



LOS ANGELES COUNTY
CONSUMER & BUSINESS AFFAIRS

Board of Supervisors

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November 7, 2024

TO: Supervisor Lindsey P. Horvath, Chair
Supervisor Janice Hahn
Supervisor Hilda L. Solis
Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell
Supervisor Kathryn Barger

Director
Rafael Carbajal

FROM: Rafael Carbajal 
Director

Chief Deputy
Joel Ayala

STATUS REPORT ON “REPRESENTLA” LEGAL REPRESENTATION AND RESOURCE LINKAGE PROGRAM FOR IMMIGRANTS AT RISK OF REMOVAL (ITEM NO. 15, AGENDA OF JULY 27, 2021)

RepresentLA has made significant progress over two years toward meeting the needs of unrepresented immigrants in the County, providing due process and a fighting chance to prevent deportation for our most vulnerable residents. Program adjustments in response to emerging community needs have made vital immigration services available to a significant number of clients, while also reaching special populations that other programs have not adequately served. This includes survivors of labor trafficking and workplace exploitation; asylum seekers and juvenile survivors of abuse, neglect, or abandonment who are not in removal proceedings; immigrants experiencing homelessness; and Veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces.

Since launching in April 2022, RepresentLA has provided full-scope and limited legal representation to **5,075** individuals. The program’s removal defense pillar has provided representation in court to **593** individuals, while the affirmative representation pillar has provided legal representation to **462** individuals and vital limited-scope legal services to **4,020**, including assisting 766 people with securing employment authorization.

Given the large percentage of clients with vulnerabilities needing wraparound services (immigrants with disabilities, unhoused immigrants, survivors of violence), case management remains an essential part of the program that will



require ongoing funding. RepresentLA will also require additional staffing from the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCBA) and its Office of Immigrant Affairs (OIA) to ensure proper program oversight, given the variety and complexity of legal and support services, and large network of nonprofit providers funded through the program. To ensure that the County continues to benefit from this investment in the capacity of nonprofit providers to serve the County's most vulnerable immigrant residents, OIA recommends an ongoing annual County investment of at least \$5.5 million in Fiscal Year (FY) 2025-26 to sustain RepresentLA at the current service level.

PROGRAM BACKGROUND

In response to the urgent need to protect immigrants at risk of deportation, in December 2016, your Board directed the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), in consultation with County Counsel, to launch an initiative to provide immigration legal representation to low-income County residents. The County partnered with the City of Los Angeles ("City"), the California Community Foundation (CCF), and the Weingart Foundation to launch the Los Angeles Justice Fund (LAJF), a two-year pilot. CCF served as the program's third-party administrator and your Board designated OIA to oversee the County's involvement in the LAJF, which began serving clients in 2018.

On July 21, 2020¹, your Board directed OIA to work with CCF to extend the LAJF pilot for one year and sunset it on June 30, 2021, work with CEO to identify funding for the extension period, and hire a consultant to develop an LAJF phase two program model in collaboration with the City, CCF, Weingart, and other stakeholders. Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees ("GCIR") worked with OIA and the parties to develop a report ("Report") addressing your Board's directives. The Report proposed a program to provide removal defense for detained and non-detained individuals, as well as affirmative immigration representation, and community support. Highlighting the importance of sustainable support for immigration legal services, the Report recommends establishing a multi-year funding cycle. On May 18, 2021, your Board acknowledged that the Report addressed your directives relating to the development of a comprehensive program and noted the need for sustainable funding for program implementation. Your Board then directed OIA to create a framework in collaboration with the City and philanthropy to implement the program.

On July 27, 2021², OIA submitted a framework to your Board that incorporated the Report's major recommendations, including the goal of identifying multi-year ongoing funding. The framework also included continuation of removal defense for detained and

¹ Los Angeles County Board motion "Immigration Legal Due Process for Low-Income Immigrants at Risk of Deportation" dated July 21, 2020. <https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/147382.pdf>

² Los Angeles County Board motion "Legal Representation and Wraparound Services Linkage for Immigrants" dated July 27, 2021. <https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/160309.pdf>

non-detained individuals, which comprised the majority of LAJF pilot services, while adding affirmative immigration relief representation to marginalized populations in the County who have struggled to access legal services through other programs. Your Board directed OIA to implement the program as outlined in the framework, directed the CEO to work with DCBA to identify *ongoing* funding for the program, and delegated authority to the DCBA director to enter into any contracts, MOUs, and agreements needed to implement the program.

PROGRAM FUNDING

RepresentLA is funded through a public-private partnership between the County, the City, CCF, and the Weingart Foundation, which collectively have invested \$17.3 million since the program launched in April 2022 as described herein.

In FY 2021-22, the Care First Community Investment (CFCI) Recommended Spending Plan included \$3.5 million for RepresentLA, allocated by your Board in the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Phase One spending plan. Philanthropic partners CCF and Weingart each contributed \$1 million in one-time funding, providing an initial \$5.5 million to launch the program. Your Board subsequently allocated another \$3.5 million in the ARP Phase Two spending plan.

In October 2022, the Department of Health Services (DHS) established a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with DCBA to provide legal assistance to immigrant clients referred by DHS's Countywide Benefits Entitlement Services Team (CBEST). CBEST helps individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness secure sustainable income through various public benefits, but immigration status often creates a barrier to obtaining these benefits. The MOU aims to leverage RepresentLA's success and infrastructure to address this issue by offering legal advice and representation, with an annual funding allocation of up to \$1 million through 2027. Additionally, the City contributed \$4 million to this program: \$2 million during the FY 2021-22 funding cycle and another \$2 million for FY 2023-24. This City-County MOU, executed in June 2023, includes \$250,000 specifically to support U.S. Armed Forces Veterans.

DCBA-OIA initially projected that funding allocated over two fiscal years by your Board, the City, and philanthropy would fund the program through June 30, 2024. However, challenges with program implementation, ramp up, and the onboarding of a large cohort of subcontractors extended the use of funds into a third year. To help extend services through the end of FY 2024-25, the City invested an additional \$1 million, while your Board approved an additional \$1.3 million in the FY 2024-25 Supplement Budget. Thus, funding the program through FY 2024 -25.

RepresentLA Funding: FY 2021 - 2022 – FY 2024 – 2025

Funding Source:	Amount:	Source:	Date Approved:
Los Angeles County	\$3.5M	ARP Tranche 1	July 27, 2021
	Up to \$1M	Dept of Health Services, CBEST*	October 5, 2022
	\$3.5M	ARP Tranche 2	September 13, 2022
	Up to \$1M	Dept of Health Services, CBEST*	June 21, 2023
	\$1.3M	FY2024-25 Supplemental Budget	October 8, 2024
City of Los Angeles	\$2M	City General Fund	2021-22 budget
	\$2M	City General Fund	2023-24 budget
	\$1M	City General Fund	2024-25 budget
Philanthropy	\$1M	California Community Foundation	November 2021
	\$1M	Weingart Foundation	September 2021
Total	\$15.3M (\$17.3M including DHS-CBEST*)		

**Funding is exclusively for individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness referred by DHS' CBEST program.*

These County, City, CCF, and Weingart Foundation investments highlight the importance of ensuring access to legal representation for immigrants facing deportation and other immigration challenges, often because federal, state and other philanthropic funding is limited. And while State funding represents the largest source of support for the nonprofit immigration legal expanded year over year from 2014–2023, State budgetary shortfalls have halted that expansion despite high demand. In this context, local government investment in immigration legal services is increasingly important, but it is no longer unique. More than 50 cities and counties across the United States now provide funding for immigration legal services. In addition to large jurisdictions like New York, Chicago, San Francisco, and Harris County, Texas, several smaller counties and municipalities have created initiatives to support their immigrant communities.

To build on recent successes and sustain services at the current level, RepresentLA requires an annual total investment of at least **\$7.5 million**. This will fund the program's various complex and vital services and ensure that the County and its partners continue to gain from their investment in building the capacity of nonprofit providers to serve the most vulnerable County immigrant residents. Philanthropic partners may contribute toward specific emerging needs and new initiatives within the program. However, we do not anticipate additional philanthropic funding to sustain program services on an ongoing basis. Therefore, a County investment of **\$5.5 million** is required to sustain program services in FY2025-26, assuming the program continues to receive a **\$2 million** investment from the City.

PROGRAM LAUNCH

DCBA-OIA issued a Request for Information (RFI) in October 2021 to identify organizations to lead or co-lead administration of the program. DCBA worked closely with the City and philanthropic partners to review RFI submissions, eventually selecting the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA), whose submission proposed partnering with Immigrant Defenders Law Center (ImmDef) and the Central American

Resource Center (CARECEN) to “co-administer and deliver services” under the removal defense and affirmative representation program pillars, respectively. Exercising its delegated authority, DCBA entered into a contract with CHIRLA on April 8, 2022. CHIRLA subsequently issued solicitations for removal defense services in June 2022 and affirmative representation services in November 2022, subcontracting to a network of nonprofit legal service providers to serve diverse immigrant communities throughout the County between October 2022 and February 2023.

Program Highlights, Unmet Needs and Challenges

USC Equity Research Institute Evaluation Report

OIA hired the University of Southern California Equity Research Institute to evaluate RepresentLA. Their report – attached as Exhibit C and based on data through December 2023 – found that RepresentLA reached **2,144 clients** through full-scope representation, legal orientation and *pro se* immigration legal services. **520** individuals received full-scope removal representation, including **26** detained immigrants, while **383** individuals received affirmative immigration representation. **50 percent** of completed detained removal defense and **84 percent** of non-detained clients obtained a positive case outcome.

Services Provided Through August 2024

The program has made considerable progress in the current year, having now served a total of **5,075** individuals through full-scope representation, legal orientation and *pro se* legal services. **593** individuals have received removal representation, including **89** individuals whose proceedings began while they were in immigration detention. **462** individuals in the following priority areas received affirmative immigration representation: Labor trafficking and workplace exploitation, special immigrant juvenile status (SIJS), asylum, immigrants experiencing homelessness, and Veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces. The program has also delivered critical limited-scope services to **4,020** persons, assisting **766** persons to secure employment authorization.

A complete list of RepresentLA legal service providers, service rendered to date, and service projections through June 30, 2025, is attached as Exhibit A.

Emerging Needs and Service Delivery Modifications

Migrant Bus Arrival Response: The program made significant adjustments in response to emerging community needs. When Texas began sending busloads of migrants to Los Angeles in June 2023, in support of the County’s response RepresentLA provider ImmDef began offering legal orientation and limited-scope legal support to migrants on every bus that arrived in Los Angeles. From June – December 2023, ImmDef provided legal orientation to **1,195** migrants arriving by bus, individual legal consultation to **415** migrants, and employment authorization applications for **126** persons. ImmDef also

assisted with immigration court filings including changes of address for **160** migrants, and **71** motions to change venue to ensure migrants bused to Los Angeles would not be ordered deported *in absentia*. To support ImmDef's work, in 2024, RepresentLA began funding two additional legal providers to offer these limited-scope legal services due to help meet the immense ongoing need. The County is home to nearly **50,000** unrepresented individuals in removal proceedings.³ Additionally, all removal defense providers now have the flexibility to request caseload adjustments to devote staff time to limited-scope legal services. These changes make vital legal assistance available to a larger percentage of unrepresented individuals in the County.

Addressing the County-City Priority of Human Trafficking: To advance the shared County-City priority of addressing human trafficking, wage theft and workplace exploitation, the program strengthened its capacity to support immigrant workers in 2024. This expansion responds to the acute needs of immigrant workers vulnerable to exploitation in high-incident industries.

For example, the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) reached out to OIA in fall 2023 to support immigrant workers employed at several poultry plants then under USDOL investigation. OIA organized support services, calling on RepresentLA legal provider Thai CDC to coordinate legal service provision for impacted workers. Through this work, **265** poultry workers received vital immigration and employment rights information and individual legal consultation, including **100** workers who received representation by Thai CDC or placement with pro bono counsel. This allowed workers to seek immigration relief under the Department of Homeland Security's Deferred Action for Labor Enforcement initiative, which provides multi-year protection from deportation and employment authorization to noncitizens whose employer is the subject of a labor agency investigation. Remarkably, USDOL recovered nearly **\$3.8 million** in backpay, damages and penalties for impacted workers. To safeguard their compensation, prior to receiving settlement payments, workers were offered financial counseling and support services coordinated by OIA and Thai CDC.

RepresentLA also began serving Veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces in August 2024. This includes deported Veterans seeking to return to their home in the County and those with a range of other complex immigration needs. OIA is collaborating with the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (MVA) to ensure program services are made available to Veterans and their families within the County, and ensure legal clients have access to MVA support services.

³ Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse (TRAC). (October 2024). Pending Court Cases by Immigrant's Address. Syracuse University. <https://trac.syr.edu/phptools/immigration/addressrep/>

Program Challenges and Adjustments

Nonprofit Sector Challenges

The nonprofit immigration legal services sector faced a variety of unprecedented challenges in the wake of the COVID pandemic, many of which coincided with the launch of RepresentLA and have had a lasting impact. The pandemic caused widespread economic difficulties, especially for immigrants in industries heavily impacted by lockdowns. Immigrant workers required legal assistance for unemployment benefits, evictions, and other acute needs. Given the urgency, many organizations stepped up to address those needs despite lacking the infrastructure, experience, and funding.

Meanwhile, Trump administration immigration policy changes, some of which were rolled back or modified by the Biden administration, created legal uncertainty as service providers struggled to stay on top of shifting rules impacting their clients. Immigration courts and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) offices experienced pandemic closures and delays, creating more uncertainty for clients. As courts reopened and USCIS resumed operations, nonprofits navigated inconsistent reopening schedules and had to manage case surges.⁴ These circumstances coincided with the launch and ramp-up of RepresentLA. Therefore, the following program challenges and adjustments should be viewed within that context.

Structural Adjustments

DCBA-OIA adopted several key GCIR Report recommendations, including centralizing administrative functions with one lead organization to promote system-wide efficiencies, and structuring the program to support “staffing teams” rather than funding per-case outcomes. A staffing teams model allows organizations to be compensated for the full costs of services, rather than completing a specified number of cases at a cost that may fluctuate due to external circumstances. However, implementation proved challenging.

The nonprofit immigration sector is well accustomed to managing grant projects that require case deliverables over a one or two-year period for a fixed amount. The staffing model through a County contract requires service providers to maintain specified staffing levels, fulfill ongoing legal representation deliverables, and invoice for reimbursement of actual cost expenditures. Tracking program costs to accurately invoice DCBA for reimbursement in a staffing teams model requires greater administrative capacity, particularly when many organizations split legal staff across multiple programs. Strong fiscal capacity is needed to monitor expenditures and support subcontractors to track and

⁴ See, e.g., **California Community Foundation. (2022).** *From Burnout to Wellbeing: Building a Sustainable Immigration Movement*. Retrieved from <https://www.calfund.org/wp-content/uploads/FBtW-Draft-12.5.22.pdf>; **American Immigration Council (Sept. 30, 2020)**, “The Impact of COVID-19 on Immigration Court Backlogs”. <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/impact-covid-19-us-immigration-system>

invoice expenses timely and accurately. This role proved challenging for the lead contractor. For over a year, DCBA received untimely invoices submitted with accounting errors and incomplete program data, requiring substantial review and feedback from DCBA, followed by a lengthy rectification process and resubmission, among other challenges. Untimely invoice submissions from some subcontractors complicated the work of the lead contractor. DCBA administrative staff provided guidance to the lead contractor's fiscal staff, yet errors persisted. These circumstances resulted in prolonged delays on multiple occasions for subcontractors to receive payment for services. Additionally, rollout of certain services, including affirmative representation services that the lead contractor committed to provide, did not launch until over a year after contract execution. These challenges are not unique to the immigration non-profit sector. These challenges have been acknowledged by the County through various initiatives, including these ARP-funded projects: Capacity-Building Grants for Justice-Focused Community-Based Organizations (\$7.5M), the Economic Mobility Initiative (\$25M), and Capacity Building for Immigrant-Focused CBOs (\$8M). CFCI programs such as the ATI Incubator Academy (\$1.4M) and Expanding Safety in Los Angeles County TPA (\$12.8M) have also prioritized building nonprofit sector capacity.

To ensure effective management of the program's affirmative pillar– which is scheduled to add additional legal providers and new service categories in 2024 – and to reduce the administrative burden on a single organization overseeing more than a dozen subcontractors providing a variety of complex services, OIA, in consultation with the City and philanthropic partners, moved to separate the administration of the program's removal defense and affirmative components. Although this was not without its challenges, the adjustment was necessary for long-term program stability.

In support of this change, DCBA-OIA entered into a second prime contract with CARECEN to administer affirmative immigration services in late May 2024.⁵ OIA then worked with CHIRLA and CARECEN to transition the administrative functions of the affirmative services pillar to CARECEN with the minimum disruption possible to clients and subcontractors. Additionally, OIA supported CARECEN to promptly issue a solicitation to identify a provider for Veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces services, as well as additional labor trafficking and workplace exploitation service providers. DCBA executed a contract amendment with CHIRLA in June 2024 to continue administering the removal defense pillar of the program. Accordingly, DCBA currently has contracts with CHIRLA and CARECEN to manage the removal defense and affirmative services pillars, respectively, through December 31, 2024. On October 8, 2024, during the adoption of the Supplemental Budget, your Board approved additional funding to extend the program through FY 2024-25. As a result, OIA is now working to extend the contracts with CHIRLA and CARECEN from January 1 to June 30, 2025.

⁵ CARECEN was included in the lead contractor's October 2021 RFI submission to "co-administer and deliver services" under the affirmative representation program pillar and was subcontracted in October 2022 for that purpose.

Unmet Needs

Case Management: In response to the expressed need by service providers across the immigration sector for case management support to achieve successful legal outcomes for clients, OIA focused the second round of its ARP-funded “Capacity Building for Immigrant-Focused CBOs” initiative on building case management capacity. In May 2024, OIA awarded \$150,000 grants to 18 organizations to hire case management staff for one year and participate in a yearlong cohort. This included a majority of RepresentLA contracted providers receiving awards to participate in the cohort. Recipients also receive training on integrating case management into legal service programs, immigrant eligibility for public benefits, and best practices for case managers, while receiving technical assistance from Alma Family Services, an organization with decades of case management expertise.⁶

This ARP-funded initiative has temporarily met the needs of RepresentLA program clientele, who are among the most vulnerable populations in the County: **53 percent** are violent crime survivors. **25 percent** are experiencing or at imminent risk of homelessness. And over **12 percent** have a disability or live in a household with a disabled immediate family member. However, these are one-time grants, which means that case management remains a program need that requires ongoing funding.

Demand for Services: Demand for program services remains high and exceeds provider capacity. Despite an expansion of program services in the Labor Trafficking and Workplace Exploitation priority area, at least seven organizations that submitted viable proposals were not selected due to unavailable funding. Applicant organizations expressed the need to respond to significant community demand for these legal services in their proposals. The aforementioned USDOL poultry cases, which identified a significantly larger number of impacted immigrant workers than the program had capacity to serve at that time, also demonstrated the need for service expansion in this area. Additionally, demand for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) legal representation in the County far exceeds program capacity. The County’s Department of Children and Family Services and Public Defender identify significant numbers of SIJS-eligible youth on an ongoing basis and struggle to refer those individuals for immigration representation in a timely manner. Several organizations could promptly provide those services should additional funding be identified.

Removal defense capacity presents an even greater challenge. Collectively, removal defense providers have capacity to represent approximately 450 clients at a time. This vital resource provides the most vulnerable immigrants in the County a fighting chance to prevent deportation and family separation. Yet less than one percent of unrepresented County residents in removal proceedings receive representation through the program. Sustaining the program capacity built thus far requires an ongoing funding commitment

⁶ For additional information about the Capacity Building for Immigrant-Focused CBOs initiative, see: <https://oia.lacounty.gov/oia-awards-3-15-million-to-strengthen-case-management-capacity/>

so that organizations can maintain staff and plan to support their clients throughout the multi-year USCIS and immigration court case adjudication timeframes.

Moreover, if federal immigration policy shifts toward a massive enforcement and detention focus in 2025, additional funding would be necessary should your Board want to meet an increased demand for those services. Compounding this, the program will not be able to promptly expand detained removal defense capacity due to the sector challenges. Should massive deportation and detention enforcement actions materialize, OIA would recommend a bar panel model for detained removal defense, incorporating both private practitioners and nonprofit attorneys to represent detained immigrants for per-case rates. Implementation of a detained removal defense bar panel would require additional funding and 6 to 12-month timeframe.

Recommendations and Next Steps

During the last two years it has been in operation, RepresentLA has made significant progress toward meeting the needs of unrepresented immigrants in the County. RepresentLA provides due process and a fighting chance to prevent deportation for the most vulnerable County residents. RepresentLA has responded to emerging community needs to make vital services available to a significant number of immigrants facing deportation, while also reaching special populations that other programs have not adequately served. To maintain the program and ensure that these communities continue to benefit from investments in the capacity of our nonprofit partners to serve vulnerable immigrant residents, OIA recommends an ongoing commitment to RepresentLA as a permanent program with annual investment of at least \$7.5 million starting in FY 2025-26 with a County investment of \$5.5 million contingent on the program's continued \$2 million contribution from the City.

We remain strongly committed to advancing equity by providing vital immigration legal representation and support services to the County's most marginalized immigrant communities. It is through efforts like RepresentLA, directed by your Board, that immigrants and their families have access to the support they need to continue making significant contributions to all aspects of County life.

If you need additional information, please contact me or Rigo Reyes, OIA's Executive Director, at (213) 247-1365 or rreyes@dcbalacounty.gov.

RC:JA:RR:DS:EV:ph

Attachment

c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
Chief Executive Office
County Counsel

EXHIBIT A
RepresentLA Legal Service Providers and
Services Summary by Category

1. Removal Defense Service Providers:

- Central American Resource Center (CARECEN)
- Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)
- Council on American-Islamic Relations-CA (CAIR-LA)
- Immigrant Defenders Law Center (ImmDef)
- Los Angeles LGBT Center
- Public Counsel
- TransLatin@ Coalition
- University of Southern California Gould School of Law

2. Affirmative Immigration Representation Service Providers and Populations Served:

- Al Otro Lado: Asylum, Labor Trafficking & Workplace Exploitation
- Asian Americans Advancing Justice: Labor Trafficking & Workplace Exploitation
- Central American Resource Center (CARECEN): Immigrants Experiencing Homelessness, Special Immigrant Juvenile Status
- Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights: Immigrants Experiencing Homelessness
- Esperanza Immigrant Rights Project: Special Immigrant Juvenile Status
- Immigrant Defenders Law Center: Veterans of U.S. Armed Forces
- National Day Laborer Organizing Network (NDLON): Labor Trafficking & Workplace Exploitation
- PARS Equality Center: Asylum
- Thai Community Development Center: Labor Trafficking & Workplace Exploitation

EXHIBIT B

Service Progress to Date

1. Labor Trafficking and Workplace Exploitation

1,224 immigrant workers served to date. **125** individuals have received legal representation and **1,099** individuals have received limited scope services including legal orientation on immigration and labor rights, individual consultation, and guidance on appearing as a witness in a criminal prosecution of an employer.

Projections

The program recently added three service providers: Asian Americans Advancing Justice of Southern California, Al Otro Lado, and the National Day Laborer Organizing Network. The program will represent an additional 300 survivors of labor trafficking and/or workplace exploitation, providing representation to a total of **425** individuals, while providing legal orientation, guidance and limited-scope services to a total of **2,000** workers by the end of the fiscal year.

2. Veterans of U.S. Armed Forces

Following a June 2024 solicitation to identify a Veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces legal service provider, affirmative representation program administrator CARECEN selecting Immigrant Defenders Law Center (ImmDef), who commenced services for Veterans in August 2024. ImmDef will provide a variety of complex legal services to noncitizen Veterans, including legal support to repatriate deported Veterans to the County. ImmDef is currently representing **5** Veterans in various matters and will serve **30** Veterans by the end of the fiscal year.

3. Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS)

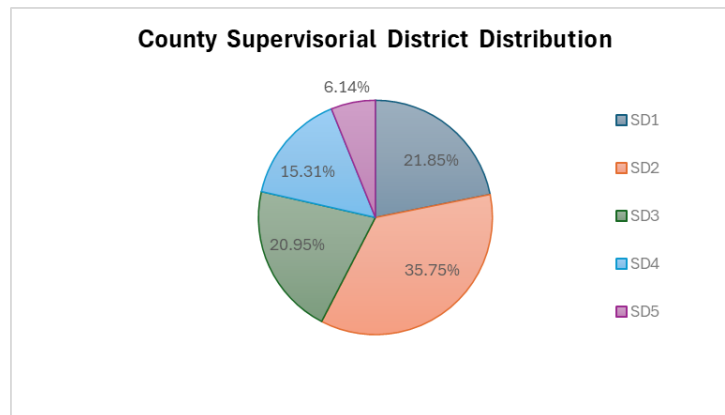
The program has served **153** minors who have experienced parental abuse, neglect or abandonment. While the vast majority of cases remain pending, **14 percent** have received immigration relief in the form of permanent residence of special immigrant juvenile status, placing them on the path to permanent residence. The program has added an SIJS provider (CARECEN) to serve aging out college students and their siblings, and projects serving a total of **235** individuals.

4. Affirmative Asylum Representation

The program has served **199** individuals, submitting **90** asylum applications, providing full-scope representation to 64 asylum seekers and assisting **61** individuals to seek employment authorization. The program added PARS Equality Center to represent Afghan arrivals and other asylum seekers in 2024. The program anticipates serving a total of **325** asylum seekers, submitting **190** complete asylum applications and assisting **150** individuals to obtain employment authorization by the end of the fiscal year.

Immigrants Experiencing Homelessness

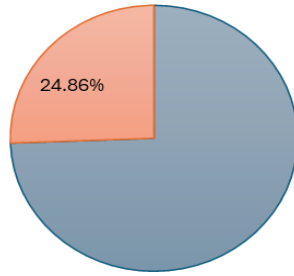
The aforementioned partnership between the Department of Health Services' CBEST program and DCBA-OIA facilitates legal representation for the most vulnerable County residents: immigrants with disabilities and older immigrants experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Lack of immigration status compounds the numerous barriers to service access that unhoused individuals face. Prior to developing this program area, no nonprofit immigration legal service provider in the County specifically served immigrants experiencing homelessness. Immigration status is necessary for individuals to access critical safety net benefits to prevent homelessness, including Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and federal housing assistance, among other programs. Obtaining immigration and court records to properly assess immigration remedies, then prepare relief applications for persons who may have been unhoused presents unique challenges. Thus far, the program has served **212** individuals (including 109 persons referred by CBEST), providing comprehensive consultation, assistance obtaining documentation, and immigration relief representation for eligible individuals and assisting **45** individuals to request employment authorization.



Client Race & Ethnicity	Percentage
Asian and Pacific Islander	4.5%
Black or African American	4%
Hispanic / Latino	82%
Indigenous Latin American	3.5%
Middle Eastern	1%
White / Caucasian	3%
Other	2%

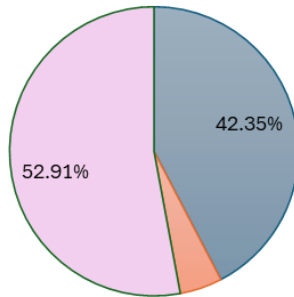
Client Gender Distribution	Percentage
Female or Woman	39%
Male or Man	46%
Gender Nonconforming	15%

25% of Clients Are Unhoused Or At Risk of Homelessness



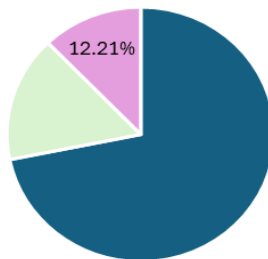
■ Not Homeless ■ Homeless Population Total

Over Half of Clients Are Violent Crime Survivors



■ Not Victim ■ Unknown ■ All Victims of Crimes

12% of Families Have Disabilities or Serious Medical Conditions



■ No ■ Unknown ■ Disability Population/Household

RepresentLA: Capturing the Program's Direction and Impact Since its Inception

By: USC Equity Research Institute

July 2024

USCDornsife
Equity Research Institute



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*One of the most rewarding part of my work is to be able to assist community members and know that we're making a difference. I believe that just knowing that they can get the assistance that they need will encourage community members who are being exploited to come forward to assert their rights. **To see community members being able to come forward and gain courage to assert their right is very rewarding.***

- RepresentLA Legal Service Provider

- A Snapshot of Immigrant Los Angeles
- Why Legal Representation Matters
- RepresentLA: An Overview
- Case Activity Data: Highlights
- Understanding the Data
- Looking Ahead
- Appendices
- Endnotes

A Snapshot of Immigrant Los Angeles

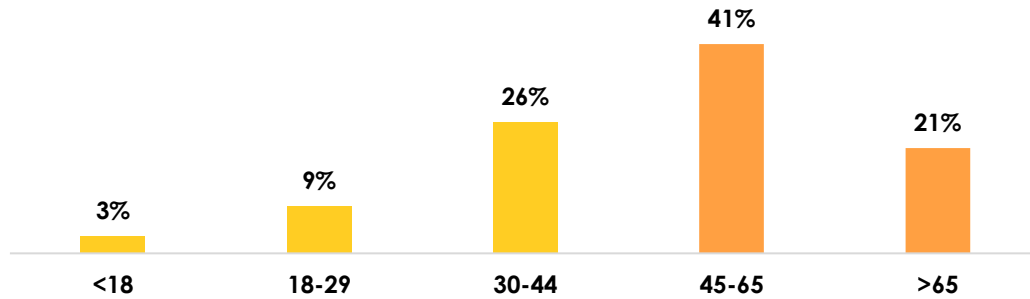
Over 1/3 of Angelenos are immigrants: Of the immigrant population, 18% are naturalized citizens, 9% are lawful residents, and 8% are undocumented immigrants.

Immigrant Angelenos have built their lives in the United States, establishing families, communities, and networks: More than 80% of immigrants in L.A. County have been living in the U.S. for over a decade.

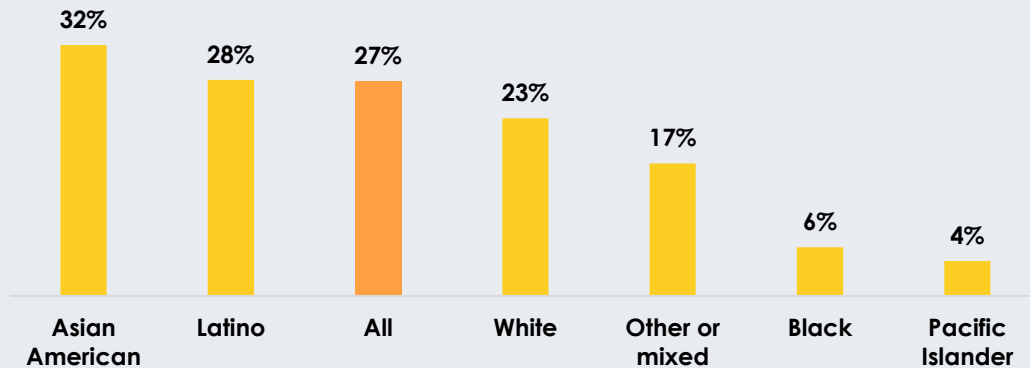
The impact of deportation has significant ripple effects beyond those at the direct risk of removal: About 1 in 5 (or 19%) Angelenos are either undocumented or live with someone who is.

Immigrant Angelenos continue to make significant contributions to the region's economy, yet they are often excluded from public health and safety net programs: In 2019, immigrants contributed about \$115 billion to the economy through the federal, state, and local taxes they paid and their spending power combined.¹

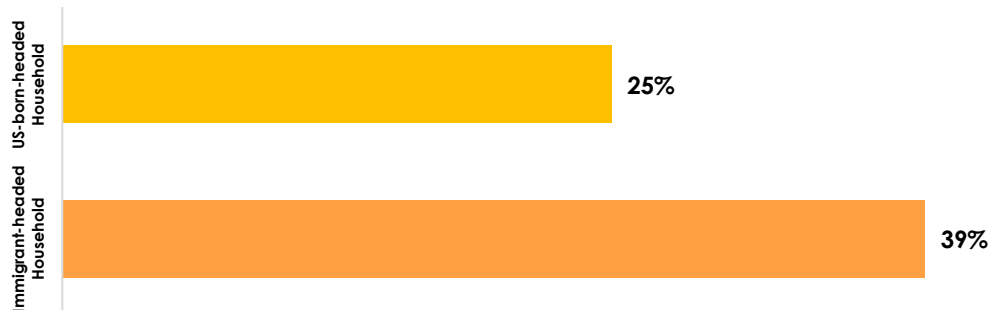
Immigrant Community by Age



Linguistic Isolation by Race



Percent Living Below 200% FPL



LOS ANGELES COUNTY'S IMMIGRANT COMMUNITY

- **Los Angeles has an aging immigrant population**—over 60% of the immigrant population are ages 45 and older.
- **More than 1 in 4 immigrant households experience linguistic isolation.** A household is considered to be linguistically isolated when no member ages 14 years or older speaks only English or speaks English at least very well.
- **Immigrant-headed households are more likely to live in poverty,** as compared to households headed by U.S.-born Angelenos.

*Note: For a complete profile of L.A. County's immigrant population by Supervisorial District, refer to the appendix.

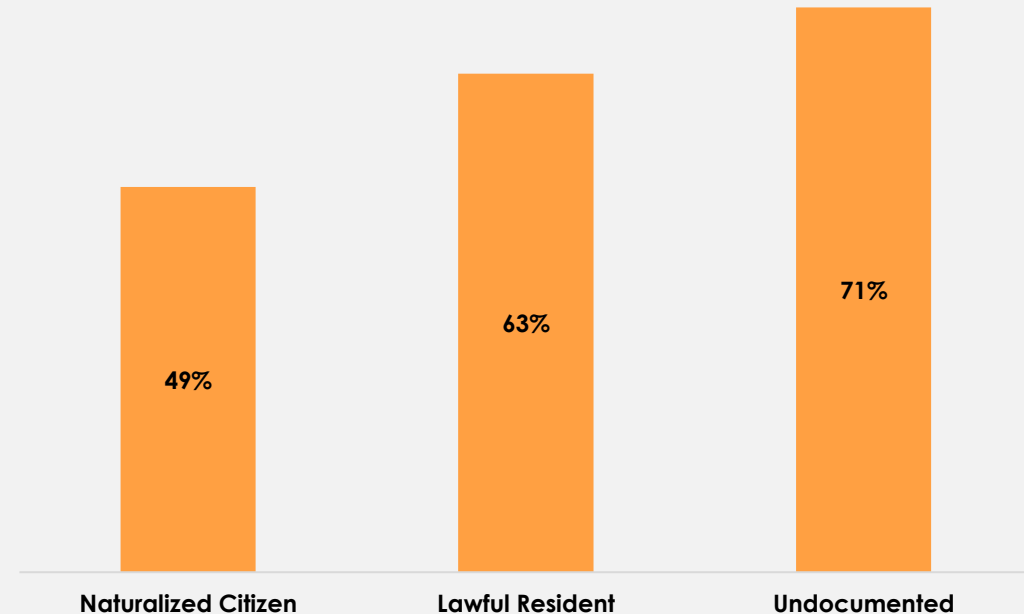
Undocumented Angelenos at a Glance

An estimated 810,000 undocumented immigrants live in Los Angeles County, with more than a quarter living in Supervisorial District 2.*

Across nativity and immigration status, undocumented immigrants are the least likely to have a bachelor's degree or higher (only 11%), as they face significant barriers to educational opportunities.

Undocumented immigrants are more likely than naturalized citizens and lawful residents to self-identify as having limited English proficiency.

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) by Status



*Note: For a complete profile of L.A. County's immigrant population by Supervisorial District, refer to the appendix.

Why Legal Representation Matters

There is a growing backlog of cases in Los Angeles' immigration courts: Over 1/3 of all immigration court cases in the state of California are held in Los Angeles immigration courts, amounting to 122,651 pending cases as of February 2024.²

Among L.A. County residents with a pending immigration case, about 50% have legal representation: Of the 105,753 pending cases, only 52,965 have representation as of February 2024.³

Legal representation matters and makes all the difference in case outcomes: Among deportation cases initiated between 2016-2021, 30% of unrepresented cases resulted in removal orders; compared to 13% of represented cases.⁴

The everchanging immigration political landscape necessitates legal resources: Republican leaders nationwide have willingly put immigrant lives at risk by bussing over 900 migrants to cities such as Los Angeles and Sacramento—in response, L.A. City welcomed these migrants and voted to investigate the legality of Texas Governor Abbott's actions.⁵

Why Legal Representation Matters

The Adelanto ICE Detention Center, located adjacent to L.A. County, is one of the largest immigration detention centers in California⁶: The Adelanto Detention Center has historically had a capacity to hold nearly 2,000 individuals. However, since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of individuals detained in the facility has declined significantly due to a federal judge's order in 2020 that required an immediate reduction in the population detained.⁷ Moreover, while the detention center will potentially close due to ongoing litigation around health and safety violations, its future is yet to be determined.⁸

On June 4, 2024, President Biden signed an executive order, further restricting the right to seek asylum at the border: Among one of the many implications, the order denies asylum to anyone crossing the Southern Border by closing it, once the number of individuals entering reaches 2,500 on a given day. In addition, migrants entering the U.S. would be subject to a more strenuous process as they seek humanitarian relief.⁹

RepresentLA: An Overview

In July 2021, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors passed a motion that adopted the recommendations of the L.A. County Office of Immigrant Affairs (OIA) to create the RepresentLA program. Adopting the framework set forth in the report, *Proposal for a Los Angeles Immigrant Community Legal Defense Program*, RepresentLA is a merit-blind program that provides funds to organizations providing legal representation for removal defense and affirmative immigration relief, as well as social support services for clients and their families.⁶ The eligibility criteria to qualify for the program include:

- **Reside or intend to reside in Los Angeles County**
- **At or below 250% of the federal poverty level.**

RepresentLA: Objectives

The guiding pillars of the RepresentLA program include:

- **Removal Defense:** RepresentLA will provide legal representation for:
 - **Non-Detained Deportation Defense:** For low-income and vulnerable immigrants in need of legal representation in immigration courts in the Los Angeles area. Providers will operate with a merits-blind approach.
 - **Detained Deportation Defense:** For detained immigrants in the Los Angeles region by operating, to the greatest extent possible, a merits-blind approach.
- **Affirmative Immigration Benefits Representation:** RepresentLA will support vulnerable populations not in removal proceedings to apply for various forms of immigration relief. These groups include immigrants experiencing homelessness, asylum seekers, survivors of labor trafficking and/or other severe workplace exploitation, and children who have been abused, neglected, or abandoned by a parent.
- **Community Support/Investing in Impacted Communities:** RepresentLA will focus on various aspects of community support.

RepresentLA: Program Administrators and Managers

The L.A County Office of Immigrant Affairs (OIA) is the government entity administrating RepresentLA. The following are RepresentLA contractors and sub-contractors that have been actively providing legal and social services, through this program, to the immigrant community for about 2 years.⁷

Program Administrators and Managers (contractors):

- **Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)**, Program Administrator, Program Manager for Community Support as well as Removal Defense, and Legal Service Provider (affirmative and removal defense)
- **Central American Resource Center of Los Angeles (CARECEN-LA)**, Program Manager for Affirmative Immigration Benefits Representation and Legal Service Provider (affirmative and removal defense)

RepresentLA: Legal Service Providers

Legal Service Providers (sub-contractors):

- **Al Otro Lado**, Affirmative Asylum
- **Esperanza Immigrant Rights Project (Esperanza)**, Affirmative Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS)
- **Council on American-Islamic Relations-CA (CAIR)**, Removal Defense
- **Immigrant Defenders Law Center (ImmDef)**, Removal Defense
- **Los Angeles LGBT Center**, Removal Defense
- **Public Counsel**, Removal Defense
- **Thai Community Development Center (Thai CDC)**, Affirmative Labor Trafficking
- **TransLatin@ Coalition (TLC)**, Removal Defense
- **University of Southern California Gould School of Law (USC)**, Removal Defense

Case Activity Data: Highlights

As part of the RepresentLA requirements, contractors and sub-contractors submitted demographic and case activity data for RepresentLA clients during Quarter 1 – Quarter 4 of the program (Jan 2023 to December 2023). The following sections highlight key data of the program’s accomplishments across the program areas:



Overview of Cases



**Removal defense
(Non-detained)**

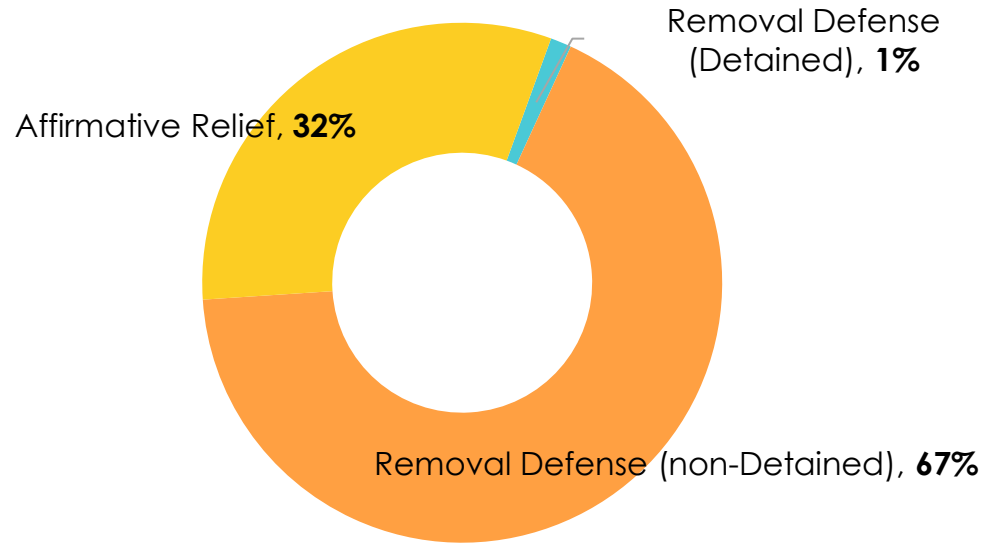


**Affirmative
Immigration Benefits
Representation**



**Removal defense
(Detained)**

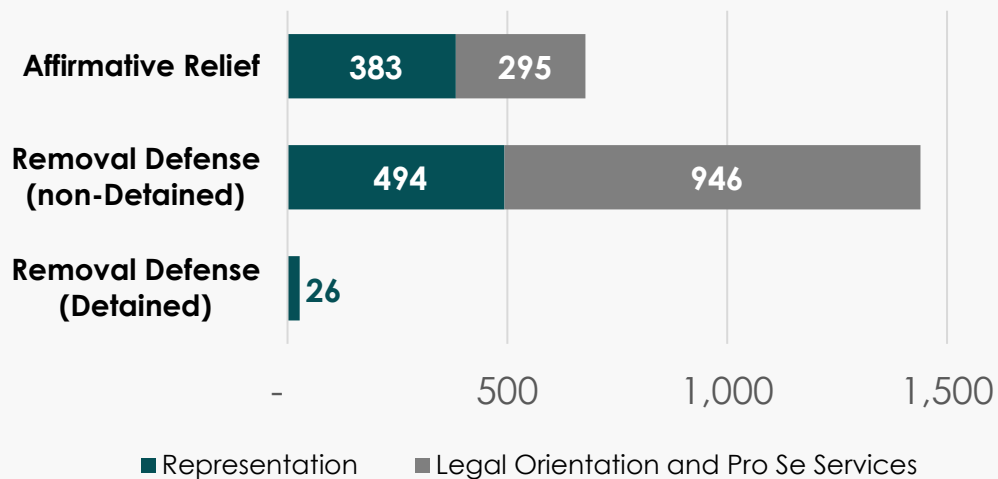
Case Activity Data: Highlights



OVERVIEW OF CASES

- Overall, RepresentLA has reached **2,144 clients**. Of those cases, ***including legal orientations and pro se services***, the majority are removal defense (non-detained), followed by affirmative relief cases.
- More than 3 in 10 non-detained removal defense cases were accepted to receive full-scope legal representation.
- More than 2 in 5 affirmative relief cases involved exploited poultry workers who received legal orientation or pro bono counsel coordinated by Thai CDC.

RepresentLA Cases/Applicants by Pillar and Case Type



Spotlights: Responding to the Political Landscape

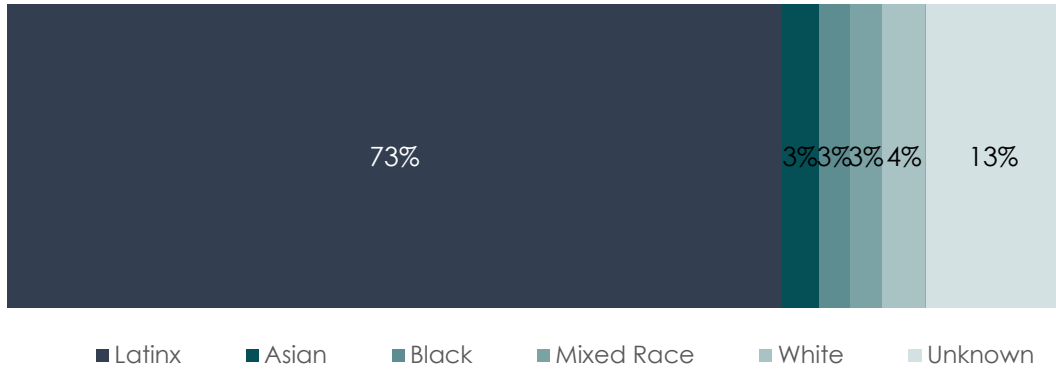
When Texas Governor Greg Abbot began sending busloads of migrants to Los Angeles in June 2023, RepresentLA sub-contractor Immigrant Defenders Law Center provided legal orientation and pro se assistance for migrants on each bus. Through December 2023, ImmDef served **1,195 individuals**, providing:

- **415** legal consultations
- Pro se assistance with **126** Employment Authorization Documents
- Pro se assistance with **160** changes of address for new arrivals in removal proceedings
- Pro se assistance with **71** Change of Venue motions

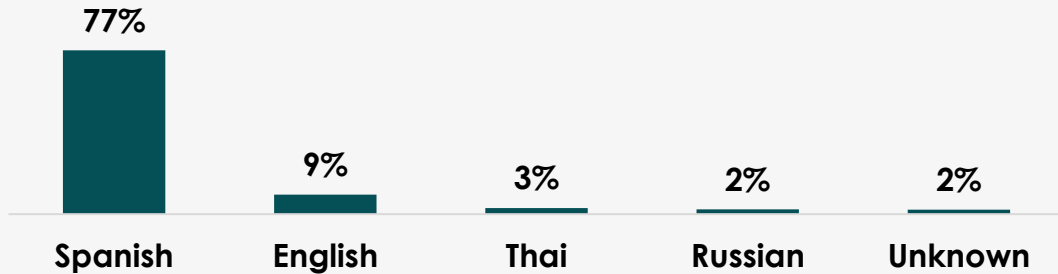
Thai CDC represented survivors of trafficking and/or severe workplace exploitation. Thai CDC also led the effort to coordinate legal and social service provision for **265 poultry workers** identified in two lawsuits—one whose findings were led by investigators from the U.S. Department of Labor. Thai CDC provided:

- **265** legal consultations on employment rights and immigration relief
- **100** pro bono counsel referrals and/or placement for immigration representation

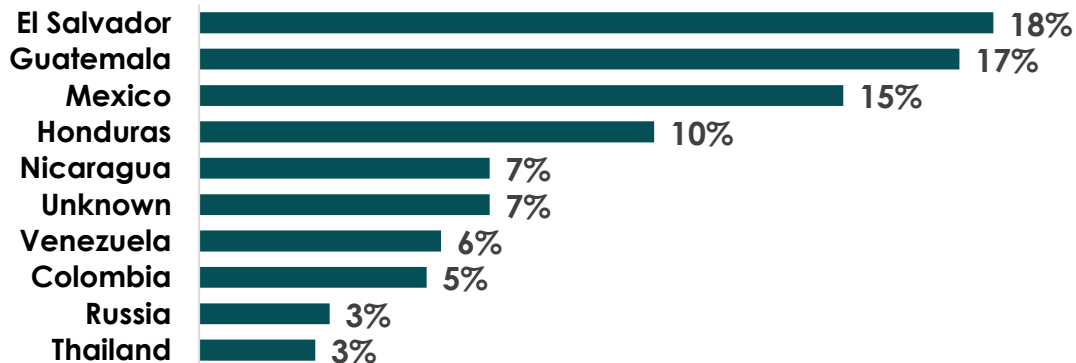
Client Demographics: Data Highlights



RepresentLA Applicants by Reported Primary Language (Top 5)



RepresentLA Applicants by Country of Origin (Top 10)

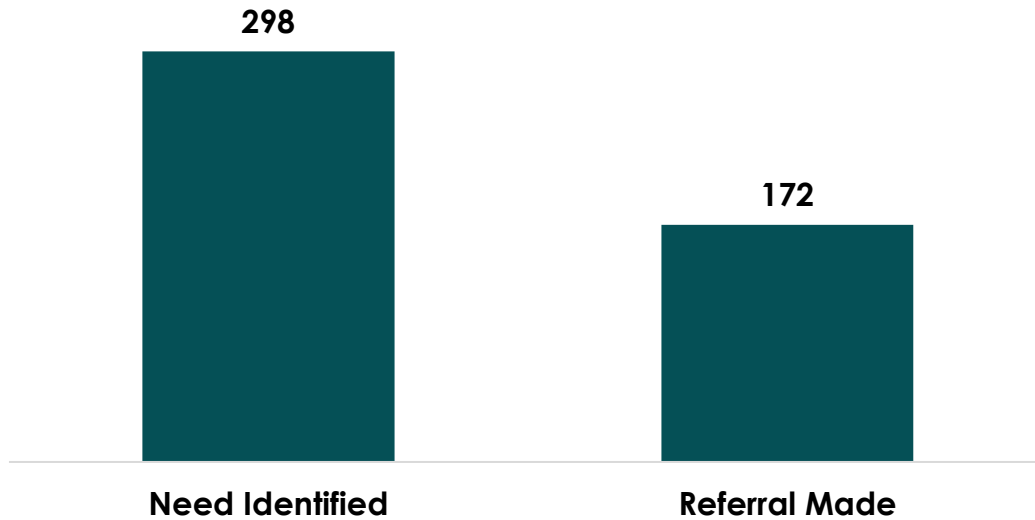


CLIENT DEMOGRAPHICS

- RepresentLA clients are primarily Latinx (73%), whereas Asian, Black, and mixed-race clients each make up 3% of all clients.
- Less than 1 in 10 RepresentLA clients report English as their primary language.
- Nearly 7 in 10 RepresentLA clients are from a Central American country (51%) or Mexico (17%).
- 533 of the 903 (59%) of full-scope representation clients reside in the City of Los Angeles.

Client Demographics: Data Highlights

Needs Identified and Referral Made for RepresentLA Clients



Needs Identified and Referral Made for Families of RepresentLA Clients

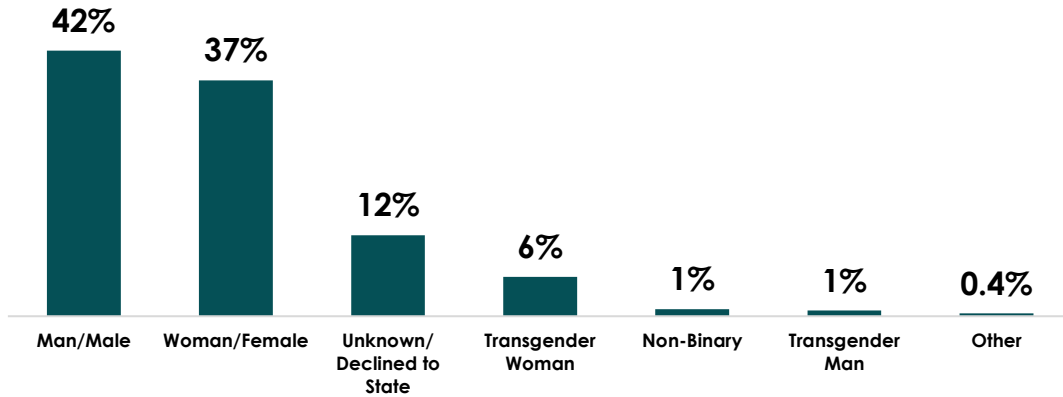


CLIENT DEMOGRAPHICS

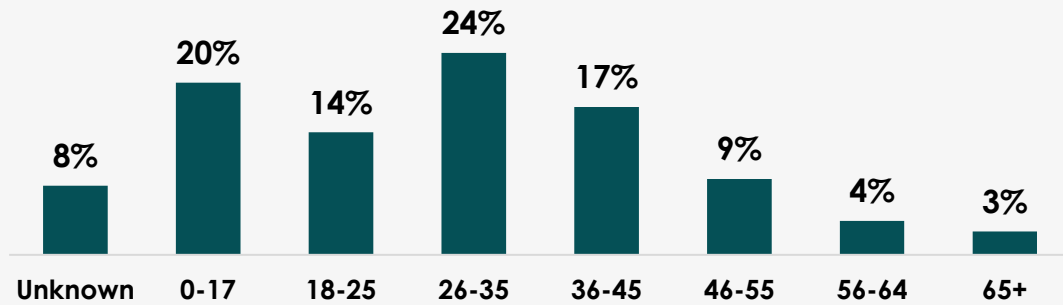
- Of the 298 RepresentLA clients who had a need identified (e.g., mental health, housing, employment), 172 (58%) were referred to a social service to meet those needs.
- Of the 108 families of RepresentLA clients who had a need identified (e.g., mental health, housing, employment), 71 (66%) were referred to a social service to meet those needs.

Client Demographics: Data Highlights

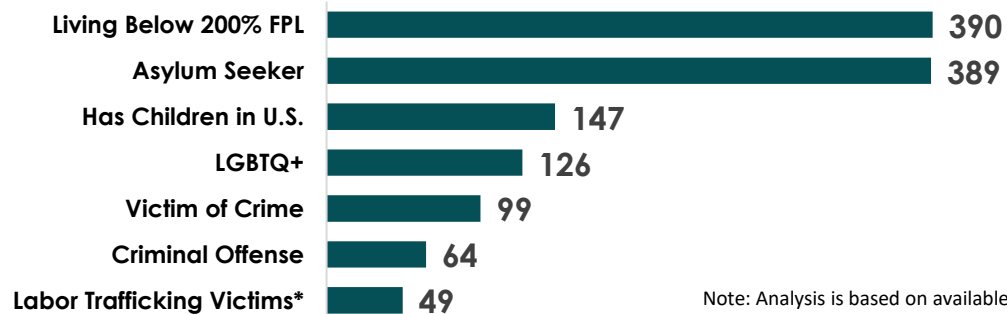
RepresentLA Applicants by Gender Identity



RepresentLA Applicants by Age



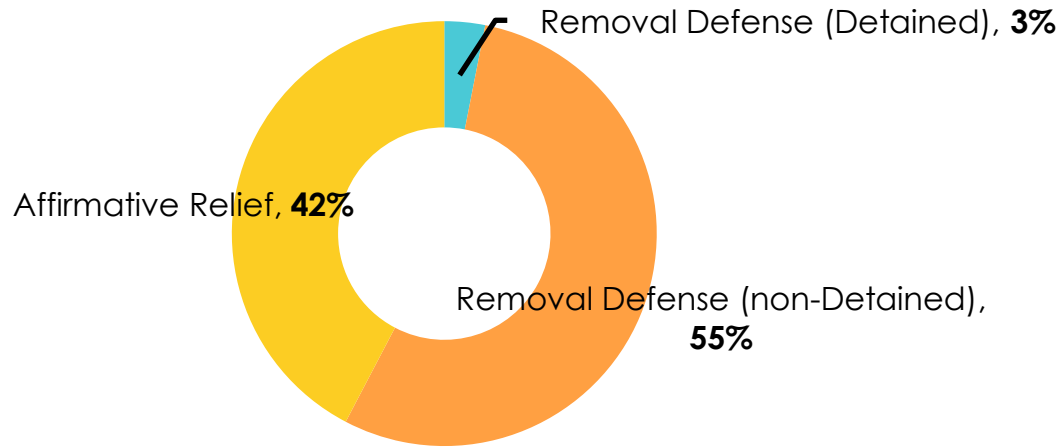
RepresentLA Applicants Reporting...



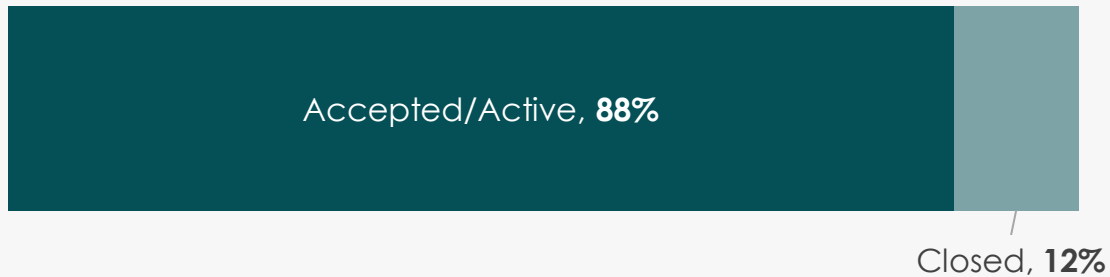
Note: Analysis is based on available data. Includes cases reporting "Yes" and "Possible"

CLIENT DEMOGRAPHICS

- About 8 in 10 RepresentLA clients identify as either men or women, whereas less than 1 in 10 clients identified as transgender, non-binary, or other.
- About 1 in 5 RepresentLA clients are ages 17 and younger.
- More than 4 in 10 RepresentLA clients live below 200% of the federal poverty line.
- More than 4 in 10 RepresentLA clients report they are seeking asylum.
- About 14% of RepresentLA clients identify as LGBTQ+.



Removal Defense (Detained & non-Detained) Status



CASE ACTIVITY DATA

- Of the 903 reported **full-scope representation cases**, 494 are classified as removal defense (non-detained), 383 as affirmative relief, and 26 as removal defense (detained).
- Of removal defense cases, all 520 cases were accepted for full-scope representation with 88% still active.
- Among full-scope representation cases, 61 removal defense cases, 94 asylum cases, 24 SIJS cases, and 36 labor trafficking cases have outcomes reported.

Voices on the Ground

“...many have strained relationships with relatives or sponsors due to their gender identity and perceived sexuality and therefore lack a proper support network...**Clients are often in need of a variety of resources, such as medical care, mental health services, and transitional housing.**

– RepresentLA Legal Service Provider

“...faced the challenge of providing services to clients outside of a legal context. **The organization is limited in the information or guidance that can be provided in the sphere of social services.** The addition of a social worker to the team could help bridge this gap and provide clients with resources, information, and guidance.

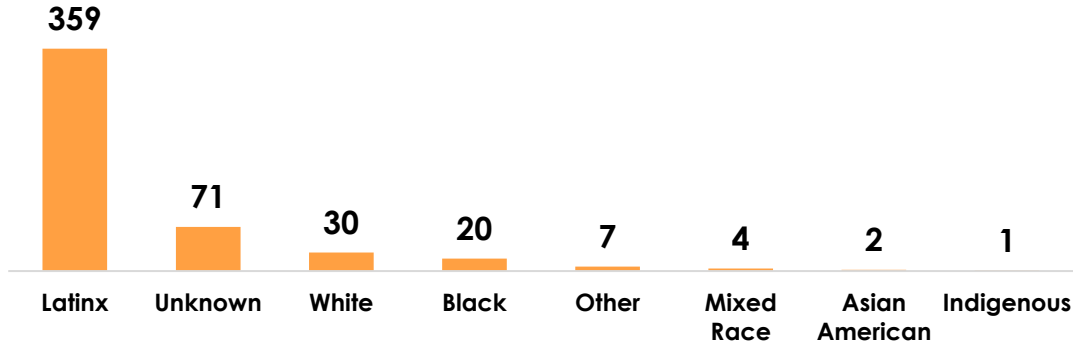
– RepresentLA Legal Service Provider

“Due to the nature of the community members being serviced, it can often be difficult for clients to meet as they usually work long hours, are victims of human trafficking, and/or have multiple jobs.

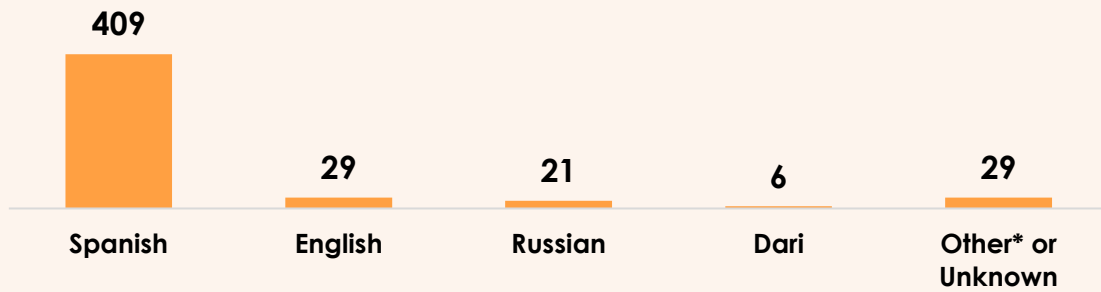
– RepresentLA Legal Service Provider

Removal Defense (Non-Detained): Data Highlights

Removal Defense (Non-Detained) by Race/Ethnicity

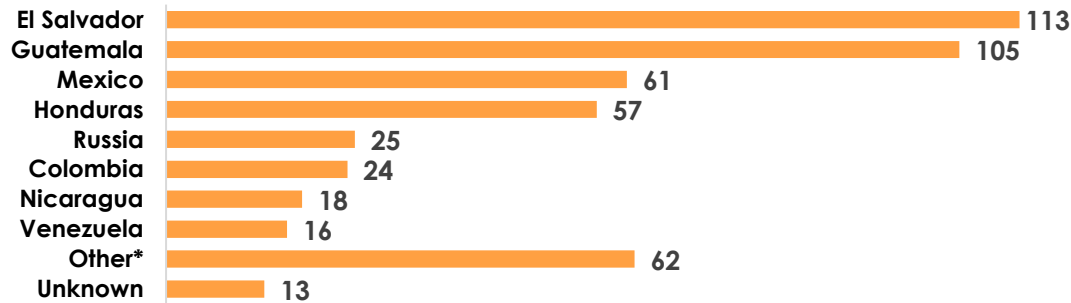


Removal Defense (Non-Detained) by Reported Primary Language



*includes Creole, Pashto, Arabic, French, Mandarin, Portuguese, Tigrinya-Eriteran

Removal Defense (Non-Detained) by Country of Origin



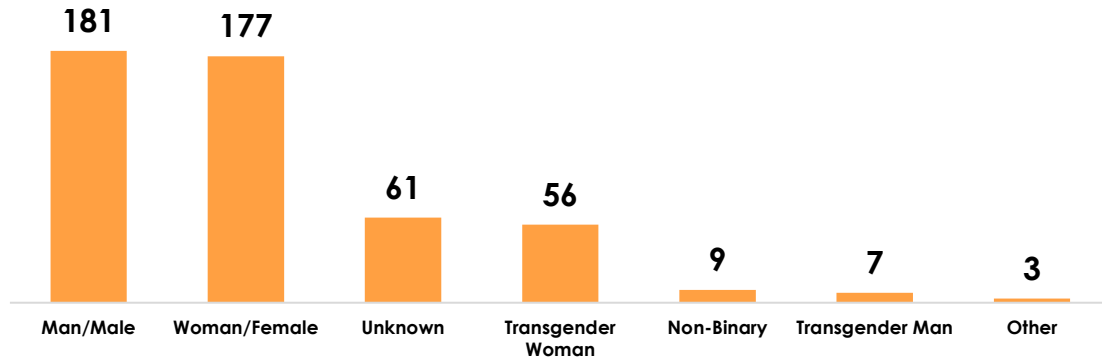
*includes (in order by the number of cases) Afghanistan, Cuba, Belize, Ecuador, Nigeria, Haiti, Mauritania, Peru, Br Uganda, Angola, China, Jamaica, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Slovakia, Tunisia, USSR

REMOVAL DEFENSE (NON-DETAINED)

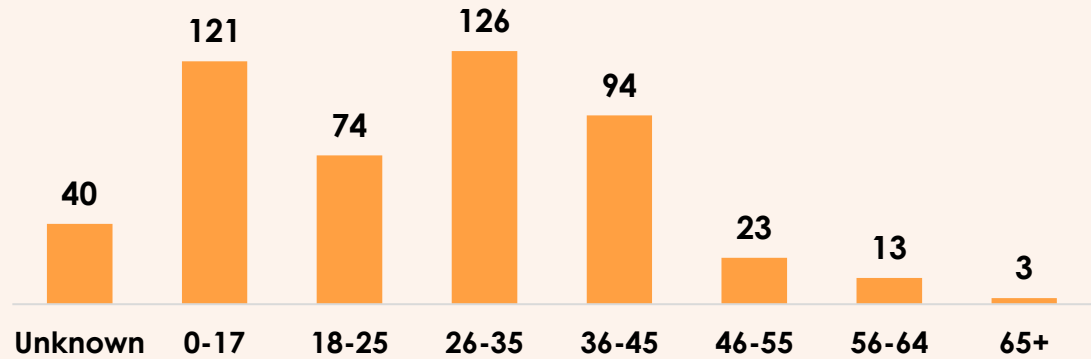
- 494 of the 903 (55%) cases are classified as removal defense (non-detained).
- The majority of removal defense (non-detained) clients identified as Latinx (72%) and reported Spanish as their primary language (83%).
- Nearly 7 in 10 removal defense (non-detained) clients reported El Salvador (23%), Guatemala (21%), Mexico (12%), or Honduras (12%) as their country of origin.

Removal Defense (Non-Detained): Data Highlights

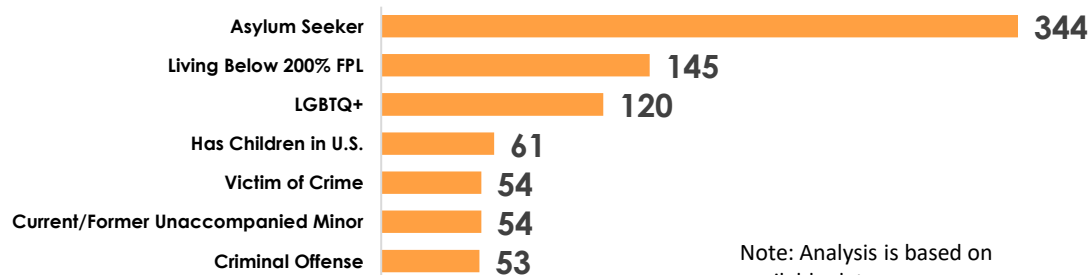
Removal Defense (Non-Detained) by Gender Identity



Removal Defense (Non-Detained) by Age



Number of Removal Defense (Non-Detained) Applicants Reporting...

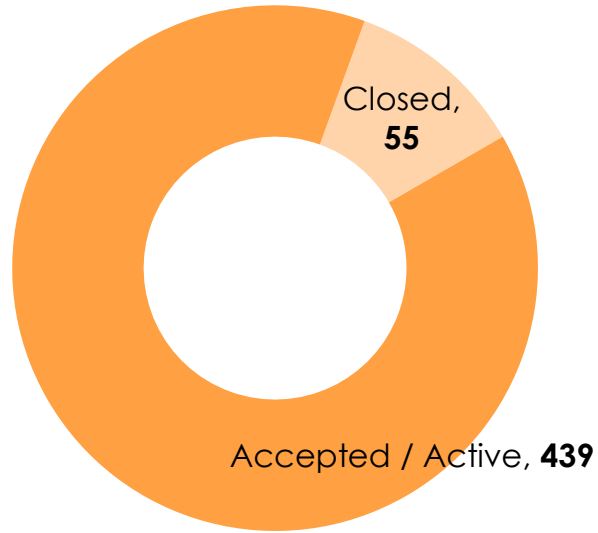


Note: Analysis is based on available data.

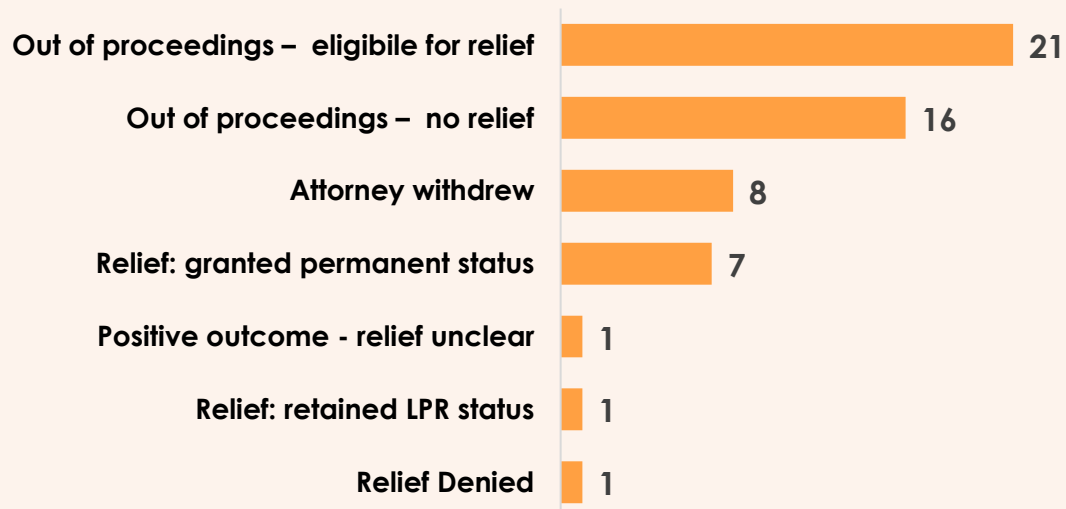
REMOVAL DEFENSE (NON-DETAINED)

- Approximately 7 of 10 removal defense (non-detained) clients identified as men or women; about 15% of clients identified as either transgender, non-binary, or other.
- More than half (65%) of removal defense (non-detained) clients are ages 35 and younger.
- Nearly 7 in 10 removal defense (non-detained) clients report they are seeking asylum.

Removal Defense (Non-Detained): Data Highlights



Removal Defense (non-Detained) Closed Case Cited Reason



REMOVAL DEFENSE (NON-DETAINED)

- Of the 494 non-detained removal cases, all were accepted for full-scope representation.
- 55 cases are closed, including 38% of clients who had their removal proceedings terminated or dismissed, lifting the imminent threat of deportation and are now eligible for a form of immigration relief.
- About 84% of closed cases have resulted in a positive outcome, including clients who no longer face deportation.

Voices on the Ground

““ *The **delay in producing receipt notices by USCIS** has brought considerable challenges to the work being completed. Additionally, there is **a lack of response from ICE counsel and can lead to a waste of resources**, such as time and staff who must attend hearings in which the ICE Counsel is not adequately prepared.*

– RepresentLA Legal Service Provider

““ *... **sharp increase in the speed of cases that are being determined for individual hearings.** Immigration judges have typically informed the attorneys within 180 days (about 6 months) of an individual hearing, which has now changed to 60 days. **This has made scheduling difficult for the staff and for the cases of the clients.***

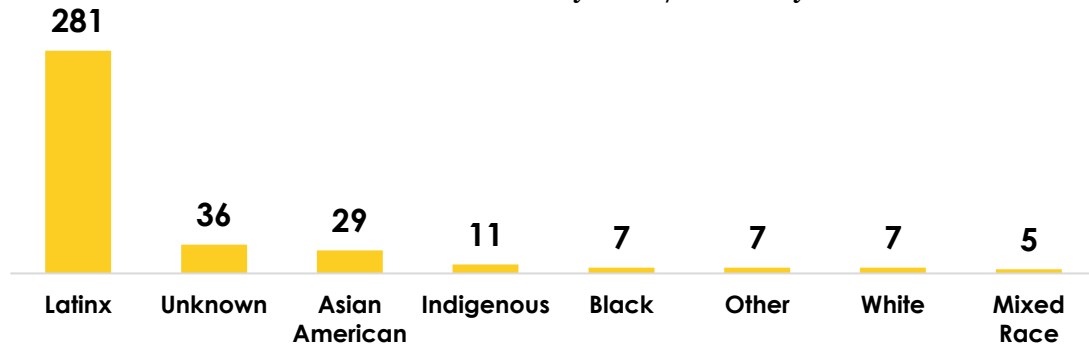
– RepresentLA Legal Service Provider

““ ***Encountering clients who were not eligible for services was a challenge, including those in removal proceedings** or because they did not live in LA County. Knowing that the demand for services is greater than what we can provide can be really heartbreaking.*

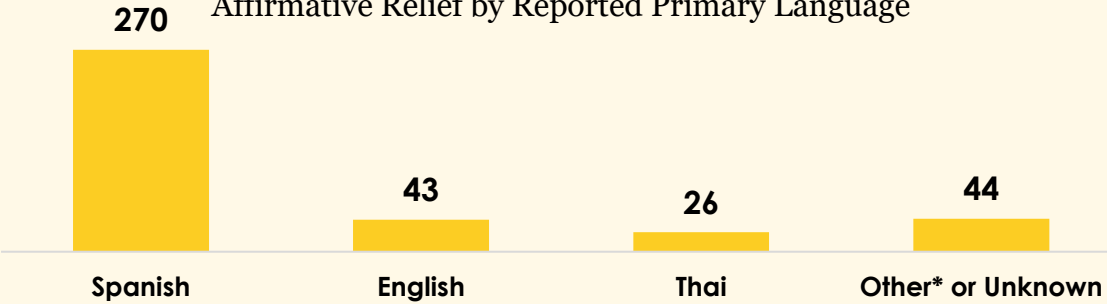
– RepresentLA Legal Service Provider

Affirmative Relief: Data Highlights

Affirmative Relief by Race/Ethnicity

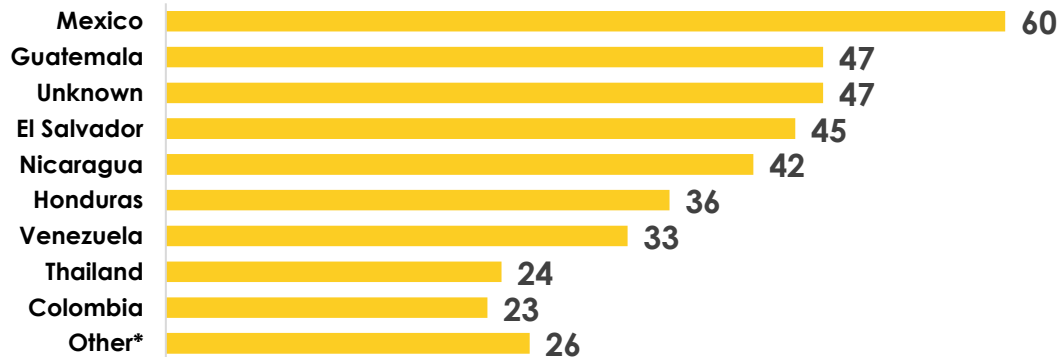


Affirmative Relief by Reported Primary Language



*includes (in order by number of cases) Indigenous language (non-specified), Ixil, Armenian, Polish, Russian, Portuguese, Quiche, and Turkish

Affirmative Relief by Country of Origin



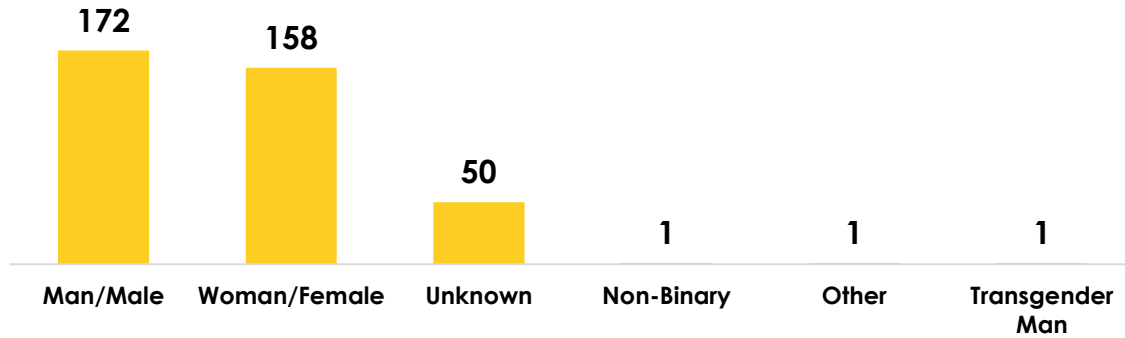
*includes (in order by number of cases) Belize, Cuba, Russia, Vietnam, China, Ecuador, Guinea, Haiti, Italy, Korea, Morocco, Nigeria, Peru, Philippines, Turkey, Uganda, Armenia

AFFIRMATIVE RELIEF

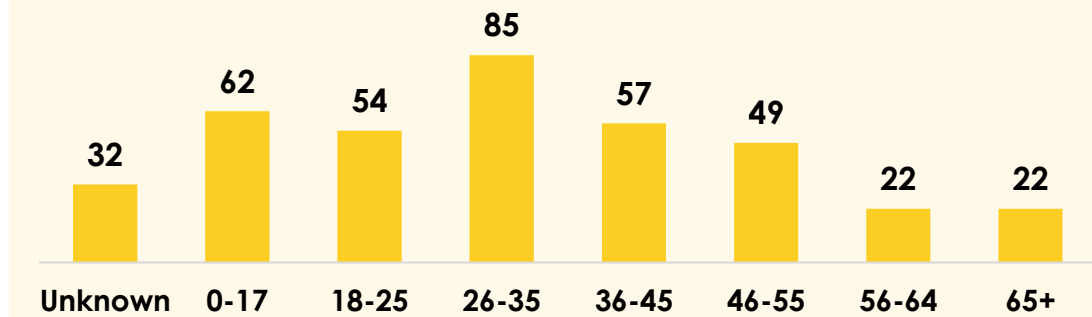
- 383 of 903 (42%) of RepresentLA's full-scope representation cases are classified as affirmative relief.
- The majority of affirmative relief clients identified as Latinx (73%) and reported Spanish as their primary language (70%).
- Approximately 6 in 10 affirmative relief clients come from a Central American country (45%), or Mexico (16%).

Affirmative Relief: Data Highlights

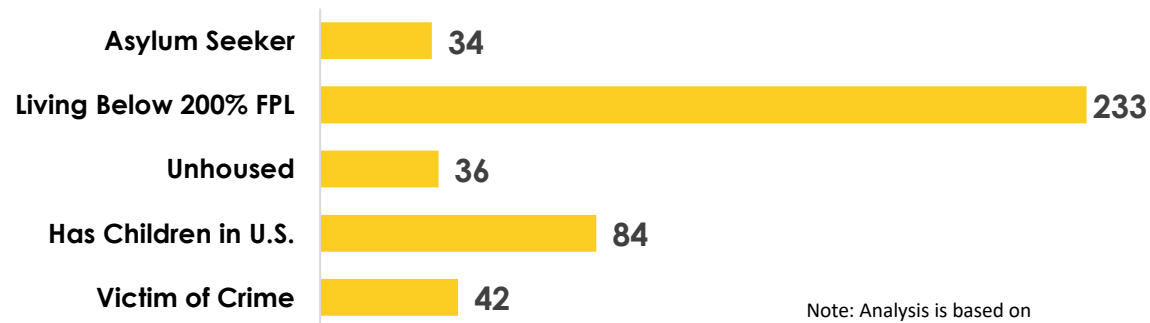
Affirmative Relief by Gender Identity



Affirmative Relief by Age



Affirmative Relief Applicants Reporting...

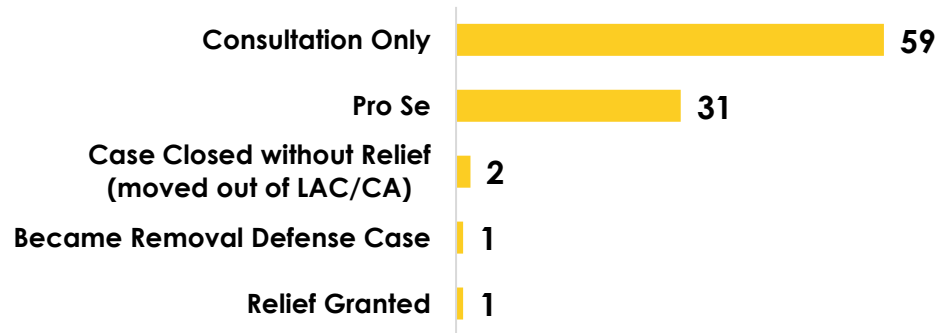


Note: Analysis is based on available data.

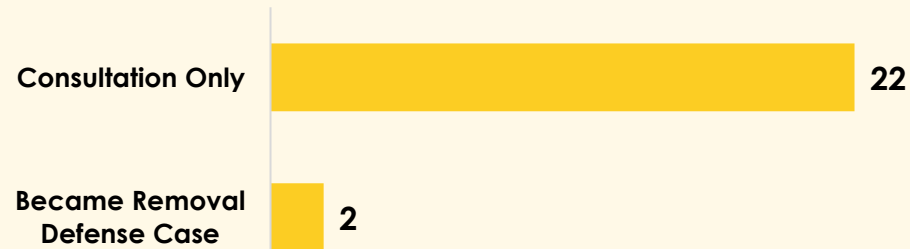
AFFIRMATIVE RELIEF

- Nearly 9 of 10 affirmative relief clients identified as men or women; 3 clients identified as either transgender, non-binary, or other.
- Nearly a quarter (22%) of affirmative relief clients are between the ages of 26 and 35 years old.
- More than 6 in 10 affirmative relief clients have household incomes below 200% of the federal poverty line.

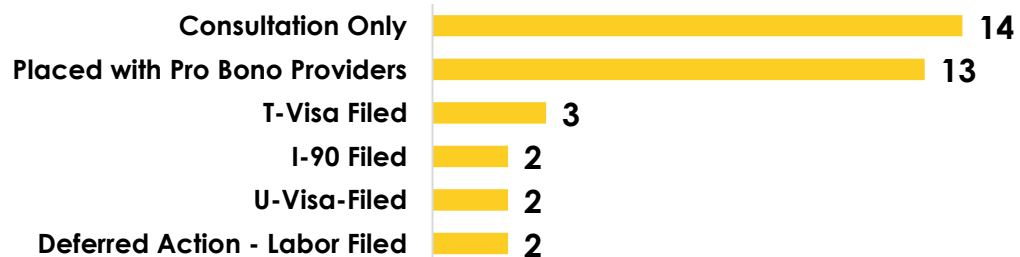
Reported Outcome for Asylum Cases



Reported Outcome for SIJS Cases



Reported Outcome for Labor Trafficking Cases



AFFIRMATIVE RELIEF

- Data inconsistency on status (e.g., “accepted/active” and “closed”) is due to different cases having distinct objectives by design (e.g., SIJS vs. labor trafficking vs. asylum cases).
- 94 asylum cases had a reported outcome, including 59 cases that were a consultation only and 31 that were pro se.
- 24 SIJS cases had a reported outcome, including 22 cases that were a consultation only and 2 that became removal defense cases.
- 36 labor trafficking cases had a reported outcome, including 14 cases that were a consultation only and 13 that were placed with pro bono providers.

Voices on the Ground

“**Clients are having to wait an indefinite amount of time for their cases to be resolved at the Asylum Office.** There are also delays with the annual visas that creates challenges in adjusting the status of many clients. **U-Visa eligibility in removal defense cases has remained strenuous** due to annual visa caps and long processing times.

– RepresentLA Legal Service Provider

“**At the federal level, the immovable visa bulletin is a challenge with an estimated wait time of 5 years for SIJS clients to receive lawful permanent residency...**several requirements must remain unchanged for the client to retain permanent residency such as remaining unmarried and/or having no interaction with the criminal system.

– RepresentLA Legal Service Provider

“**Caseworkers will most likely have to obtain more work and resources for the new asylum rules following the end of Title 42...**Clients with NTAs must apply for asylum affirmatively and may be ineligible after one year. **Various changes have been made by USCIS that have made this more difficult,** such as the inability to complete this task online.

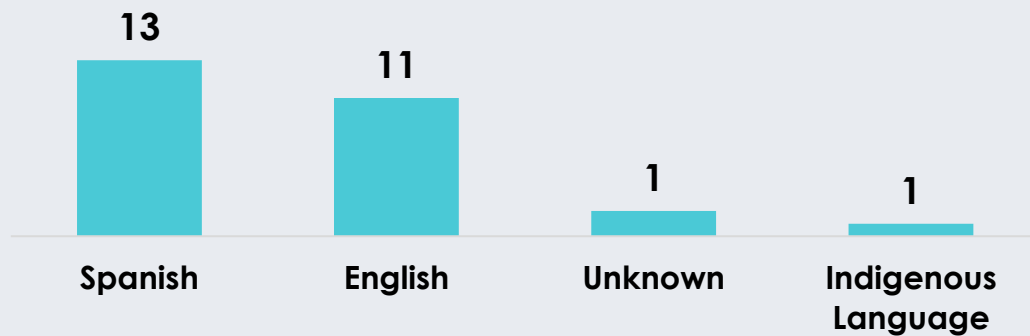
– RepresentLA Legal Service Provider

Removal Defense (Detained): Data Highlights

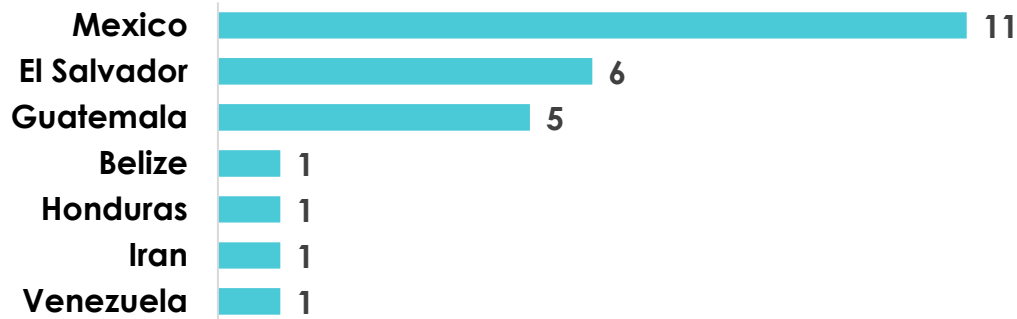
Removal Defense (Detained) by Race/Ethnicity



Removal Defense (Detained) by Reported Primary Language



Removal Defense (Detained) by Country of Origin

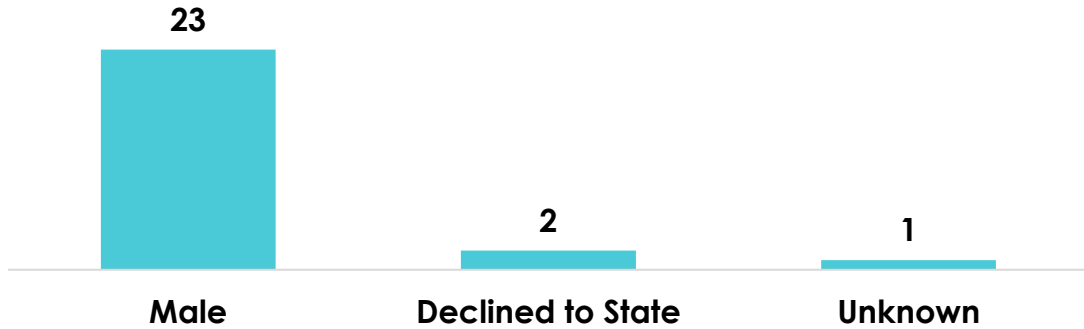


REMOVAL DEFENSE (DETAINED)

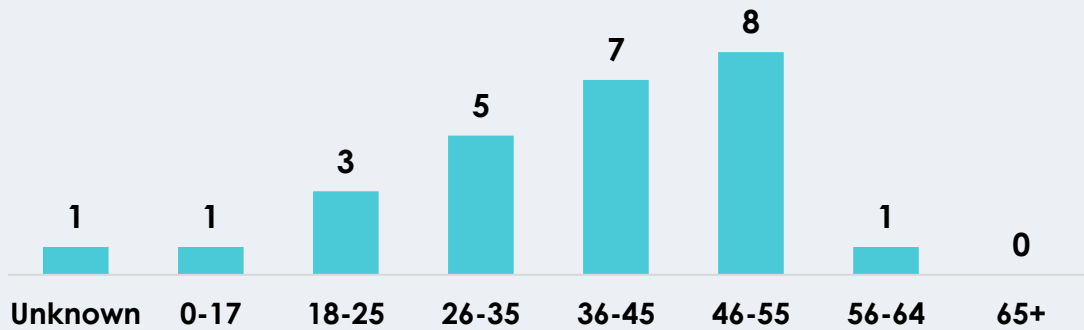
- 26 of the 903 (3%) RepresentLA full-scope representation cases are classified as removal defense (detained).
- The majority of removal defense (detained) clients identified as Latinx (69%) and reported Spanish as their primary language (50%).
- A significant share of removal defense (detained) clients reported Mexico as their country of origin (42%).

Removal Defense (Detained): Data Highlights

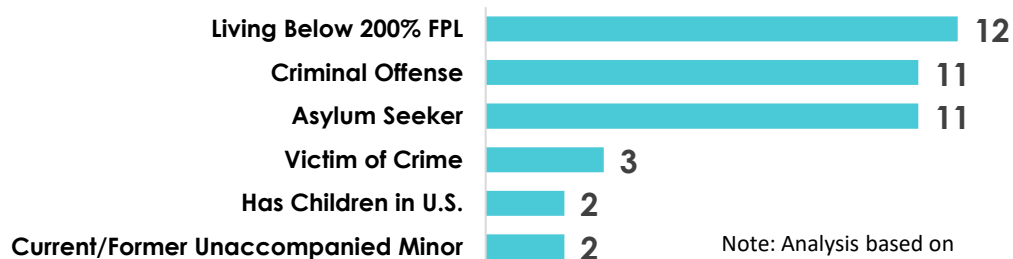
Removal Defense (Detained) by Gender Identity



Removal Defense (Detained) by Age at Intake



Number of Removal Defense (Detained) Applicants Reporting...

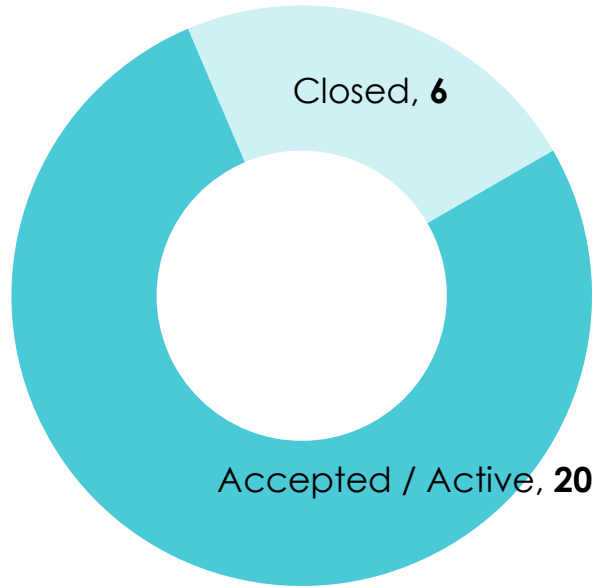


Note: Analysis based on available data.

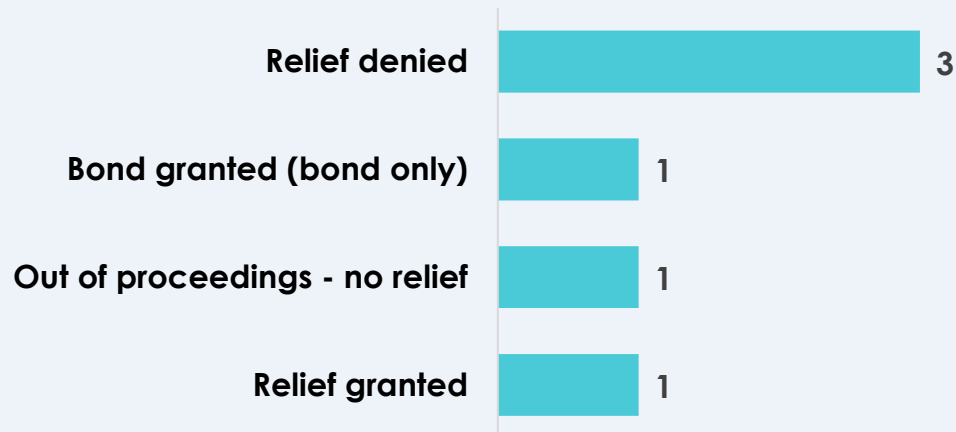
REMOVAL DEFENSE (DETAINED)

- Among removal defense (detained) clients with gender reported, all identified as men.
- More than half (57%) of removal defense (detained) clients fall between the ages of 36 and 55 years old.
- More than 4 in 10 removal defense (detained) clients have at least one vulnerability reported, including seeking asylum.

Removal Defense (Detained): Data Highlights



Removal Defense (Detained) Closed Case Cited Reason



REMOVAL DEFENSE (DETAINED)

- 3 of the 6 closed cases had a positive outcome, including having a bond granted, proceedings dismissed/terminated, or relief granted.
- 3 of the 6 closed cases had their relief denied.
- Of the 26 removal defense (detained) cases, all were accepted for full-scope representation.

Voices on the Ground

““ The biggest obstacle has mostly been **providing timely services to detained clients while facing red-tape from detention centers.** Detention administrators and officers do not operate with the same sense of urgency as legal providers and court staff do, which further delays our work.

– RepresentLA Legal Service Provider

““ Our team encountered **communication issues with our clients in detention.** It's difficult to schedule video calls with our clients and some delays with the mail as well. Communication is even more challenging when our **clients are transferred to a different detention facility without any notification to us.**

– RepresentLA Legal Service Provider

““ The most challenging part of my work has been the **lack of cooperation and availability to talk to my client with GEO group** - the group contracted to guard detainees. Perhaps due to the sheer amount of individuals currently detained, it is at times **difficult to get a timely video appointment with clients.**

– RepresentLA Legal Service Provider

Understanding the Data: Quarterly Wellness Survey

As part of the RepresentLA reporting requirements, contractors and sub-contractors are encouraged to complete a quarterly survey to evaluate their feelings of burnout; the emotional toll of the work; the positive influence on clients' lives; and whether they have adequate time and resources to complete work-related tasks.

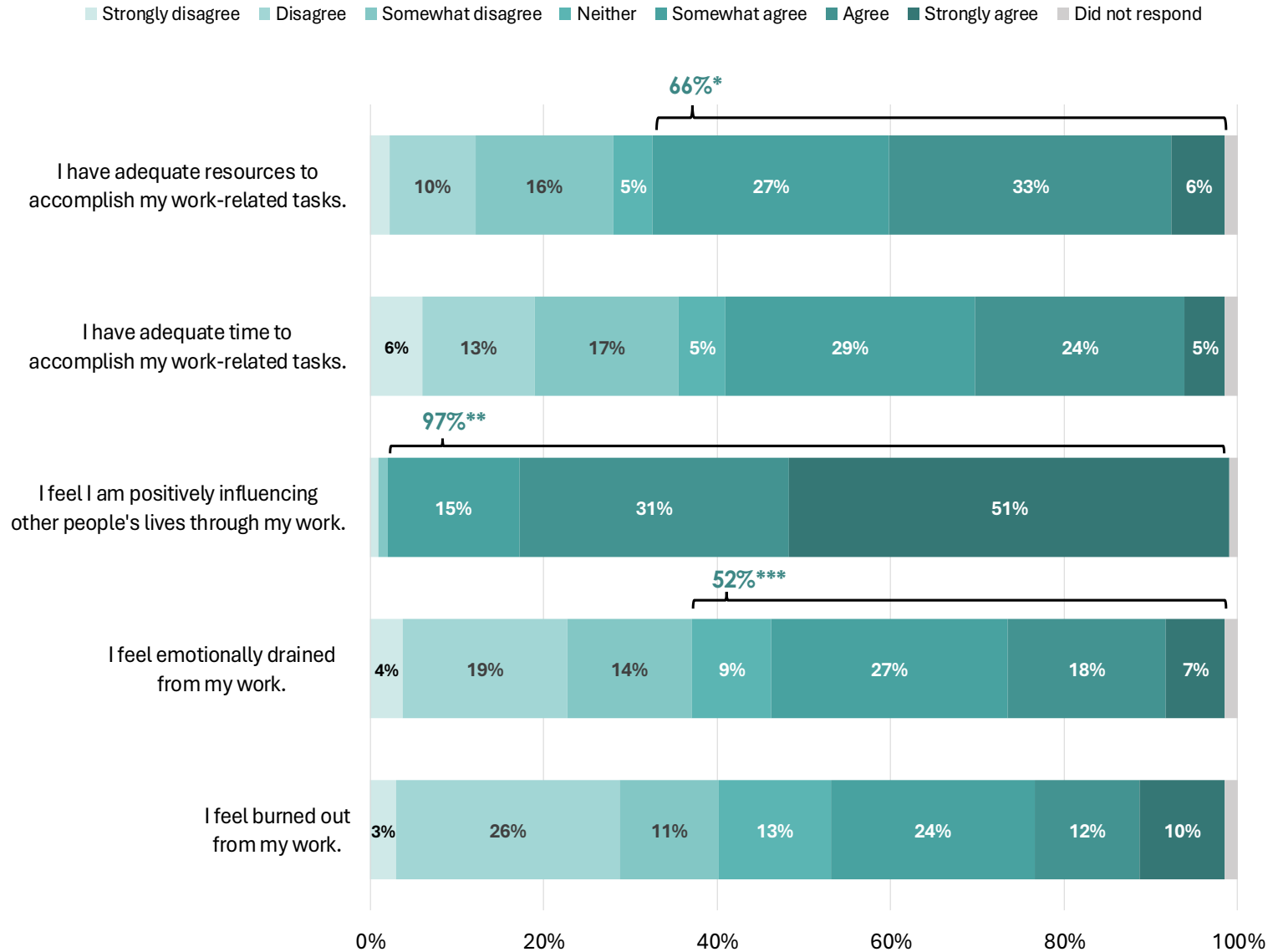
The survey also assesses the successes and challenges they face as legal service providers that provides further context and insight into the case activity data.

“

*Not only is it a lot of **high stress and pressure to meet the 1-year deadline** for cases that we don't always have as much time as we would like, but also **all the emotional work** that happens in order to focus the client to get the necessary/helpful facts to the case.*

– RepresentLA Legal Service Provider

RepresentLA Wellness Survey Q 1 - Q 4



Note: The total number of responses featured above was 132.

- ***66%** of responses indicated some degree of agreement with the statement: *“I have adequate resources to accomplish my work-related tasks.”*
- ****97%** of responses indicated some degree of agreement with the statement: *“I feel I am positively influencing other people's lives through my work.”*
- *****52%** of responses indicated some degree of agreement with the statement: *“I feel emotionally drained from my work.”*

Understanding the Wellness Survey Data: Top 3 Challenges

1. RepresentLA contractors and sub-contractors have an overwhelmingly high volume of cases with unreasonable and competing priority deadlines. Many describe their experience as constantly “operating in a state of emergency” while understaffed and under-resourced.
2. Immigration law is not only complex, requiring time and resources, but also emotionally taxing and attorneys are often not compensated adequately. This can explain the high attorney turnover that creates challenges for them in managing caseloads and can explain the “difficulty of hiring qualified and quality candidates to do the work.”
3. Contractors and sub-contractors are not only providing critical legal services but are also a lifeline to vulnerable clients who have faced traumatic experiences and numerous socioeconomic challenges—such as economic insecurity, housing, mental health challenges, and transportation needs. Clients’ circumstances can often impede them from providing the necessary documentation to attorneys and even attending their appointments.

“

*Constantly **being in a state of emergency** has been absolutely exhausting. **Short deadlines coupled with too much work, not enough time, and complex cases—it gets draining.** You feel guilt when you're not working but your physical and mental health suffer if you're at your desk all day and into the night. It's a tough balance that affects us beyond our work self and into our relationships and families.*

*– RepresentLA Legal
Service Provider*

Understanding the Wellness Survey Data: Top 3 Rewarding Factors

1. The majority of RepresentLA contractors and sub-contractors highlighted that providing clients—who have navigated challenging circumstances—with critical support throughout their legal processes that tend to be complex, is the most rewarding aspect of their work.
2. Similarly, they feel rewarded when they can obtain positive outcomes for clients who otherwise may not have been represented—for immigrants in removal proceedings this meant preventing their clients from being deported or releasing their client from detention—and receiving their client’s appreciation.
3. An additional rewarding component of the work for RepresentLA contractors and sub-contractors was working alongside their dedicated co-workers who fostered a sense of camaraderie.

“

*The most rewarding thing about the work is definitely being able to **assist and guide clients who have already struggled a lot** and are traumatized from what they have seen and lived. It is very satisfying to be able to assist them...through **case management work such as application for benefits, support with other types of needs** to provide a more well-rounded assistance.*

*– RepresentLA Legal
Service Provider*

Looking Ahead: Factors to Consider

1. To date, RepresentLA has provided critical services, including legal orientation and pro se services, to 2,144 vulnerable immigrants who otherwise would not be represented. Indeed, about 14% of RepresentLA clients identify as LGBTQ+.
2. Attorneys are a lifeline to clients—71 families and 172 clients were referred to social services—but funds to hire in-house social workers are an urgent need.
3. Navigating a complex and ever-changing immigration system warrants funding for organizational capacity, technical assistance, and living wages—this is especially important in retaining attorneys who experience significant burnout. Due to this, RepresentLA has pivoted to respond to the moment in time and the needs of immigrant Angelenos.
4. Despite all the challenges contractors and sub-contractors face in providing legal services, they continue to achieve positive case outcomes for their clients—not only in the form of relief but also in providing competent counsel throughout challenging legal processes and the cancellation of removal proceedings, among others.
5. RepresentLA has forged new partnerships with AltaMed, the Children’s Hospital of Los Angeles, and the Department of Labor that are coordinating social and legal services for vulnerable immigrant populations.



*...the partnerships between **AltaMed and Children’s Hospital of Los Angeles** have **remained fruitful** and allowed clients to receive medical care, psychological care, case management, and legal **services to the children impacted by the stress and vulnerabilities of immigration.***

– RepresentLA Legal Service Provider

Looking Ahead: Factors to Consider

6. RepresentLA has expanded the infrastructure of legal services—that is critical in responding to a changing political landscape—yet the need continues to far outweigh the availability of resources.
7. Factors such as the reduction in the detained population at the Adelanto Detention Center impact the volume of detained removal defense cases represented through the program. As such, flexibility in funding is important to respond to the moment in time.
8. Improving the centralized referral system to be more detailed, accessible, and streamlined can alleviate inefficiencies and add clarity on whether an individual is eligible for the program.
9. Although the Community Advisory Group (a component of the program framework) has not been created yet, its implementation during the next phase, will be key for incorporating the voices and needs of the immigrant community.
10. Improving and streamlining data collection systems—while not compromising the time of attorney’s who are already at capacity—is important to improve the quality and accuracy of the case activity data. Moreover, extensive and duplicate data reporting requirements create an additional burden for attorneys—time can be better spent assisting clients.

“

*...The success rate of [our organization] has impacted the caseload deliverables positively. **All the merit hearings for LGBTQ asylum seekers have resulted in grants of relief this year.***

– RepresentLA Legal Service Provider

Methodological Appendix

CASE ACTIVITY DATA AND ANALYSIS

Contractors and sub-contractors who provide legal services input client data into an online platform operated by RepresentLA's Program Administrator, Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights - Los Angeles (CHIRLA). This data then is processed and downloaded on a quarterly basis by CHIRLA. USC ERI receives the anonymized legal case activity data from the County Office for Immigrant Affairs (OIA) and CHIRLA. After receiving the data, we clean and analyze the data using SPSS, a statistical and computation tool. Based on entries categorized as "legal cases" in the data, we then create crosstabs based on different case types (e.g., removal defense or affirmative relief) and various sociodemographic indicators, including race/ethnicity, gender, country of origin, and primary language. For sociodemographic data that is missing, we recode them as unknown.

For data on vulnerabilities (e.g., Is the client experiencing homelessness?), we do not recode missing data (i.e., blank) as unknown because it is unclear if contractors and sub-contractors are systematically and consistently not responding because the client is not experiencing that particular vulnerability, if it is unknown because client did not disclose, or if the contractor or sub-contractor inputting the data overlooked the question. It is also possible that the completeness of the data is threatened by attrition.

WELLNESS DATA

The wellness survey includes open-ended questions assessing contractor and sub-contractors' experience in the past three months, including challenges, rewarding aspects, barriers, bond funds, and feedback providing legal services through RepresentLA. The survey also includes a series of Likert scale questions to measure feelings of burnout; the emotional toll of the work; the positive influence on client's lives; and whether they have adequate time and resources to complete work-related tasks.

A 7-point scale of agreement was utilized with the following ratings: strongly disagree, disagree, somewhat disagree, neither, somewhat agree, and strongly agree. While contractors and sub-contractors were encouraged to respond on a quarterly basis, they were not required to do so. The responses submitted are dated from July 2023 to January 2024 to capture quarter one through quarter four of the program. The wellness survey was embedded in the Salesforce data portal that contractors and sub-contractors used to submit case activity data. Wellness data was extracted by CHIRLA, the program administrator, and sent to the USC Equity Research Institute for analysis. The data was cleaned and reviewed by USC ERI and analyzed using Excel and SPSS.

SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT LEVEL ESTIMATES

In order to use the 2021 5-year American Community Survey (ACS) microdata from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS USA) to explore LA County’s supervisorial districts, we created a crosswalk by intersecting 2021 LA County supervisorial district boundaries, 2010 public use microdata areas (PUMAs), and 2021 block group centroids in ArcGIS Pro. We chose to use the block group-level because it is **the most granular geography** available in the 5-year ACS microdata.

In the crosswalk product, each row represents a sliver resulting from the intersection of PUMAs and supervisorial district boundaries. Additionally, each sliver is accompanied with **an allocation factor that indicates how much of a PUMA’s population overlap with supervisorial district(s)**. An allocation factor of 1 means that a PUMA is completely contained inside a supervisorial district.

To allocate microdata to supervisorial districts and ensure that individuals from the same household stick together, we first assigned **random numbers** to all rows (individual observations). Next, we aggregated the microdata by household serial number to find the cumulative distribution of the person weight (note, this can be either person or household weight). **This step makes sure that all household members (in a PUMA that is split among districts) stay together when assigned to a supervisorial district.** Lastly, we computed the cumulative population percentage and used that along with the allocation factor to distribute people/households into supervisorial districts.

Random distribution of overall population distribution may seem crude initially. However, we stress that two-thirds of PUMAs in LA County are fully or largely (more than 90%) contained in a supervisorial district. Additionally, our population estimates by supervisorial districts closely align with the county’s own estimates.

	SD 1	SD 2	SD 3	SD 4	SD 5
County Estimates	1,982,511	2,023,783	2,061,345	2,083,832	1,896,455
USC ERI Estimates	2,022,780	2,054,821	2,070,194	2,116,828	1,899,121
Percentage Difference	2%	1.5%	0.4%	1.6%	0.1%

ESTIMATING IMMIGRANT STATUS

To estimate immigrant status (e.g., undocumented, naturalized citizen, lawful resident), we rely on an approach developed by Pastor, Le, and Scoggins (2021).⁸ This approach relies on an increasingly common strategy that involves first determining who among the non-citizen population is least likely to be undocumented due to a series of conditions (a process called “logical edits”) and then sorting the remainder into documented and undocumented based on a series of probability estimates. The probability estimates are derived from a logistic regression model run on the 2014 Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) from the U.S. Census Bureau, from which coefficients are then applied to non-citizen, non-Cuban immigrants in the 5-year ACS microdata from IPUMS USA to estimate each respondent’s probability of being undocumented. Unlike most surveys, the questions included in the SIPP allow researchers to deduce documentation status.

Individuals in the ACS microdata who are not assumed to be documented based on the logical edits are then tagged as “undocumented” until estimated control totals from experts at the Office of Immigration Statistics, the Migration Policy Institute, and the Center for Migration Studies are met. Estimated control totals at both the national level by country of origin, and at the state level (for all countries combined) are applied. It is important to note that when tagging individuals as “undocumented,” the tagging is not simply done from the top down in terms of estimated probabilities of being undocumented but is rather done in such a way that the distribution of probabilities for those tagged as undocumented mimics the distribution observed among those identified as undocumented in the SIPP.

All non-citizens not tagged as undocumented are assumed to be either Lawful Permanent Residents (LPRs) or holders of student or H1B visas. Student visa holders include those who immigrated as adults and were enrolled in higher education at the time they were surveyed. H1B visa holders are identified through a procedure that considers age, country of origin, length of time in the U.S., and occupation. Those not identified as student or H1B visa holders are assumed to be LPRs. Unless otherwise noted, demographic data of the LA County immigrant population are estimates by USC Equity Research Institute.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Questions?

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USCDornsife
Equity Research Institute

Endnotes

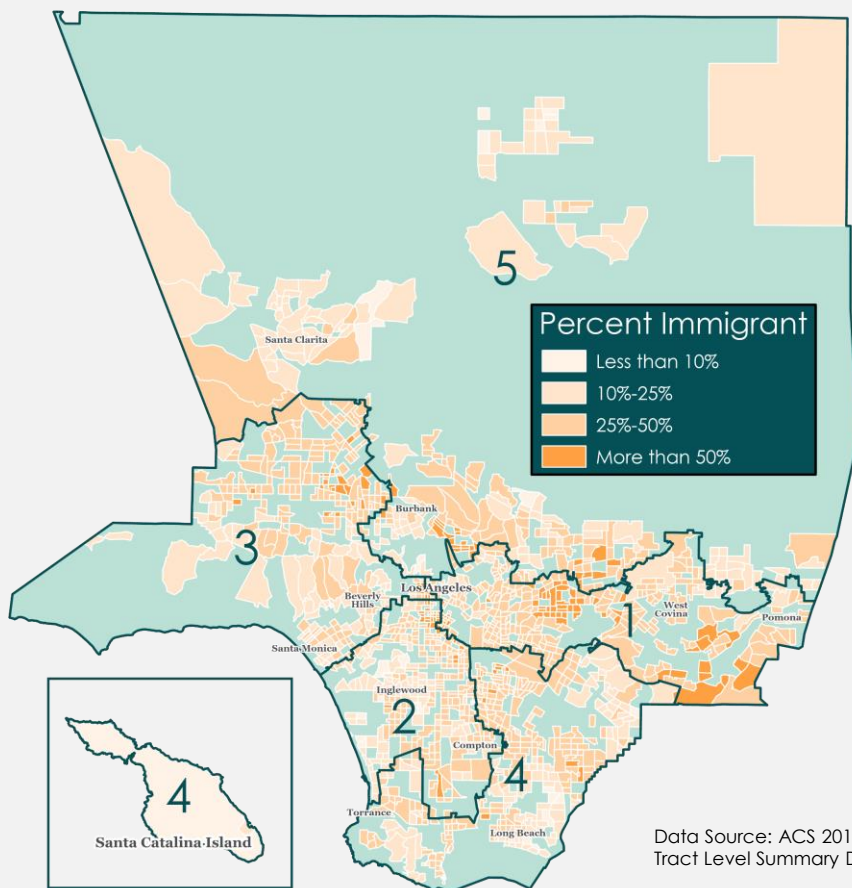
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A Demographic Snapshot of LA County's Supervisorial Districts (SD)

Neighborhood Level Immigrant Map

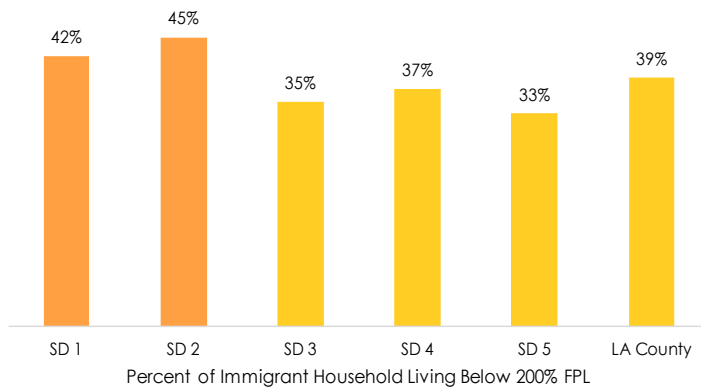
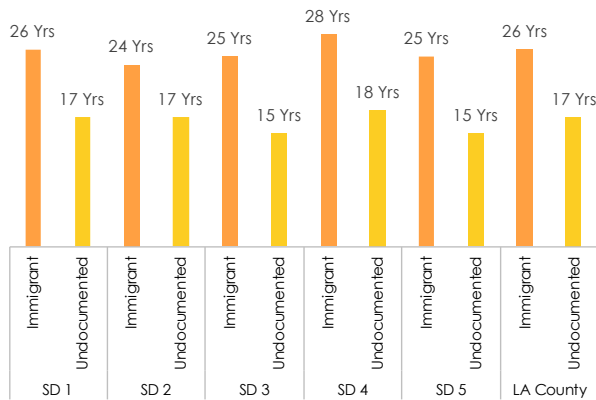
Insight & Analysis

Though SD 1 is home to a **quarter** of the county's immigrant population, SD 2 has the largest share (**28%**) of the county's undocumented immigrant population.



Supervisorial District		Immigrant Population	Undocumented Immigrant
1	Count	824K	188K
	Share	24%	23%
2	Count	709K	226K
	Share	20%	28%
3	Count	727K	144K
	Share	21%	18%
4	Count	672K	161K
	Share	19%	20%
5	Count	571K	90K
	Share	16%	11%
Los Angeles County	Count	3.5M	810K
	Share	100%	100%

Supervisory District (SD) Comparisons



Median Arrival Time

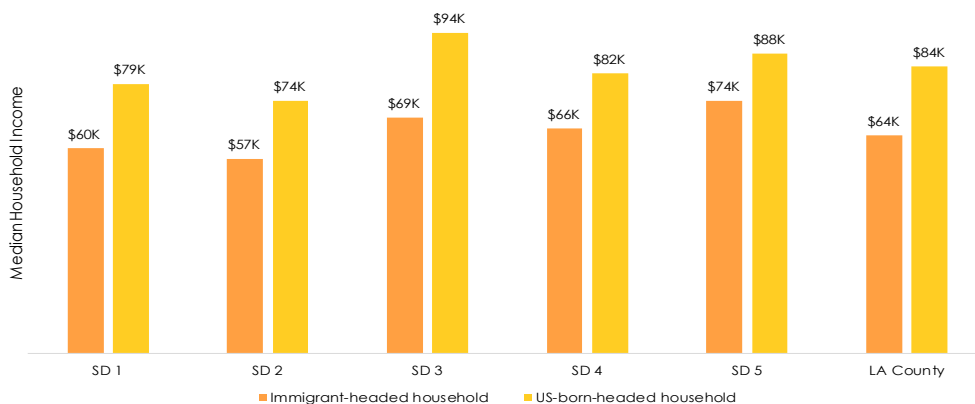
Across all districts, the median time lived in the US for undocumented immigrants is more than 15 years.

Poverty

More than 40% of immigrant households in Supervisory Districts 1 and 2 live below 200% of the federal poverty line.

Nativity Income Gap

US-born-led households generally have higher median household income than immigrant-led households. The largest gap can be found in the Third District where the gap is **\$25,000**.



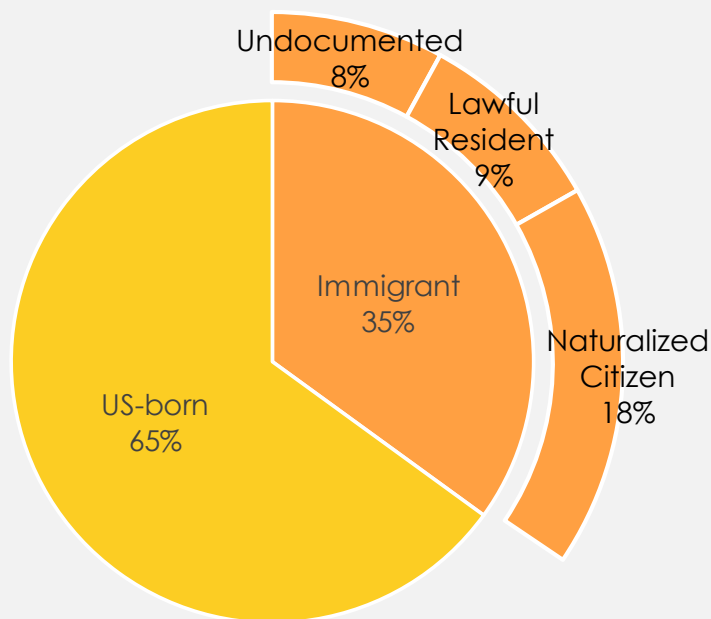
Supervisory District	Undoc Population	Citizen Living with Undoc Family Member(s)	Lawful Resident Living with Undoc Family Member(s)
1	188K	194K	56K
2	226K	233K	58K
3	144K	131K	39K
4	161K	190K	45K
5	90K	94K	31K
LA County	810K	841K	230K

Mixed-Status Families

In 2021, **over 1 million** citizens and lawful residents lived with at least one undocumented family member in the county. Overall, **1 in 5** people in Los Angeles County (19%) were either undocumented or lived with at least one undocumented family member.

Los Angeles County Immigrant Community Profile

Nativity and Immigration Status



QUICK FACTS

In 2021, over 1 in 3 (or **3.5 million**) Angelenos were immigrants.

Top 5 Countries of Origin

Mexico

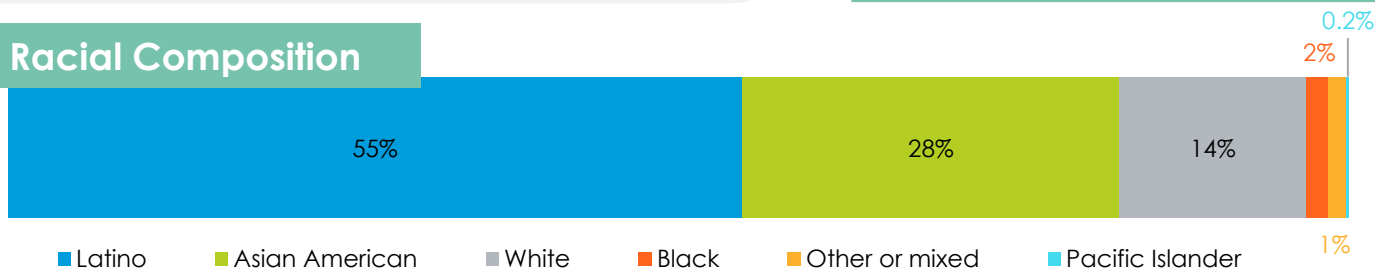
China

El Salvador

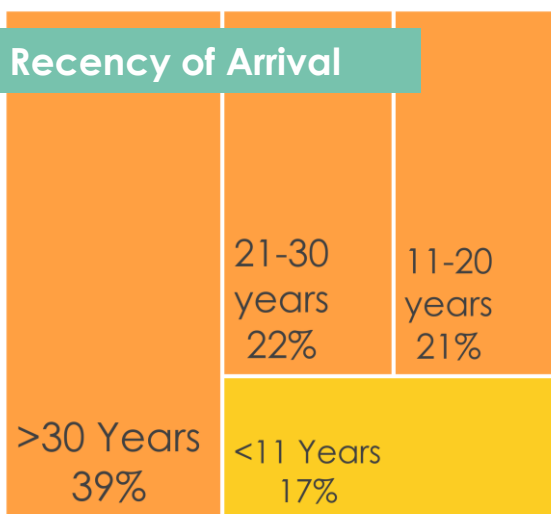
Philippines

Guatemala

Racial Composition



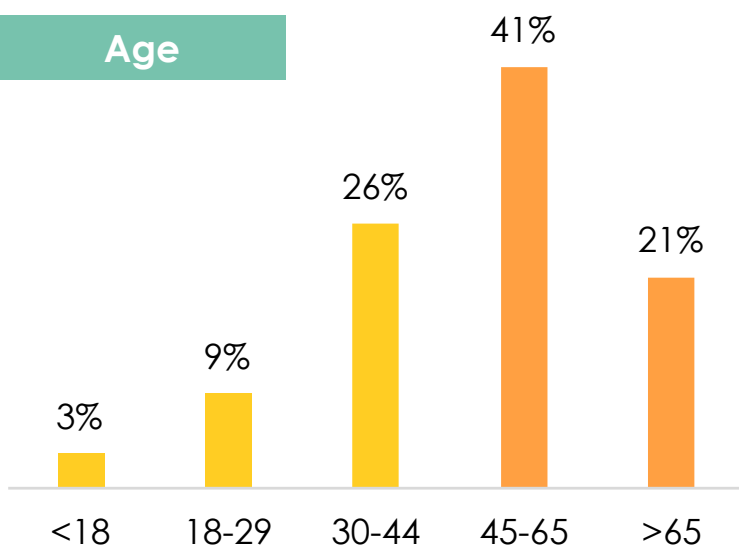
Recency of Arrival



More than **80%** of immigrants in the county have been in the US for more than a decade.

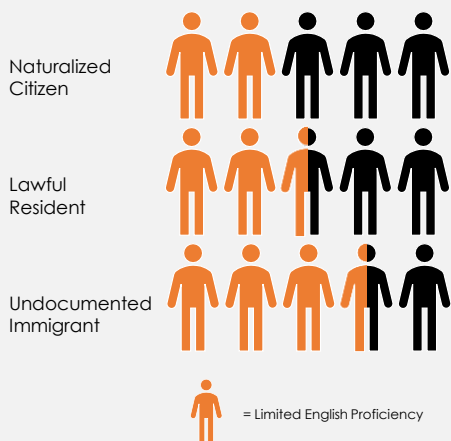
Los Angeles has an aging immigrant population. Over **60%** of immigrants are 45 or older.

Age

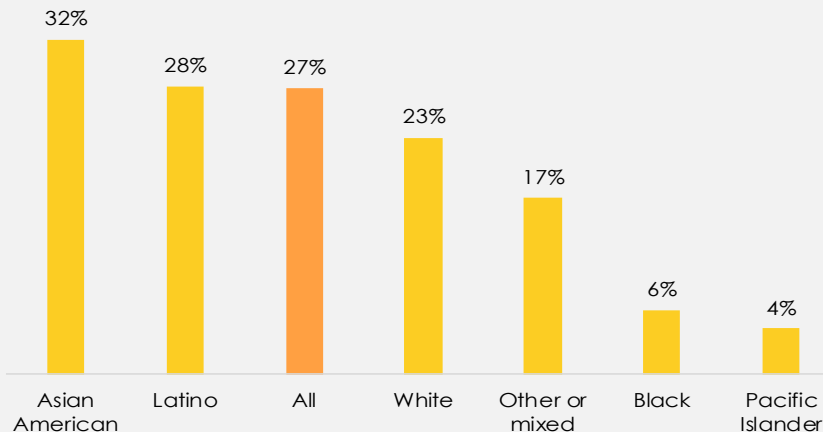


Los Angeles County Immigrant Community Profile

Limited English Proficiency



Linguistic Isolation



Language Access

More than 3 in 5 undocumented immigrants identified as having limited English proficiency. Asian American and Latino immigrant households experience linguistic isolation at a **higher rate** than the average.

Language Diversity

Los Angeles has a rich diversity of languages. **More than half** of the population speak a language other than English at home.

Spanish	3.67M	Vietnamese	82K
Chinese	393K	Hindi	77K
Tagalog	242K	Farsi	77K
Armenian	178K	Japanese	52K
Korean	169K	Russian	52K

Median Household Income Gap

Immigrant households had a median income of **\$64,000**, while US-born households had a median income that is **31%** higher at **\$84,000**.

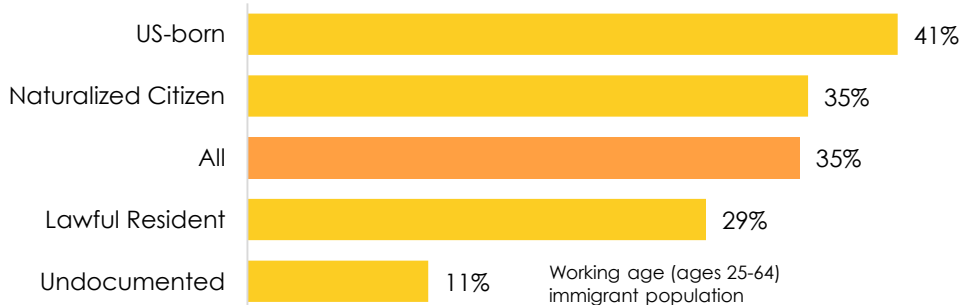
Experience with Poverty

Immigrant-led households are more likely than their US-born counterparts to experience poverty. About **39%** of immigrant-led households live below 200% of the federal poverty line in the county.

Percent Living Below 200% Federal Poverty Line

US-born-led Household	25%
Immigrant-led Household	39%

Percent with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher

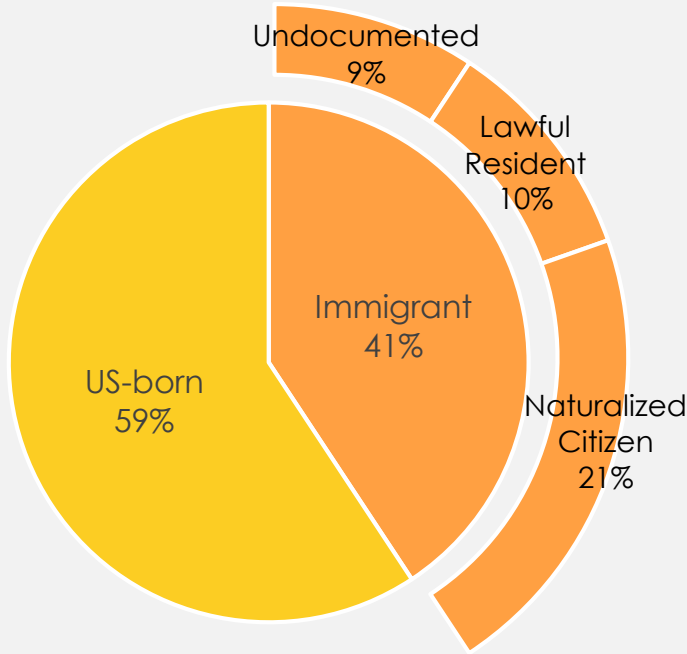


Disparities in Educational Attainment

At 11%, undocumented immigrants are **the least likely** to have a bachelor's degree or higher.

Supervisorial District 1 Immigrant Community Profile

Nativity and Immigration Status



QUICK FACTS

Supervisor: **Hilda Solis**

Total population: **2.0M**

Most populous city*: **Pomona**

*Not counting the City of Los Angeles

Top 5 Countries of Origin

Mexico

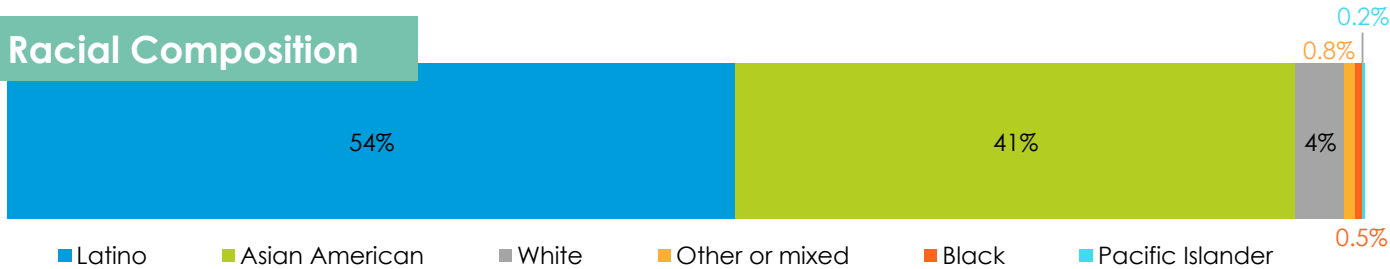
China

Philippines

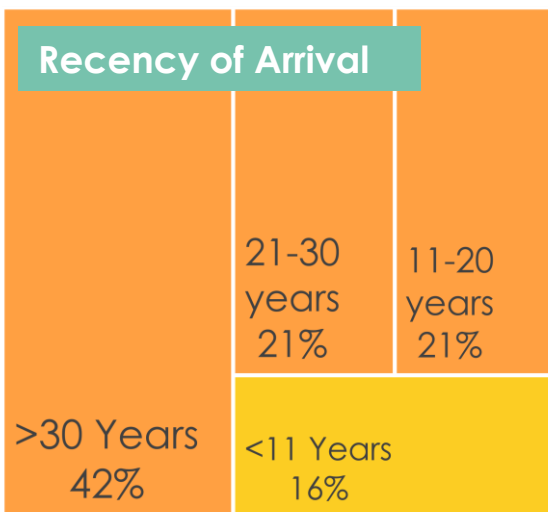
El Salvador

Guatemala

Racial Composition



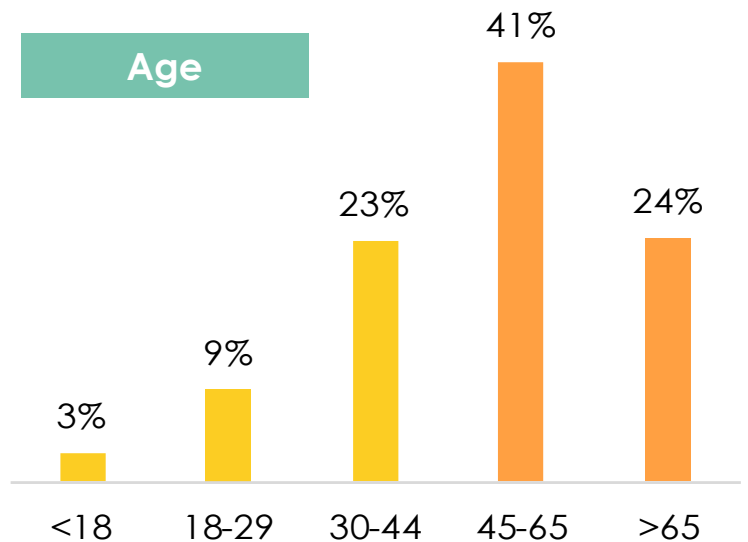
Recency of Arrival



More than **80%** of immigrants in the First District have been in the US for more than a decade.

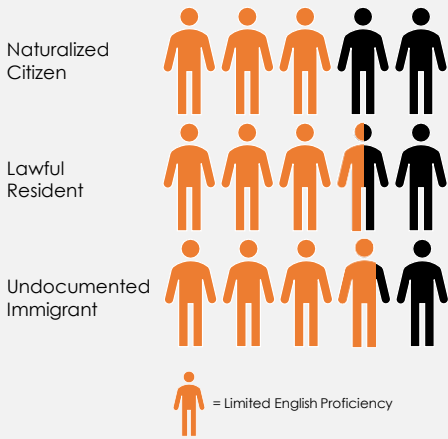
Similar to the county, District 1 also has an aging immigrant population. About **65%** of the immigrant population in the First District are 45 and above.

Age

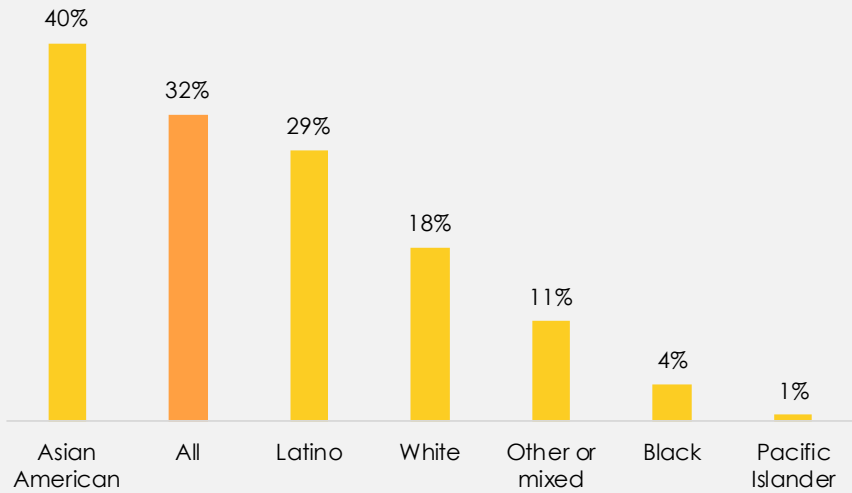


Supervisorial District 1 Immigrant Community Profile

Limited English Proficiency



Linguistic Isolation



Language Access

Close to **4 in 5** undocumented immigrants identified as having limited English proficiency. About **40%** of immigrant Asian American households experience linguistic isolation in the First District.

Language Diversity

In addition to Spanish, Supervisorial District 1 has an array of Asian languages spoken at home.

Spanish	879K	Hindi	10K
Chinese	216K	Japanese	9K
Tagalog	54K	Armenian	7K
Vietnamese	42K	Thai or Lao	6K
Korean	33K	Indonesian	5K

Median Household Income Gap

In District 1, immigrant households had a median income of **\$60,000**, while US-born households had a median income that is **32%** higher at **\$79,000**.

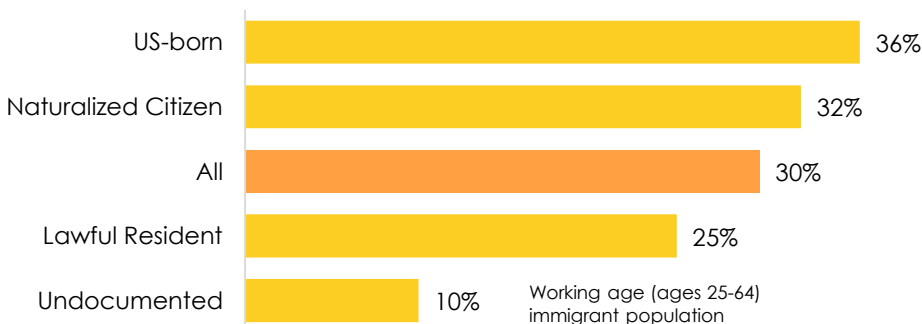
Experience with Poverty

Immigrant-led households are more likely than their US-born counterparts to experience poverty. About **42%** of immigrant-led households live below 200% of the federal poverty line in the county.

Percent Living Below 200% Federal Poverty Line

US-born-led Household	27%
Immigrant-led Household	42%

Percent with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher

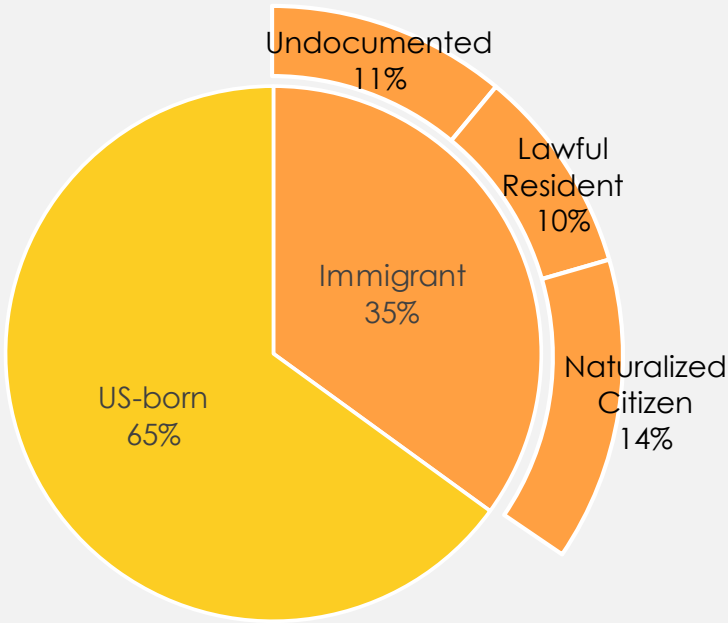


Disparities in Educational Attainment

At 10%, undocumented immigrants are **the least likely** to have a bachelor's degree or higher.

Supervisorial District 2 Immigrant Community Profile

Nativity and Immigration Status



QUICK FACTS

Supervisor: **Holly Mitchell**

Total population: **2.0M**

Most populous city*: **Inglewood**

*Not counting the City of Los Angeles

Top 5 Countries of Origin

Mexico

El Salvador

Guatemala

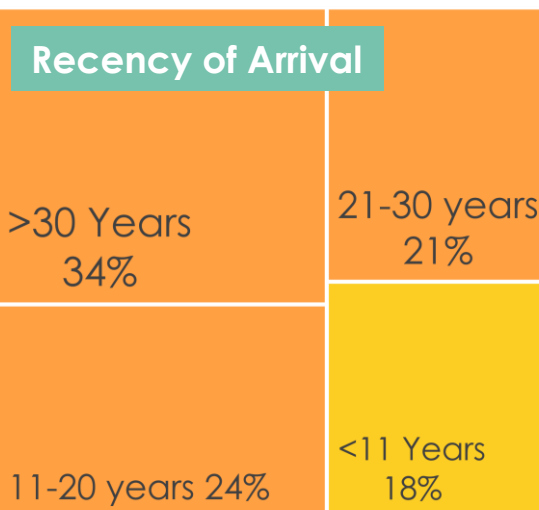
Korea

Philippines

Racial Composition



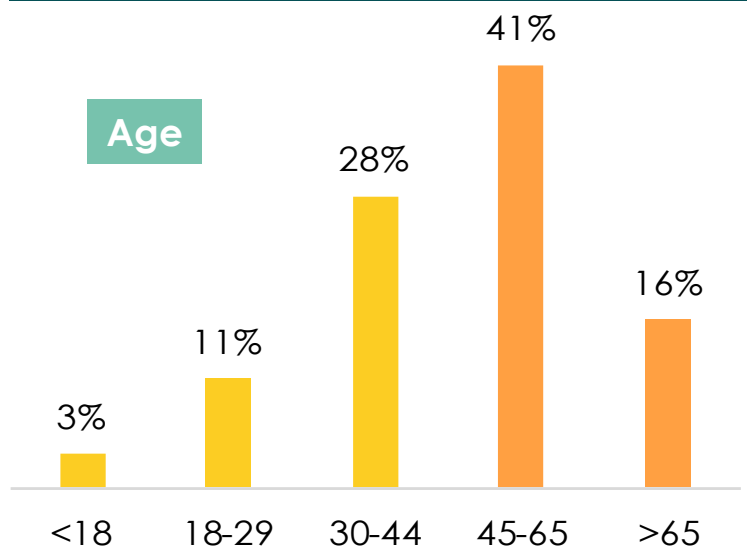
Recency of Arrival



More than **80%** of immigrants in the Second District have been in the US for more than a decade.

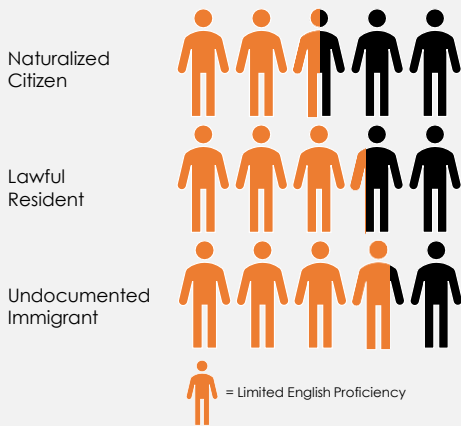
Similar to the county, District 2 also has an aging immigrant population. About **65%** of the immigrant population in the Second District are 45 and above.

Age



Supervisorial District 2 Immigrant Community Profile

Limited English Proficiency



Linguistic Isolation



Language Access

Close to **4 in 5** undocumented immigrants identified as having limited English proficiency. About **one third** of Asian American and Latino households experience linguistic isolation in the Second District.

Language Diversity

About **8,000** people speak a language from the Sub-Saharan African language family at home in the Second District.

Spanish	921K	French	10K
Korean	47K	Japanese	10K
Tagalog	39K	Sub-Saharan African	8K
Chinese	19K	Vietnamese	7K
Hindi	13K	Arabic	7K

Median Household Income Gap

In District 2, immigrant households had a median income of **\$57,000**, while US-born households had a median income that is **30%** higher at **\$74,000**.

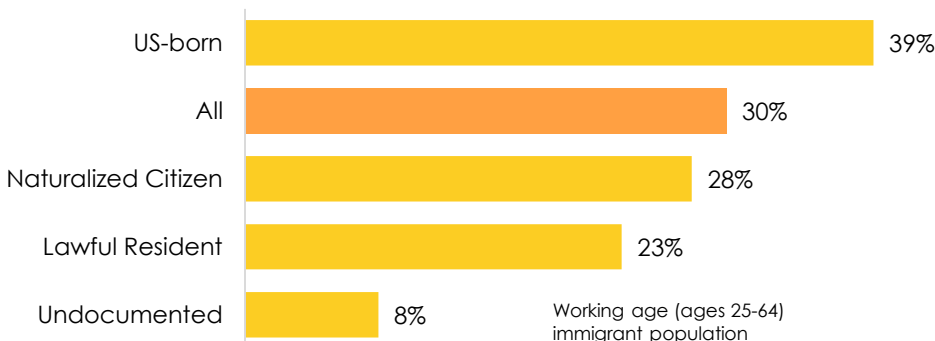
Experience with Poverty

Immigrant-led households are more likely than their US-born counterparts to experience poverty. About **45%** of immigrant-led households live below 200% of the federal poverty line in the county.

Percent Living Below 200% Federal Poverty Line

US-born-led Household	29%
Immigrant-led Household	45%

Percent with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher

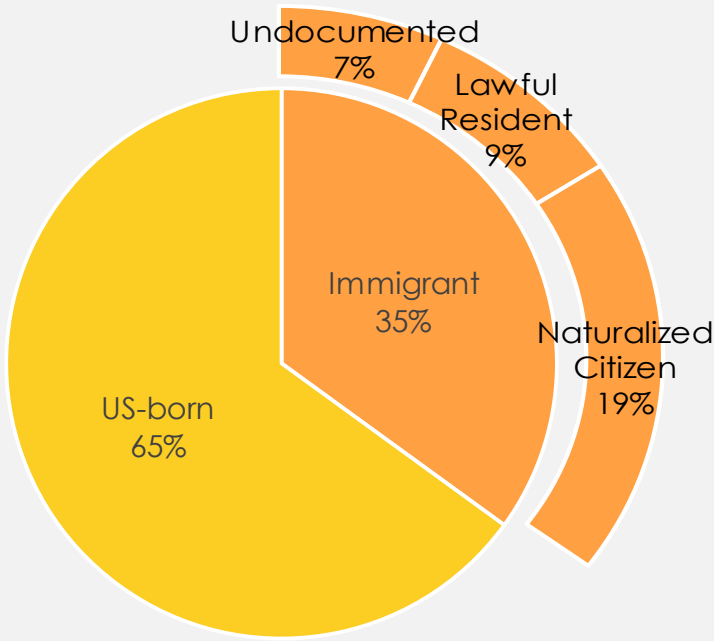


Disparities in Educational Attainment

At 8%, undocumented immigrants are **the least likely** to have a bachelor's degree or higher.

Supervisorial District 3 Immigrant Community Profile

Nativity and Immigration Status



QUICK FACTS

Supervisor:

Lindsey Horvath

Total population: **2.0M**

Most populous city*:

Santa Monica

*Not counting the City of Los Angeles

Top 5 Countries of Origin

Mexico

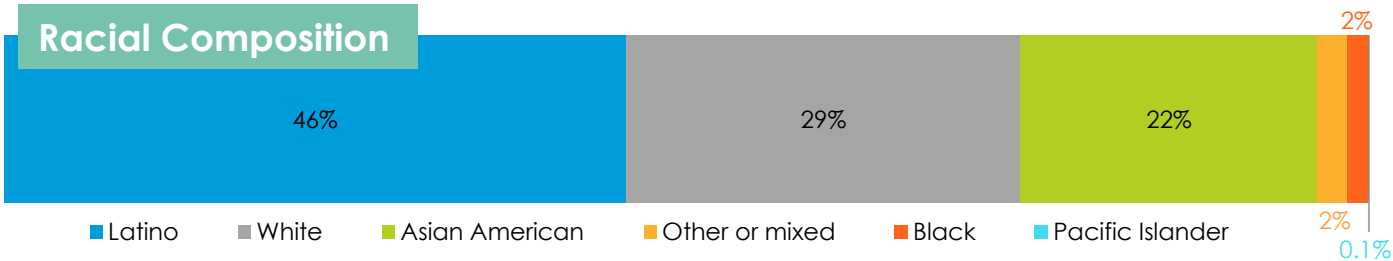
El Salvador

Philippines

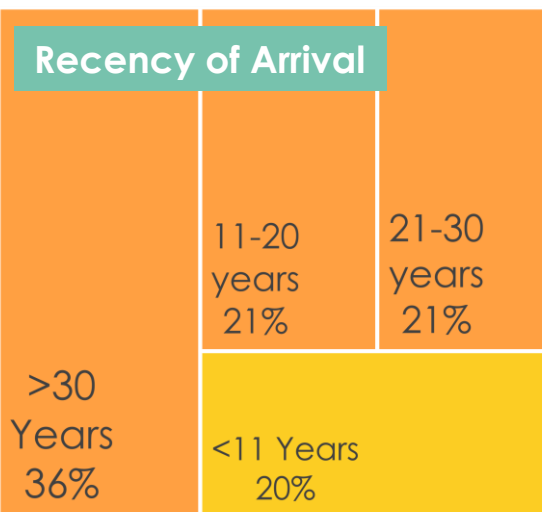
Iran

Armenia

Racial Composition



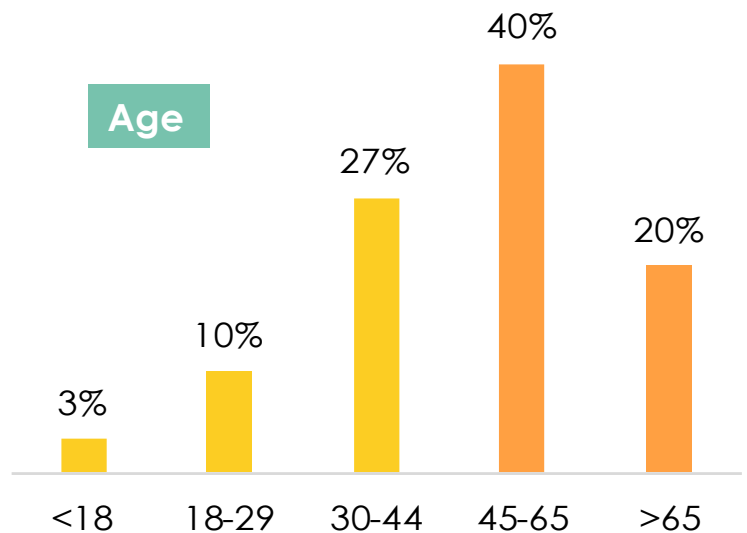
Recency of Arrival



About **80%** of immigrants in the Third District have been in the US for more than a decade.

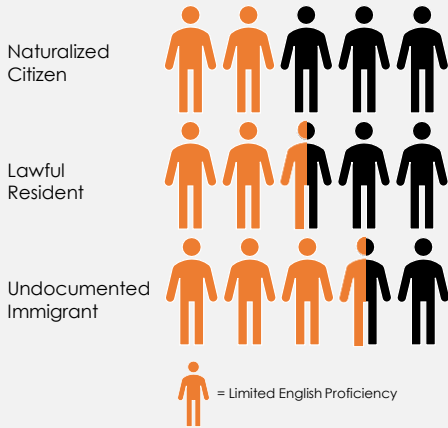
Similar to the county, District 3 also has an aging immigrant population. About **60%** of the immigrant population in the Third District are 45 and above.

Age

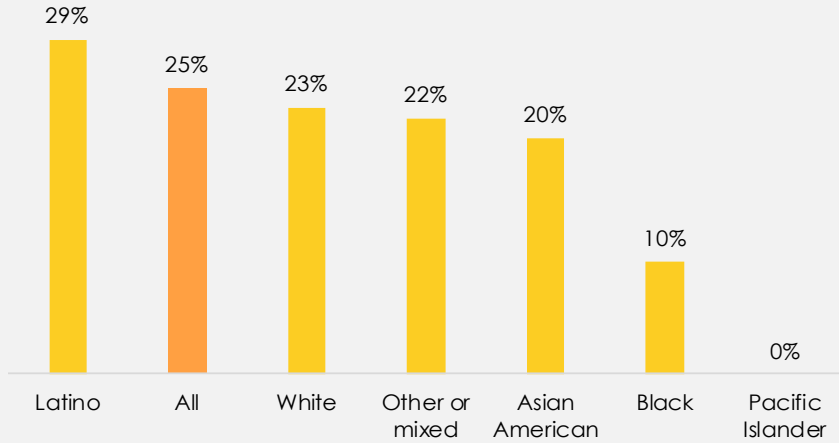


Supervisorial District 3 Immigrant Community Profile

Limited English Proficiency



Linguistic Isolation



Language Access

More than **3 in 5** undocumented immigrants identified as having limited English proficiency. About **30%** of Latino households experience linguistic isolation in the Third District.

Language Diversity

Among Asian languages, Tagalog is the most commonly spoken language at home in the Third District.

Spanish	600K	Chinese	30K
Armenian	55K	Korean	28K
Farsi	53K	Hindi	23K
Tagalog	52K	Hebrew	18K
Russian	32K	French	17K

Median Household Income Gap

In District 3, immigrant-led households had a median income of **\$69,000**, while US-born households had a median income that is **36%** higher at **\$94,000**.

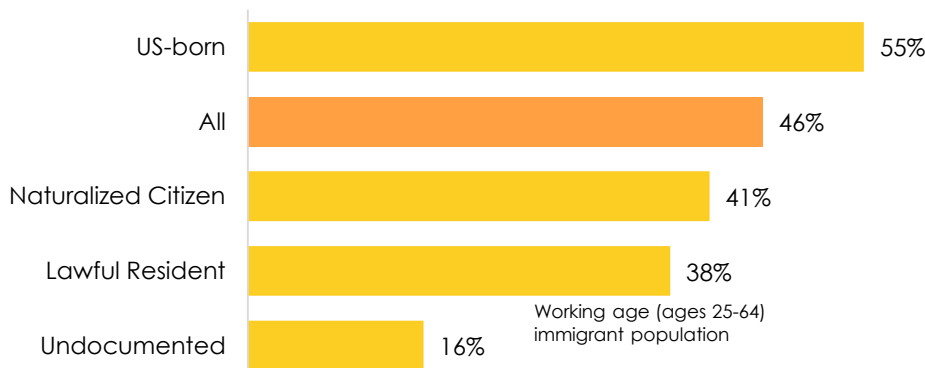
Experience with Poverty

Immigrant-led households are more likely than their US-born counterparts to experience poverty. About **35%** of immigrant-led households live below 200% of the federal poverty line in the county.

Percent Living Below 200% Federal Poverty Line

US-born-led Household	21%
Immigrant-led Household	35%

Percent with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher

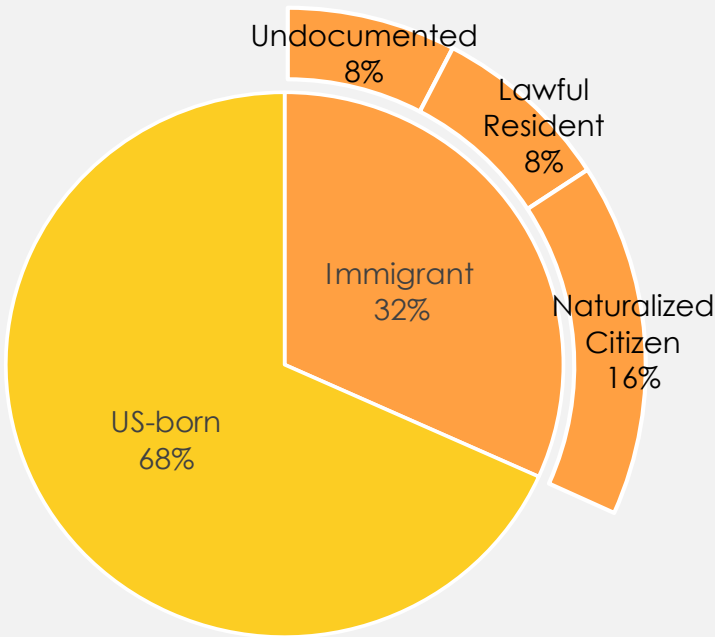


Disparities in Educational Attainment

About **16%** undocumented immigrants in the Third District have a bachelor's degree or higher.

Supervisorial District 4 Immigrant Community Profile

Nativity and Immigration Status



QUICK FACTS

Supervisor: **Janice Hahn**

Total population: **2.1M**

Most populous city*:

Long Beach

*Not counting the City of Los Angeles

Top 5 Countries of Origin

Mexico

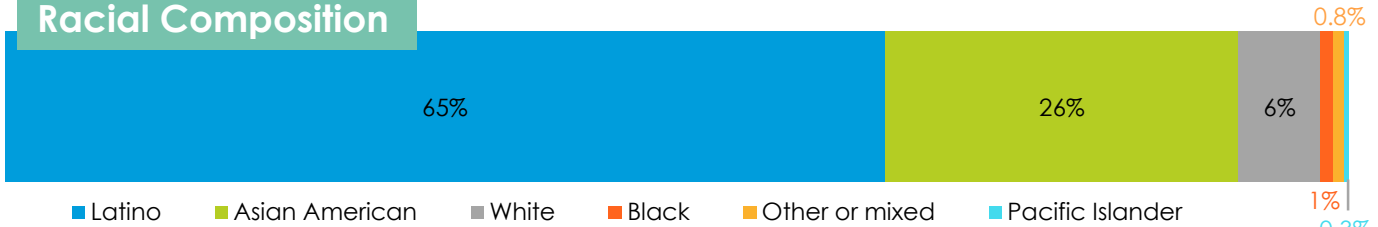
Philippines

El Salvador

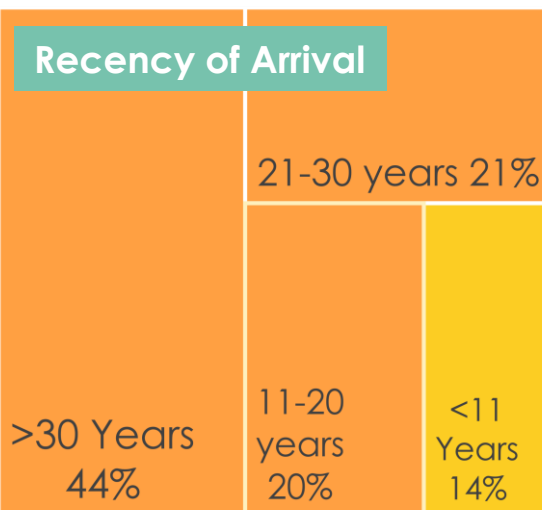
Korea

China

Racial Composition



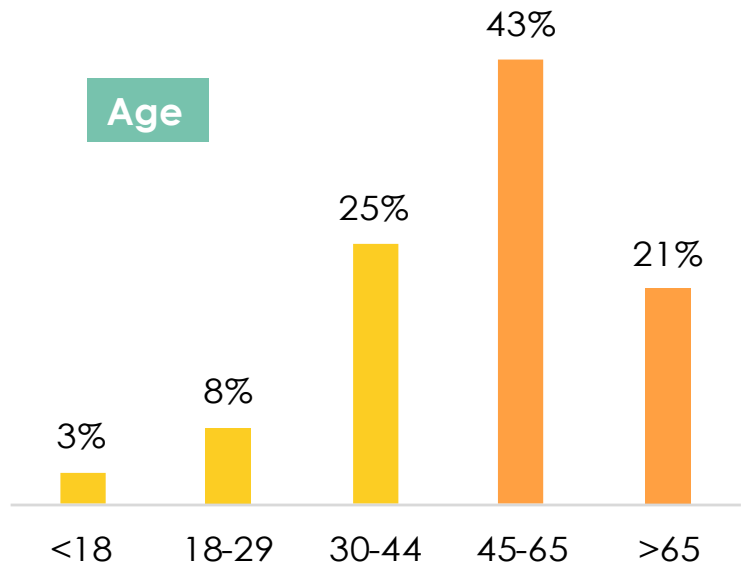
Recency of Arrival



More than **80%** of immigrants in the Fourth District have been in the US for more than a decade.

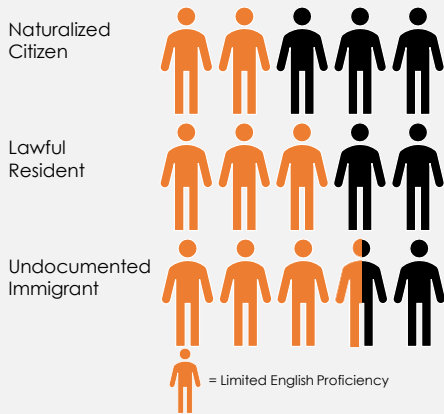
Similar to the county, District 4 also has an aging immigrant population. About **64%** of the immigrant population in the Fourth District are 45 and above.

Age

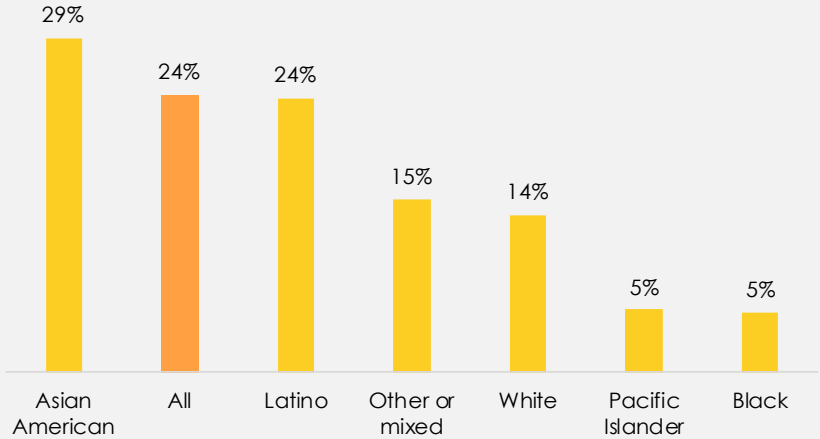


Supervisorial District 4 Immigrant Community Profile

Limited English Proficiency



Linguistic Isolation



Language Access

More than **3 in 5** undocumented immigrants identified as having limited English proficiency. About **30%** of Asian American and **24%** of Latino immigrant households experience linguistic isolation in the Fourth District.

Language Diversity

An estimated **921,000** people speak Spanish at home in the Fourth District, the second largest population in the county.

Spanish	921K	Japanese	17K
Tagalog	54K	Other East/Southeast Asian	17K
Chinese	39K	Arabic	9K
Korean	35K	Vietnamese	9K
Hindi	18K	Dravidian	6K

Median Household Income Gap

In District 4, immigrant households had a median income of **\$66,000**, while US-born households had a median income that is **24%** higher at **\$82,000**.

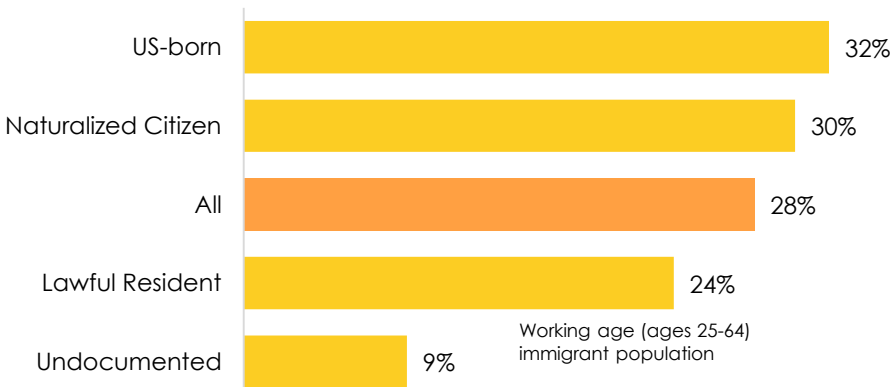
Experience with Poverty

Immigrant-led households are more likely than their US-born counterparts to experience poverty. About **37%** of immigrant-led households live below 200% of the federal poverty line in the county.

Percent Living Below 200% Federal Poverty Line

US-born-led Household	25%
Immigrant-led Household	37%

Percent with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher

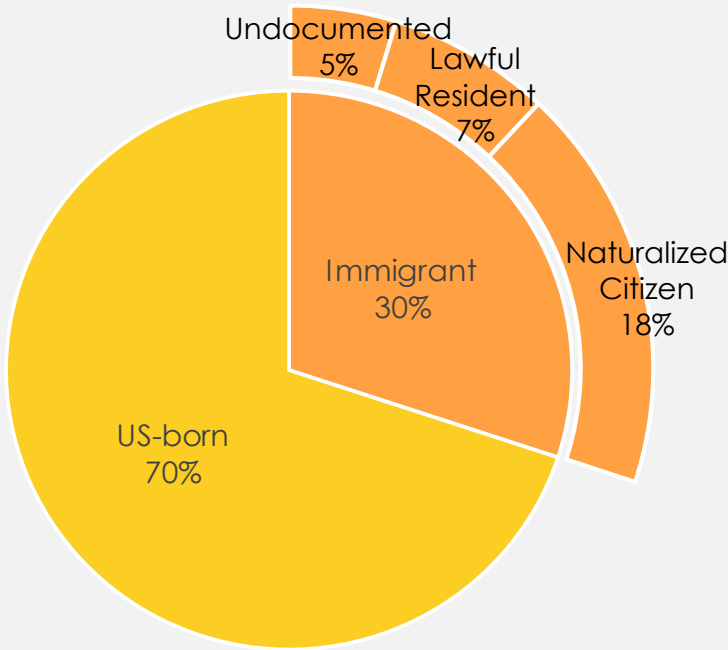


Disparities in Educational Attainment

About **10%** of undocumented immigrants in the Fourth District have a bachelor's degree or higher.

Supervisorial District 5 Immigrant Community Profile

Nativity and Immigration Status



QUICK FACTS

Supervisor:

Kathryn Barger

Total population: **1.9M**

Most populous city*:

Santa Clarita

*Not counting the City of Los Angeles

Top 5 Countries of Origin

Mexico

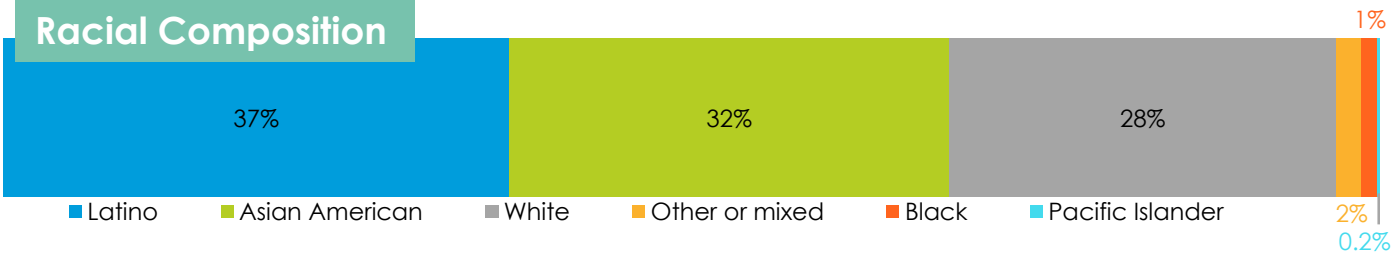
Armenia

China

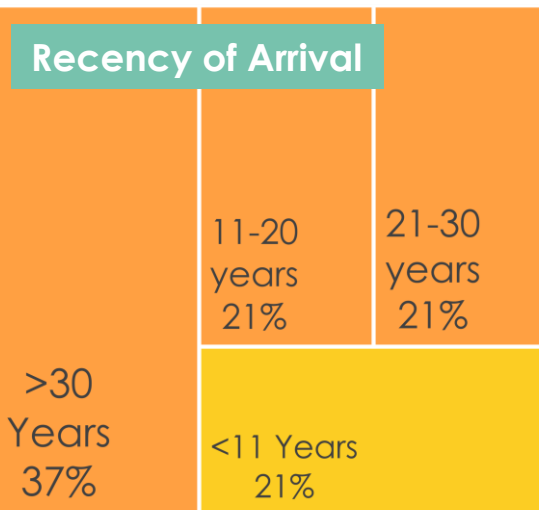
Philippines

El Salvador

Racial Composition



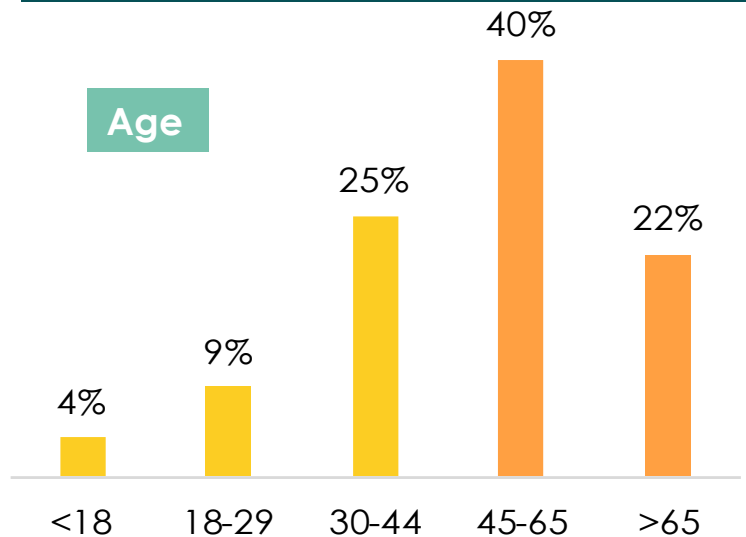
Recency of Arrival



Close to **80%** of immigrants in the Fifth District have been in the US for more than a decade.

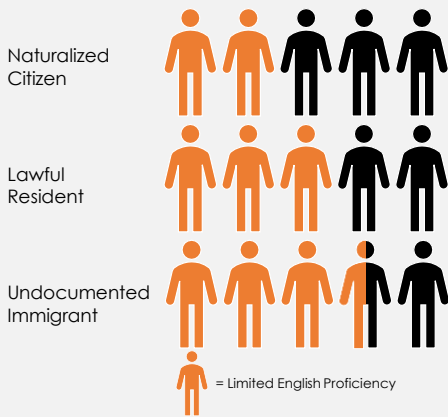
Similar to the county, District 5 also has an aging immigrant population. About **62%** of the immigrant population in the Fifth District are 45 and above.

Age

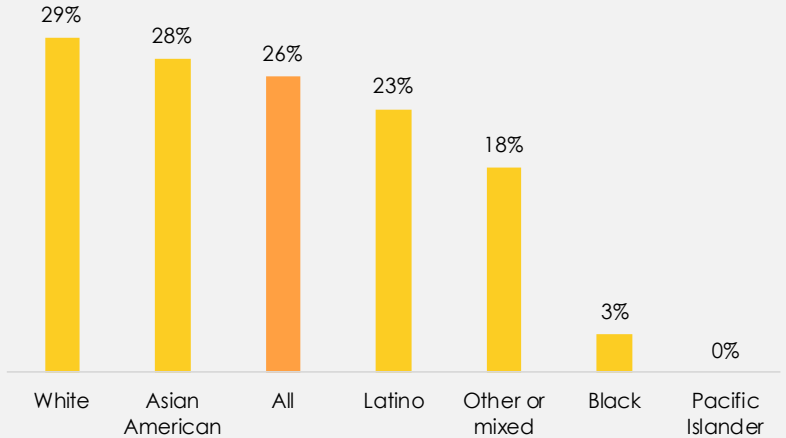


Supervisorial District 5 Immigrant Community Profile

Limited English Proficiency



Linguistic Isolation



Language Access

More than **3 in 5** undocumented immigrants identified as having limited English proficiency. Close to **30%** of white and Asian American immigrant households experience linguistic isolation in the Fifth District.

Language Diversity

Home to a vibrant Armenian community, about **111,000** Angelenos speak Armenian at home in the Fifth District.

Spanish	441K	Hindi	14K
Armenian	111K	Arabic	13K
Chinese	89K	Farsi	11K
Tagalog	42K	Russian	10K
Korean	26K	Vietnamese	10K

Median Household Income Gap

In District 5, immigrant households had a median income of **\$74,000**, while US-born households had a median income that is **19%** higher at **\$88,000**.

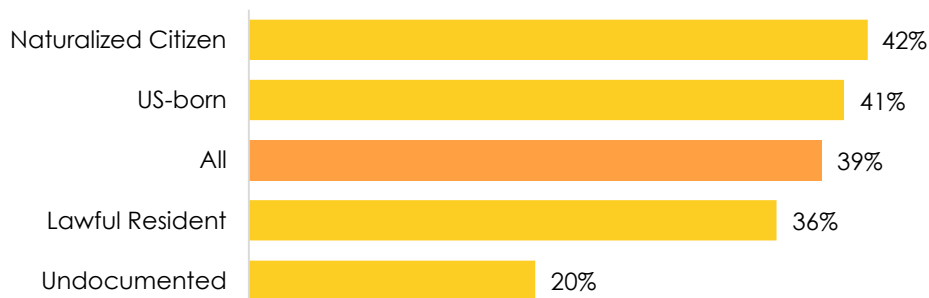
Experience with Poverty

Immigrant-led households are more likely than their US-born counterparts to experience poverty. About **33%** of immigrant-led households live below 200% of the federal poverty line in the county.

Percent Living Below 200% Federal Poverty Line

US-born-led Household	23%
Immigrant-led Household	33%

Percent with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher



Disparities in Educational Attainment

About **20%** undocumented immigrants in the Fifth District have a bachelor's degree or higher.