

2015 Immigrant Justice Corps Justice Fellows



Danielle Alvarado

Northeastern University School of Law | Spanish

Danielle grew up in San Jose and spent five years working to combat the mass criminalization of immigrants along the U.S./Mexico border. She has also worked with the Instituto para las Mujeres en la Migración, as a Maggio Immigrants' Rights Fellow at the New Orleans Workers' Center for Racial Justice, and at the National Immigration Project of the NLG.



Matthew Boaz

Georgetown University Law Center | Spanish

During law school, Matthew successfully represented a detained client through Georgetown Law's clinical program, and he has worked with Kids in Need of Defense and the CAIR Coalition in Washington, DC. Matthew is originally from Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.



Kristen Cates

Georgetown University Law Center | Spanish

A native of Georgia, Kristen worked as a bilingual advocate for domestic and sexual violence survivors before law school. She then continued to advocate for marginalized immigrants, serving individuals seeking relief from predatory business practices and providing trauma-informed legal services to immigrant women fleeing gender-based persecution.



Victor Cueva

Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law | Spanish, French

Originally from Lima, Peru, Victor's inspiration to attend law school stems from his experience growing up as an undocumented immigrant in the Hudson Valley. During law school he became a New York City Bar Diversity Fellow, interned at the New York Civil Liberties Union, participated in Cardozo's Immigrant Justice Clinic, and interned at Catholic Charities Immigration Legal Service.



Samuel Dillon

Rutgers School of Law-Newark | Spanish, Portuguese

Sam spent two decades as a newspaper correspondent in Latin America, winning two Pulitzer prizes and bearing witness to the violence that persuades thousands to migrate in search of a safe haven and better life. Sam enrolled in law school after reading the Katzmann report on the need for multilingual lawyers to improve immigrant representation. He participated in Rutgers Law's Immigrant Rights Clinic, counseled immigrants at a New Jersey detention center, and wrote draft opinions as an intern at the Newark Immigration Court.



Christina Elhaddad

American University Washington College of Law | Arabic, French, Spanish

Affected by the stories of refugees in her home country, Lebanon, Christina became fascinated with the repercussions of migration. She devoted herself to working with immigrant communities in Maryland and Virginia through the Women and the Law Clinic at Washington College of Law, and to establishing the school's chapter of the Iraqi Refugee Assistance Project.



William Giacofci

Roger Williams University School of Law | French

William worked in Togo as a natural resource management volunteer with the Peace Corps, and he taught English for a year in Thailand and South Korea. During law school, he represented clients in removal proceedings as a student attorney and interned with African Services Committee. Currently, he is completing a clerkship with the Executive Office for Immigration Review in Adelanto, California.

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Julina Guo

Harvard Law School | Mandarin

Julina has lived the immigrant experience in both Sweden and the U.S. Before law school, Julina worked as an immigrant caseworker for U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand. The highlights of her law school career were her work at the Harvard Immigration and Refugee Clinic, the Human Rights Clinic, the Center for Popular Democracy, and the Legal Aid Society.



Gilda Marie Holguin

Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law | Spanish

As the child of Dominican immigrants, Gilda witnessed firsthand the struggle immigrants face in obtaining better opportunities in the United States. Gilda honed her skills in Cardozo's Immigration Justice Clinic, at Sanctuary for Family's Immigration Intervention Project, and at the New York Immigration Court.



Antonia House

New York University School of Law | French, Spanish, Arabic

Antonia grew up in New York City surrounded by flourishing immigrant communities. Following 9/11, she witnessed the government, the media, and sections of the public target those communities. Since starting law school, Antonia has worked at Catholic Charities-New York, the Center for Constitutional Rights, and NYU's Immigrant Rights Clinic.



Grace Kao

Yale Law School | Mandarin

Born and raised in a Southern Californian ethnoburb full of Asian and Latino immigrants, Grace grew up surrounded by families of mixed immigration status. She has devoted herself to racial justice and immigrants' rights through her internships at the ACLU Immigrants' Rights Project and Federal Defenders of New York, and her participation in Yale's Worker and Immigrant Rights Advocacy Clinic and Criminal Justice Clinic.



Kennji Kizuka

Berkeley School of Law | Spanish

Kennji has advocated for immigrants through the East Bay Sanctuary Covenant, CAIR Coalition, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Kennji comes to IJC from a judicial clerkship with the Honorable Rosemary S. Pooler, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit. A Delaware native, he holds a master's degree in public affairs from Princeton University.



Geehyun Sussan Lee

Harvard Law School | Korean, Mandarin

Sussan, who immigrated to the U.S. 20 years ago, became impassioned about immigration legal services while applying for her own citizenship and witnessing the relative ease of her process compared to others. Sussan has worked at the Harvard Immigration & Refugee Clinic; Clinic for Migrants' Rights in Ramat Gan, Israel; and the Massachusetts Immigrant & Refugee Advocacy Coalition.



Kellie MacDonald

Harvard Law School | Spanish

Kellie grew up in Portland, Maine, a city with a large refugee population. In law school, Kellie represented detained immigrants with the Harvard Immigration Project and CAIR Coalition, worked on criminal-immigration issues with the Committee for Public Counsel Services, and fought for wages for immigrant workers with the Harvard Legal Aid Bureau.

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Katie Madison

Yale Law School | Spanish

Katie has spent her time at law school working on behalf of immigrant women and unaccompanied children who fled from abuse, neglect, and persecution. She is dedicated to helping immigrants share their stories in court and gain the opportunity to have a safe home in the United States.



Annie Mathews

New York University School of Law | Spanish

Annie began her career working with low-income immigrant women in Oakland, California. She went to law school and earned a public policy degree to better advocate for these women. She has interned at Bronx Defenders, Make the Road New York, and the Legal Aid Society. She is currently advocating for reproductive justice as a legal fellow with the ACLU.



Jonathan "J.J." Mulligan

UC Davis School of Law | Spanish

J.J.'s mother's experience of being forced into exile from Chile after the military coup in 1973 inspired him to advocate for low-income immigrants. During law school, J.J. gained significant experience representing undocumented immigrants, especially farmworkers, while working at the Watsonville Law Center, the UC Davis Immigration Law Clinic and California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation.



Anna Oguntimein

David A. Clarke School of Law (UDC) | Yoruba

A Nigerian immigrant and former teacher, Anna has spent her law school career advocating for immigrants' rights. Anna grew up in Maryland, where she founded a nonprofit organization that provides "Know Your Rights" workshops to immigrants and refugees.



Nicholas ("Nick") Phillips

Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law

Nick moved from southwest England to the United States with his family at age twelve. During law school, Nick interned at the Immigration Justice Clinic and the ACLU Immigrants' Rights Project. Nick comes to IJC after completing a clerkship with the Honorable Frederic Block of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of New York.



Ting Poon

Brooklyn Law School | Cantonese, Mandarin

Ting's profound commitment to seeking justice for immigrant communities stems from her experiences working for various immigration-related organizations, including CUNY Citizenship Now!, Immigrant Defense Project, and the Immigration Unit at Brooklyn Defender Services. Ting grew up in Flushing.



Natalia Rentá

Stanford Law School | Spanish

Originally from Puerto Rico, Natalia attended college in the U.S. and was unaware of the hurdles immigrants face to gain lawful status. Natalia worked as an immigration paralegal at Lutheran Social Services of New York, represented people in removal proceedings at Stanford's Immigrants' Rights Clinic, and helped youth apply for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals at the International Institute of the Bay Area.

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Laura Rodríguez

Emory University School of Law | Spanish

Laura's dedication to immigrant rights started with her mother, who risked her life coming to the U.S. from Colombia. Laura interned at the Executive Office for Immigration Review and the Latin American Association in Atlanta. Laura grew up on Long Island.



Nabila Taj

CUNY School of Law | Urdu, Hindi

Nabila advocated for refugee rights prior to law school; at CUNY, she challenged the criminalization of low-income immigrant communities through representation and by facilitating "Know Your Rights" trainings with the Immigrant & Non-Citizens Rights Clinic and the Creating Law Enforcement Accountability & Responsibility project.



John Travis

Boston University School of Law | Spanish

John grew up in Mexico, and his Spanish fluency and bicultural background have greatly aided his ability to work with the immigrant community. John has volunteered with Kids in Need of Defense (KIND), gone to Texas with ProBAR, and interned in the Immigration Unit at Greater Boston Legal Services. Prior to law school, John worked at the Brennan Center for Justice, focusing on voting rights issues.



Paola Uriarte

Brooklyn Law School | Spanish, French

Paola's passion for immigration law began with her own experience as a young Peruvian immigrant in New York. Before and during law school, she has been committed to representing immigrants while interning at the Immigrant Defense Project, Brooklyn Defender Services, The Legal Aid Society, and the Safe Harbor Project at Brooklyn Law School.

Community Fellows



Whitney Braunstein

Tulane University | Spanish, Portuguese

Whitney's passion for immigration advocacy was sparked by her work as a summer fellow at LIFT-New York, where she witnessed how low-income individuals were deeply affected by their immigration status. At Tulane University she was a member of the Oak Wreath, an award bestowed upon senior women who demonstrate outstanding leadership, service, and academic achievement.



Omar De Los Santos

Yale University | Spanish, German

The son of Mexican immigrants, Omar was born and raised in South Gate, California. In high school he worked to make the DREAM Act a reality in California. While in college, he was a translator and interpreter for both the Worker and Immigrant Rights Advocacy Clinic at the Yale Law School and the Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services of New Haven.

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Joan Fernandez

Princeton University | Spanish, Portuguese, French

Born in the Dominican Republic, Joan was director of the detention center visitation, scholarship, and mentorship programs for the Princeton DREAM Team. Joan was awarded scholarships and distinctions by the Leadership Enterprise for a Diverse America, the Horatio Alger Association for Distinguished Americans, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.



Paula Garcia-Salazar

CUNY Macaulay Honors College at City College | Spanish

Born in Ecuador, Paula immigrated to Leesburg, Virginia with her single mother at the age of seven. Her personal experiences as an undocumented immigrant led her to develop an interest in human rights, and her passion for immigration work deepened after she spent the summer working with asylum seekers in Washington, DC. Paula has worked on union organizing, archival research, and interpreting.



Allison Mandeville

Yale University | Spanish, Arabic

An avid language learner and Rotary Youth Ambassador in high school, Allison went on to serve as president of the Yale Refugee Project and as an interpreter for asylum-seeking clients in a New Jersey detention facility. In college, Allison studied at Al-Quds University in the West Bank and interned at the United Nations Office of the International Organization for Migration.



Mayra Melendez

Salisbury University | Spanish

Mayra's interest in immigrant advocacy began when she and her family lost their status due to the errors of an immigration attorney. She went on to co-found a youth immigrant group dedicated to immigrant rights and education access for students in Maryland, and she worked as an organizer for Migrant Clinicians Network. Mayra was also selected as a FirstGEN Civil Rights Fellow.



Anahi Mendoza

Harvard University | Spanish

Anahi Mendoza was born in Mexico City and came to the United States at age four. She graduated as valedictorian of Santa Maria High School and went on to be Director Emeritus of Act on a Dream, co-founder of Harvard's only feminist magazine, and interpreter at the Harvard Law School Immigration and Refugee Clinic. Anahi is also a White House Champion of Change.



Ji Won (Stephanie) Park

The Macaulay Honors College at Hunter | Korean, Spanish

Stephanie's experience as an immigrant naturally inspired her passion for social justice activism. As a Macaulay Honors student at Hunter College, she pursued this passion by studying the literature and history of marginalized peoples. While interning during college, Stephanie assisted New York City immigrants with immigration applications.

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Jennifer Pérez

University of California, Berkeley / Spanish

Immigration was a central part of Jennifer's life growing up. During college, Jennifer interned at California Rural Legal Assistance, where she managed the U-Visa project. She also interned at East Bay Sanctuary, where she worked with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA) and Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) applicants.



Danyeli Rodriguez Del Orbe

John Jay College of Criminal Justice | Spanish

Danyeli, a Dominican immigrant, has resided in New York City since she was eight years old. Despite her undocumented status, she was accepted to John Jay College of Criminal Justice and became an Honors student and a Vera Fellow. Danyeli went on to be cofounder and President of the John Jay Dreamers. Danyeli also interned at local immigrant rights organizations during her time in college.



Ethan Schneider

Yale University |Mandarin

Growing up as the son of a public defender and a community health pediatrician, Ethan learned the value and significance of helping people who have limited access to healthcare and legal representation. While at Yale, Ethan worked as a summer counselor for international students and was twice awarded full fellowships by the Richard U. Light Foundation to study Mandarin in both Mainland China and Taiwan.