critical gaps remain.**

There have been a number of advocacy efforts related to expanding immigration legal services within Connecticut, resulting in varying levels of success. Between 2019 and 2021, advocates made several

<sup>165</sup> Author interviews with multiple immigration attorneys, July 3, 2024.

<sup>166</sup> 211 Connecticut, “Program to Aid Those Facing Deportation – East Hartford – 3-12-2025,” accessed August 4, 2025.

<sup>167</sup> Author interview with community organizer, March 13, 2025.

<sup>168</sup> Governor Ned Lamont, “Immigration Resources: Family Preparedness Plan,” accessed August 4, 2025.

attempts to establish a universal representation program for clients in the state before the efforts splintered. Related to these efforts, two bills were introduced in the legislature to enhance noncitizens' access to legal counsel in immigration proceedings, though neither advanced.<sup>169</sup> In 2021, the City of Hartford launched a program to offer universal representation to Hartford residents in removal proceedings, funded by city general funds.<sup>170</sup>

## BOX 1

### Case Study: Universal Representation in New York Deportation Proceedings

Unlike in criminal cases, where defendants who cannot afford an attorney receive the help of a publicly appointed lawyer, migrants who are in immigration proceedings (which are civil in nature) and facing deportation are not appointed counsel. They have the right to an attorney at their own expense, though it is often cost prohibitive. Nationally, 42 percent of immigration court cases completed in the first three months of 2025 involved unrepresented individuals.

The universal representation model adopted in some jurisdictions seeks to address this gap by providing legal assistance to every person facing deportation proceedings who cannot afford an attorney. Income-eligible migrants receive legal assistance regardless of the merits of their case, and if they are ineligible for relief from deportation (such as asylum), attorneys advise migrants on options for voluntarily departing the United States.

New York City established the first universal representation program in the nation for detained migrants in 2014, and a number of studies have deemed it a success in advancing due process and fairness. In 2013, New York City allocated \$500,000 to pilot the New York Immigrant Family Unity Project, providing legal representation for low-income immigrants in deportation proceedings. In 2014, the City Council provided \$4.9 million to expand the project. While not all immigrants receive representation, the project aims to serve those who cannot afford it themselves, are detained, and face deportation proceedings in a New York immigration court.

Since 2017, the project has also served immigrants detained in upstate New York, with state lawmakers and private groups providing additional funding. The Vera Institute of Justice administers the program, and local nonprofit organizations provide legal representation. Studies have repeatedly found that legal representation initiatives such as the Family Unity Project have significant benefits for local communities and their economies, including by “keeping workers in the workforce, getting new arrivals work authorization, keeping families together, and providing pathways to upward mobility,” in the words of the Office of the New York City Comptroller.

Sources: U.S. Department of Justice, Executive Office for Immigration Review, “Current Representation Rates” (fact sheet, April 4, 2025); Office of the New York City Comptroller, *Economic Benefits of Immigration Legal Services* (New York City: Office of the New York City Comptroller, 2024); Vera Institute of Justice, “The New York Immigrant Family Unity Project,” accessed April 23, 2025; The Bronx Defenders, “New York Immigrant Family Unity Project,” accessed April 23, 2025.

<sup>169</sup> A 2019 bill sought to fund immigration legal services for unaccompanied children in removal proceedings, while a 2021 bill sought to establish a right to counsel for everyone in removal proceedings. See State of Connecticut, *An Act Concerning Access to Legal Counsel for Children in Immigration Removal Proceedings*, SB 991, 2019 legislative session (February 28, 2019); State of Connecticut, *An Act Concerning Access to Legal Counsel for Children and Other State Residents in Immigration Removal Proceedings*, SB 524, 2021 legislative session (January 27, 2021).

<sup>170</sup> Alex Putterman and Hartford Courant, “Hartford Initiative Provides Money for Legal Representation for Residents Facing Deportation,” *Hartford Courant*, April 10, 2022.

## The state's *Trust Act* limits law enforcement cooperation with federal immigration enforcement.

Since its initial passage in 2013, Connecticut's *Trust Act* has limited local law enforcement's cooperation with ICE. Specifically, the *Trust Act* bars local law enforcement from holding migrants past their criminal sentence for ICE to take custody and from sharing release dates and times with ICE, except in narrow circumstances (such as for those with certain felony convictions).<sup>171</sup> In 2019, the *Trust Act* was adjusted to expand the definition of law enforcement to include bail commissioners and probation officers and to require law enforcement to inform an individual when ICE requests their continued detention.<sup>172</sup>

As written, the *Trust Act* lacks meaningful repercussions for violations of its provisions. Immigrant advocates pushed in 2025 for the state legislature to add enforcement mechanisms to the *Trust Act*, along with data privacy protections for immigrants.<sup>173</sup> At the same time, Republicans in the state legislature sought to change the act to allow local law enforcement to share information with ICE on a broader set of crimes and to share this information at the point of arrest rather than waiting for a conviction.<sup>174</sup> Ultimately, the state passed a law that allows individuals to sue local governments over *Trust Act* violations, expands the set of law enforcement officials covered by the act (to include juvenile probation officers, members of the Board of Pardons and Paroles, and state prosecutors), and adds 13 crimes to the list of convictions for which local law enforcement are allowed to share information with ICE.<sup>175</sup> With news of the federal government seeking access to state-collected data on Medicaid enrollees, food assistance recipients, and voters,<sup>176</sup> Connecticut advocates continue to press state legislators to pass data privacy protections for Connecticut residents in future legislative sessions.

## B. Recommendations

Immigration legal services play a pivotal role both in immigrants' ability to navigate complex immigration processes and in the efficiency and fairness of legal proceedings. There are various options legal service providers, funders, state and local leaders, and other stakeholders in Connecticut could consider to expand the reach and impact of such services. These include:

### 1. Increase funding for legal services through flexible funding streams that can be adapted to community and organization needs

Insufficient funding was identified across interviews as one of the top barriers to legal service provision within the state, often dictating the type and breadth of services that organizations can offer. Funders could

171 State of Connecticut, *An Act Concerning Civil Immigration Detainers*, Public Act No. 13-155, *Connecticut Statutes of 2013*, Chapter 965 (2013).

172 Steven Stafstrom, "Legislature Passes Trust Act Bill to Lamont for Protecting Undocumented Immigrants," Connecticut House Democrats, May 30, 2019; Emilie Munson, "ICE Detention Procedures Spark CT Capitol Debate," CT Post, March 8, 2019; State of Connecticut, *An Act Concerning The Trust Act*, Public Act No. 19-20, *Connecticut Statutes of 2019*, Chapter 965 (2019).

173 State of Connecticut, *An Act Concerning the Trust Act*, Raised Bill No. 7212, 2025 Legislative Session (March 12, 2025).

174 Mike Cerulli and Juliana Lepore, "Republicans Call for Changes to 'Trust Act,' Possibly Impacting How Connecticut Law Enforcement Works With ICE," News 8, Jan 24, 2025.

175 Emilia Otte, "CT Lawmakers Pass Expanded Trust Act," CT Mirror, May 27, 2025; State of Connecticut, *An Act Concerning Revisions to Various Statutes Concerning Criminal Justice*, Public Act No. 25-29, *Connecticut Statutes of 2025*, Chapter 961 (2025).

176 Kimberly Kindy and Amanda Seitz, "Trump Administration Hands over Medicaid Recipients' Personal Data, Including Addresses, to ICE," Associated Press, July 17, 2025; Jude Joffe-Block, "The USDA Wants States to Hand over Food Stamp Data by the End of July," National Public Radio, July 19, 2025; Emily Badger, "States Have More Data About You Than the Feds Do. Trump Wants to See It," *New York Times*, August 1, 2025.

consider offering more flexible options, including by providing organizations with general operating funds rather than funds dedicated to specific types of staff or specific client characteristics. Some organizations need more lawyers, others need more funding for translation, and still others need more legal support staff (paralegals and legal assistants); flexible funding can enable organizations to channel resources to meet these varied needs. Additional funding to support higher salaries for attorneys, or other sweeteners such as tuition assistance, could help Connecticut organizations compete with opportunities in New York and Boston. Moreover, with several law schools located throughout the state, investments in a professional pipeline for people who are rooted and want to stay in Connecticut could be helpful to combat attrition rates.

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Notably, Connecticut has rarely provided state revenue funding for immigration legal services. Particularly as federal funding reductions have caused Connecticut nonprofits to cut their legal services staff, precisely as immigrants are in greater need of legal assistance, the state could consider funding immigration legal services to ensure due process for all state residents placed into removal proceedings and the ability of immigrants in the state to secure more-durable forms of legal status, when available to them. Such funding could be broad, adding Connecticut to the group of ten states that fund immigrant removal defense,<sup>177</sup> or be targeted more narrowly to immigrants who have some form of legal status or to particular types of legal assistance needs.

## 2. Continue to explore creative solutions to support legal representation amid capacity challenges

Connecticut organizations are continually adapting their approaches to address the legal service needs of state residents against the backdrop of a rapidly changing immigration policy landscape. Nevertheless, demand for legal services continues to outstrip the available supply. Therefore, stakeholders should continue exploring measures to increase access to legal services and information despite these capacity limitations.

Ongoing efforts to expand know-your-rights and pro se clinics and to provide limited representation can offer a basic level of legal orientation and assistance to a greater number of individuals. Continued exploration of workflow models of legal assistance, in which different actors are responsible for different components of a case, could also potentially help to expand capacity. For example, this could mean making use of origin-country conditions reports put together by organizations around the country and collected in a shared repository, bringing in social work students from local universities to collect affidavits as part of their clinical training, and reserving lawyers' time for the portions of cases where their legal expertise is most needed. A workflow model could also involve coordinating among organizations to allocate cases

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<sup>177</sup> See Vera Institute of Justice, "The Safety and Fairness for Everyone (SAFE) Network," accessed April 23, 2025. This year, Massachusetts appropriated \$5 million for an immigrant legal defense fund for the coming fiscal year. See Chris Van Buskirk, "Gov. Maura Healey Approves \$5 Million for Immigrant Legal Defense Fund in FY26 State Budget," *Boston Herald*, July 8, 2025.

or specific tasks based on their staff's capacity, availability for representation (even on a limited basis), and areas of expertise.

In addition, greater use of support from non-lawyers—whether social workers, administrative staff, Department of Justice-accredited representatives, or paralegals—will be vital in a period of high demand and limited funding. Finally, outreach to areas of the state with fewer legal service providers and to immigrant populations that speak languages other than English and Spanish will also be important.

### **3. Provide clearer information to state entities that play a role in immigration cases and strengthen relationships between them and legal service providers**

For immigrants applying for specific visas, such as U visas for victims of crime and T visas for victims of trafficking, cooperation between legal service providers and local law enforcement is paramount. Yet, legal service providers report encountering limited willingness on the part of some agencies to cooperate. Providing guidance to law enforcement agencies across the state about the role they play in these visa

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processes, as well as building bridges between legal service providers and law enforcement agencies, could thus help resolve these cases more efficiently and effectively. To achieve these goals, state leaders with experience in immigration issues could work to provide educational materials to relevant agencies, allowing their staff to ask questions and clear up confusion. State leaders could also help to foster better communication between legal service providers and local law enforcement so that each group better understands the others' priorities and needs.

As legal service providers work to address and adapt their services to the changing policy landscape, coordination with schools, financial institutions, and other relevant entities could help prepare clients who are at risk of deportation for the possibility of being removed to their countries of origin. Many legal service providers already offer critical support in the form of know-your-rights presentations and assistance with preparing documents necessary for an immigration court case to defend against removal. At the same time, potential removal raises other needs, such as to obtain U.S. school records for children restarting their education in another country, ensure continued access to financial assets, access medical records, and more. A state-led and coordinated effort among institutions doing this type of preparation work would decrease duplication and help ensure that noncitizens at risk of detention and deportation are prepared across all aspects of their lives.