

2025 IMPACT REPORT

Latin American Legal Defense and Education Fund



LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



As the Executive Director of LALDEF, it is my pleasure to present you with our 2025 Impact Report. While 2025 has brought historic challenges for the immigrant community, we have never been more certain that our organization was made for this moment.

Since it first opened its doors in 2004, LALDEF has been a champion for immigrant rights and integration. As immigration policies and enforcement continue to evolve, LALDEF is proud to stay the course, providing the same support and dignified service that our clients have come to expect from us for over 20 years. It is a privilege to share the moments and milestones that made up our 2025, and we hope you will continue to stand with us in the months and years ahead.

Cecy Jimenez-Weeast, Executive Director

LETTER FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

As the Board President of LALDEF, it is a great honor for me to present to you our 2025 Impact Report. Despite rising challenges in the immigrant community, LALDEF has stood strong against the current, providing a lifeline to Mercer County's low-income immigrant community when it is needed most. From education to legal support, youth mentoring, client advocacy, and more, LALDEF provides a crucially needed pathway to citizenship, stability, and ultimately, self-reliance.

As I reflect on 2025, I am overwhelmed with gratitude for our supporters, partners, and allies who continue to make our mission a reality. Thank you for standing alongside us, and we look forward to sharing more about the work you made possible in the report ahead.

Sasa Olessi Montaña, President



2025 HIGHLIGHTS

STAYING THE COURSE

One of LALDEF's proudest accomplishments this past year was the rollout of our **2025–2028 Strategic Plan**. Rooted in both our mission and the realities of the current moment, this plan provides LALDEF with a concrete pathway to sustainable, goal-oriented growth.

This plan was built upon a three-tiered approach in which we aspire to achieve the following:



1. **Expand Legal Services:**

Over the next three years, LALDEF plans to strategically grow its Legal Services team. We will continue to steward private fundraising efforts to support staff sustainability and development.

2. **Reach Out with Intention:**

LALDEF's Board of Trustees is dedicated to intentional community outreach. We will foster new partnerships, create awareness, and develop relationships with key stakeholders in our region.

3. **Stay the Course:**

In a rapidly changing political landscape, LALDEF recognizes that its greatest strength is stability. Despite ongoing challenges as a result of increasing immigration enforcement, LALDEF remains dedicated to providing the same quality, wrap-around support that our community has relied upon for over 20 years.

To learn more about our strategic plan, please visit the "About Us" section on our website, www.laldef.com.

LEGAL SERVICES

LALDEF's Immigration Legal Services department is dedicated to supporting immigrants in Mercer County as they navigate the pathway to permanent status in the United States. Amidst a rapidly-changing immigration client, LALDEF remains committed to ensuring that the most vulnerable members of our community know their rights and can access quality, low-cost legal services.



We cover...

- Filing of applications for naturalization and citizenship
- Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)
- Adjustment of status
- Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) provisions
- U Visas for victims of crimes
- T Visas for human trafficking victims
- Renewals of green cards and work permits
- Temporary Protected Status (TPS)
- Special Immigrant Juveniles (SIJ)

In 2025, we assisted with

316
immigration
legal cases

In 2025, we
provided

302

FUTURO

YOUTH MENTORING PROGRAM

LALDEF's FUTURO initiative is a high-impact youth mentoring program for first- and second-generation immigrant high school students. FUTURO provides students with academic support, SAT preparation, college application assistance, mentoring, social support, and community service opportunities.



FUTURO students visiting Princeton University

INTENDED MAJORS INCLUDE

- Nursing
- Business
- Political Science
- Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering
- Computer Science
- Communications
- Media and Communications
- Electrical Engineering
- Architecture
- Psychology
- English
- Mechanical Engineering
- Advertising and Graphic Design
- Culinary Arts

Number of clients/students served throughout the year:

162

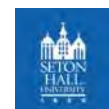
Amount awarded in financial aid, grants, and scholarships:

\$813,299

Total Graduates for the class of 2025

22

COLLEGES INCLUDE



FUTURO

YOUTH MENTORING PROGRAM



STUDENT STORY...

"I am from Guatemala and have been in Lawrenceville for 14 years. I learned about LALDEF a couple of years ago when they started processing IDs for immigrants. I believe it is an organization that greatly assists families who immigrate to this country in search of a better life and provides our children with the opportunity to understand that they can achieve more. It teaches them that there are many paths to success. I am very grateful for the opportunity you have given my daughter and all these children who seek to succeed in life as professionals."

- FUTURO Familia,
parent of Class of 2025 scholar

"I am currently a 12th grader [..], my family is from Ecuador, and I was raised in New Jersey. I first heard about FUTURO through my older brother, who was part of the program and encouraged me to join. Being part of FUTURO has been an amazing experience. It's guided me through the challenges of college admissions and helped me feel more prepared for what's ahead. What's meant the most to me is the community—being surrounded by others who share similar backgrounds and goals has been incredibly motivating and comforting. I'm truly grateful for the support and sense of belonging that FUTURO has given me."

- FUTURO Class of 2026 student

PARENT TESTIMONIAL...

MERCER COUNTY AREA COMMUNITY ID CARDS



The Mercer County Community ID program was launched in 2011 through the **One Community Coalition** after identifying the many obstacles that members of our community without identification faced. LALDEF partners with organizations such as the **Trenton Area Soup Kitchen (TASK)**, the **Rescue Mission of Trenton**, and the **Trenton Psychiatric Hospital** to provide IDs to any underserved population in need of identification.

ID recipients are connected with **our Client Advocates, who provide personalized guidance in navigating healthcare, education, and other supportive programs and resources** that advance their personal and family well-being.

The Community ID program offers residents of Mercer County the opportunity to identify themselves, prove their address, and have an emergency contact on file at all times.

The community ID cards provide access to services at locations such as:

- **Municipal and social service agencies**
- **Schools**
- **Clinics**
- **Food pantries**
- **Parks**
- **Post offices**
- **Libraries**



In 2025, LALDEF issued **1,882 Mercer County Community IDs**, serving as a trusted gateway for individuals to access vital services.

PROMOTING EQUITABLE HEALTHCARE

LALDEF is committed to providing low-income immigrants in Mercer County, NJ with equitable, culturally and linguistically accessible healthcare resources. Through our free healthcare initiatives, we have been able to combat the barriers, fears, and misinformation which has historically led to poorer health outcomes for the Latino community, including higher mortality rates.

In 2025, LALDEF hosted its annual Hispanic Heritage Month Wellness and Resource Fair, as well as 220 vision screenings, 66 eyeglass vouchers, 53 mammograms, and 25 vaccinations.



In 2025, we facilitated

53

MAMMOGRAMS

220

VISION SCREENINGS

66

EYEGLOSS VOUCHERS

25

VACCINATIONS

ONGOING OPPORTUNITIES TO STAY CONNECTED WITH OUR COMMUNITY



LALDEF Staff at the Hispanic Heritage Month Health Fair on October 4, 2025.

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH HEALTH FAIR

In celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month, LALDEF hosted its fourth annual **Hispanic Heritage Resource and Wellness Fair** on October 4th, 2025 at 120 East State Street in Downtown Trenton. At the event, members of the community had the opportunity to enjoy a day of health, resources, music, and more, with over 16 collaborating partners present to share more about the many available resources in our area.

Featured elements of the Fair included free eye screenings, A1C screenings, and a free food bag courtesy of **Arm in Arm**.

ACCESS TO SERVICES

MAMMOGRAM EXTRAVAGANZA EVENT

In 2025, LALDEF teamed up with the Trenton Health Team's NJCEED program to provide semi-annual mammogram screenings.

These events provided free mammograms to 53 women who reported a family history of breast cancer or who were ages 40 years and older.

At the event, clients also had the opportunity to connect with healthcare providers to schedule other types of cancer screenings.



Mammogram Van outside LALDEF's headquarters

FREE EYE SCREENINGS

LALDEF, in collaboration with **Project BEST**, continued its free eye screening program throughout 2025. This program provides community members with free eye exams; we have also been able to provide referrals to free glasses for those in need of financial assistance. **This year, 220 community members participated in free eye screenings at LALDEF's headquarters, and 66 individuals were referred for free eyeglasses.** This program is offered on the last Monday of each month.

CLIENT ADVOCACY



LALDEF's Client Advocates provide our community with hands-on assistance to navigate a variety of concerns, including identification, unemployment, food stamps, housing, and other vital social services.

184

Translations of birth certificates, identification documents, and more:

252

Cases in which Client Advocates provided support with a variety of concerns, including identification, health insurance, unemployment, food stamps, housing, and other vital social services.

90

Notarizations of documents to facilitate access to driver's licenses in our community:

ADULT EDUCATION

LALDEF's Adult Education program enhances client quality of life by providing empowerment through education. Our expansive catalogue of course offerings equips our clients with greater knowledge of the English language, leading to improved outcomes in education, employment, and more. Our GED courses play a key role in advancing and furthering client education, while our citizenship courses equip future citizens with the knowledge and skills needed to pass the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) citizenship exam.

COURSE OFFERINGS

- English as a Second Language (ESL) courses
- General Educational Development (GED) preparation
- Citizenship exam preparation

In 2025, we served

436

clients through our
Adult Education
Program



"I am from Venezuela, and I moved to the USA in 2020. I did not speak English. I arrived in New Jersey in 2022 and I have one year studying English. I live with my brother here in New Jersey.

My experience with LALDEF has been positive. ESL classes have helped me. I can express myself better and I understand more. I felt welcome at LALDEF and the organization [is] helping people like me."

- LALDEF Level 2 ESL Student, in his own words

LATINAS UNIDAS PROGRAM



LALDEF's Latinas Unidas program is a support group for Latina women in the Mercer County community. Latinas Unidas members have the opportunity to share and learn about a number of topics relevant to women today, including healthcare, education, financial literacy, and more. In addition to hands-on workshops and educational opportunities, the Latinas Unidas program provides participants with a forum to share resources, goals, and dreams with a community of supportive, like-minded women.

2025 Workshops

- **Healthy Relationships**
(Planned Parenthood) - January 2025
- **Better Financial Habits**
(Bank of America) - February 2025
- **Cervical Cancer Presentation**
(Planned Parenthood) - March 2025
- **Nutrition and Colorectal Cancer**
(Crossroads 4 Hope) - April 2025
- **Art Therapy** (LALDEF) - May 2025
- **Mental Illness** (NAMI Mercer) - June 2025
- **Zumba Class** (LALDEF) - July 2025
- **Beginner Entrepreneurs**
(Rising Tide Capital) - August 2025
- **Teenage Cyber Security Awareness**
(Princeton Public Library) - September 2025
- **Understanding Menopause and Its Changes**
(Planned Parenthood) - October 2025
- **Know your Rights**
(LALDEF) - November 2025
- **Lotería Entre Mujeres:
Health, Strength, and Community**
(Planned Parenthood) - December 2025



OUR 90% / 10% PROMISE

Income

Overall Budget: \$850,000

Revenue: Grant funding
Private donations
Program Fees

Expenses:

Administrative: 10%

**Mission Programs
& Services:** 90%

We are proud to share that approximately **90% of our funding goes directly toward programs and services**, with just 10% supporting essential administrative and operational costs. This commitment to **maximizing impact** is made possible by the generosity of our committed donors, the unwavering dedication of our volunteers, and the care and efficiency of our staff.

We remain deeply committed to responsible stewardship and financial transparency. If you would like additional details, we welcome you to reach out to us directly at development@laldef.org for more information.

OUR SUPPORTERS

INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTORS

\$5,000+

Cathy Schaefer Batterman & Eric Batterman
Christopher Eisgruber Household
Patricia Fernandez-Kelly & Alejandro Portes
Ellen & Thomas Petrone
Trenton Meeting of Friends

\$1,000 - \$4,999

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\$500 - \$999

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John Vadnais Household

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Sybill Stokes Estate

Ann & Mitsuru Yasuhara Estate

OUR SUPPORTERS

INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTORS

Under \$500

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Donors for the last 13 months as of January 26th, 2025. If we have neglected to include your name or if we have inadvertently misspelled your name, please accept our sincerest apologies and contact our Director of Development and Communications, Angelica Stern, at angelica.stern@laldef.org in order to have this corrected.

We greatly appreciate your support!

OUR SUPPORTERS



CARE Grant
2024-2025



CENTER FOR HISPANIC POLICY RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT



I AM TRENTON | FUNDACIÓN COMUNITARIA
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION | YO SOY TRENTON



LALDEF relies on the generosity of many institutional donors and individual supporters like you to support our work. LALDEF currently accepts donations of donor-advised funds, IRA contributions, checks, cash, donations of stock, and more.

To find out more, please visit www.laldef.org/donate.

LALDEF TEAM

OUR KEY STAFF

Cecy Jimenez-Weeast, Executive Director

Caty Dominguez, Community Outreach Coordinator

Yessenia Lopez, Office Manager

Lorena Morales, Adult Education Coordinator

Griselda Pachuca-Garcia, FUTURO Coordinator

Angelica Stern, Director of Development and Communications

OUR BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Cynthia Martinez, Trustee



LALDEF

Founded in 2004, the **Latin American Legal Defense and Education Fund (LALDEF)** promotes the rights of all immigrants (with a focus on the Latin American community in the Mercer County area); facilitates access to health care, education and legal representation; advocates for the integration of immigrants; and fosters inter-cultural communication to strengthen our communities.

The organization's programs fall into two key areas:

- (1) Immigration legal services and
- (2) community outreach and education, which includes client advocacy, adult education, youth mentoring and development, and more.



CONTACT US

LATIN AMERICAN LEGAL DEFENSE &
EDUCATION FUND

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Trenton, NJ 08611

(609) 688-0881 | info@laldef.org | laldef.org

Come visit us in Princeton each Tuesday from 1:00 pm to 3:30 pm at Nassau Presbyterian Church and the Princeton Library from 4 pm to 6:30 pm.



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