



**IMMIGRANT
DEFENSE
PROJECT**

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**Job Announcement:
Immigrant Defense Project
Litigation Staff Attorney (Full-Time)**

Summary

The Immigrant Defense Project (IDP) seeks a full-time litigation attorney to work on strategic litigation and litigation support initiatives in defense of immigrants. This new attorney will work hand-in-hand with IDP's founder and senior counsel, Manny Vargas, supervising litigation attorney, Andrew Wachtenheim, and the rest of IDP's team on a range of issues affecting the rights of immigrants in the criminal legal and immigration detention and deportation systems.

Organization Background

IDP is a New York City-based nonprofit founded 20 ago to address the crisis of escalating criminalization and mass deportation. Through a multi-pronged, integrated advocacy strategy that brings together impact litigation, expert advice, and litigation support; defender and community trainings; policy advocacy; alliance building and community education; and challenging negative narratives about immigrants through strategic communications, we work to secure fairness and justice for all immigrants by transforming the racially-biased U.S. criminal and immigration systems. In all parts of our work, IDP seeks to bridge gaps between directly-affected individuals, their lawyers, and high-level advocacy.

IDP is a relatively small organization with big impact. Our litigation practice has been central to strategic Supreme Court litigation campaigns that have defined many of the rights of immigrants in the criminal legal and immigration systems since the 1996 reforms (e.g., *Padilla v. Kentucky*--recognizing the constitutional right to accurate immigration advice for noncitizen defendants; *Mathis v. United States*--reaffirming a strict categorical approach in immigration and federal sentencing adjudications; and *Mellouli v. Lynch*, *Moncrieffe v. Holder*, *Carachuri-Rosendo v. Holder*, and *Lopez v. Gonzales*--the string of cases limiting the government's harsh and overreaching application of the drug-based deportation laws.) **Our areas of substantive litigation focus include: the categorical approach and generally seeking to limit the reach of criminal deportability grounds, retroactivity, conviction finality, criminal bars to persecution based relief, ICE community enforcement, state/local collaboration and information-sharing with ICE, immigration detention, and motions to reopen and reconsider in conviction-based cases.**

Our unique legal support helplines provide cutting edge legal analysis for thousands of community members and attorneys annually, serve as a clearinghouse for ICE enforcement trends in New York City and beyond, and facilitate a feedback loop between IDP's litigation staff and advocates fighting cases before the immigration agencies, immigration courts, and federal courts. In addition to training attorneys across New York, IDP develops Train-the-Trainers workshops for public school teachers, legal

service providers, and other community-based organizations, on a range of topics, from complex criminal and immigration laws to issues such as Know-Your-Rights with ICE.

Position Summary

IDP is hiring a **Litigation Staff Attorney** to work on a variety of **strategic and impact litigation** affecting the rights of immigrants having contact with the criminal legal and immigration systems. This position will include:

- Providing technical assistance and helping to coordinate amicus briefing in support of Supreme Court and Circuit Court litigation campaigns affecting the treatment and rights of immigrants in the criminal legal and immigration detention and deportation systems.
- Amicus briefing, and limited direct representation of individual immigrants in petitions for review before the Circuit Courts and motions and other appeals before the BIA, and district court actions.
- Bridging gaps between appellate litigators, defenders, and community members, by identifying issues affecting immigrant communities that may be positively influenced through litigation; providing guidance and model materials on how to utilize new legal developments and decisions from the courts; and teeing up cases that have the potential to be effective vehicles for policy change through the courts.
- Participating in immigration litigation and policy convenings and coalitions.
- With other staff, providing expert consults to criminal defense attorneys, immigrants and their families, and immigration attorneys on criminal-immigration law issues through IDP's helplines.
- Minimal travel, primarily to regional and national trainings (including some evening and weekend events) is required.

Qualifications

- JD degree and bar admission in good standing in any state. Admission in New York, or willingness and eligibility to promptly seek admission, preferred but not required.
- Two to five years of litigation experience, preferably including experience in immigration court or federal court litigating issues related to immigrant rights.
- Demonstrated commitment to immigrant rights and social justice issues.
- Exceptional organizational and written and oral communication skills; ability to timely respond to and balance numerous requests for assistance.
- Ability to work in a respectful, non-judgmental manner with impacted individuals (including people accused or convicted of serious crimes), and to work collaboratively, respectfully and supportively with colleagues and partners.
- Strong command of Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Excel and other standard productivity software.
- Oral and written fluency in Spanish is preferred.

Compensation

Salary commensurate with relevant experience. Generous benefit package provided by IDP's fiscal sponsor, Fund for the City of New York. Highly congenial organizational culture and commitment to work-life balance.

To apply:

We will be screening applications and interviewing on a rolling basis. Please submit cover letter, resume, and salary requirements to attorneysearch@immdefense.org with Litigation Staff Attorney in the subject line. Writing samples and three references will be requested for those interviewed. No phone calls please.

The Immigrant Defense Project is an Equal Opportunity Employer that actively recruits women, people of color, persons with disabilities, persons with diverse gender and sexual identities, immigrants, and formerly incarcerated persons.