



*Time.*



IMMIGRANT  
JUSTICE  
CORPS





*35 young people stepped into the fray as the inaugural class of Immigrant Justice Corps fellows.*



# Our timing was perfect.



No year could have been better to launch Immigrant Justice Corps than 2014. It was the year that deportations by the current administration – most without counsel – hit 2 million, an unprecedented number. As the Congressional session ended, so did the Senate's immigration bill, the most pro-immigrant package in decades. On the eve of Thanksgiving, President Obama announced the biggest immigrant legalization program in 30 years. It was immediately challenged in federal court.

Thirty-five young people stepped into this fray as the inaugural class of Immigrant Justice Corps fellows. They came from California, Nebraska, Rhode Island, Florida, and points between. Together they speak ten different languages. Half are first-generation immigrants, some in the U.S. barely a decade. All of them arrived in midtown Manhattan on the second day of September, ready to serve New Yorkers in need. Together they realize Judge Robert Katzmann's founding vision, made possible by the Robin Hood Foundation's enthusiastic incubation and generous seed funding.

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Justice Fellows have already opened more than 500 cases. They represent young people who traveled to America alone, women rebuilding their lives after domestic abuse, LGBT people fleeing persecution, and so many more.

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None of their clients would have a lawyer otherwise. With a lawyer, they are **five times** more likely to win.

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Our Community Fellows – recent college graduates – dispersed to community-based organizations in every borough.

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Community Fellows have screened more than 700 people: one-third of whom are already eligible to upgrade their immigration status. Our Fellows have helped them file applications for naturalization, DACA, and green cards.

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One-third aren't eligible now, but will be eligible for deferred action when the new programs begin. Still more were referred to Justice Fellows for help that requires a lawyer.

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Those who aren't eligible for any relief at all got an accurate, honest answer and advice on how to avoid being exploited.

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It's hard to fight poverty with one hand tied behind your back. Too many New Yorkers have their hands – or their parents' hands – tied by lack of legal status. Winning the right to work protects our clients from exploitation and raises the wage scale for everyone. Winning the right to stay here in safety fulfills the promise our city makes over and over again, to each new generation of arriving Americans. Thank you for being part of it.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rachel B. Tiven". The signature is stylized and includes a horizontal line extending to the right.

Rachel B. Tiven, Esq.  
Executive Director

# Meet the Fellows

We are both being assigned fascinating, challenging work, often on cutting-edge issues in asylum law. Rebecca just won her third defensive removal case today, and we are both working on BIA briefs, in addition to a full and varied client docket.

— Dave Wilkins  
Justice Fellow at  
Central American  
Legal Assistance

**Alain Balan**, NYU – Brooklyn Public Library  
**Gloria Chacon**, New York Law School – The Door  
**Mili Chapado**, Florida State – Mexican Consulate  
**Janice Chua**, Fordham Law – NYLAG  
**Scott Coomes**, Harvard Law – Immigration Equality  
**Stephanie Cordero**, Cardozo Law – Legal Aid Society  
**Karla Diaz**, UC San Diego – Project Hospitality  
**Kimberley Fayette**, Brown – Brooklyn Public Library  
**Scott Foleffa**, Brooklyn Law – Make the Road NY  
**Allison Gao**, Franklin & Marshall –  
Chinese American Planning Council  
**Laura Garbes**, Tufts – Part of the Solution  
**Miriam Lacroix**, Pace Law – City Bar Justice Center  
**Palmer Lawrence**, Michigan Law – Immigration Equality  
**Luis Mancheno**, Roger Williams Law – Bronx Defenders  
**Edward McCarthy**, Yale Law – Brooklyn Defender Services  
**Sean Lai McMahon**, NYU Law – Urban Justice Center  
**Aseem Mehta**, Yale – Part of the Solution  
**Caitlin Miner-Le Grand**, Yale Law – City Bar Justice Center  
**Leslie Montes**, Harvard – Project Hospitality  
**Nhu-Y Ngo**, UCLA Law – Legal Aid Society  
**Kendal Nystedt**, NYU Law – Make the Road NY  
**Wilson Osorio**, American University Law – NYLAG  
**Karla Ostolaza**, Cardozo Law – Bronx Defenders  
**Katherine Park**, Columbia Law – Urban Justice Center  
**Amy Pont**, NYU Law – The Door  
**Rebecca Popuch**, Berkeley Law – CALA  
**Emily Puhl**, Berkeley Law – Legal Services NY  
**Aaron Reichlin-Melnick**, Georgetown Law – Legal Aid  
**Jessica Rofé**, NYU Law – Brooklyn Defender Services  
**Faiza Sayed**, Columbia Law – Sanctuary for Families  
**Michael Shannon**, Boston College Law –  
Sanctuary for Families  
**Hong Tran**, Yale – Chinese American Planning Council  
**Melissa Garcia Velez**, Lehman College – Mexican Consulate  
**Tanika Vigil**, Harvard Law – Legal Services NY  
**Dave Wilkins**, Georgetown Law – CALA





## Spotlight

*Faiza Sayed* and *Michael Shannon* are working at **Sanctuary for Families**, an agency dedicated to the safety, healing and self-determination of victims of domestic violence, human trafficking and related forms of gender violence. Faiza graduated from Columbia Law School and clerked for Judge Kimba Wood. Originally from Pakistan, Faiza's family's positive experience with an immigration lawyer influenced her career choice. Michael Shannon, a graduate of Boston College Law School who speaks Spanish, French and Pulaar, was inspired by his activist parents to join the Peace Corps and pursue a legal advocacy career. Faiza and Michael represent immigrants on battered spouse waivers; VAWA self-petitions; petitions for U and T non-immigrant status; and SIJS and asylum applications.

## The New York Times

### Select Press

**Editorial: Mr. Obama's Wise Immigration Plan**  
*The New York Times*, November 21, 2014

There is a crying need for legal representation for immigrants... Not everyone is lucky enough to live in New York, where a groundbreaking effort, the Immigrant Justice Corps, has announced that it is doubling its outreach — with 50 lawyers and 30 community advocates — in response to the Obama plan.

**A Lawyer Corps for City Immigrants, By Mirela Iverac**  
*WNYC News*, September 23, 2014



25 lawyers make up the inaugural class of the Immigrant Justice Corps, whose goal is to address a growing problem: the dearth of qualified lawyers to represent immigrants facing deportation and other legal problems.

# Building Immigrant Justice Corps

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Our fellows' year began with a thrilling surprise visit from **Justice Sonia Sotomayor**, who joined **Judge Katzmann** to welcome the fellows and charge them to change lives.

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All 35 fellows spent September in our immigration law "boot camp." Guest lecturers from every host organization participated. Training included a mock trial and visits to the Tenement Museum, the New-York Historical Society, and the Department of Homeland Security.

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**Robin Hood** incubated Immigrant Justice Corps literally as well as figuratively, turning a former library space into our office. Our Fellows' biweekly meetings take place at **Cardozo School of Law**, and **Temple Emanu-el** hosted our September boot camp.

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Once permanent Executive Director **Rachel B. Tiven** was in place, Immigrant Justice Corps began to staff up. Three excellent lawyers – **Victoria Neilson**, **Sarah Deri Oshiro**, and **Maribel Hernández Rivera** – train and mentor the Justice Fellows and directly supervise the Community Fellows. Operations Director **Kelly Schnur**, an Encore fellow, has set up accounting, IT, and payroll systems.

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Our 501(c)(3) status was granted by the IRS in November.

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Our start-up year was audited by **Grant Thornton**, which gave our books a clean bill of health.

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We advertised at hundreds of schools to recruit our next class, visiting more than 30 campuses. Our Selection Committee – comprised of leading lawyers and activists – reads hundreds of applications and conducts dozens of interviews. No doubt the next class will be as accomplished and committed as the first!

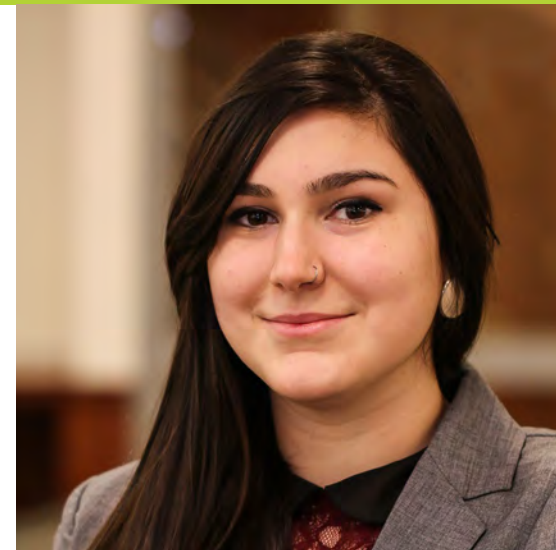
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I am filing a crime victim visa for a 17 year old boy. He was repeatedly molested and raped by a family friend over the course of almost 3 years. He ultimately reported the abuse to his high school counselor and was integral in helping the DA's office arrest and press charges against the perpetrator.

— Tanika Vigil

Justice Fellow at Legal Services of New York



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Peter Widulski

I am representing three young people from a Honduran family that has been harassed and persecuted by gang members in Honduras. One of their family members was raped, tortured, and killed. After such tragic ordeal, the whole family fled Honduras and is now seeking refuge in the US.

— Wilson Osorio

Justice Fellow at New York  
Legal Assistance Group



WWW.JUSTICECORPS.ORG

## Staff

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Sarah Deri Oshiro  
Maribel Hernández Rivera  
Kelly Schnur  
Rachel B. Tiven

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*Managing Attorney*  
*Supervising Attorney*  
*Interim Operations Director*  
*Executive Director*

## Board

Hon. Robert A. Katzmann  
Robert M. Morgenthau  
Deborah Winshel  
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