



IMMIGRANT RIGHTS CLINIC

Highlighted Project: Bond Representation

Over the past decade, the number of immigrants detained by federal authorities has grown at alarming rates. Although immigration proceedings are civil in nature and immigration detention is not supposed to be punitive, conditions can be as bad as those found in the criminal system. Isolated from their families and communities, detained immigrants face profound pressure to forfeit meritorious claims in order to remain in the United States.

Since 2014, clinic students have represented and assisted detained immigrants in their efforts to obtain freedom from detention. Clinic students meet clients at the Adelanto Detention Center in San Bernardino County or at one of several facilities in Orange County. Students investigate facts, formulate a theory of the case, prepare evidence and serve as primary representatives at detainees' bond hearings. The clinic's bond clients include some of the most vulnerable in the immigration system—those who have survived domestic or childhood abuse, fled persecution, struggle with mental illness, are recovering from drug or alcohol addiction, or face stigma and discrimination as a result of their criminal records. Bond is often a turning point in their cases. Clients have won important relief ranging from cancellation of removal orders to the acquisition of visas.

In total, students have assisted nearly 50 detainees, many of whom were subject to prolonged detention, and secured the release of more than 20.

The bond project is highly regarded and has become a model for other law clinics and pro bono programs.

Immigrant Rights Clinic

Clinic Directors:



Sameer Ashar
Clinical Professor of Law

Phone: (949) 824-9868

Fax: (949) 824-2747

sashar@law.uci.edu



Annie Lai
Assistant Clinical Professor of Law

Phone: (949) 824-9894

Fax: (949) 824-2747

alai@law.uci.edu

401 East Peltason Drive
Irvine, CA 92697-8000

Additional Faculty:

Emi MacLean, Lecturer
Areas of Expertise: Immigration
Defense and Workers' Rights

The UCI Immigrant Rights Clinic launched in 2011 as part of UCI Law's visionary experiential learning program. Clinic students, working under close faculty supervision, provide direct representation to immigrants on matters ranging from detention and deportation defense to workplace exploitation and protection of civil and constitutional rights of immigrants. The clinic also provides legal support to grassroots organizations working on critical issues affecting low-income immigrants in the region. The clinic strives for and models high-quality, holistic, and transformative lawyering. It acts in accordance with the foundational insight that the community is best served when lawyers help empower marginalized individuals and groups to advocate for themselves.

In past years, complex cases undertaken by the clinic have included the representation of youth referred to ICE by juvenile probation officials, community members alleged to have gang ties, immigrants in deportation proceedings requiring post-conviction relief, and LGBT immigrants seeking asylum and other forms of protection. Other representative projects have included:

- Establishing wage theft projects in Orange County and Pasadena, California in collaboration with the National Day Laborer Organizing Project and Colectivo Tonantzin
- Winning back wages owed to hotel cleaning staff and warehouse workers
- Litigating a federal suit in Maricopa County, Arizona, with Puente Arizona to challenge the criminalization of immigrant workers
- Working with a coalition in Santa Ana, California to pass a bold and far-reaching sanctuary ordinance