

DECEMBER 2023

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# End-of-Year Report

2023



## Message from the **Executive Director**

Dear Friends and Supporters,

The American Immigration Council is supporting immigrants and refugees, fighting back on xenophobia, promoting belonging both nationally and at the community level all across the country, and advocating to modernize our outdated immigration system with a greater impact than ever before due to the creation of new and powerful tools within our organization and deep relationships with partners representing and serving communities in need. The finalization of our merger with the New American Economy (NAE) has culminated in an ambitious 5-year Strategic Plan to guide the Council in the years ahead as we seek to create a nation where everyone is afforded an equal opportunity to thrive socially, economically, and culturally.

We have had a high-impact year in 2023. We launched a comprehensive border solutions campaign to modernize our asylum system and grew our capacity for state and local coordination. We've been at the forefront of challenging harmful legislation and policies in the courts and have pushed for transparency on government policies and procedures through Freedom of Information Act requests. Our teams have shaped the narrative around the positive contributions of immigrants on the fabric of the nation through national and local media op-eds and through our effective national ad campaign that promotes belonging for everyone in the United States.

As we look back on everything we have accomplished since January, we are hopeful for the impact we will continue to make, even in an uncertain election year ahead. The Council has built a solid foundation with a multi-pronged approach to immigration reform that works in tandem by touching the hearts and minds of people where they live and advancing lasting legislation and policy change on all levels. With your continued support, we will scale our influence to a greater degree than ever before. In the enclosed report, you will see how we are deploying the full suite of approaches to advance a fairer, more humane immigration system; inform decisionmakers and the public discourse on immigration with facts and sophisticated research; and build a more welcoming, inclusive country from the ground up.

We are excited to share with you the progress we have made together in 2023, and as always, are grateful for your continued partnership and support of this important work.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeremy Robbins', written in a cursive style.

**Jeremy Robbins**  
Executive Director

# Our 2023 Highlights

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*Council staff at site visit to the border*

## **Crafting solutions that work for the most difficult immigration challenges facing our country:**

In May, the Council published [Beyond A Border Solution: How to Build a Humanitarian Protection System That Won't Break](#). Through these 13 recommendations, the Council believes that we can create a system for asylum processing that is flexible, orderly, and durable, respects the rights of asylum seekers, inspires confidence in the American public, and ensures that the United States remains a beacon of safety.

**Obtained our first new designation in 16 years to sponsor STEM research scholars:** This allows early career STEM researchers to engage in research, observation, or consultation related to research projects for up to five years at leading U.S. companies, a move that will directly help drive the U.S. innovation economy.

**Testifying before Congress:** On June 7 and September 20, the Council's Policy Director Aaron Reichlin-Melnick appeared before U.S. House committees to testify as an expert on the subject of [immigration laws](#) and the positive economic contributions of immigrants to the United States.

**Site visits to the border:** The Council led a delegation and joined visits to three border states — Arizona, California, and Texas — to evaluate the current migration situation and how communities are responding.

**Challenging Florida legislation:** In July, we filed [a lawsuit](#) with local and national partners, challenging the constitutionality of a provision of Florida's new anti-immigrant law, Senate Bill 1718. The case was filed against Gov. Ron DeSantis, Attorney General Ashley Moody, Florida Statewide Prosecutor Nicholas B. Cox, and the attorneys general for all 20 Florida Judicial Circuits on behalf of the Farmworker Association of Florida and various impacted individuals, including U.S. citizens and undocumented drivers and passengers who routinely travel into and out of Florida.

**Suing the Biden administration regarding CBP One:** In July, we filed [a lawsuit](#) challenging the federal government's border-wide policy and practice of turning back asylum seekers without a CBP One appointment at ports of entry along the southern border, denying them access to the U.S. asylum process. CBP One is an app designed to streamline interactions between U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers and travelers, including asylum seekers. The suit seeks to end CBP's newest iteration of unlawful metering and to ensure that the government is complying with U.S. laws meant to protect asylum seekers' rights and safety.

**Shedding light on family separation under the Trump administration:** We completed discovery and fact-gathering in our family separation lawsuit and defeated the government's motion for summary judgment. Several damaging documents prompting national media reporting were released in court filings, showing government officials instructing Border Patrol officers to send separated children to shelters for immigrant children at an "accelerated pace" to prevent reunification with their parents. In October, the [court found](#) that our clients have a right to a trial.

**Pushing for transparency on government policies:**

We filed Freedom of Information Act requests and litigation to investigate policies including the [implementation of CBP One](#); a [\\$10 million appropriation](#) made to improve legal access in detention; the acceptance of immigration bonds to secure the release of detained individuals; [accelerated immigration hearing dates](#); [disparate treatment of Black immigrants](#); and [ICE's implementation of enforcement priorities](#).

**Growing and mobilizing our Immigration Justice Campaign (IJC):**

Our network saw a tremendous 16% growth this year. We deployed their expertise in advocating for policy change by raising their voices against the asylum transit ban in solidarity with coalition partners, producing 32,813 comments — 63% of the total comments on the regulation.

**Facilitating global connections:** This year, we received designation as a program sponsor for the Research Scholar category by the U.S. Department of State, allowing us to expand our exchange program and further deepen global connections for exchange visitors, host organizations, and attorneys.

**Shaping the national media discourse around**

**immigration:** The Council's subject matter experts and resources appeared in 1,342 news stories in 2,012 national and local media outlets, including [The New York Times](#), [The Washington Post](#), [Politico](#), [The Wall Street Journal](#), [Los Angeles Times](#), [The Associated Press](#), [Forbes](#), [Univision](#), and [NPR](#).

**Tracking state and local legislation:**

Our significant state legislative tracking capacity allowed us to track over 1,000 immigration-related bills and to equip partners ranging from the White House to national advocacy coalitions and other Council departments with real-time intelligence on hundreds of bills.

**Strengthening our case with quantitative data:**

The research team authored or produced 45 publications, expanded our capacity to conduct surveys in local communities, and developed data science capacities to scrape, clean, and analyze government data.

*The Washington Post*  
*Democracy Dies in Darkness*

# Opinion | An abject Biden failure on immigration should prompt a real rethink

By [Greg Sargent](#) and [Paul Waldman](#)

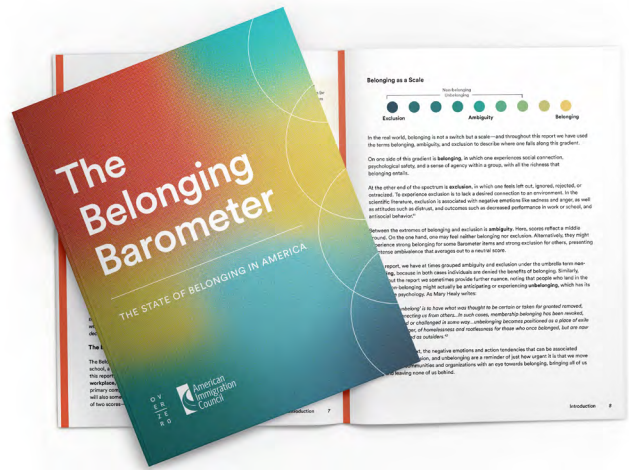
March 30, 2022 at 5:19 p.m. EDT

**Increasing our state and local influence:** The Offices of New Americans (ONA) State Network grew by three states (Maine, Minnesota, and North Dakota) and now includes membership from 19 Democrat- and Republican-led states that have engaged with Biden administration officials and held bi-weekly briefings with the White House and Department of Homeland Security since the end of Title 42. The Council has also expanded the Global Talent Chamber Network (GTCN) to represent over 85 chambers in 31 states.

**Mobilizing the business community for reform:** We published an open letter with over 100 business leaders, including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, National Retail Federation, and others, calling on Congress to reduce the wait time for asylum seekers to get work authorization, from 180 days to 30 days.

**Measuring our impact:**

In March, we released [The Belonging Barometer: The State of Belonging in America](#), a groundbreaking research tool for measuring belonging and a national survey to take the pulse on belonging in the U.S. that will allow us to measure the impact of each dollar we invest in promoting belonging.



**Promoting a culture of belonging:**

Our \$74 million [Belonging Begins with Us](#) campaign with the Ad Council continues to generate strong audience engagement and reach, and includes high-impact content partnerships, including with Sony around the summer blockbuster film, *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse*.

# Organization Update

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*Council staff at our staff retreat in Montgomery, Alabama*

**T**he American Immigration Council has fully incorporated the strengths of two entities into one merged organization that now houses a breadth of expertise, strategies, programs, and sophisticated tools like no other organization in the field to support immigrants, promote belonging and welcoming in the communities where immigrants settle, and successfully advocate for changes to modernize our country's immigration policies.

The integration of two staffs, team structures, and organizational cultures has been achieved, and an ambitious new 5-year Strategic Plan and a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Plan are being finalized, setting up the Council to scale our impact and reach to a greater degree than ever before so we are ready to address the immense challenges we currently face, as well as the potentially seismic shifts that could come with the 2024 election.

The new strategic plan will serve as a guide to achieve our goals and ensure our vision of how the Council will impact the immigration arena. The DEI plan will foster a cohesive organizational culture grounded in shared values and commitments. We engaged [The Barthwell Group](#) to support corresponding employee committees responsible for drafting the plans to help shape how we structure our DEI and strategic planning initiatives.

Merging and harmonizing two different organizational cultures remotely has been a challenge for the organization and various teams. We learned that investing early on and remaining intentional about the work to build an effective and unified staff with a shared vision is essential. By doing so, we have been able to create the conditions necessary to expand our recruitment and hiring to now include staff in 19 states. Recognizing there is no substitute for in-person relationships and trust-building, we have been intentional in planning in-person gatherings to build cohesion and camaraderie. In October, staff gathered in Montgomery, Alabama, and reflected on the complicated racial history of our nation — and how it impacts our work together — at the Equal Justice Initiative Legacy Museum and The National Memorial for Peace and Justice. Many staff were present at the AILA National Conference in Orlando in July and were able to connect with stakeholders, partners, and each other.



Council staff at the AILA National Conference in Orlando

## SPOTLIGHT

# Staff Updates



Understanding how fractured the media and information environments currently are, the Council created a new Consumer Content and Branding department in 2023 to work in concert with our Strategic

Communications department to find new and compelling ways to bring our messages and our work to policymakers, journalists, advocates, and the public. This department houses the Council's websites and digital content. We promoted **Katherine Steinberg** as the new Director of Consumer Content and Branding. Katherine has over 15 years of experience leading editorial, product development, and partnerships for brands like Nickelodeon and AOL. The content and branding team has continued the full integration of the Council's and NAE's digital content.



Growing the Council's revenue beyond the financial bump of the merger is critically important to our ability to sustain the organization's high-impact work and enable us to be agile enough to expand or scale

work strategically. Our revenue has historically been composed of foundation grants (our largest revenue source), individual donors, our J-1 Visa Program, and monetary and in-kind contributions through the American Immigration Lawyers Association and their membership. To meet this critical need, the Council hired **Mina Devadas** as Chief Development Officer in January to further develop the Council's funding strategy and programs and strengthen our fundraising infrastructure. Mina brings more than 20 years of fundraising leadership to the Council and a record of successes at organizations including United We Dream and Children's Defense Fund.

# Programmatic Updates

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## Advancing a Fairer, More Humane Immigration System:

Policy, Litigation, Transparency,  
the Immigration Justice Campaign,  
and Cultural Exchange





# Policy

The policy department has had a successful year shaping the public discourse on immigration issues and educating policymakers with subject matter expertise and a nuanced understanding of the immigration arena. We deployed targeted advocacy strategies concerning our priority issues by engaging with Congressional staff, holding Hill briefings, leading and supporting coalition advocacy letters to Congress, drafting and building support for “Dear Colleague” letters, and recommending amendments to bill text. The Biden administration has adopted multiple proposals that the Council advocated for this year, including the designation of Venezuela as an eligible country for Temporary Protected Status and the extension of work authorization for many immigrants from various backgrounds.

One of the policy team’s current priorities, supported by research and evidence from the field, is to shift policy away from an overreliance on harsh enforcement and detention towards sensible and humane immigration reforms. This includes a greater availability of parole for asylum seekers and those who might otherwise be sent to detention, modernizing our visa system so that there are enough visas to meet the needs of our economy, government-appointed counsel for anyone who cannot afford it (decades of government data demonstrates that 96% of immigrants with representation attend all their hearings), and community-based case management services administered by expert NGOs.

Our vision to offer a concrete, viable alternative policy solution was launched in May when the Council published [Beyond A Border Solution: How to Build a Humanitarian Protection System That Won't Break](#). Through these [13 recommendations](#), the Council believes that we can create a system for asylum processing that is flexible, orderly, and durable, respects the rights of asylum seekers, inspires confidence in the American public, and ensures that the United States remains a beacon of safety.

**Beyond a Border Solution** has been received by more than

**10K+**  
reporters

and related webinars have been attended by more than 1,500 stakeholders.



Targeted congressional office briefings provided education about how to message the core concepts of the report and many offices expressed continuing interest in the recommendations. More than 10,000 reporters received the report and related webinars have been attended by more than 1,500 stakeholders. Specific recommendations from the report have formed the basis for solutions-based op-eds in [The Dallas Morning News](#), [Houston Chronicle](#), and [San Antonio Express-News](#).

Going forward, the Council plans to amplify the special report's recommendations across our networks to champion that border challenges are not an impossible situation that only enforcement- and deterrence-based policies can "solve." This is part of our greater vision to guide the narrative around humane solutions and actionable reform, acknowledging that offering effective solutions on the border is the gateway to broader conversations about any topic related to immigration.

On June 7, the Council's Policy Director Aaron Reichlin-Melnick [appeared before the U.S. House Judiciary Subcommittee](#) on Immigration, Integrity, Security, and Enforcement to address the question of whether the Biden administration is faithfully executing the law. His testimony explained how immigration officials are imbued with significant enforcement discretion and that CBP officers are required to carry out both enforcement laws and humanitarian protection laws. He called for Congress to come together to update our immigration laws and address the difficult question of how to build a 21st-century humanitarian protection system. Aaron was [back in front of Congress again](#) on September 20, testifying to the full House Homeland Security Committee about the positive economic contributions of immigrants to the United States. His testimony drew extensively on our research team's work. Throughout the hearing, multiple members of Congress used Council data to illustrate the economic benefits of immigration.



Aaron Reichlin-Melnick appearing before the U.S. House Judiciary Subcommittee

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*Rebuilding a functional system does not require a radical overhaul of U.S. immigration law. Nor will it lead to open borders. Instead, creating and funding a flexible, orderly, and safe asylum system will reduce both irregular entries and unjust outcomes.*

**Aaron Reichlin-Melnick**  
*Policy Director*

## Dara Lind



In January, we hired Dara Lind as a new Senior Fellow. Dara has extensive reporting experience covering immigration policy for *ProPublica* and *Vox* and cohosting the *Vox* podcast “The Weeds.” She has covered immigration in some form since the end of the George W. Bush administration. Dara’s expertise in unpacking complex information for the general public, decision-makers, and the media was on display in her two notable *New York Times* op-eds, [“We Should Give Up the Fantasy of Solving the Border Crisis”](#) and [“The U.S. Keeps Telling People to Come the ‘Right Way.’ They’re Listening.”](#), and in the publication, [“How To Seek Asylum \(Under Biden’s Asylum Transit Ban\), In 15 Not-At-All-Easy Steps”](#). She has continued to publish op-eds and represent the Council’s policy team in media appearances.

Our team continues to strongly advocate for Congress to pass a permanent solution for undocumented youth across the United States, including those who participate in the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) initiative. The policy team is currently updating our fact sheets on the Dream Act and DACA as part of our regular process of ensuring that our materials are up-to-date and continuously relevant. Our team also continues to work closely as a member of the Evacuate Our Allies coalition on the reintroduction of the Afghan Adjustment Act, collaborating with military, business, and faith partners to work toward a long-term legislative solution for our Afghan allies.

Since the summer board meeting, the policy team has also traveled to three different border states to evaluate the situation facing migrants and how communities are responding. In September, we led a delegation to Tucson and Nogales and met with Border Patrol, CBP’s Office of Field Operations, local NGOs, the Mexican consulate, and representatives from Pima County to discuss migrant response in southern Arizona and on the Mexican side of the border in Nogales. Our write-up of the lessons learned from this trip was personally shared with U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas. In October, four members of the policy team traveled to El Paso and Ciudad Juárez to interview migrants and meet with local NGOs and government partners to discuss migrant response. In November, our new Senior Policy Counsel Adriel Orozco traveled to San Diego to work with our long-term partner Al Otro Lado, helping migrants who have recently crossed into California and investigating the situation in California.



Council staff at site visit to the border

In 2023, the policy department has also:

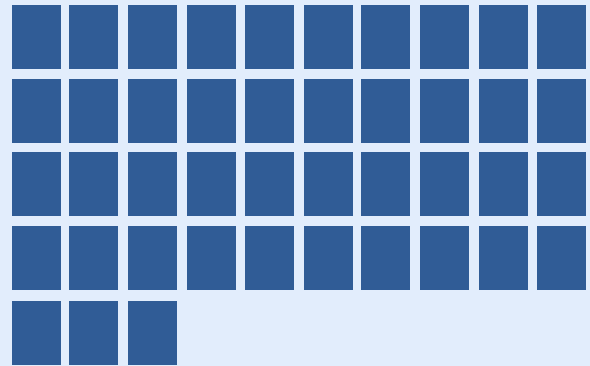
- Published **43** blog posts, **10** new or updated fact sheets, **three** regulatory comments, **six** op-eds on immigration policy, and **one** special report.
- Worked with the IJC team to implement **six** calls to action to leverage our large pool of IJC volunteers to call for positive policy changes.

The policy team participated in and helped convene coalitions to support our priorities:

- The Council joined a coalition of **129** labor, immigration, civil rights, and religious organizations calling for members of the House of Representatives to vote against the anti-immigrant bill H.R.2 Secure the Border Act of 2023.
- In partnership with **232** organizations, the Council joined a letter calling on the Biden administration to create a more humane immigration system by ensuring asylum seekers and other migrants were not placed in immigration detention as Title 42 ended.
- The Council joined **50** advocacy organizations in a letter urging U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to preserve the option of in-person bond payments, and raised concerns about the accessibility, functionality, and data privacy and security of the agency’s new bond payments web-based system Cash Electronic Bonds Online (CeBONDS).
- The Council joined **four** other organizations, collectively representing thousands of stakeholders across the United States, in a letter urging the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to address the procedural deficiencies in the Fiscal Year 2024 H-1B Visa registration and lottery process.
- In partnership with the National Immigration Project (NIPNLG) and the Rocky Mountain Immigrant Advocacy Network (RMIAN), the Council filed an administrative complaint demanding an immediate investigation into the increased use and misuse of solitary confinement at the Denver Contract Detention Facility in Aurora, Colorado. Five investigations were opened as a result of this complaint.
- The Council joined with a coalition of large national groups, including the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), to provide Congress with a “dos” and “don’ts” guide to the budget supplemental debate.

In 2023, the policy department published:

## 43 blog posts



## 10 new or updated fact sheets



## 6 op-eds on immigration policy



## 1 special report



# Litigation

The Council’s legal team advocated through the court system to prevent or invalidate unlawful and unjust laws and practices at the federal and state level to create a more just, fair, and humanitarian immigration system. We have sought to empower immigration attorneys and other litigators through practice advisories, trainings, and convenings to effectively pursue these same goals.

The Council’s legal team has maintained a docket of 13 affirmative lawsuits to protect the rights of all those affected by and working through the immigration system.

The legal team — with the ACLU National Prison Project, ACLU of the District of Columbia, ACLU of Arizona, and the law firm Milbank — filed an amended complaint in August in [a lawsuit](#) (*Florence Immigrant & Refugee Rights Project v. U.S. Dept of Homeland Security, et al.*), challenging the barriers to access counsel at the Florence Correctional Center (FCC) in Arizona. The court entered a preliminary injunction ordering the government to provide better facilities for improved attorney access to their detained clients. The lawsuits seek to ensure that attorneys can have timely, confidential communication with their detained clients by phone, videoconferencing, and in person at FCC.

## SPOTLIGHT

## Challenging Florida’s Unconstitutional Anti-Immigrant Law

In July, the legal team filed [a lawsuit](#) (*Farmworker Association of Florida v. DeSantis*) with the Southern Poverty Law Center, American Civil Liberties Union, ACLU of Florida, and Americans for Immigrant Justice, challenging a provision of Florida Governor Ron DeSantis’ new anti-immigrant law, Senate Bill 1718. The lawsuit focuses on Section 10 of the law, which criminalizes the transportation of individuals into Florida who may have entered the country unlawfully and have not been “inspected” by the federal government since. The complaint states that it is unconstitutional for a state to unilaterally regulate federal immigration and that Florida’s use of the term “inspection” is incoherent and unconstitutionally vague.



Ringo Chiu

The case was filed against Gov. Ron DeSantis, Attorney General Ashley Moody, Florida Statewide Prosecutor Nicholas B. Cox, and the attorneys general for all 20 Florida Judicial Circuits on behalf of the Farmworker Association of Florida and various impacted individuals, including U.S. citizens and undocumented drivers and passengers who routinely travel into and out of Florida.



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The secret history of the U.S.  
government's family-separation policy

“We need to take  
away children.”

An investigation by  
Caitlin Dickerson

The legal team completed discovery and fact-gathering in our family separation lawsuit, [C.M. v. United States](#), and defeated the government's motion for summary judgment. Our lawyers and partners Arnold & Porter, Kairys, Rudovsky, Messing, Feinberg & Lin LLP, National Immigrant Justice Center, and National Immigration Litigation Alliance deposed key government officials to uncover details on the origins and implementation of the Trump administration's family separation policy. Several damaging documents were released in court filings, showing government officials instructing Border Patrol officers to send separated children to shelters for immigrant children at an “accelerated pace” to prevent reunification with their parents. A summary of key damaging documents can be found [here](#). These documents were highlighted in reporting from [The Washington Post](#) and [The Atlantic](#) with the public discussion on the Trump administration's family separation policy being revisited by news networks like [NBC](#) and [ABC](#). In October, the court denied the government's motion for summary judgment, finding that our clients have a right to a trial. The court found that “Plaintiffs persuasively argue that [high-level government officials] designed the [Zero Tolerance and other policies] to separate families as a means of deterrence and despite knowing that it would cause severe trauma to children and parents.” The case will now go to trial unless there is a settlement.

SPOTLIGHT

## Challenging CBP One Turnback Policy

In July, the legal team, with Mayer Brown, Vinson & Elkins, and the Center for Gender and Refugee Studies, filed [a lawsuit](#) (*AOL et. al v. Mayorkas*) challenging the federal government's border-wide policy and practice of turning back asylum seekers without a CBP One appointment at ports of entry along the southern border, denying them access to the U.S. asylum process. The plaintiffs in the case are immigrant rights organizations Al Otro Lado and Haitian Bridge Alliance, and nine individuals turned away at the southern border by CBP and denied their fundamental right to seek asylum in the United States. The suit seeks to end CBP's newest iteration of unlawful metering, which we [previously brought suit over](#), and to ensure that the government is complying with U.S. laws meant to protect asylum seekers' rights and safety. In October the court found that it did not have authority to order a preliminary injunction of the policy. Now the government must answer the plaintiffs' complaint.



Ronny Sison

We continue monitoring through September 2026 ICE's compliance with the settlement in our victory in [Garcia Ramirez et al. v. ICE](#), which challenged the practice of arresting and detaining young people on their 18th birthdays, often placing them in detention centers and jails instead of identifying sponsors, group homes, or other alternatives to detention. The settlement has been extraordinarily impactful as ICE's required monthly data has revealed: From October 2021 through September 2023, 99.7% of age-outs have been released rather than detained. By comparison, 75% of age-outs were *detained* when the lawsuit was filed. Co-counsel in this case are the National Immigrant Justice Center and the law firm Kirkland & Ellis.

In January, our legal team, the American Immigration Lawyers Association, and the law firms of Gibbs Houston Pauw, Bless Litigation, Joseph & Hall PC, Kuck Baxter Immigration Partners LLC, and Siskind Susser, PC filed [a lawsuit](#) (*Guevara Enriquez v. USCIS*) to hold the Biden administration accountable for the increasing delays in processing unlawful presence waivers, which are a necessary step for many immigrants in the U.S. to become a lawful permanent resident. Until these waivers are decided, plaintiffs — who are spouses of U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents — cannot work lawfully and remain subject to removal from the United States, leaving the plaintiffs and their families stuck due to governmental dysfunction. The legal team has moved to certify a class of all immigrants affected by these delays, which they estimate to be 70,000-100,000 immigrants.

The legal team continues to educate the legal community:

- By the end of the year, we will have published **nine** new or updated practice advisories.
- Members of the legal team have spoken on **over 25** panels, continuing legal education programs, webinars, and other presentations for the legal community.
- In November the legal team hosted a convening for **over 70** litigators from **37** immigration organizations and law firms.
- The legal team has published **29** blogs.

# Transparency

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**T**he Council’s transparency team has played a leading role in shedding light on immigration policies and facts that are otherwise shielded from the public eye through our Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) filings.

In July, the Council along with the ACLU National Prison Project and the New York Civil Liberties Union sued DHS and ICE seeking to compel the departments to produce a report prepared for Congress regarding a \$10 million appropriation made to improve legal access in detention. The ACLU had filed a FOIA request for the report in May, and when no records were received within the statutory timeframe, the lawsuit proceeded.

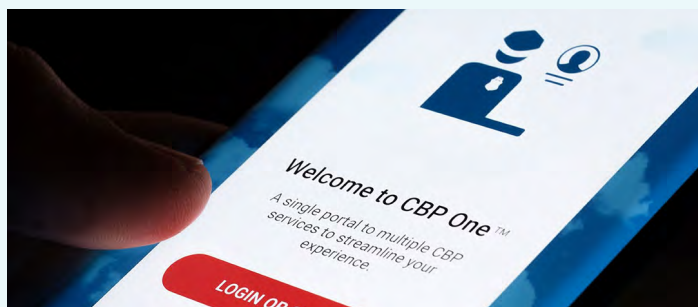
The Council continued to litigate a 2022 case pressing ICE to make information about its policies for accepting immigration bonds to secure the release of detained individuals publicly available. As a result of the lawsuit, ICE published a version of its bond manual on its FOIA library.

After the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) failed to respond to the Council’s October 2022 [FOIA](#) seeking records about its practice of moving up the date of immigrants’ hearings with little to no notice to their lawyers, the Council filed suit against EOIR in July. The FOIA seeks 1) records about the notice immigrants and their lawyers should receive from EOIR; 2) records about how immigration judges decide whether to grant a continuance when the reason for the extension is attorneys’ work-related conflicts or workload; and 3) data about the number of cases EOIR has advanced in the last two years.

## SPOTLIGHT

## Investigating CBP’s Use of Mobile Application CBP One

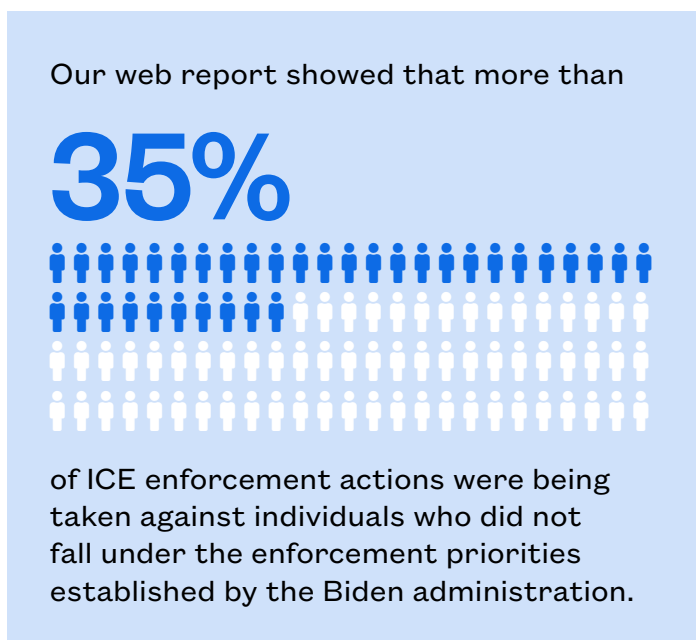
**T**he transparency team filed a FOIA in July to investigate the implementation of [CBP One](#). When CBP did not respond to the request, the Council along with the Center for Gender and Refugee Studies filed a lawsuit in October to compel disclosure, seeking information about procedures for processing migrants who do not have a CBP One appointment, the number of migrants impacted, the agency’s cooperation with Mexican officials regarding such migrants, and the agency’s process capacity at ports of entry.





The transparency team continues to press for records about the [disparate treatment of Black immigrants](#) in immigration court proceedings and detention facilities.

The Council, along with our partners at the Immigrant Legal Resource Center, published never-before-seen data obtained in response to FOIA litigation about ICE’s implementation of its enforcement priorities from the time period these guidelines were adopted to the time new DHS directives took effect in November 2021. The Council analyzed the data in a recently published web report — [ICE Didn’t Follow Federal Enforcement Priorities Set by Biden Administration](#). The web report demonstrated that more than 35 percent of ICE enforcement actions were being taken against individuals who did not fall under the enforcement priorities established by the administration.



Other reports summarize government records and data on important immigration developments, including one [detailing the development of CBP One](#), and another [detailing USCIS failures to adjudicate humanitarian applications by Afghan asylum seekers](#).

The Council, along with partner organizations, updated the practice advisory on [Nightingale v. USCIS and FOIA Requests for Immigration Case Files \(A-Files\) in April](#). The advisory 1) explains the ways to submit a FOIA request for a client’s immigration records, or A-File; 2) provides suggestions for avoiding agency rejections of the requests; and 3) identifies issues related to the *Nightingale* injunction that class counsel is monitoring.

The transparency team also published its [FOIA Litigation Toolkit](#). The advisory provides immigration practitioners with step-by-step instructions about how to file a lawsuit under the Freedom of Information Act. It explains the preliminary steps that need to be completed before filing the lawsuit, the appropriate parties in a FOIA case, the proper venue for filing, the types of claims litigants may bring, how to file the complaint and supporting documents, and what to expect after the lawsuit is filed. Additionally, the toolkit contains sample documents to help guide practitioners.

# Immigration Justice Campaign

**T**hrough the Immigration Justice Campaign (IJC), we have broadened and built up our nationwide volunteer infrastructure that can mobilize responsive legal representation and advocacy. Our network of advocates has seen tremendous growth, and we have continued to deploy their expertise in creative ways — whether advocating for policy change by raising their voices or representing clients in court. In 2023, IJC has:

- Added **3,145** new people to our network of advocates for a total network of **22,484** individuals — a **16%** growth in the network.
- Partnered with policy and legal teams to present **six** grassroots advocacy opportunities, or Take Actions, gathering a total of **37,762** messages to policymakers from **21,814** unique participants.
- Together with two partner organizations, we led a coalition of **38** organizations from across the immigration sector who came together to respond to the federal government’s request for comments on the proposed asylum transit ban producing **32,814** comments in opposition to this harmful proposed rule.
- Placed **531** pro bono engagements, helped **329** migrants, and engaged **259** volunteers in casework.
- Supported clients from **34** countries speaking **16** languages.
- Secured the release of **19** people from detention, won immigration relief for **22** people, won **six** victories at the Board of Immigration Appeals, and won **one** victory at a Circuit Court of Appeals.

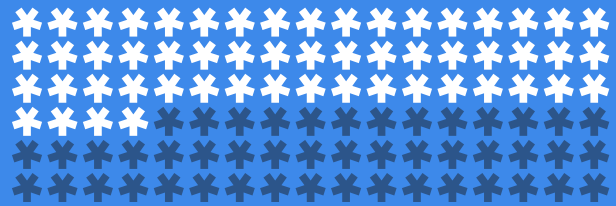
In 2023, IJC has seen:

**102**

Cases concluded

**54%**

Success rate



We trained IJC volunteers to meet a broader range of legal service needs both inside and outside of detention by hosting **11** webinars with a total of **3,006** unique participants, focusing on topics such as how case management makes for a better immigration system, the details of the asylum transit ban, and the impact of Title 42 coming to an end, as well as training for pro bono attorneys such as how to conduct remote intakes and the specifics of representing asylum seekers at Aurora Immigration Court. We continue to expand our online training platform to be a go-to, easy-to-navigate resource and learning hub to meet volunteer advocates’ diverse needs.



## Planning for the Future of the Immigration Justice Campaign

**A**fter six years of pro bono lawyering for immigration justice, we are entering a new phase of the Campaign. We are working to build the scalable, adaptable, and high-impact organization we need to meet the current political moment, offer high-quality representation and services to people directly impacted by the immigration enforcement system, and create the nimble and high-impact direct service and advocacy tools we'll need to be ready for a potential new administration after the 2024 election.

While we will not be taking on new cases during this planning period, our volunteers will continue working as hard as they always do to win our open cases alongside their current clients, and we will continue to rely on our network of more than 20,000 advocates to fight for changes to our immigration system and how our government enforces it. We remain committed to our core mission of serving people who would otherwise have to navigate our immigration enforcement system without the help of a lawyer, and to reducing and ultimately ending immigration detention. Given the significant shift in the public debate surrounding immigration issues in recent years, we are taking the time necessary to rethink our structure, strategy, approach, and sustainability to make us the most effective and responsive advocates we can be in the field.

Through our successful collaboration with the Welcome Legal Alliance (including VECINA, the American Bar Association, Human Rights First, and Welcome.US), we quickly engaged **1,796** volunteers and supported **1,695** resettled Afghans over the course of our project offering assistance to Afghan asylum seekers. IJC utilized its already established pro bono model to coordinate legal representation for Afghans, including those who risked their lives to help our troops overseas. When they were brought over during Operation Allies Welcome, Afghans were issued humanitarian parole which only grants them temporary protection. The path to permanent residence is much more complicated and underscores the critical role of pro bono legal representation in our system. With more than 80,000 Afghans evacuated and seeking refuge in the United States, the ongoing need for access to essential legal support is substantial.

We have also leveraged our volunteer network to provide individualized telephonic legal orientations, legal intake, pro se plus, and full representation for individuals and families who were able to enter the United States during the initial wind-down of the Migrant Protection Protocols (a.k.a. "Remain in Mexico" program). In 2023, we have placed **244** pro bono engagements for **167** migrants formerly subject to MPP — bringing the total numbers to **689** matters for **444** migrants over the course of the project.

IJC continued to leverage the quantitative case data we collected in our case management database as a tool to strengthen the case for alternatives to immigration detention. We developed a detention data story to be housed on IJC's website that lays out the basics of immigration detention and the case to end it. Additionally, our case management database provided client and volunteer sources for op-eds and media interviews to make the case against detention. We continued to use quantitative and qualitative data to make specific recommendations for the closure of individual detention centers due to egregious conditions, including the Torrance County Detention Facility in New Mexico and the Denver Contract Detention Facility in Aurora, Colorado. Finally, we leveraged our data in support of local initiatives to end the use of private detention centers, leading to the successful passage of such a law in Colorado.

# Cultural Exchange

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**T**he Council sponsors intern and trainee programs at host organizations across the United States, promoting exchange by providing direct support to exchange visitors, host organizations, and attorneys, from application for J-1 Visa sponsorship through alumni engagement. In 2022, we began a strategic rebuilding and rebranding of our exchange program that has brought many accomplishments in 2023 including, most notably, the new designation as a program sponsor for the Research Scholar category by the U.S. Department of State — a designation few organizations are awarded. This year the cultural exchange team has also:

- Obtained our first new designation in 16 years to sponsor STEM research scholars, allowing early career STEM researchers to engage in research, observation, or consultation related to research projects for up to five years at leading U.S. companies. A move that will directly help drive the U.S. innovation economy.
- Participated in Advocacy Day – 2023
  - Successfully met with the offices of Senators Raphael Warnock, Jon Ossoff, John Fetterman, Bernie Sanders, and Representative Lucy McBath to discuss the J-1 exchange visitor program.
- Created a [J-1 Explainer Video](#) for the exchange team’s website and LinkedIn Page.
- Conducted an American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) University Roundtable attended by **234** individuals titled [J-1 Visa: Diversify Your Business Immigration Practice](#).
- Hosted an AILA continuing legal education (CLE) seminar on the topic “Down to Details: Jazzing Up the J-1 Training/Internship Placement Plan” (DS-7002) attended by **113** individuals.
- Exhibited at the 2023 Spring AILA CLE Conference, providing crucial information about the J-1 Intern and Trainee program.
- Presented at Ohio Business for Immigration Solutions, delivering a comprehensive overview and highlighting the advantages of the J-1 Intern and Trainee program.
- Presented at the 2023 AILA Annual Conference Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) Chapter meeting, offering a comprehensive overview and highlighting the advantages of the J-1 Intern and Trainee program.
- Delivered a brief overview at the 2023 AILA Annual Conference Canadian Chapter meeting, sharing insights on the J-1 program.
- Participated as an exhibitor in the Worldwide ERC®’s Global Workforce Symposium with **200** exhibitors and **1,800+** registrants.
- Presented on the J-1 category and global exchange for a Worldwide ERC® webinar. **496** people registered, **297** attended and the session was rated 4.9/5 across all measures.
- Our 2023 goal to increase our program revenue by promoting the visibility of the Council’s exchange department within the AILA community, other attorneys, and Fortune 500 companies is on track. As of October, 90% of our \$1.4 million annual revenue projection has been achieved.



*This is Engineering*

# Informing Decisionmakers and the Public Discourse

Communications, Research, Storytelling, Arts and Culture

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*Little Amal in San Antonio*

**E**ffective messaging and counter-messaging to combat the rising prevalence of anti-migrant rhetoric, misinformation, and disinformation is essential in today's immigration climate. Compelling storytelling and reality-based narratives built around unifying language move the hearts and minds of skeptics in the middle and

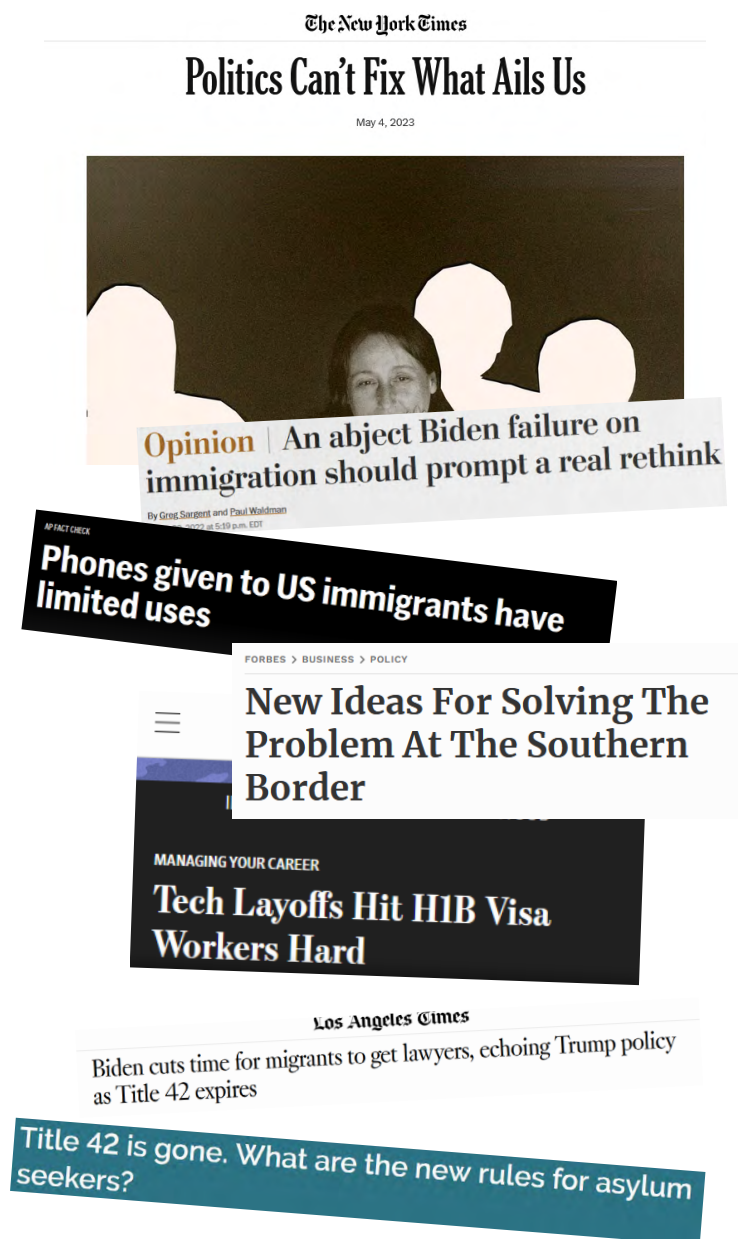
make legislative and policy changes more likely to take hold. Our communications, research, and storytelling teams work to ensure that the public debate around immigration is centered around facts and sound analysis and provide the multi-pronged approach to immigration reform that will drive progress no matter what the future holds.

# Communications

The Council utilized the full range of strategic communications approaches to elevate our research and policy advocacy efforts, working to ensure that the public debate around immigration and policy is centered around facts and sound analysis. In 2023, the Council's subject matter experts and resources have appeared in **1,812** news stories in **2,019** national and local media outlets, including [The New York Times](#), [The Washington Post](#), [The Wall Street Journal](#), [The Los Angeles Times](#), [The Associated Press](#), [NPR](#), [Bloomberg](#), [The San Diego Union-Tribune](#), [The Boston Globe](#), [The Intercept](#), [USA TODAY](#), [NBC News](#), [ABC News](#), [CNN](#), [The Denver Post](#), [Telemundo](#), [Univision](#), [Forbes](#), [POLITICO](#), [Houston Chronicle](#), [Dallas Morning News](#), and [The Hill](#).

The Council published 107 blog posts to our nationally recognized blog, [Immigration Impact](#), which received over **491,197** page views in 2023. The team has hosted **16** webinars in 2023 featuring our experts, with **350-470** attendees per webinar, including a mixed audience of lawyers and nonprofit leaders, coordinating with partners across the country to lift key messages. We implemented strategies to drive website traffic, reaching over **1.5 million people**, and social media targeting our **176,000+ followers** (a 2% increase from 2022).

The Council will continue to push strong narratives around the importance of belonging, welcoming new Americans, sharing myth-busting research, and highlighting our subject matter experts who break down complicated immigration policy and combat hateful false narratives, particularly as we head into another election-year cycle.



# Research

The Council's research team played an essential role across the organization to employ sophisticated data analysis and data science techniques to elevate colleagues' and coalitions' work. The work of this team is central to our organization's ability to ground the discourse in facts and sound analysis.



*Presenting a research report in Kent County, Michigan*

In addition to these collaborative efforts, the research team has expanded our capacity to conduct surveys in local communities and developed data science capacities to scrape, clean, and analyze government data.

## The research team has supported the following Council teams in 2023 by:

**Transparency:** Releasing a [web report](#) showing ICE enforcement priorities using data obtained from a FOIA request; analyzing data scraped from I-213 forms to examine CBP's enforcement tactics, including the racial profiling of immigrants; developing an [interactive map](#) showing CBP involvement in efforts to police protestors in the wake of George Floyd's death.

**Legal:** Developing an [interactive map](#) showing the demand for H-2A workers across the U.S.

**Policy:** Conducting quantitative analysis on EOIR data to show representation rates in immigration courts across the country.

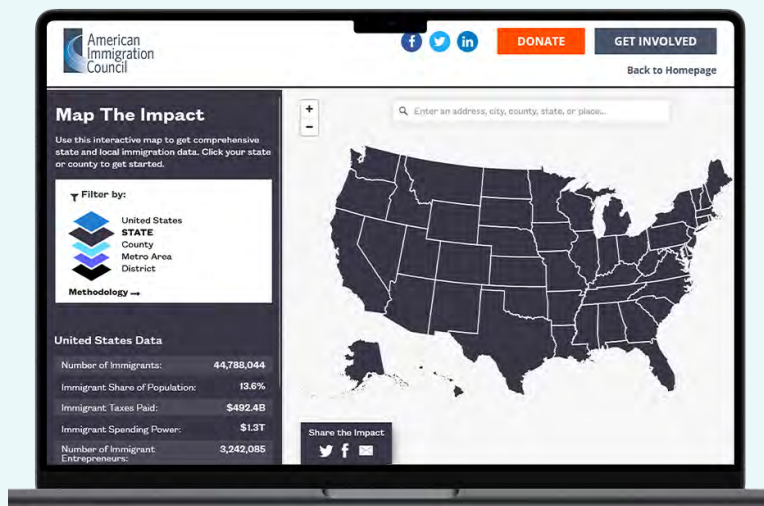
**Immigration Justice Campaign:** Developing a web report highlighting IJC's work to end our addiction to immigration detention.

**Center for Inclusion and Belonging:** Integrating questions from CIB's Belonging Barometer to the survey for the YMCA Youth Unity Projects to measure the impact of the program on the sense of belonging among diverse young groups.

**Cultural Exchange:** Developing a data portal that can be used to look up the accreditation of foreign colleges and universities.

# Map the Impact

We relaunched our [Map the Impact](#) with a comprehensive coverage of more than 100 data points about immigrants and their contributions in all 50 states and the country overall. It continues to be widely cited in places ranging from [Gov. Newsom's declaration](#) for California's Immigrant Heritage Month to [a Forbes article](#) and [PBS' Two Cents series](#) that targets millennials and Gen Z.



This year the research team produced **45** publications, including **four** special reports, **three** web reports, **29** fact sheets, and **nine** blog posts. Included in these publications are two special reports providing the most up-to-date estimates about key immigrant populations: [Starting Anew: The Economic Impact of Refugees in America](#) and [The Contributions of Temporary Protected Status Holders to the U.S. Economy](#). Our ability to produce targeted special reports and fact sheets is invaluable to our state and local coalitions and regional advocacy partners on the ground to convey the importance of immigrants in the fabric of our nation and ground that messaging with indisputable facts.



# Storytelling

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**T**he Council’s storytelling team is a team of full-time journalists who are a resource for anyone who cares deeply about immigration and wants to tell their story in the media. The storytelling team has successfully placed **91** op-eds throughout 2023. Since its inception, the team has helped place a total of **805** opinion pieces and essays in major news outlets across the country, featuring many immigrants’ stories in their own words. Our mission is to help a diverse spectrum of voices participate publicly in this important conversation through personal essays, op-eds, and letters to the editor. We aim to uplift perspectives that are both thoughtful and thought-provoking, nuanced, and empathetic.

Some success stories include pieces in [Fast Company](#), [The Colorado Sun](#), [Houston Chronicle](#), the [Pittsburgh Post Gazette](#), [Fox News](#), and the [Lexington Herald Leader](#).

# Arts and Culture

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**T**he Council was a proud national partner of the [Little Amal Tour](#), an internationally celebrated 12-foot-tall puppet of a 10-year-old Syrian refugee girl that has been welcomed in more than 250 artistic events across the globe. Her urgent message to the world is “Don’t forget about us,” highlighting the fact that half of all refugees are children. The project celebrates the cultural diversity, migration stories, and contributions made by refugees and immigrants. Little Amal embarked on a 6,000-mile nine-week-long journey across the United States in September and was featured at more than 100 artistic events across 40 towns and cities where immigrants settled and built new and cherished communities. Her journey shows how art can be a tool for understanding and sparking conversations on difficult subjects.



*Little Amal in San Antonio, Texas*

# Building a More Welcoming Country from the Ground Up:

State and Local Initiatives and the Center for Inclusion and Belonging



# State & Local Initiatives

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**T**he Council’s state and local initiatives team engaged government, business, and nonprofit leaders nationwide to promote a more welcoming environment for newcomers. To date, we are active in over **100** communities and nearly **40** states, and we are working to expand our networks and coalitions to scale our impact and reach. In 2023, we expanded our state and local capacity as we brought on a new Director, Rich André, and Deputy Director, Victoria Francis, along with a new State Policy Manager and Policy Associate.

State and local engagement is an inroad to promoting immigration reform, especially when federal policy change is at a stalemate. It is also a critical messaging avenue to combat rising state-level restrictionism, misinformation, and disinformation.

## State-Level Advocacy

This year the state and local initiatives team tracked over **1,000** immigration-related bills and advocated with local partners for state-level policies that help foster an inclusive environment for immigrants and refugees. Our significant state legislative tracking capacity allows us to equip partners ranging from the White House to national advocacy coalitions and other Council departments with real-time intelligence on hundreds of bills each year. Together with the research team, state and local produced **28** state and local reports. We supported **27** state bills—ranging from the creation of Offices of New Americans to workforce polices that increase access to occupational licenses for immigrants—in written testimony, letters of support, and by equipping local advocates on the ground with Council data and best practices. **Twelve** of those bills became law.

The team has been particularly active in Texas, where the state legislature was called into a fourth special session on November 7 and Governor Abbot included immigration as one of the priority topics. Several bills were of particular concern related to smuggling, improper entry, and border security funding, which the Council’s Texas organizer kept the organization abreast of. The Council team provided talking points that advocates could share with legislators for floor debates to try to reduce the harm of the bills and get important talking points on the record should there be future litigation on any of the bills.



*Global Talent Chamber Network annual convening*



In 2023, we launched the fifth cohort of the [Gateways for Growth Challenge](#) — a competitive award opportunity for local governments, chambers of commerce, and non-profit organizations promoting immigrant inclusion in their communities. The program has assisted **76** local communities in **37** states by providing customized demographic and socioeconomic research and individualized technical assistance to support the creation of community-wide plans that outline concrete strategies for leveraging the skills and contributions of all community residents.



Presenting Gateways for Growth data

Our newest grantees are Baltimore County, MD; Brockton, MA; Greater Salem, MA; Ottawa County, MI; Fort Wayne, IN; Pittsburgh, PA; Portland and Southern Region, ME; Santa Clara County, CA; Santa Fe, NM; and the South Bend Elkhart (Michiana Region), IN. **Six** communities released tailored research reports, **three** are in process, and **four** received matching grants to support planning efforts. This fall, we also launched a local commissioned report in Grand Rapids, MI, a Gateways for Growth alumni community, with Council staff presenting the report's findings at a local event that was part of a community-led initiative to drive economic prosperity for the region through immigration and revitalize the [Michigan Compact on Immigration](#).

## State Compacts and Business Coalitions

There are now **eight** business-led state [Compacts on Immigration](#) with over **760** signatories across the nation including in Texas, Iowa, Florida, Utah, Colorado, Michigan, Ohio, and Maine, mobilizing the business community to promote the economic case for immigration reform and the principles that should guide the conversation. The Council supports **three** successful statewide business coalitions in Colorado, Ohio, and Texas, whose mission is to elevate the private sector's role in educating, promoting, and advocating for immigration policies that strengthen the economy and attract international talent.



The growing influence of our Texas business coalition, [Texans for Economic Growth \(TEG\)](#), now consists of over **145** Texas businesses, chambers of commerce, and trade associations dedicated to recognizing and supporting the positive impact that immigrants have on the Texas economy including Spurs Sports & Entertainment (which owns and operates the San Antonio Spurs), Uber, and PepsiCo. Some of TEG's 2023 work included advocating in the offices of leadership in the Texas legislature and with key members of Congress in D.C. and in their districts.



## OHIO BUSINESS *for* IMMIGRATION SOLUTIONS

The [Ohio Business for Immigration Solutions](#) coalition has increased membership by over 400% since its launch, now with more than **100** members, engaging both businesses and state entities in immigration reforms that will strengthen the economy, attract and retain global talent, and bring new businesses to Ohio. The state and local and research teams worked with our Ohio coalition to release research on the [Economic Contributions of Immigrants in Ohio's Workforce](#) that highlights how immigrants help fill workforce shortages across sectors including manufacturing, healthcare, STEM, and education fields. As a result, a coalition member released an [op-ed](#) to highlight Ohio's chronic nursing shortages and how immigration can be a solution.



## COLORADO BUSINESS COALITION *for* IMMIGRATION SOLUTIONS

[Colorado Business Coalition for Immigration Solutions](#) is now composed of more than **45** business, industry, and trade organizations and is the business voice for immigration reform across the state, partnering closely with state government leadership. We worked with our Colorado business coalition to identify areas of research on the H-2A and H-2B needs and contributions to the state, particularly looking at the role immigrants do and can play in improving labor shortages, and that data was provided to Senator John Hickenlooper's office.

The on-the-ground organizers for these three coalitions have organized their members to participate in various summits, presentations, and panels, including the [Texas Association of Business](#) (TAB) Annual Policy Convening, as well as events hosted by the [Colorado Business Roundtable](#) (COBRT), and the [Ohio Chamber of Commerce Small Business Council](#).

### SPOTLIGHT

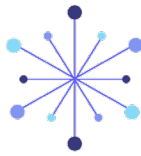


## OFFICE OF NEW AMERICANS STATE NETWORK

The [Offices of New Americans \(ONA\) State Network](#) — a bipartisan forum for state policy leaders who are responsible for addressing immigrant and refugee integration and economic development — has expanded membership to **19** Democrat- and Republican-led states.

The Council provided data, research, and opportunities for these politically powerful actors to speak out and grow their reach, and to expand the network of participating states.

- We added new ONAs to the network, including Maine via an executive order and Minnesota and North Dakota via legislation passed this year. In the case of Minnesota, the Council offered formal testimony in committee and submitted a letter of support leveraging our economic and demographic research on immigrants' contributions to the state.
- We arranged numerous opportunities for ONA Network states to engage with Biden administration officials, particularly to coordinate efforts around welcoming new arrivals to highly impacted states, workforce integration, language access, and wellbeing programs.
- 35 ONA representatives from 16 states met in Washington, D.C. for our annual convening to learn, network, and share expertise on immigration integration work in their states, and to meet with federal counterparts at the White House to discuss opportunities for state-federal collaboration.
- Since the end of Title 42 in May, the ONA State Network has held monthly meetings where the White House and Department of Homeland Security brief states on the response to the increasing number of asylum seekers coming from the southern border, with the goal of sharing real-time information and developing more sophisticated state and local responses.



# GLOBAL TALENT CHAMBER NETWORK

The Council expanded the [Global Talent Chamber Network \(GTCN\)](#) to represent over **85** chambers in **31** states. GTCN educates and empowers chambers of commerce by partnering with them to provide tailored economic reports and assist with messaging, fact sheets, and advocacy strategies, along with in-person convenings to share best practices across the U.S.

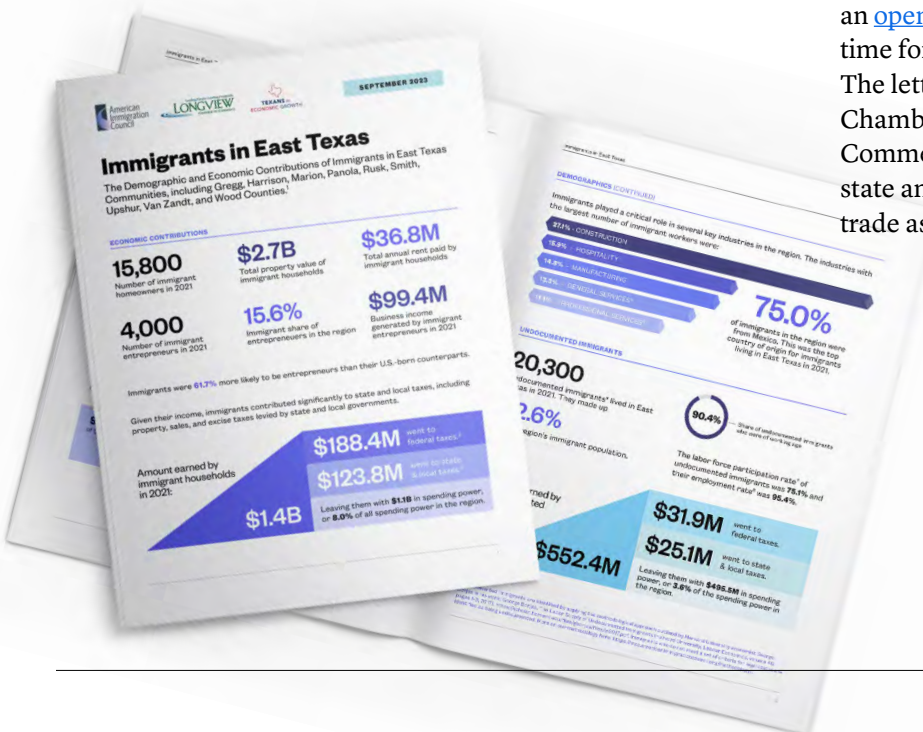
- We partnered with the [Longview Chamber of Commerce](#) to release our [Immigrants in East Texas](#) research.
- We worked with the [Greater Akron Chamber](#) to release our research on the [Economic Contributions of Immigrants in Ohio's Manufacturing Sector](#).
- We partnered with numerous GTCN members with messaging, talking points, and strategy as they organized their federal advocacy and D.C. fly-ins, including chambers from Siouxland, IA; Madison, WI; and Kansas City, MO.

- We hosted our annual Global Talent Chamber Network Convening in partnership with the Greater Houston Partnership in October, bringing together **12** chambers from states like Texas, Ohio, Michigan, and Kentucky, to discuss how to elevate the business voice on federal, state, and local immigration policy and leverage international talent to fill workforce gaps. This was our first in-person convening since 2019.



Global Talent Chamber Network annual convening

- As a follow-up to the convening, the Council published an [open letter](#) calling on Congress to reduce the wait time for asylum seekers to receive work authorization. The letter has over **100** signatories including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the National Retail Federation, and other state and local chambers of commerce, businesses, and trade associations from across the country.



# Center for Inclusion and Belonging (CIB)

This year CIB maintained its preeminent role as a thought and action leader in narrative and culture change with important contributions across its wide-ranging programs, while successfully onboarding a new Director, Kim Serrano, managing complex partnerships, and sustaining and seeding new funding relationships.



## Belonging Begins with Us

Our [Belonging Begins with Us](#) campaign with the Ad Council continues to generate strong audience engagement and reach, including new, high-impact content partnerships and consistent ad pick-up across all media categories. This year the campaign initiated, launched, or concluded four content partnerships (with Upworthy, Amplifier, Sony, and Team Up Partnership), the most of any year to date. Based on the latest data, the creative assets produced through these partnerships are driving some of the campaign's highest-performing months since initial launch, including:

- Receiving **\$16.4 million** of donated media, generating **529 million** impressions, and airing across all 50 states via outlets that serve as trusted messengers for our target audiences. When segmented by media type, we've received **\$5.63 million** from out-of-home, **\$3.72 million** from digital, **\$3.47 million** from TV (broadcast and local stations), **\$3.37 million** from print, and **\$190,000** from radio. A total of **\$74 million** of donated media has been realized since the campaign began in December 2020.
- Our prominent partnership with Sony around the theatrical release of *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse* yielded **\$3.8 million** of donated media support from **154 cities** nationwide.
- A significant return on investment was maintained with every \$1 spent on content generating \$20 in donated placement.

Our latest tracking suggests very promising results with our target audiences: conflicted skeptics (primary) and potential helpers (secondary). Campaign recall and ad awareness are highest among conflicted skeptics, indicating that our content is reaching the desired audience. We are also seeing promising indicators of behavior change among the target audience: conflicted skeptics and potential helpers who have seen our ads report new familiarity around the idea of belonging and engaging in encouraging behaviors that foster belonging at higher rates than their peers who have not seen campaign ads. We launched a new round of audience research at the end of 2023, to shape the direction of campaign activities in 2024 and ensure our efforts and impacts are responsive to our audience.

## Belonging Barometer

Alongside Over Zero, we released [The Belonging Barometer: The State of Belonging in America](#), a first-of-its-kind tool for measuring belonging and a national survey to take the pulse on belonging in the U.S. Since release, we have focused on socializing report lessons with business leaders, the public, funders, and civil society actors and have been encouraged by the wide and ideologically diverse response. Highlights include:

- We hosted a [webinar](#) with influential field leaders from Walmart, Omidyar, and the Othering and Belonging Institute, reaching **600+** registrants from **45** states.



- The Barometer has garnered widespread media attention across political and ideological spectrums. We have worked with the communications and storytelling teams to place **20+** print, radio, and TV pieces featuring Belonging Barometer data, interviews with CIB experts, and/or opinion editorials. National coverage includes:
  - [“Why So Many Americans Feel Left Out” - The Washington Post](#) by Theodore Johnson (March 23, 2023)
  - [“Politics Can’t Fix What Ails Us” - New York Times](#) by David French (May 4, 2023)
  - [“Are Americans Losing Their Sense of Belonging?” - The National Review](#) by Frank Filocomo (May 11, 2023)
  - [“One is the loneliest number: What will help people connect again?” - Christian Science Monitor](#) by Harry Bruinius and Sophie Hills (June 9, 2023)
  - [“After the Pandemic: Loneliness, Belonging, and Rebuilding Our Civic Infrastructure - The Art of Association”](#) by Daniel Stid (June 15, 2023)
- National and local radio stories in 11 states and TV interviews with NBC, ABC, and Fox News affiliates.
- We moderated a virtual panel on [The Loneliness Epidemic: The Case for Belonging at Work](#), with leaders from Google, Eventbrite, and Thermo-Fisher Scientific, reaching **1,100+** registrants.

The research remains timely as awareness of widespread loneliness and isolation grows among leaders and policymakers who are working to strengthen democratic practices, deepen social trust, and foster social cohesion. In 2024 we anticipate exploring ways to incentivize the use and application of the Barometer tool and survey findings.



## Belonging Innovation Lab Fellowship

At the end of the year, CIB concluded our 18-month [Belonging Innovation Lab Fellowship](#) to strengthen the leadership and bolster the organizational capacity of 24 principals from 12 grassroots organizations engaged in community-based programming that bridges differences, especially across racial and ethnic lines. This year, the CIB provided Fellows with six group training modules (on topics ranging from storytelling and communications to place-based programming and organizational resilience, among others) and 1:1 coaching and access to a curated resource library, and completed site visits with a quarter of the cohort to enhance learning and provide targeted support. The CIB will synthesize cohort lessons and summarize initial outcomes in early 2024.

The first fellowships include:

- **Oklahoma City, Oklahoma** - [Futbol Factory](#) - This local group bridges communities through soccer leagues, clinics, and tournaments and wants to work to optimize how they are bridging racial/ethnic lines through sports.
- **Detroit, Michigan** - [Global Detroit's Social Cohesion Project](#), advancing quality of life improvements via community councils in two neighborhoods, fostering cross-cultural and mutually beneficial relationships between long-term and immigrant residents, and bridging racial and ethnic divides in the process.
- **North Mankato, Minnesota** - [Minnesota Council of Churches Refugee Services' Tapestry Project](#) leads life skills workshops about topics like parenting, housing, safety, health, and entrepreneurship. They use these workshops to bridge racial/ethnic lines.
- **Brockton, Massachusetts** - [Mutual Aid Brockton](#), uses a mutual aid approach to solve community problems launched during the pandemic and is anxious to design its programs in ways that can bridge racial and ethnic divides while solving other community needs.
- **Fayetteville, Arkansas** - [Ozark Literacy Council](#) uses literacy centers to host knitting, tea, and other hobby groups to bridge divides across racial and ethnic lines.

- **Needham, Massachusetts** - [Needham Resilience Network](#), is developing a transformative model for community that creates a table of multipliers, or a "network of networks." This includes community leaders/liaisons who can speak to and from the major perspectives of all the community stakeholder groups (e.g., civic organizations, community initiatives, identity groups, health, business and faith communities, and town bodies in ex officio status). Their goal is to bridge a range of differences to meet the needs of the whole community.
- **Salem, Oregon** - [Willamette University](#) is developing a transformative curriculum to improve undergraduate students' abilities to engage in liberal arts discussion across a range of differences (first generation college vs. legacy, rural/urban, and others) and to pass the tools on as trainers.

## Farming/Agriculture Projects

A cohort of community farming and garden projects are using their programs to build a range of connections across diverse communities and bridge racial and ethnic divides.

- **Schenectady, NY** - [Schenectady Inner City Ministries](#) uses community-based farming programs to bridge differences across racial and ethnic lines.
- **Cleveland, Ohio** - [Global Cleveland's Bee Bridge Project](#) in five neighborhoods uses beekeeping to bridge differences across racial and ethnic lines.
- **Berea, Kentucky (rural)** - [Sustainable Berea](#) uses community farming to build bridges across racial and ethnic lines.
- **Davenport, Iowa (rural)** - [Tapestry Farms](#) uses community farming to build bridges across racial and ethnic lines.
- **Denver, Colorado** - [Denver Urban Gardens](#) is the largest state-level urban garden initiative that wants to expand its bridge-building muscles and implement them in their programs.

# 2023 Publication Highlights

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## We published the following new special reports:

- [Beyond a Border Solution: How to Build a Humanitarian Protection System That Won't Break](#)
- [The Belonging Barometer: The State of Belonging in America](#)
- [Starting Anew: The Economic Impact of Refugees in America](#)
- [Building Social Cohesion Among Diverse Youth During COVID-19](#)
- [The Growing Demand for Healthcare Workers](#) (13 states)

## Our staff authored and supported several prominent published opinion pieces including:

- *Boston Globe* – [“There’s already a blueprint for helping migrants. Let’s invest in it.”](#)
- *The New York Times* – [“We Should Give Up the Fantasy of Solving the Border Crisis”](#)
- *Fox News* – [“Order at the border requires access to asylum”](#)
- *Dallas Morning News* – [“Federal coordination can help migrants and communities that support them”](#)
- *The New York Times* – [“The U.S. Keeps Telling People to Come the ‘Right Way.’ They’re Listening.”](#)

## Newly published or updated fact sheets:

- [An Overview of the “Uniting for Ukraine” Program](#)
- [The Use of Parole Under Immigration Law](#)
- [A Snapshot of Immigrant Women in the United States](#)
- [CBP One: An Overview](#)
- [Temporary Protected Status: An Overview](#)
- [New Americans in Baltimore County](#)
- [New Americans in Northern Utah](#)
- [The Economic Cost of Repealing In-State Tuition in Texas](#)
- [The Economic Benefits of the Empire State Licensing Act](#)
- [Undocumented College Students](#)
- [The Contributions of Temporary Protected Status Holders to the U.S. Economy](#)
- [The Biden Administration’s Humanitarian Parole Program for Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, and Venezuelans: An Overview](#)