

PANGEA LEGAL SERVICES

Quarterly Newsletter | January 2016



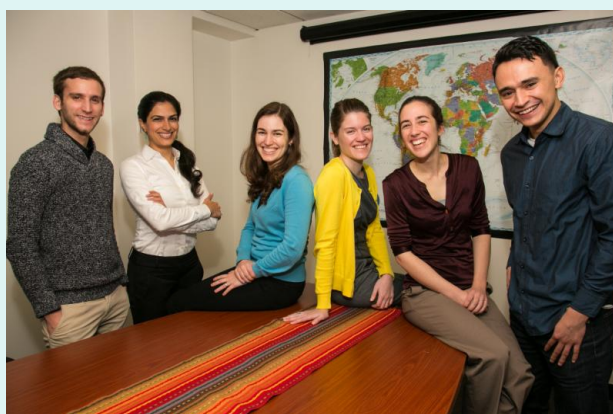
The mission of Pangea Legal Services is to stand with immigrant communities and to provide services through direct legal representation, especially in the area of deportation defense. In addition to direct legal services, we are committed to advocating on behalf of our community through policy advocacy, education, and legal empowerment efforts.

Dear Friends and Family,

2015 was an exciting year for Pangea. As you will read, it was full of successes, external challenges, and organizational growth. Below is a snapshot of our work.

Thank you so much for all of the support you gave - we couldn't have achieved what we did without your positive encouragement and generosity!

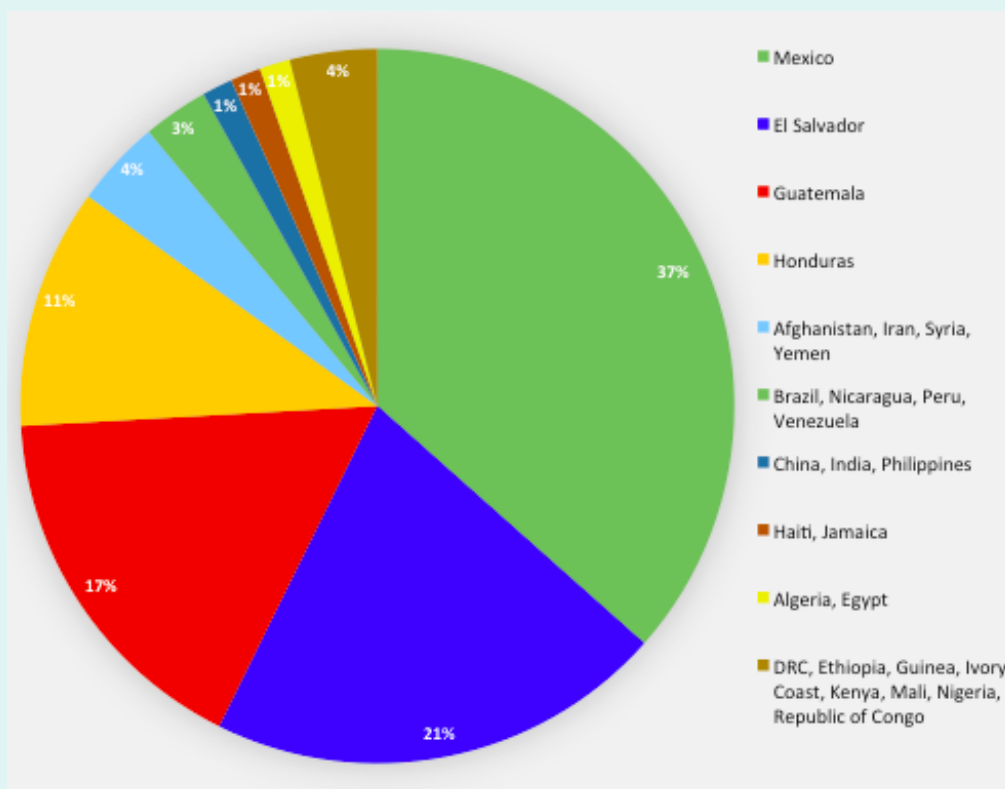
Warmly,
Pangea Team



Direct Legal Services

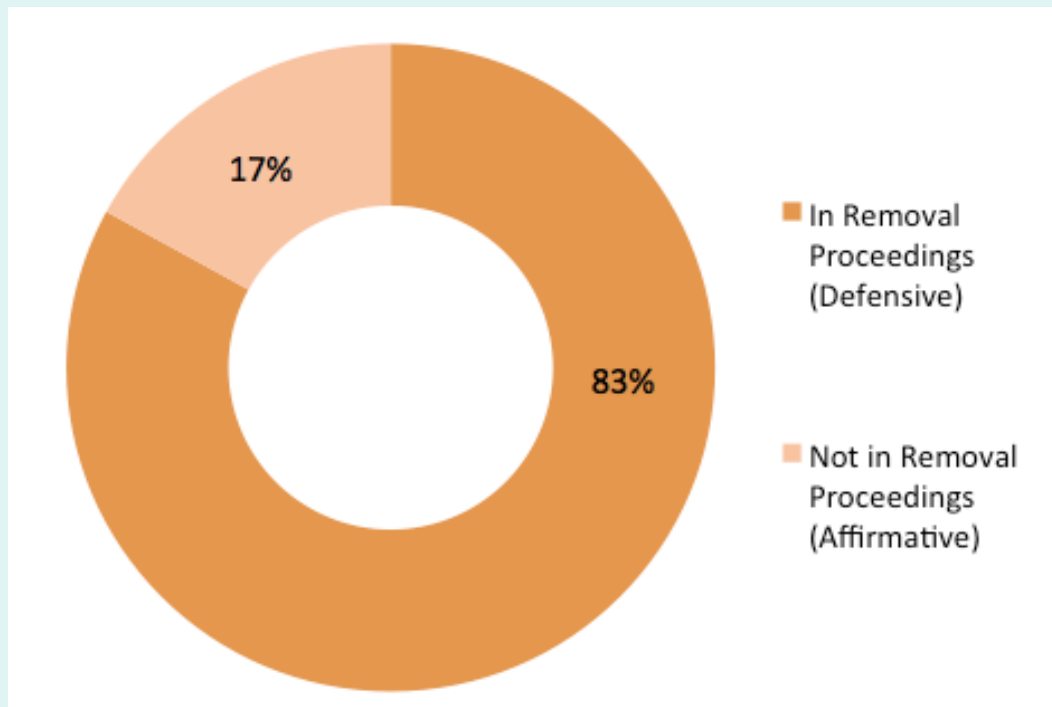
In 2015, we provided brief or full-scope legal services to **341 individuals**.^{*} Our client population came from all over the world, and had diverse legal needs.

Clients' Country of Origin

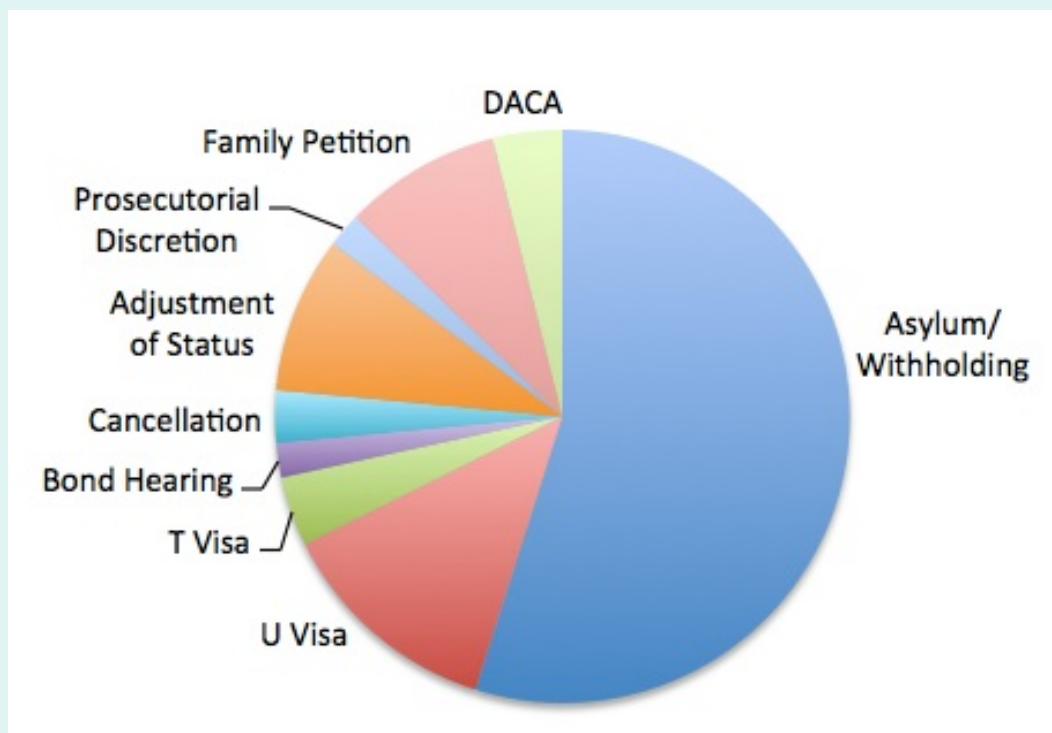


Removal Defense

Approximately **83%** of all of the cases we opened in 2015 were in removal proceedings or at imminent risk of deportation. Of the 17% that were not in removal proceedings, many were petitions for relatives of clients whom Pangea had successfully represented in removal proceedings.



Most Common Types of Cases



In addition to our brief and full-scope representation, Pangea also provided **380 individual consultations** in 2015 (each lasting approximately 45 minutes). These helped us to screen for new cases, educate individuals about their rights, and increase community access to affordable and reliable immigration advice.

*This number does not include individuals who only received a consultation or brief legal advice.

Legal Services Spotlight: Chronicles of an Asylum Seeker in Detention



One of Pangea's long-term goals is to grow a strong detention project. To this end, we took on several detained cases in 2015 and began providing free, biweekly phone consultations to family members of detained

immigrants.

Detention work can be difficult, labor-intensive, and heart wrenching. To illustrate some of the challenges, our Dream SF Fellow, Irma Gonzalez, presents the following Legal Services Spotlight:

Gloria couldn't take it anymore. Her partner's threats and violence had become unbearable. As much as she didn't want to leave her family and friends in Honduras, Gloria decided that she had to escape the country to save her life.

Now it was May 2015, and she was trying to cross the border. She waited nervously at a border checkpoint. When her turn came up, she stepped forward and told the border official that she wanted to apply for asylum.

To even be able to apply for asylum, Gloria had to first pass a Credible Fear Interview - a 1-2 hour interview where she would have to convince an immigration officer that her case was strong enough to go before a judge. Luckily, Gloria passed her interview. But even though she had a strong asylum case and no criminal record, she was sent to a detention center in Bakersfield, California called Mesa Verde.

Being locked up in detention made Gloria feel like a criminal. She was still suffering from the effects of the abuse she suffered in Honduras, and being in detention made her feel more afraid and alone.



Eventually, through the American Immigration Lawyers' Association, Gloria was put into contact with Pangea Legal Services. Luis Angel and Marie took the case *pro bono*. By this time, Gloria had been detained for almost 3 months.

Pangea's number one priority was to get Gloria released, so that she could live free and fight her asylum case outside of detention. It wasn't going to be easy. First, Luis Angel had to track down Gloria's "deportation officer," which took numerous phone calls. Then he had to convince the officer - both orally and in writing - to release Gloria from detention.

Luis Angel and Marie spent one month trying to negotiate Gloria's freedom. Then Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) suddenly transferred Gloria to a different detention center near Los Angeles, without notice or warning. Although not confirmed, Gloria may have been transferred because she participated in a hunger strike. She and several other women had wanted to make a statement about the poor conditions in detention, including the raw chicken and spoiled food they were served. When one woman came down with food poisoning, Gloria and several other women showed their solidarity by going on a hunger strike.

ICE didn't notify Luis Angel or Marie that they transferred Gloria, even though they were her lawyers. Even worse, ICE



failed to bring Gloria to her first immigration court hearing in San Francisco. Neither the judge nor the government attorney knew where Gloria was. Luckily Luis Angel and Marie were able to avoid a

deportation order.

With Gloria in a new detention center, Pangea had to start negotiations all over again with Gloria's deportation officers. Luis Angel made countless phone calls and written requests, without success.

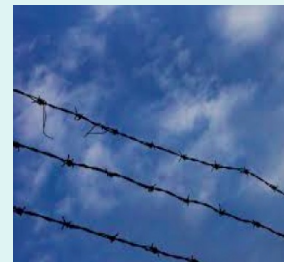
As soon as Gloria became legally eligible for a bond hearing (after 6 months of detention), Luis Angel asked to have a hearing with the court. This time, Luis Angel wanted to make sure that Gloria would be present at her hearing so he fought to transfer her back to Mesa Verde. ICE finally agreed, but then transferred Gloria to another detention center without notifying Luis Angel.

All the while, Gloria continued to suffer from depression and chronic headaches in detention. Still, she managed to stay hopeful. Cheering one of her only allies, Luis Angel, she remained positive and certain that he could get her out of detention.

Gloria's bond hearing finally came. By this time, Gloria had been in detention for 6 months and 2 weeks. Luis Angel had made over 30 requests to 6 different ICE officers to get her released. At the bond hearing, the judge agreed that Gloria was not a threat to the community and provided the lowest bond possible. A few days later, Gloria walked free.

Even though Gloria is now out of detention, her legal story is not over. She continues to be in deportation proceedings, and her next court hearing is scheduled for 2017. Gloria will continue working alongside Luis Angel

to prepare her asylum case. She is slowly rebuilding her life and healing from her depression and trauma. She remains hopeful about her future, and prays for the day when she can



live safely in the United States.

Please support us in expanding our detention work and representing people like Gloria. We really appreciate your support, no matter how big or small.

Policy Advocacy



*Our former Dream SF Fellow,
Joseline, in Sacramento*

On a state level, the immigrant community made great strides in 2015. We lobbied for and celebrated the passage of several bills that [expand immigrant rights](#) in California, including more protections for immigrant workers, defendants, and children.

On a local and national level, however, we faced several challenges. President Obama's executive action was bogged down in the courts, [delaying immigration relief](#) to

about [4.4 million undocumented parents](#). We also experienced backlash on our [local due process ordinances](#), jeopardizing the separation between local law enforcement and ICE in San Francisco and San Jose.

On the eve of the New Year, President Obama announced [large-scale raids against the Central American community](#).

The target of these raids:

women and children refugees with final orders of deportation, [86% of whom did not have legal representation](#) in the courts.



Pangea client Nelly speaking of the dangers in her home country, Honduras

The news of this shameful announcement hit hard. Pangea



Nelly sharing her story with reporters

received numerous calls from clients terrified of being affected, and the larger immigrant community was panicked. Although no raids were confirmed in California, we heard reports of families not leaving their homes, [children not going to school](#), and parents not going to

the store.

Pangea staff and clients denounced President Obama's announcement at a [public rally, calling for an end to the deportations](#). We [spoke out against the raids](#) on Univision, and encouraged the larger community to stay strong. We also participated in a statewide day of action, [joining](#)

[hundreds of others in the streets](#) to demand that the Obama Administration recognize Central Americans as refugees and [stop the deportations](#).



*Pangea client Ernesto - [who was liberated from detention in December 2015](#) -
calling for an end to ICE raids*

As we enter 2016, we will continue advocating for our community and draw strength from our vision that all human beings have the right to move with dignity, documents, and respect.

Legal Empowerment & Education

In 2015, our staff and volunteers participated in over 30 legal empowerment events. Some highlights included:

- Providing free, telephonic legal orientation sessions to family members of detained immigrants on a bi-weekly basis, explaining the detention process and immigrants' rights while incarcerated
- Sharing information with Univision viewers about DAPA, employment-based U visas for victims of workplace

crime, and notario fraud

- Presenting poetry and mock arguments at "Our Day in Court," an event organized by the SCC Coalition for CIR, which allowed community members to share how they were impacted by the delay of DAPA/DACA+
- Co-presenting for a national webinar on representing unaccompanied children seeking asylum



*Pangea attorney, Nilou, presenting on DAPA
in collaboration with SFOP/PIA*



*Pangea interns and OCEIA Dream SF Fellows
at Univision 14 headquarters*

Growth and Expansion

2015 was an exciting year of growth for Pangea. In July, we opened a [second office](#) in the South Bay, thanks to a generous grant from the [Sobrato Foundation](#) and the [Silicon Valley Community Foundation](#).

In September, we hired a fifth attorney to our team, [Luis Angel Savalza](#). And in December, we welcomed Ande Stone as our new Operations Manager, and [Elaine Orr](#) from Silicon Valley Community Foundation to our Board of Directors.



Pangea's piñata / time capsule, containing three years of paper wishes, hopes and dreams inside

Thank you for your Support!

Thank you to everyone who came to our South Bay office warming party, and supported us throughout the year. We look forward to continue working together in 2016, and wish you a very happy New Year.



Pangea team at our South Bay office warming party in September


We envision a world where the fundamental right to move is respected and appreciated by all. Our view is that all human beings are entitled to respect,

documents, and a process through which to move, settle, and resettle in the world.



[Donate Here](#)

Pangea Legal Services is a registered 501(c)(3) organization, and donations are tax-deductible. We will put every dollar of your generous contribution to work by providing direct legal services, policy advocacy, and legal empowerment for low income immigrant communities.



Stay Connected



[Read our prior newsletters here!](#)

Follow us on **twitter**

View our profile on **Linked in**

Like us on **Facebook** 

Pangea Legal Services

350 Sansome St, Ste 650 · San Francisco, CA 94104 · 415.254.0475
Sobrato Center for Nonprofits · 538A Valley Way · Milpitas, CA 95035