



Advocates for Basic
Legal Equality, Inc.

ABLE IMMIGRATION ADVOCACY PROJECT REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY



The Immigration Advocacy Project at Advocates for Basic Legal Equality, Inc. (ABLE) provides quality legal services, advocacy, and crucial legal educational information for low-income immigrants and refugees in the Miami Valley. ABLE's advocacy is focused on protecting victims of crime, keeping families together, and building a stronger community.

Our work is made possible by the commitment of our funders, including the Consulate of Mexico in Indianapolis, Dayton Police Department, Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation (OLAF), Welcome Dayton, and many supportive individuals.

Advocates for Basic Legal Equality, Inc. (ABLE) works to ensure the availability of quality immigration services to members of the Miami Valley community who are seeking a better life but cannot afford a private attorney.

In 2017, ABLE faced, and responded to, immigration crisis after crisis. Through community presentations and individual sessions, we educated thousands of people in the Miami Valley on immigration laws and these immigration emergencies—from three versions of the Travel Ban, to an increase in home and workplace raids, to the effective termination of prosecutorial discretion, to the repeal of DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals), and the end of Temporary Protected Status for nationals of many countries.

After each community presentation, advocates answered general questions from the audience and provided one-on-one individual consultations. Attendees received a new ABLE publication developed in early 2017. This handbook, “Preparing Your Family for Immigration Enforcement,” was drafted and produced by ABLE in response to a marked increase in immigration enforcement. It includes details on individuals’ Constitutional rights, a Limited Power of Attorney for childcare needs, and a family emergency planning guide—all aimed at empowering families to make critical decisions for themselves in advance, rather than risking that they be made later by government or agency officials. ABLE also produced wallet-sized “Know Your Rights” cards for individuals encountering law enforcement officials. Further, ABLE launched its own immigration resource website—immigration.ablelaw.org—for clients and community members to stay current on constantly-changing immigration topics.

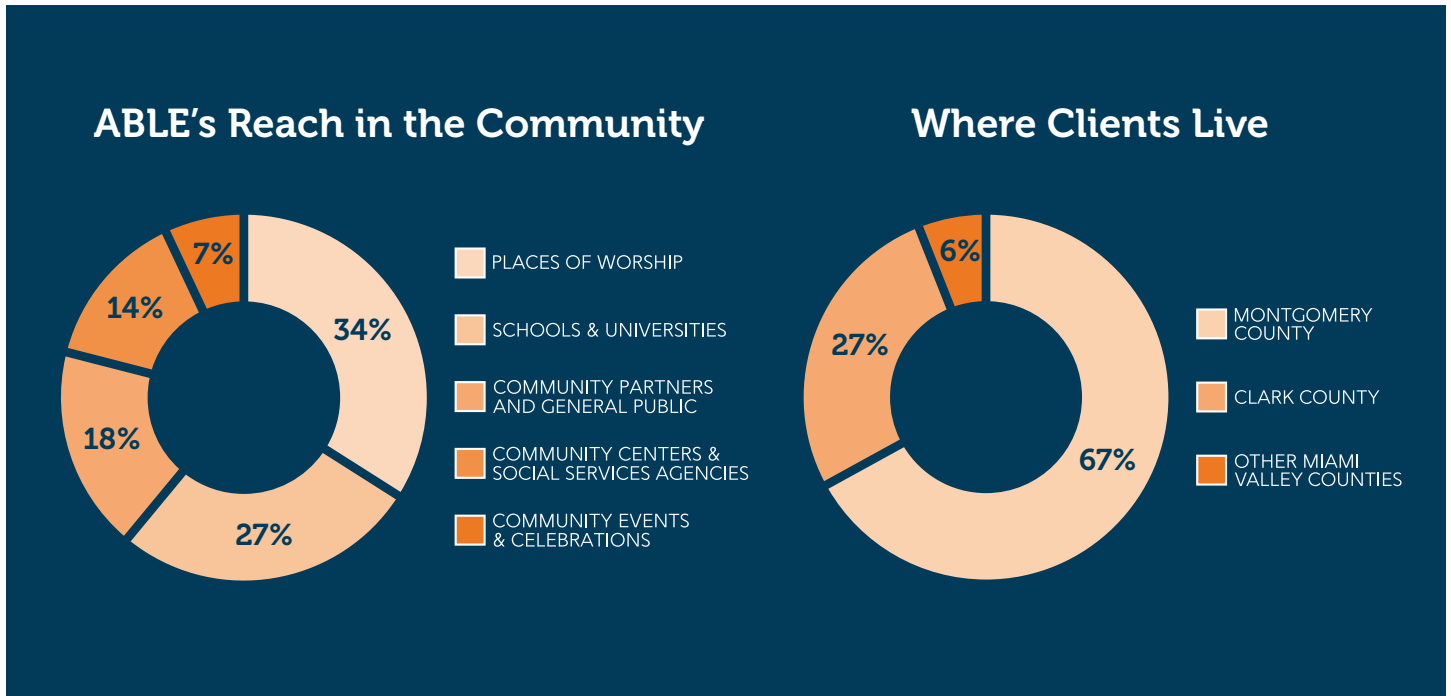
Beyond education, ABLE provided direct legal representation to 170 people in 2017, prioritizing family unity and stabilization cases and cases protecting individuals from domestic violence and other crimes, persecution, torture, and human trafficking. ABLE advocates also protected immigrants and refugees from *notarios*, or consumer fraud scammers, who prey on these vulnerable members of our community.

We need to stand with people who are, understandably, fearful.

Working together with Welcome Dayton over the years, ABLE has conducted asylum, DACA renewal, refugee adjustment of status, and naturalization workshops and clinics, and provides leadership on the Welcome Dayton Committee, and the Government and Justice Subcommittee. In May 2017, Welcome Dayton and ABLE co-hosted the first One City fundraiser to support vital services for greater Dayton’s immigrants and refugees. An ABLE staff attorney spoke to approximately 250 attendees on challenges our clients face, including heightened fears of deportation, racial profiling, and crime victimization under new immigration policies. Attendees also learned about ABLE’s successes empowering immigrant victims of crime, unifying families, and promoting self-sufficiency in immigrant and refugee communities.

How ABLÉ's Immigration Advocacy Project makes a difference:

In 2017, ABLÉ reached more than **2,000** people directly through **56** community outreach presentations and many news articles through various media outlets. Hundreds were provided with brief counsel and advice following outreach and presentations. Thousands more were reached with written and online materials.



Results of Screening and Investigation:

Because of ABLÉ's immigration questionnaire and in-depth screening, the majority of individuals screened were eligible for some immigration benefits and retained ABLÉ to represent them in that application for relief.

CASES ACCEPTED FOR FULL REPRESENTATION

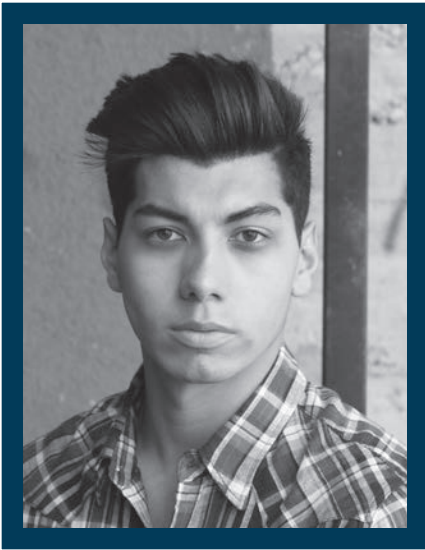
78% (133)

CASES ACCEPTED FOR COUNSEL & ADVICE ONLY

22% (37)

SPECIFIC CASE TYPE IN THE MIAMI VALLEY

Naturalization & Citizenship	8
Family Reunification (includes Refugee Adjustment of Status)	58
U Visa / VAWA	37
Asylum	6
Immigrant Children	42
DACA & DACA Renewal	15
Other	4



José is now 18 years old, but he came to the United States from El Salvador when he was 14 years old after suffering years of physical and emotional abuse by his alcoholic father. José was forced to start working when he was 11 years old; he would go to school in the mornings and work all night with his father on a fishing boat. The working conditions were very dangerous; on one occasion, a storm caused debris to fall and impale José in the back. His father did not seek medical attention and told him to “take it like a man.” On top of the abuse at home, he was also getting threats and abuse from one of the gangs because he refused to join them. He finally fled El Salvador when one of his friends was shot and killed in front of him. During his journey to the United States, he was attacked, extorted, and suffered from extreme weather and lack of food before he was apprehended

by U.S. border authorities. A couple of months after being released to his aunt in Ohio, where he had found a safe and caring home, José was hit by a car and suffered extensive injuries, which caused him to be incapacitated for weeks.

ABLE obtained a custody order from the juvenile court with the requisite findings to apply for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status, which was approved by USCIS. José now has a pending application for Adjustment of Status, which means he has work authorization while he waits for his green card to arrive.

Despite everything he has gone through, José loves school and will graduate from high school in May. He has already been accepted to a couple of universities, and is working on scholarship applications.



Sadiya and her family were excited to come to Dayton, as they had heard about the Welcome Dayton initiative and wanted to be part of a diverse community and raise their daughter in an atmosphere of love and respect. However, Sadiya’s husband did not show her the same respect that he wanted from the community—he regularly beat Sadiya, threatened to kill her, and even searched for videos online on how to get away with murder.

After hearing that the Dayton Police Department (DPD) was interested in protecting vulnerable immigrants from crime, regardless of their immigration situation, she developed the courage to call them and report her husband’s abuse. She continued cooperating with law enforcement officials through the detention and prosecution of her husband’s case, which ultimately resulted in his deportation.

Due to her cooperation, DPD and ABLE assisted Sadiya in securing a special visa for victims of serious crimes, which is a law enforcement tool designed to help police in the prosecution of crimes where the immigrant victim may be reluctant to cooperate because they fear that their own immigration status may cause the police to turn them away, or worse yet, turn them over to federal immigration agencies.

Now, not only are Sadiya and her daughter safe from her abusive husband, she is also empowered to forge ahead as a single mother supporting her family. She is also looking forward to being reunited soon with her two older children who are now able to immigrate to the United States to live with their mother from their native Algeria due to her resolved immigration status.