



# UnLocal 2020 Year-End Report



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# UnLocal's leadership transition

This year UnLocal's founder and executive director Michele Lampach stepped down, passing her role to Terry Lawson, the new executive director. UnLocal was founded by Michele and co-founder Laura Stein in 2008 as a community needs assessment when Michele identified there was a need in immigrant communities to be connected to social services while working as a case manager in Brooklyn. Michele worked with immigrant leaders, service providers and volunteers to address this problem. In 2012, after Michele had attended law school, UnLocal transformed into a legal service and education provider with the help of community-based immigrant attorneys. When UnLocal first began, Mahduri Kumar and Michele were UnLocal's only employees. Today, UnLocal staffs twenty employees who provide legal assistance and counsel, education and outreach, social services, and artistic outlets for our immigrant community.

During Michele's time leading UnLocal, the team has helped thousands of immigrants and their family through pro bono legal representation and community outreach. In addition, the operating budget doubled in size since UnLocal's inception, and we've cultivated partnerships with over 150+ community organizations to deliver holistic services to our clients. Since the beginning, UnLocal has been deeply rooted in their values of empowering and centering the voices of immigrant community members, proactively working to become an anti-racist institution, and prioritizing the health and wellbeing of their employees, who often experience vicarious trauma from their work. Michele will continue to help advance UnLocal's mission by joining the UnLocal board.

Under Terry's new leadership, UnLocal's team is positive that we will keep on growing in a positive direction. Terry comes to UnLocal from the Immigrant Defense Project (IDP) where she was the supervising policy attorney. Prior to IDP, Terry was the Director of the Family and Immigration Unit at Bronx Legal Services, where she worked for 12 years.



**Michele Lampach**

She brings with her to UnLocal significant successes in organizational growth, development, and sociopolitical analysis and policy work. While at IDP, she championed the right of immigrant New Yorkers to attend court without fear of being arrested by ICE through her work on the Protect Our Courts Act, which passed in the New York State Legislature last week. She also supported the New York Attorney General's lawsuit against ICE, resulting in last month's injunction, and successfully advocated with the ICE Out of Court Coalition for a court rule last year to require judicial warrants for ICE courthouse arrests. At UnLocal, she will bring together her experience in engaging with policy and working directly with communities to effectuate change. As a movement lawyer, Terry looks forward to dedicating herself to collaborating with UnLocal staff and directly impacted individuals and communities.



# A message from the Executive Director:

**Terry Lawson**



**Dear community,**

Even though 2020 was a year of great adversities, UnLocal's team demonstrated tremendous resiliency. Amid the pandemic, we came together to address the pressing needs of our clients and challenged the unwavering and relentless attacks on immigrant communities by the previous administration. With our supporters, we organized two successful campaigns where we raised funds to support our clients' immediate financial needs during the pandemic and for our immigrant-serving programming. In 2020, we learned that with community support, we can overcome any obstacle.

Unfortunately, the Biden-Harris administration has not lived up to its promise to protect immigrant communities as they continue to be detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). In 2021, UnLocal will continue to advocate for our clients until this new administration grants immigrant communities adequate protection and rights. More importantly, we will continue to lean on our community partners, supporters and our team to accomplish this vital work.

**In solidarity,  
Terry Lawson**



## **Mission Statement**

UnLocal aims to address the fundamental injustices and structural inequities that disproportionately impact immigrant communities. We are a community-centered non-profit organization that provides direct immigration legal representation, community education, outreach, and advocacy for New York's undocumented immigrants. UnLocal is dedicated to creating sustainable structures that build collective power and allow us to flourish.



# 01 Our Impact

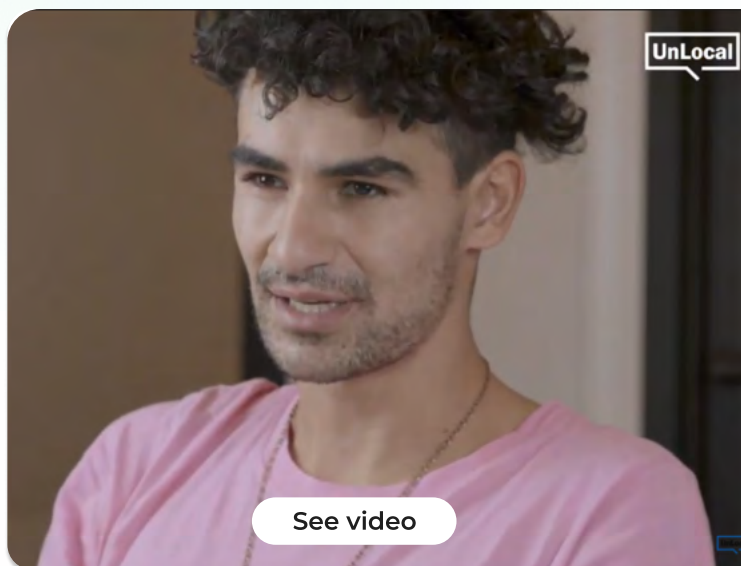


## 1.1 Legal

UnLocal's robust team of lawyers and paralegals provide free legal advice and representation to immigrant communities throughout New York State on immigration-related matters and represents immigrants in immigration court, federal district and appellate courts, civil court, family court, and USCIS filings and hearings. UnLocal helps our clients obtain asylum, employment authorization, lawful permanent residency, Special Immigrant Juvenile Status, U visas, naturalization, family reunification, name changes, and guardianship and custody petitions. Additionally, our legal team helps eligible immigrants apply for Medicaid and Social Security Numbers and provides assistance to those who need help securing Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers (ITINs). The Legal team has 10 in-house attorneys and two sub-practices: the Queer Immigrant Justice Project (QIJP) and the Post Order Defense (POD) Team, which handles cases for people at imminent risk of deportation. In 2020 our legal team handled **898** cases, which is a **30%** increase from last year.

## 1.2

### Queer Immigrant Justice Project (QIJP)



[See video](#)

Through our Queer Immigrant Justice Project (QIJP), UnLocal provides holistic legal representation and community education for LGBTQIA+ immigrants, with the goal of reducing individual and state-sponsored violence and discrimination. In October, we released a video and a newsletter highlighting the important work QIJP accomplished in 2020 as part of our Together We Win Campaign. In the video, Michael Younker, QIJP Director, and Supervising Attorney, and Dennise Hernandez, Education and Outreach Coordinator, explained their role as project leads, and QIJP clients discussed their journey as queer immigrants as well as their experiences working with the UnLocal team.

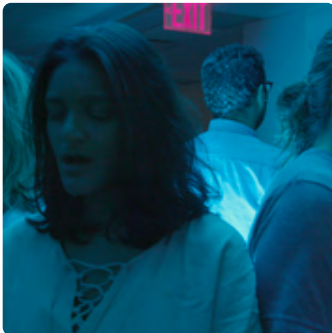
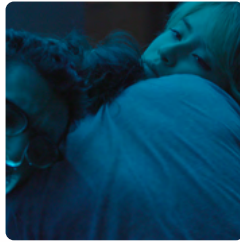
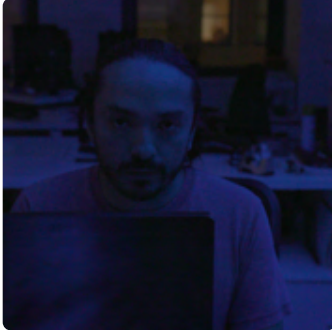
Michael Younker represents LGBTQIA+ immigrants in immigration court, family court, and at the asylum office, while also connecting them to health care, housing, therapy, transitioning support, and more. Dennise Hernandez educates the public about the rights of queer immigrants, the patterns of discrimination and violence they face, changing immigration policies, and their impact on the queer immigrant community. Dennise and Michael cultivate relationships with community-based partners to ensure that QIJP reaches a broad audience and provides critical support to queer immigrants. In December 2020, Victoria Jeon, Equal Justice Works Legal Fellow, joined the QIJP team to provide direct legal services and education and outreach to clients. Victoria will also help expand our capacity to address the intersectional issues encountered by Asian Americans, Southeast Asians, South Asians, and Pacific Islanders minorities and immigrants that identify as LGBTQIA+.





In 2020, the QIJP team worked closely with Congregation Beit Simchat Torah (CBST) by attending the monthly clinics CBST hosted for LGBTQIA+ clients seeking assistance with their asylum cases, providing consultations, and training volunteers to prep legal cases before he took them on for full representation. Moreover, Michael worked closely with legal interns and a Columbia LLM Public Interest and Government Fellow to assist with numerous LGBTQIA+ immigration cases. Many QIJP clients had their asylum cases approved, including a young man from Jamaica who was rejected and threatened by his family and a Nigerian woman who experienced unspeakable harm by members in her community. This year, we invited clients to engage in our work by asking them to become QIJP ambassadors to raise awareness on LGBTQIA+ issues and speak on behalf of the project.





## 1.3

### **Rapid Response Legal Collaborative (RRLC)**

As founding members of the Rapid Response Legal Collaborative (RRLC), together with the New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG) and Make the Road New York, UnLocal provides legal services and education for immigrants who are detained or at imminent risk of being detained or deported. Immensely challenging, each case requires multiple legal strategies to try to stop someone's deportation. The UnLocal Rapid Response team benefits from a Staff Attorney, Juliana Perez Calle, who represents clients in removal proceedings, and a paralegal, Itzel Corona Aguilar, who devotes their time to speaking with immigrants recently detained by ICE and developing materials to provide current and detailed information to immigrant communities.

In November 2020, the RRLC team won an appeal to the Board of Immigration Appeals for a Cuban asylum-seeker who was detained for 15 months. The BIA found that the Immigration Judge's findings were not supported by the record and remanded his case to the Immigration Judge. With the proceedings ongoing, we requested his release on humanitarian parole, which ICE granted and he is now living in New York. In December 2020, an UnLocal Rapid Response client was granted bond and released from ICE detention after spending 16 months in ICE detention. Our advocacy led to his release despite the fact that his case is still on appeal to the Board of Immigration Appeals.

# 1.4

## Education and Outreach (E+O)

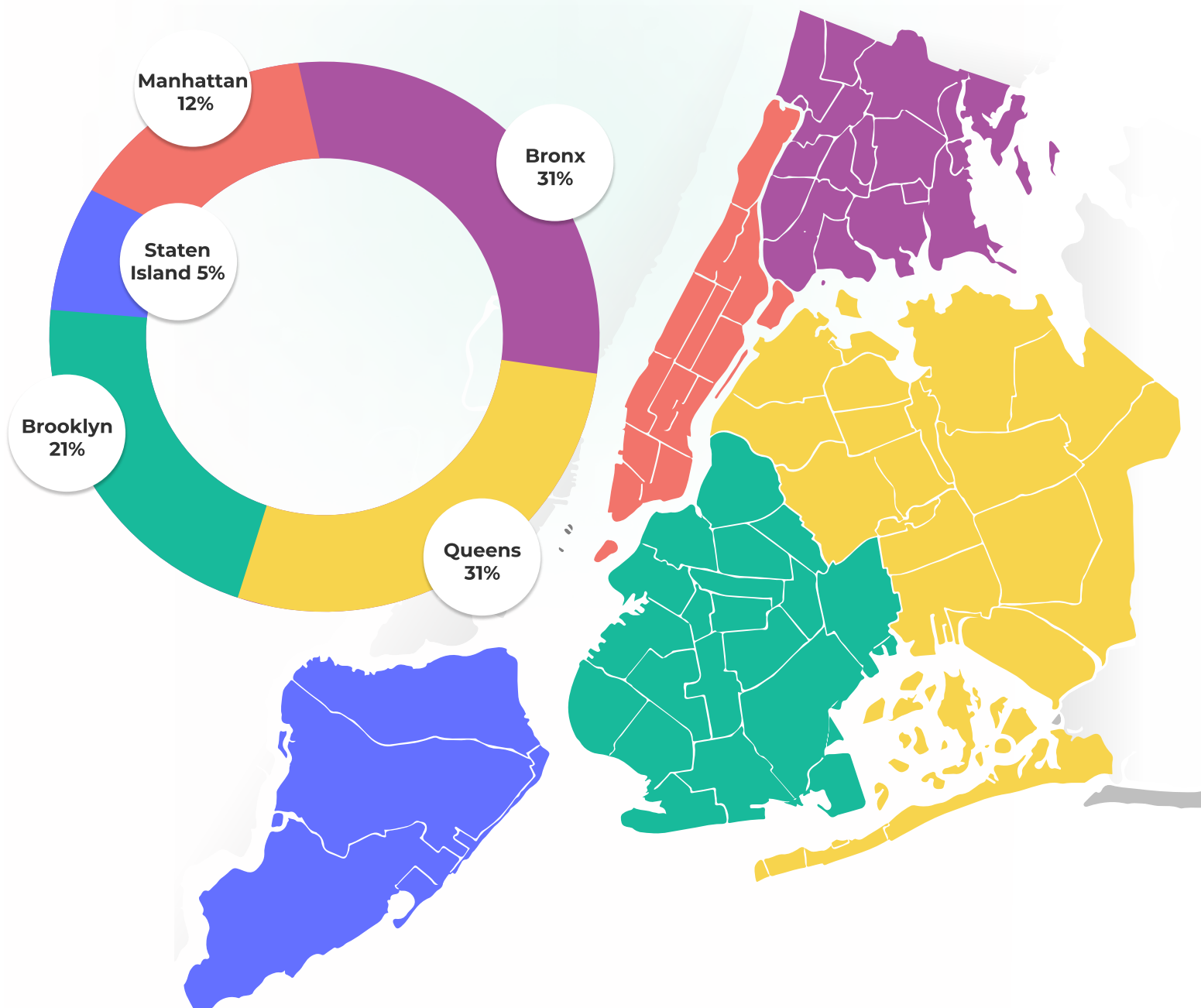
Our Education and Outreach (E+O) team is composed of educators and outreach specialists, Angelica Lara, Dennise Hernandez, Diana Castillo, Wes Aguilar, Itzel Aguilar, and Victoria Jeon who generate educational presentations, outreach materials, trainings, and other content on a wide range of issues that impact immigrant communities, from high school students looking for post-secondary education orientation, workers looking for rights and wage information, guidance counselors who are trying to learn how to identify the needs of their students, to community organizations and community members getting their questions answered about immigration law and policy. Our Education and Outreach team works closely with our lawyers, paralegals and advocates to educate New York's immigrant community about their rights, update them about any urgent or immediate information released by the City and track any developments in immigration law that could immediately impact our clients and community.



In 2020, due to the pandemic, the E+O team shifted from in-person community events to online platforms to deliver information and services and organized 76 outreach events, totaling 10,413 participants, the E+O team educated partners and community members about their rights with respect to financial benefits given during the pandemic, unemployment, public charge regulations, tax filing information, hardship declaration applications, COVID relief funds, community mutual aids, as well as, prioritizing community presentations on COVID-19 economic stimulus measures, the E+O team partnered with schools and guidance counselors to make sure that the New York State DREAM Act (college access for undocumented New Yorkers) application guidance, DACA updates, Immigration policy presentations, How to support your Undocu students presentation for educations, college access presentation for students and parents, mental health support modules for Immigrant students, building community based partnerships was still accessible through our social media, partner calls, public facing events, and partner presentations.

## Where we serve our clients

UnLocal provides legal advice and representation to immigrants living in and around New York City. In 2020, our NYC clients lived in the Bronx (27%), Queens (28%), Brooklyn (18%), Staten Island (4%), and Manhattan (38%)





# 2020 Campaigns and Fundraisers

# 03

## 3.1 UnLocal's COVID-19 Relief Work



As the pandemic was raging through New York, UnLocal recognized the immediate and devastating impact of Covid-19 on our immigrant communities. We responded by organizing the [UnLocal Covid-19 Immigrant Relief Fund](#), for which we raised over **\$76K**, helping **191 immigrant individuals** and families pay for utilities, rents, groceries, and more. Our Education and Outreach team posted regular updates regarding Covid-19, educated our community partners on the policies revolving around the pandemic, built and populated our bilingual [Covid-19 resources page](#), and hosted regular events on the latest Covid-19 news on platforms easily accessible to immigrant communities. UnLocal is fiercely committed to ensuring that our communities have the most updated information related to COVID, especially Department of Education policies regarding the various school reopening models and updates on school closures.



## 3.2 Together We Win Campaign

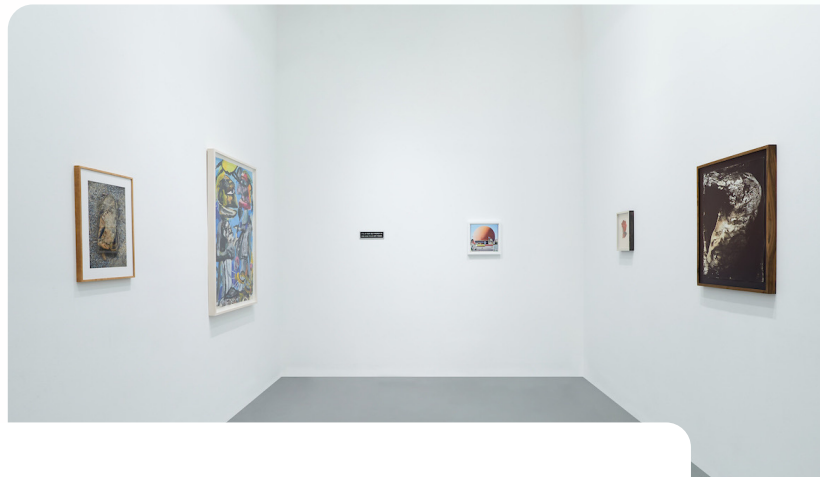
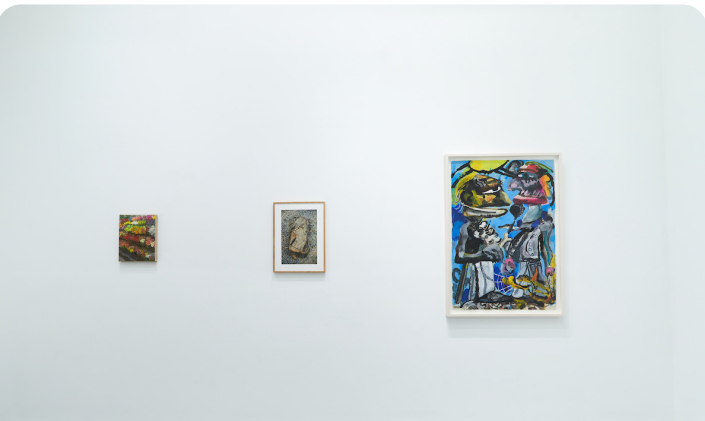
#TogetherWeWin

During the Fall, we launched our Together We Win Campaign. The campaign was inspired by all the major victories won at UnLocal in 2020 with help of our team, partners, and supporters. We highlighted our recent fundraisers, major cases won by our attorneys, and our different programs at UnLocal.

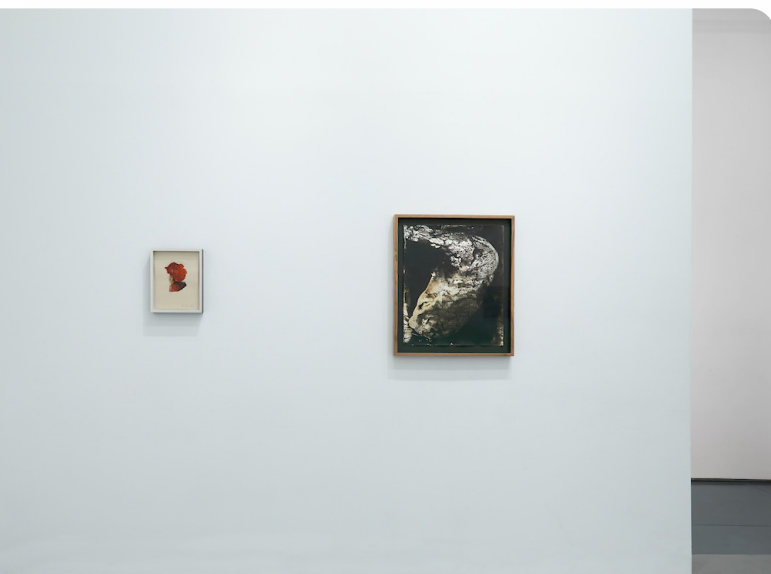
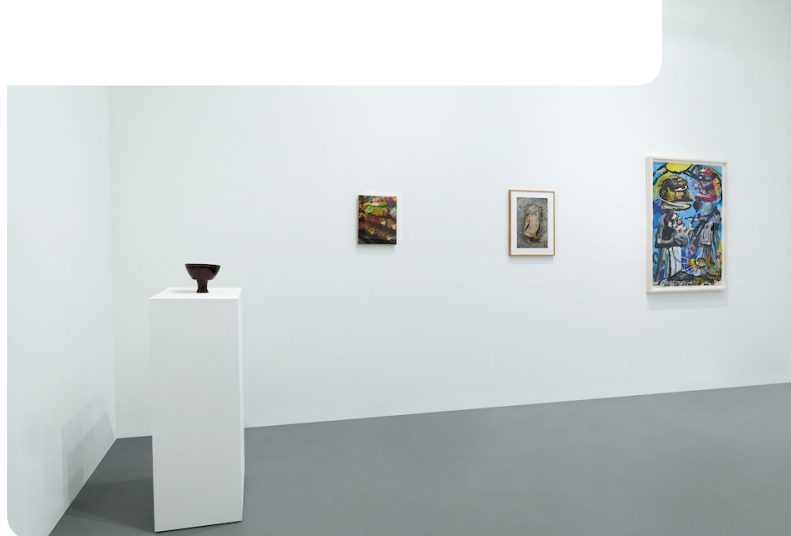
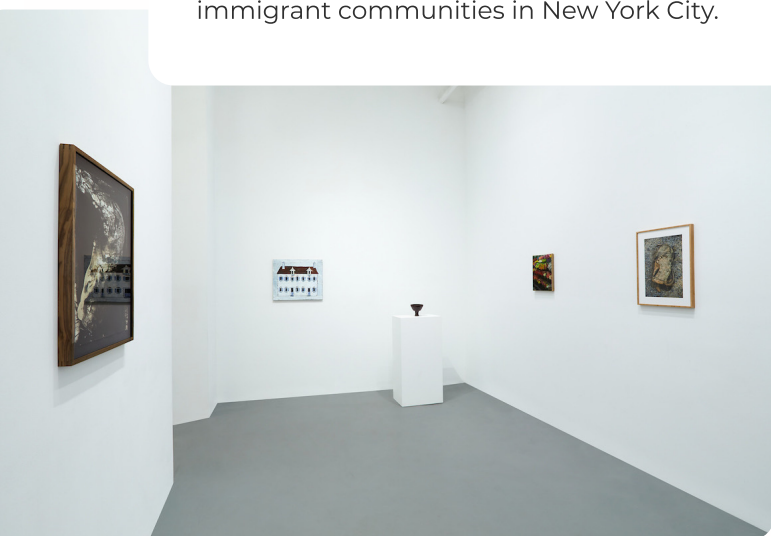
We began the campaign by celebrating our Covid-19 Relief Fund in September. Then, In October, we highlighted the Second Circuit victory, *Martinez de Artiga v. Barr*, won by UnLocal's Legal Director, Rebecca Press. In January 2020, after six years of an ongoing legal battle, Rebecca argued before the Second Circuit Court of Appeals in defense of Patricia's ability to remain in the United States. Patricia Martinez de Artiga and her son, who was ten at the time, fled El Salvador in 2014 after repeatedly being threatened with death by a notorious gang. Together they sought safety in the United States. But the safety and security of legal status had eluded them, as the immigration system twice rejected their applications for protection. However, in June 2020, the Second Circuit issued a published decision in Patricia's favor and for the first time recognized that the law does not require someone like Patricia to wait until they are physically harmed before fleeing.

## 3.3

### Annual Art Auction



In 2020, the UnLocal Benefit Art Auction **raised \$132,300**. Since 2017, some of our board members have collaborated with Klaus von Nichtssagend Gallery to organize the auction, creating connections to over a hundred artists and galleries. Thanks to this growing network of support from the arts and collaborations with artists, UnLocal's donor base continues to expand, which enables us to raise a substantial amount of funding each year for our vital work defending immigrant communities in New York City.



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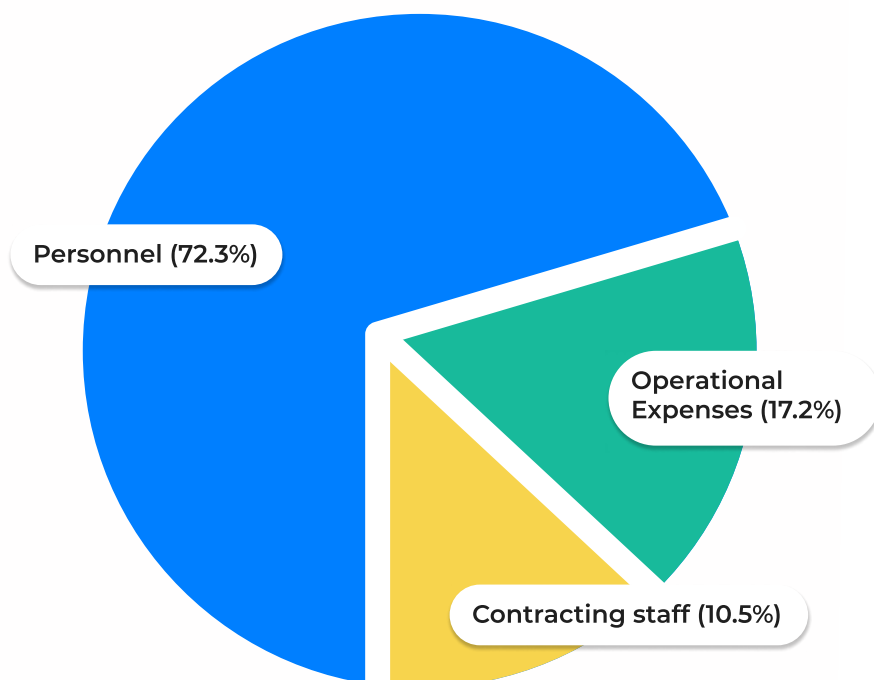
# FY 2020 Expenses

UnLocal believes NYC immigrant communities deserve access to free and high quality legal services. In order to provide these services, UnLocal raises funds to pay our in-house staff and for general operating expenses to accomplish our work.

● **Personnel:** Personnel includes staff salaries, fringe benefits, and payroll.

● **Contracting staff :** Contracting independent contractors we hire to assist UnLocal with our work.

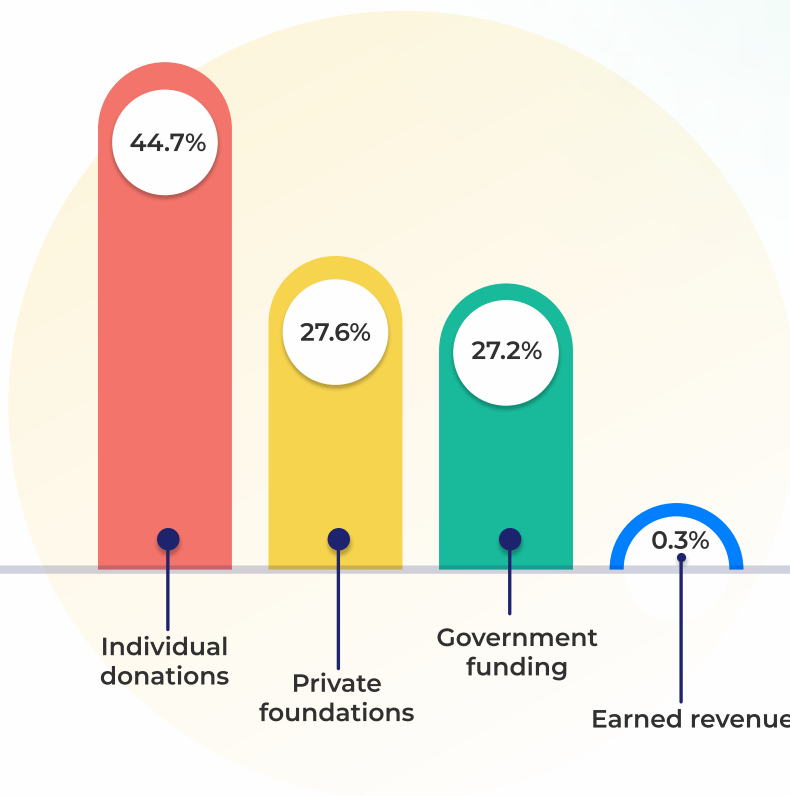
● **Operational Expenses:** Operational expenses include training for staff, shipping and mailing case files, research on cases, translation services for clients, and office expenses.



05

## Funding Sources

In 2020, UnLocal's funding consisted of individual donations, government funding, private foundations and earned revenue.



# 06

## Funders

UnLocal is grateful for all the support we receive from our donors, partner organizations, and community members. We cannot accomplish our work without your support. Thank you to everyone who contributed to our mission in 2020. We hope to continue making a difference with your help in 2021:

American Bar Endowment \$ 20,000	New York City Council \$ 5,000	Bruce and Nancy Newberg \$ 10,000
Joyce and Irving Goldman Family Foundation \$ 20,000	Brian A. McCarthy Foundation \$ 30,000	Brooklyn Community Foundation \$ 10,000
New York Community Trust \$ 25,000	Braitmayer Foundation \$ 17,500	Equal Justice Works \$ 50,000
New York University Community Fund \$ 2,000	Immigrant Justice Corps \$ 218,778	Lower East Side People's FCU \$ 500
Pinkerton Foundation \$ 50,000	New York Bar Foundation \$ 20,000	New York Immigration Coalition \$ 101,000
	NYC Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA) \$ 80,000	Office for New Americans (ONA) \$ 114,136