

The National Immigrant Justice Center (NIJC) is dedicated to ensuring human rights protections and access to justice for all immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers.

Based in Chicago and with five offices across the country, NIJC provides direct legal services to and advocates for all immigrants through policy reform, impact litigation, and public education. Since its founding more than three decades ago and thanks to the support of thousands of pro bono attorneys from the nation's leading law firms, NIJC has been unique in blending individual client advocacy with broad-based systemic change.

In courthouses and communities across the United States, NIJC's pro bono partners advocate for and protect basic human rights for individuals that face multiple forms of discrimination. NIJC's LGBTQ Immigrant Rights Initiative provides free legal services across the country to detained and non-detained immigrants who identify as LGBTQ and/or HIV-positive.

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## NIJC's LGBTQ Immigrant Rights Initiative Facts:

- LGBTQ immigrants are 97 times more likely to be sexually abused while in detention.
- U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement routinely uses prolonged segregation to house transgender and gender nonconforming immigrants in lieu of releasing or providing gender-appropriate facilities.
- LGBTQ and HIV+ immigrants routinely lack the medication they need for their gender affirming care or chronic conditions.

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## Our Pro Bono Partnership

- NIJC pro bono attorneys provide assistance on:
  - Affirmative asylum representation
  - Deportation/removal defense (detained and non-detained) before the immigration court, Board of Immigration Appeals or federal courts of appeals
  - Advocacy for immigrant victims of violence, trafficking, and other crimes.
  - Tracking and challenging detention conditions across the country
  - Creating a welcoming environment for clients
- Due to on-going changes to immigration law and policy, pro bono time and involvement will depend on the matter.



## NIJC Provides:

- Trainings conducted by asylum experts
- Policy and practice updates regarding any changes within the immigration system that may impact clients
- Detailed practice manuals, practice advisories, and samples produced
- Technical support through the life of the case
- Detailed practice manuals and samples produced by years of NIJC experience. In most cases involving asylum based on sexual orientation or gender identity, NIJC has a significant amount of country conditions research already available, as well as sample briefs/legal memos. Pro bono attorneys will need to tailor the materials to their client's case.



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## Project Contact Information

For more information, please contact the LGBT Pro Bono Coordinator Michelle Velazquez [mivelazquez@heartlandalliance.org](mailto:mivelazquez@heartlandalliance.org) or at 312.660.1620.

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We invite you to see all of NIJC's extensive pro bono resources available on our website at <https://immigrantjustice.org/for-attorneys>.

To connect with individuals and families who need legal representation, please see the [current case list](#) available on our web page.

For general information about NIJC Pro Bono Programs please contact Ellen Miller, Pro Bono Manager, at 312.660.1415 or [emiller@heartlandalliance.org](mailto:emiller@heartlandalliance.org).



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