

## **Elena's Light Legal Advocacy**

Following the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan 2021, Elena's Light has developed and intensified advocacy efforts in the legal realm to address the influx of refugees who desperately need assistance. We have advanced three main initiatives:

### 1. Know Your Rights Series

In February 2022, we developed and hosted a Know Your Rights on Afghan Humanitarian Parole with local immigration lawyers and legal aid organizations. In August 2022, we hosted the [second KYR](#) session on immigration options for Afghans, including TPS, Asylum, SIV, and more. Both panels were led by immigration lawyers and experts in the field. These presentations have reached hundreds of attendees. Here is a link to [KYR 1](#) and [KYR 2](#).

### 2. Developing a local pro-bono infrastructure

Elena's Light is collaborating with other New Haven organizations to develop a pro-bono infrastructure that can respond to the overwhelming need for legal representation among Afghan newcomers. As a result of the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, there has been an increase in refugees who haven't been able to access legal representation, especially in the state of CT. Representatives from legal and immigrant justice organizations in the Greater New Haven area are partnering to address these needs, including Elena's Light, Quinnipiac Law, IRIS, CIRI, NHLAA, Cohen and Wolf, P.C., and more. These representatives are coming together to create a pro-bono committee of immigration lawyers, who will assist Afghan clients file for asylum among other things.

Elena's Light legal advocacy team is spearheading the Volunteer Recruitment efforts, including interpretation, to build this program.

### 3. Legislative Advocacy

Elena's Light is increasingly becoming involved in legislative advocacy for refugee rights. Recently, we met with Senator Murphy's team to urge support for the Afghan Adjustment Act, increasing the FY23 refugee admissions goal, among other [policy requests](#). We are in the process of building local, state, and national partnerships in an effort to advance legislation that protect and benefit refugees.

Our advocacy projects involve collaborations with many organizations including:

- Quinnipiac Law
- Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services (IRIS)
- Connecticut Institute for Refugees and Immigrants (CIRI)
- New Haven Legal Assistance Association
- Cohen and Wolf
- HIAS Pennsylvania
- Building One Community
- We Are All America