

i≡ Immigration Equality



**Strategic
Plan
2020–2023**

DEAR FRIENDS,

Twenty-five years ago, Immigration Equality was created by a small group of volunteer lawyers to ensure that same-sex couples could not be forced apart by unconstitutional, discriminatory laws. Our founding mission soon expanded to saving LGBTQ refugees from being deported to countries where they would suffer horrific persecution and to protecting the rights of immigrants living with HIV. We have always been a group of motivated activists and attorneys determined to reform a broken immigration system, not just because it's the right thing to do, but because our very lives depend on it.

Our founding principles continue to inspire and motivate us to demand justice and dignity for our community. From decades of experience, we know that progress is not inevitable. It is something we must fight for every day. At the same time, we have learned that no matter how overwhelming an obstacle may seem, it is always possible to find a way forward. Over the years, we have won substantial victories for the people we serve, regardless of which party was in control of Congress or who was living in the White House. We even celebrated remarkable, system-wide wins during the last administration. While we welcomed the transition to new leadership in Washington, we nevertheless know that the reforms we must secure will still be hard-won.

To be an effective advocacy organization, we must never content ourselves with doing “business as usual.” Our success stems largely from our ability to adapt to the moment. When we find ourselves approaching a pivot point, we must be thoughtful about how best to take advantage of the opportunities presented to us. Real change requires a purposeful approach. That is why we undertook a three-year strategic planning project during this past year, despite the unprecedented challenges posed by a global pandemic. And we have set the bar high: by the end of 2023, Immigration Equality will have (1) secured asylum for hundreds more LGBTQ refugees, (2) liberated transgender and HIV-positive immigrants from civil detention facilities, (3) reformed federal immigration policies that disenfranchise the children of same-sex couples, and (4) made our organization a more effective agent in the fight against racism and bias.

We recognize that our goals are ambitious, and that there is a lot of work for us to do. Nevertheless, our vision is clear and our determination is absolute. With your help, we will achieve our mission.

Thank you for supporting our work. We could not do it without you!

Sincerely,



Aaron Morris, Executive Director



Randy Feuerstein, Board Chair

We fought alongside the Zaccari-Blixt family for three years to force the State Department to recognize their son, Lucas Zaccari-Blixt, as a U.S. citizen from birth—and we won a victory for the entire LGBTQ community.



OUR MISSION

We promote justice and equality for LGBTQ and HIV-positive immigrants and families through direct legal services, policy advocacy, and impact litigation.

OUR VISION

We envision a future where every LGBTQ and HIV-positive immigrant can build a life anchored in freedom, justice, and dignity.

Where the people of this nation celebrate the innovative spirit and remarkable contributions of immigrants and refugees. Where our immigration system is equitable and humane. Where every person—regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, or HIV status—is empowered to freely express their true self and to love whom they choose.

And where safety, opportunity, and the hope for a better future are an everyday reality for all.

OUR VALUES

- **Justice and Equality:** We strive for dignity and fair treatment for everyone—in law, policy, and practice.
- **Quality of Service:** We are committed to providing excellent legal counsel to, and highly effective advocacy for, the people we serve.
- **Freedom and Empowerment:** We work to ensure that every individual may live proudly and openly as their true self in a safe and welcoming nation. We seek to enable immigrants to build a better future for themselves and for their families.



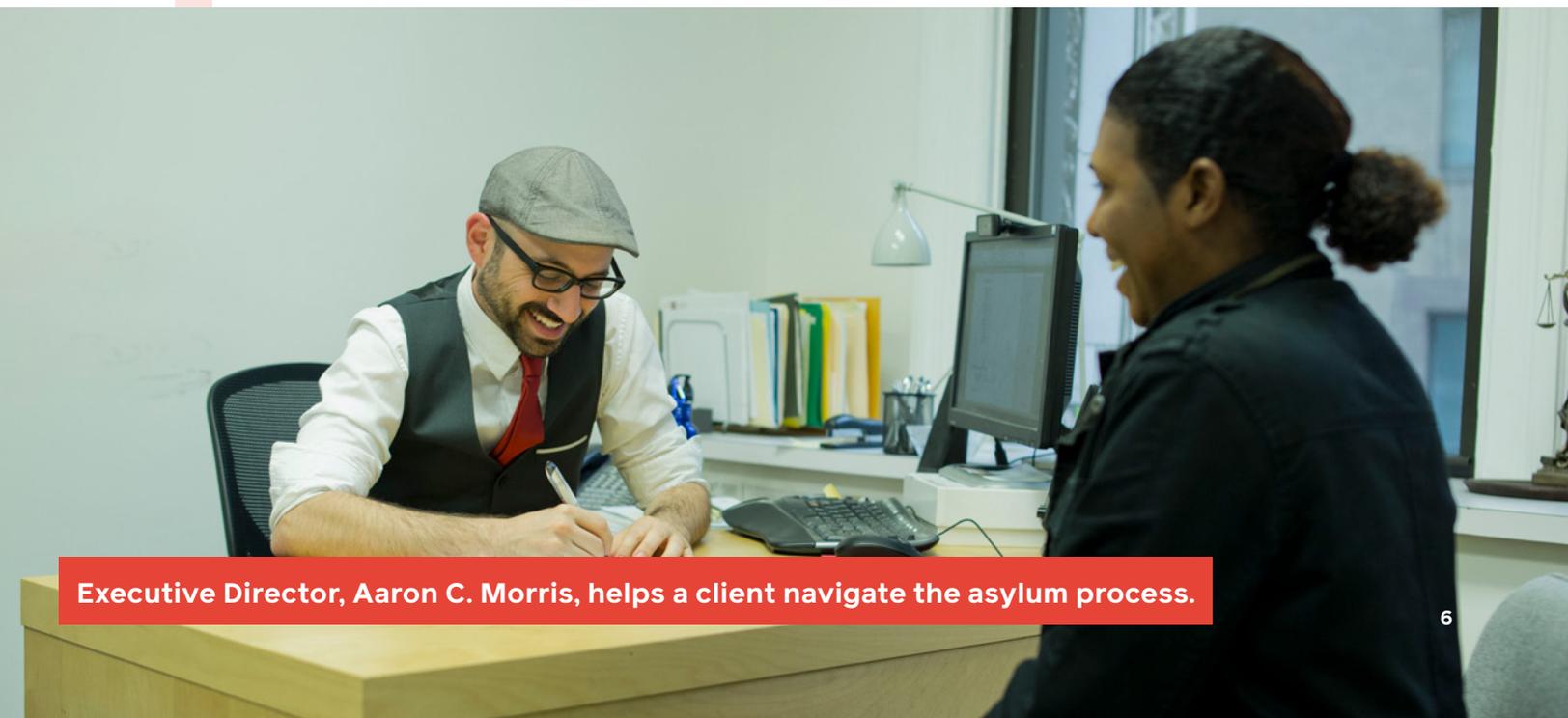
Client-advocate Ishalaa Ortega receives a SHINE Award for her leadership in LGBTQ and HIV-positive advocacy.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 1: SERVING CLIENTS



Through direct services such as our pro bono asylum program, impact litigation, and advocacy in Washington, Immigration Equality aims to ensure that:

- every indigent LGBTQ or HIV-positive asylum seeker nationwide has access to legal help;
- the U.S. State Department recognizes children of same-sex couples as birthright citizens;
- all LGBTQ or HIV-positive people in detention are released;
- Trump administration policies that harm LGBTQ or HIV-positive immigrants are reversed;
- pro-LGBTQ or HIV-positive immigration law and policies are created and advanced.



Executive Director, Aaron C. Morris, helps a client navigate the asylum process.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2: OPTIMIZING OPERATIONS



Immigration Equality will invest in efforts to better define and develop staff roles, standardize data practices, collaborate on planning, and manage projects.



Asylum winner Terry López, his wife Adriana Hernandez, and their son Darien.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 3: EXPANDING SUPPORT FOR OUR MISSION



Through public events and nationwide coalitions, we will bridge and build stronger external partnerships.

To inspire wide support for our mission, we will develop and implement engaging messaging strategies, promote our rebrand, and optimize the impact of our new website.



An MSNBC reporter interviews asylum winner Regina Elisabeth King about the persecution she faced in Guyana.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 4: EMPHASIZING RACIAL JUSTICE, DIVERSITY, AND CULTURAL COMPETENCY



By thorough evaluation of our recruiting practices, communications, vendor selection, and potential partners through a racial justice lens, we will seek to root out bias and expand the diversity of our staff and our audiences.

We will develop and implement an anti-bias organizational culture as well as identify additional ways to incorporate racial justice work into our advocacy.



Oliver Anene, a former client and current Board member, speaks in a rally for immigrant and LGBTQ rights in front of the White House.

OUR PROGRAMS

DIRECT LEGAL SERVICES

Immigration Equality provides free legal services to LGBTQ and HIV-positive asylum seekers. Each year, we connect over 600 individuals with pro bono attorneys, and our staff trains and works with those lawyers to represent their clients.

Since we started our asylum program, our in-house attorneys and large pro-bono network have won asylum for over 1,200 individuals.

IMPACT LITIGATION

Through our impact litigation, we seek to change discriminatory policies affecting LGBTQ and HIV-positive people. In these cases, we may only represent a small group of people, but our aim is to secure rulings that are far-reaching for our community.

POLICY ADVOCACY

Immigration Equality and the Immigration Equality Action Fund work in coalitions to advance bills that serve our clients, and educate policymakers on the particular dangers that queer, trans, and HIV-positive individuals face.

Our client-advocates share their powerful personal stories before members of Congress to drive home the real-world impact of laws and policies.

JOIN THE MOVEMENT TO PROTECT LGBTQ AND HIV-POSITIVE IMMIGRANT RIGHTS

When we come together to demand equal rights for our community, we are a force to be reckoned with.

Join thousands of other supporters to create meaningful change for LGBTQ and HIV-positive immigrants and families.

Get started by following our digital channels:



ImmigrationEquality

www.facebook.com/ImmigrationEquality



IEquality

www.twitter.com/iequality



ImmigrationEquality

www.instagram.com/immigrationequality

www.immigrationequality.org

To find out how to invest in our ambitious goals, please email:
development@immigrationequality.org.



Hundreds of Immigration Equality supporters march in the New York City Pride March.



Immigration Equality

www.immigrationequality.org