

CILA 2022

Annual Report



The Children's Immigration Law Academy (CILA) is an expert legal resource center created by the American Bar Association (ABA) in 2015. CILA is a project of the ABA's Commission on Immigration (COI) and is closely aligned with its COI sister projects, the South Texas Pro Bono Asylum Representation Project (ProBAR) and the Immigration Justice Project (IJP).

CILA builds capacity for advocates working with immigrant youth by providing several key services including, hosting trainings, developing resources, answering case specific questions, and creating space for collaboration and community. The CILA team aims to help other advocates feel inspired, encouraged, and empowered to continue this important, challenging work, and in turn, for the advocates' clients to feel the same. Through CILA's efforts, we hope to ensure that more youth have the representation that they need and that the advocates working alongside them are supported. The CILA team and organization expanded in 2022. The year brought a season of growth, transition, and progress forward. CILA continues with a commitment to capacity build, to fill the gaps, and to support both advocates in the field and pro bono attorneys. This annual report shares and celebrates CILA's highlights from 2022.

CILA Highlights

In 2022, CILA expanded more of its services nationally. CILA continues to answer legal and social services technical assistance questions for advocates in Texas, and the organization now offers legal technical assistance to the Vera network of legal service providers nationally.

CILA hosts six working groups, and as of 2022, three more working groups reach a national audience. Additionally, CILA expanded signature trainings, Boot Camp and the National Institute for Trial Advocacy (NITA) training, to participants from the Vera network nationally. CILA's team nearly doubled in 2022, growing from seven team members to twelve.

Building Advocate Capacity

60+

Written Resources
Created

400+

Technical Assistance
Questions Answered

24

Working Group Meet-
ings Hosted to Provide
Space for Community
and Collaboration

Hear from 2022 Training Participants

"The activities in the [breakout] rooms and role playing was very helpful when learning about trauma informed techniques when preparing for asylum cases."

from CILA's Workshop

"I am very new to this career and so far this training has exceeded all expectations. The tools, resources, and speakers have all empowered me to feel more confident in my position. This training has motivated me to keep up my work in immigration."

from CILA's Boot Camp

"Clear and detailed presentation. Amazing presenters."

from CILA and COI's
Pro Bono Training

"This was wonderfully helpful and relevant! It is very refreshing to see this type of care and attention paid to such a significant issue in this line of work."

from CILA's Secondary
Traumatic Stress and Self-
Care Webinar



"Meet the two Texas attorneys behind the Children's Immigration Law Academy"



The ABA Features CILA

5 Top Downloaded CILA Resources in 2022

1

CILA Pro Bono Guide:
Working with Children and
Youth in Immigration Cases



2

Navigating Reunification
Challenges: A Toolkit for
Sponsors of Unaccompanied
Minors



3

Special Immigrant Juvenile
Status (SIJS) Overview



4

Working with Unaccompanied
Children: Mental and
Behavioral Health Toolkit



5

Helpful Resources in
Representing
Unaccompanied Children



Responding to Emergent Needs

CILA created a video, *Listen to My Voice/Escuche Mi Voz*, highlighting the voices of three young adults living in Houston who entered the United States as unaccompanied children. The individuals are Indigenous and Garifuna, having traveled to the United States from Guatemala and Honduras.



CILA incorporated a presentation on “Unaccompanied Minors – The Case of Indigenous Children” into CILA’s Boot Camp training, presented by Maya experts and allies from the International Mayan League. The presentation provides historical context of forced migration for Indigenous peoples, current context at the U.S./Mexico border and interior U.S., and a set of

recommendations to improve practices and services among providers.

In August, CILA’s Texas-focused newsletter went national. CILA changed the newsletter’s name to *Champions for Immigrant Youth* and updated its look. CILA also launched a monthly blog post series on *Litigation Updates* including case summaries of decisions from the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA), the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, and the Supreme Court.



CILA issued numerous written resources in 2022 including “Tips for Working with Children and Youth Remotely in a Hearing or USCIS Asylum Office Interview,” “Country Conditions Compilation: Conditions for LGBTQIA+ Children & Youth in Seven Countries,” “Summary of State Special Immigrant Juvenile Status Legislation,” “Overview of New Special Immigrant Juvenile Status Regulations,” and “The ABCs of SIJS.”

CILA continued its partnership with the National Immigration Litigation Alliance (NILA) to provide trainings, resources, and technical assistance on appellate and litigation strategy. In 2022, CILA and NILA initiated a webinar series on “Litigation for Unaccompanied Children: Updates and Foundational Cases.”



Connecting On-the-Ground Information to Policy

In other exciting news, USCIS announced in March 2022, that it would offer deferred action to youth with SIJS subject to the backlog of cases waiting to apply for a green card. As a result of advocacy efforts

on this issue, including the efforts by the ABA and CILA, the change means that over 45,000 youth in the SIJS backlog will no longer be at risk of deportation and can obtain a work permit.

Social Work Program

CILA's social work program hosted two key webinars focused on "Secondary Traumatic Stress and Self-Care" in March 2022 and "Best Practices for Serving LGBTQIA+ Unaccompanied Youth," held in June during Pride Month.

CILA released two toolkits to support advocates and families. CILA's resource, *Working with Unaccompanied Children: Mental and Behavioral Health Toolkit*, provides an overview of mental and behavioral health concerns and best practices when working with unaccompanied children. *Navigating Reunification Challenges: A Toolkit for Sponsors of Unaccompanied Minors* aims to support sponsors (parents and non-parents alike), both before reunification takes place and once the sponsor and child are living together. The toolkit is available in both English and Spanish.

CILA's social services working group continued to provide a space for social workers and staff to share resources, ideas, challenges, as well as support. The working group also hosted guest speakers on medical benefits for youth and information related to trafficking survivors.

CILA continued to answer technical assistance questions related to social services for advocates in Texas.



Pro Bono Initiatives

CILA and the COI came together to create the *ABA CILA & COI Pro Bono Program Resources & Templates Toolkit*. The 92-page resource details best practices, considerations, and resources for organizations with new or evolving pro bono programs working with children, youth, and/or families in immigration cases.

CILA co-hosted a half-day training, *Representing Children and Families in Immigration Matters*, in March 2022 with the COI, featuring speakers from several nonprofit organizations. The training was very popular, and approximately 429 participants tuned in for some or all of the half-day training.

CILA added several new resources to CILA's webpage featuring creative models for pro bono programs, including "The Case for Pro Bono Placement, Even When We 'Lose'" and

"CILA's 2021/2022 Survey Results: Engaging Pro Bono Attorneys to Support the Immigration Cases of Unaccompanied Children."

The CILA team hosted two unique projects in 2022, including "CILA's Bite-Sized Tips for New Practitioners & Pro Bono Attorneys" featuring seven tips from the CILA team with short videos for each tip and accompanying resources. CILA also created a project where advocates could share why they are involved and work on behalf of immigrant youth. Advocates shared visuals representing one word that described why they are involved.

Eighteen organizations can post case cards with pro bono opportunities in children's cases and receive interest forms from potential volunteers via CILA's platform, *Pro Bono Matters for Children Facing Deportation*. In 2022, 30 matches were made with pro bono attorneys, who expressed interest in working on a case on CILA's platform.

Get Involved

Join CILA's newsletters: monthly newsletter *Champions for Immigrant Youth* and quarterly newsletter *Pro Bono Matters*



Donate to CILA



Express interest in a pro bono case posted on CILA's platform *Pro Bono Matters for Children Facing Deportation*



Connect with CILA on social media



Thank You

Thank you to the advocates, who work tirelessly on behalf of immigrant youth. You are champions, and you inspire us with your courage, competency, compassion, and creativity. Thank you to those who support CILA and our work, whether through generosity of your time and wisdom or monetary support. Thank you to those who have collaborated with us on projects. And a special thanks to our dedicated, incredibly helpful Advisory Committee. We are grateful to be in community with you all. We celebrate what was accomplished together in 2022 and look forward to the new year.

CILA Team

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