



Catholic
Charities
Archdiocese of Dubuque

Immigration Legal Services



Keeping Families Together Edition 4 November 2019

Catholic Social Teachings on Immigration Our Faith in Action

By Yer Vang, Catholic Charities' Legal Director

As the holiday season approaches, it gives me an opportunity to reflect and be grateful for the blessings bestowed. More importantly, to paraphrase an excerpt from Luke 12:48, *"From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded."*

This passage reminds us to greet everyday with gratitude, especially when I consider the heart-wrenching stories shared with me from our brothers and sisters from all over the world. These stories are filled with pain, trauma, and sorrow. But somehow, our clients are able to maintain faith through this journey and greet us with hope. So then it becomes our responsibility to use our talents and gifts to help re-affirm the universality of all people's human dignity and respect, regardless of their immigration status. This becomes the underlying foundation of Catholic Social Teaching as it relates to how we treat our immigrant brothers and sisters.



Here are the three principles on Immigration:

1. People have the right to migrate to sustain their lives and the lives of their families.
2. A country has the right to regulate its borders and to control immigration.
3. A country must regulate its borders with JUSTICE and MERCY.

How can we put our faith into action as it relates to these above principles? We do so by using our 'Head' to ask important and impactful questions. We also use our 'Heart' by giving heartfelt, caring responses and using your heart to lead decisions. Lastly, we can use our 'Hands' by putting our skills and talents to work into faith, by taking action and doing. Consider fostering opportunities of encounter between native born and immigrants/refugees and incorporating immigrants into your community activities.

Are you interested in learning more about Catholic Social Teachings and how we can put our Faith into Action as it relates to principles on Immigration? Please take some time to listen to the 30 minute video below as I tell my own personal journey when I spoke on 'Pathways to Unity' during the Archdiocese Pastoral Leadership Study Day on October 15th.



Love your
neighbor
as yourself.
MATTHEW 22:39

In Gratitude

Words from a client to their Immigration Attorney...

"I am so please to give you an update since we last communicated. On August 15, 2019, I received my Employment Authorization Card. On October 7, 2019, I had an I-485 Immigration Hearing in the USCIS' Des

Moines office. The immigration officer approved a two year permanent residence period for me. I received my Green Card on Saturday October 12, 2019.

"You were quick and very responsive when I requested the assistance of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Dubuque (Waterloo) in April. I gained strength knowing you cared which made me realize I was not alone. You and Catholic Charities are working for the good of the people especially when we need help.

You proved that you are not only a lawyer but you are also compassionate and unselfish in giving. I want you to know during trying times your business card was my beacon of hope because I knew you were always reachable and available.

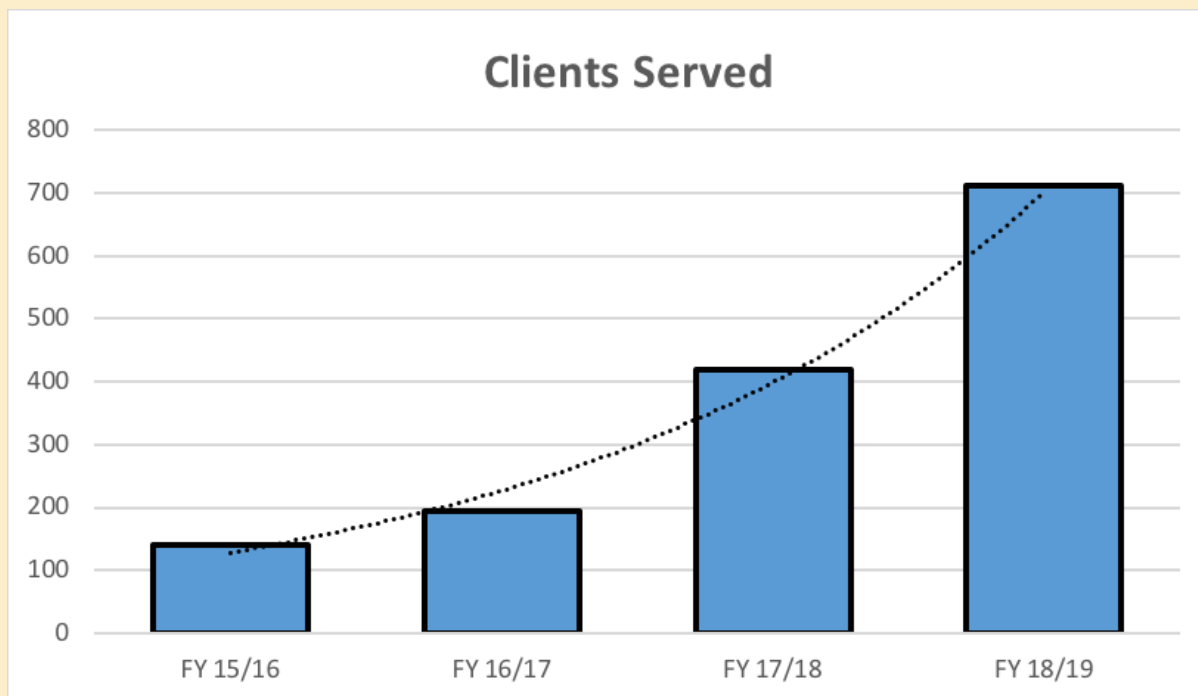
Now I am working part-time which enables me to better learn our English language and to become a productive part of our country. My prayers were answered because God sent me angels to comfort and guide me. And you were one of those angels. My husband and I are so very blessed and thankful for all your assistance because we know the journey was possible because you cared enough to join us with our trials and tribulations. May God continue to bless you, your family, and staff because you are making a difference. I am sincerely grateful"

Need for Immigration Legal Services continues to grow...Catholic Charities' offer services in New Hampton

In the last year and a half, Catholic Charities' Immigration Legal Services expanded its

staffing team by hiring two bilingual (Spanish) legal assistants and two more immigration attorneys. With additional staffing, Immigration Legal Services increased its availability to serve more clients and conduct more immigration education workshops, including Know Your Rights. Last year, the team served 713 clients and reached over 1,400 people with outreach activities.

In September 2019, Catholic Charities started providing services as needed in New Hampton, Iowa, located at the St. John School of Religion. Miryam Antunez De Mayolo, Immigration Attorney, provides free legal consultations by appointment in New Hampton on a monthly basis. Catholic Charities hopes to eliminate transportation barriers for immigrants who may not be able to drive long distance or find rides to their appointments in Cedar Rapids, Dubuque or Waterloo offices. The expansion of services into New Hampton helps serve north central and north east Iowa communities. Those interested in making an appointment in New Hampton should call 319-272-2080.



One in Dignity. One in Love.

Who is an immigrant?

An immigrant is any person that is not a US citizen but intends to make the United States his/her permanent place of residence (includes undocumented persons, refugees, asylees, but does not include international students, temporary foreign workers, etc).

Why should we use the term 'undocumented person' instead of 'illegal alien'?

Being physically present in the US without documentation is a CIVIL violation of immigration law, it is NOT a criminal violation. More importantly, words matter. Refrain from using dehumanizing language; instead promote inclusivity and unity. When you reframe and correct misconceptions or myths about immigrants and refugees you are showing compassion towards our immigrant brothers and sisters.

Please take 60 seconds to watch the below video about how we are all one in dignity and one in love.



Glory and Grace: An American Dream

Glory and Grace had dreams come true on the same day. Twin brothers from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gloire Kakuru and Grace Ndovia, were granted United States citizenship together in a ceremony at the Linn County Courthouse in Cedar Rapids on August 16, 2019.

Kakuru, whose first name Gloire means "glory" in French, credits Catholic Charities for helping to make his dream come true. Gloire is pictured to the left with the Judge who conducted the ceremony.

"I am so glad that I came through Catholic Charities. They know what they are doing and they get work done with results," he said. "I want to thank Catholic Charities as they are always there to help people with their needs."

Torn apart by decades of civil war and corruption, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DNR) is a central African nation of 91 million people, the second largest country on the continent. Kakuru, along with his mother, sister and twin brother, spent over a decade in a Kenyan

refugee camp before making it to America. He was only 14 years old when he arrived here. Literally thousands of Congolese immigrants have flooded into the United States over the past two decades seeking refugee status, American citizenship and a new way of life.

Kakuru volunteered through AmeriCorps and worked with Catholic Charities through a refugee resettlement program, helping people transition to life in the States. "Gloire wanted to get citizenship and learned what Catholic Charities was doing. He came to us for a consultation and later helped his brother do the same thing," said Yer Vang, Legal Director for Catholic Charities, said. "It is a remarkable story." The fact that Gloire was volunteering and giving back to help others, while at the same time seeking a better life himself, speaks volumes about his integrity, care for others and deep desire to be part of American life and

the American dream.

Kakuru received citizenship after just nine months, but the process can sometimes take years and includes a formal application, submission of a myriad of detailed documents, fingerprinting, a background check, and then finally, a civic, written and oral exam.

Community Partner Highlight:



otto SCHOITZ
FOUNDATION

The Otto Schoitz Foundation, Waterloo, Iowa, has awarded Catholic Charities a \$20,000 grant to support the Immigration Legal Services program. Executive Director of Otto Schoitz, Shelli Panicucci, states, *"We are grateful for the services provided by Catholic Charities as bilingual and skilled legal services are particularly needed in the increasingly multi-cultural, multi-lingual environment of Waterloo and the Cedar Valley. We're very happy to partner with Catholic Charities to improve the health and well-being for all in our community."*



Immigration Attorney Highlight: Denise (Dee) Patters

Dee joined Catholic Charities in August 2018 as an Immigration Attorney and is a member of the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA). Her previous employment as Assistant Hardin County Attorney focused on prosecuting and strengthening services for victim-based crimes, with an emphasis on intimate partner violence and child sexual abuse. Prior to her

work in Hardin County, Dee served as Assistant Floyd County Attorney and Law Clerk in the Third Judicial District of the State of Minnesota. Dee earned her Juris Doctorate at the University of Iowa College of Law and holds a Bachelor's degree in Middle Eastern Studies with a minor in Religion from Smith College. During her studies, Dee had the privilege to work in the Appeals Chamber of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague, Netherlands, and to study in Morocco, Egypt, France, Great Britain, Germany, the Netherlands, and Cyprus. When she's not working, Dee enjoys travelling, camping, spending time with her fiancé Chris, and spoiling her two dogs and cat.

Did You Know?

WHAT IMMIGRATION MEANS TO

IOWA



148,721 immigrants make up 4.8% of the state's population.

IMMIGRANT ENTREPRENEURS INVIGORATE THE ECONOMY



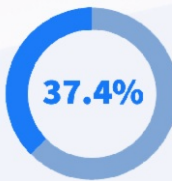
More than 2 percent of self-employed business owners in Iowa are immigrants.



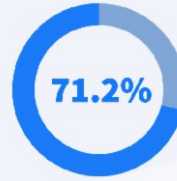
\$54,600,000

the total annual revenue generated by these immigrant-owned businesses.

IMMIGRANTS ARE AN INTEGRAL PART OF COMMUNITIES



More than on-third of all immigrants in Iowa are naturalized U.S. citizens.



More than 7 in 10 of immigrants in Iowa speak English "well" or "very well."

IMMIGRANT HOUSEHOLDS STRENGTHEN THE ECONOMY



\$3,000,000,000

in spending power.



\$820,300,000

in federal taxes.



\$348,900,000

in state and local taxes.

IMMIGRANTS ARE ESSENTIAL TO THE LABOR FORCE

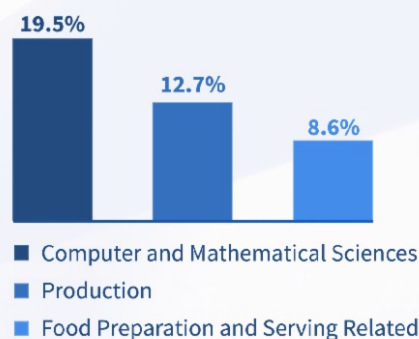


Nearly 6 percent of workers in the Iowa labor force are immigrants.



Over 8 percent of workers in Iowa's science, tech, and professional services industry are immigrants.

The largest shares of immigrants in Iowa's labor force work in the following occupations:



Immigration Legal Updates November 2019

USCIS Proposes Significant Changes in Fees and Fee Waivers

On November 8, 2019 United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced it will make changes to certain application fees and limit access to fee waivers for certain applications. The proposed fee changes was published on November 14, 2019, with a 30-day comment period ending on December 16, 2019. These changes places the burden on the backs of hardworking immigrant families, when instead policies should help lift the burden. Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC) has provided a summary of these proposes changes below. **We encourage you to post comments objecting to these changes by [going to this link](#).**

- **Adjustment of Status (AOS) to Lawful Permanent Residency**- Currently, an AOS application costs \$1,225 for most applicants. The current fee includes the cost of concurrently filed applications for work and travel authorization. USCIS is proposing to separate the filing fees for these applications and increase the total price of that package to \$2,195.
- **Affirmative Asylum** - USCIS is proposing to impose a new fee of \$50 on applications for asylum. If this fee were to go into effect, the US would be only the fourth country in the world to levy such a fee on asylum seekers.
- **Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)** - USCIS is proposing to include a new fee for DACA renewals of \$275. Currently, renewing DACA cost \$495 for the employment authorization and biometrics fee. But USCIS is proposing to raise the employment authorization fee to \$490 and to roll the biometrics fee into the proposed \$275 for the form I-821D fee. Thus, the cost of a DACA renewal will increase from \$495 to \$765, an overall increase of 55 percent.
- **Fee Waivers** - USCIS is proposing to slash existing fee waivers except for those enumerated by statute (i.e., VAWA self-petitioners, battered spouses of certain nonimmigrants, U visas, T visas and TPS). Among the fee waivers largely eliminated are those for applications for naturalization, adjustment of status, green card replacement and renewals (Form I-90) and employment authorization.
- **Naturalization** - USCIS is proposing to increase the naturalization applications (Form N-400) fee 83 percent, raising the fee from \$640 to \$1,170. Additionally, USCIS is proposing to eliminate the Form N-400 Reduced Fee as well as fee waivers for the N-400. This will increase the burden on low-income immigrants seeking to naturalize, delaying their access to the American dream for that much longer.

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) - Supreme Court Update

On November 12, the U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments in three cases related to the government's decision to end DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals). This highly-anticipated hearing is a pivotal step in immigrants' and advocates' response to the administration's efforts to end DACA (which would leave roughly 800,000 immigrant youth vulnerable to deportation). It is likely the U.S. Supreme Court will not issue a decision until Spring 2020. Therefore, while we wait, it is important to let those who are eligible DACA recipients know what their options are.

Who can renew their DACA?

Anyone who has previously held DACA status and continues to meet the DACA eligibility requirements may apply under current DHS policy.

When should renewal requests be filed?

Given the uncertain future of the DACA landscape, immigration service providers recommend that DACA recipients consider filing renewals without delay in the event that a future decision

causes U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) (the office that processes DACA renewals) to stop accepting renewal requests. USCIS has been accepting renewal requests that are filed more than 150 days before expiration. However, those who apply more than 150 days in advance run the risk of receiving an extension of less than two full years. Some applicants have also reported renewal requests filed more than 150 days in advance being held for several months before being adjudicated. Ultimately, it is the decision of each DACA recipient to weigh these potential risks against the benefits of a DACA extension before deciding how early to apply or whether to apply at all.



Interested in learning more?

Please click here to visit our Immigration Legal Services website page or
Click here to donate to Catholic Charities.

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www.CatholicCharitiesDubuque.org

