

2025 OCJF Legal Empowerment Impact Report



1. Executive Summary

In 2025, Orange County Justice Fund's (OCJF) Legal Empowerment Program (LEP) operated amid heightened immigration enforcement, widespread misinformation, and frequent policy and litigation changes. As uncertainty increased, demand for accurate, accessible legal information grew, requiring OCJF to remain responsive while maintaining consistency and trust.

LEP functioned as preventative legal infrastructure, supporting immigrant and refugee communities by providing legal education, preparation, and navigation before individuals entered legal crisis. As enforcement patterns and policy guidance shifted, OCJF updated educational content and strengthened internal systems to sustain reliable service delivery in an unstable legal environment.

2025 Program Snapshot

83

Events

8,239

People Reached

89

Consultations

36

Partners

11

Cities

2. Who We Serve & Where We Work

OCJF's Legal Empowerment Program serves immigrant and refugee communities across Orange County through trusted, community-based partnerships across multiple sectors.

Programming is delivered in multiple languages, including **Spanish, English, Vietnamese, and Korean**, and is hosted in accessible community settings such as schools, unions, faith-based institutions, family resource centers, day laborer centers, community organizations, and neighborhood spaces.

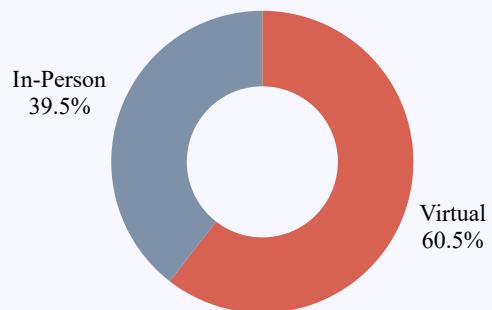
By embedding legal education and navigation support within trusted community spaces, LEP prioritizes upstream engagement—helping residents prepare for enforcement encounters, avoid exploitation, and access accurate information before harm occurs.



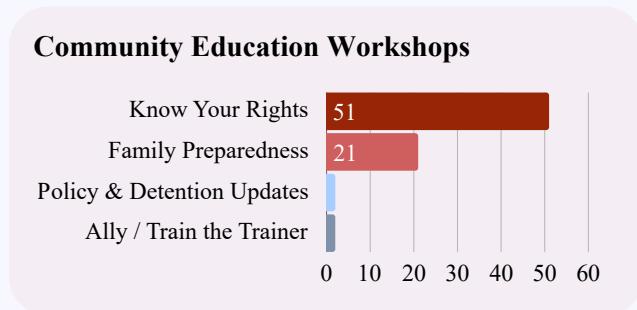
3. Program Activity & Delivery Model

In 2025, OCJF delivered **81 community education workshops**, averaging approximately **7 workshops per month** from mid-January through the end of November

Programming was delivered through multiple formats to maximize accessibility.



Workshops by Topic



Workshop topics reflected evolving community needs and enforcement realities. The most frequently delivered topics included:

Nearly all workshops were co-hosted with partner organizations, underscoring LEP's reliance on and investment in community collaboration as a core delivery strategy.

4. Community Education Reach & Language Access

Across all workshops, LEP reached **8,239 total attendees**, with an average attendance of **102 participants per workshop**.

To ensure accessibility and meaningful participation:

- **45 workshops included interpretation services**
- Programming was delivered primarily in **Spanish and English**, with additional language access provided as needed based on community requests and partner capacity.

The scale of attendance and sustained participation reflects both heightened community demand the trust OCJF has built through consistent, accurate, and responsive community-based programming.



OCJF staff recognized by the Santa Ana City Council for community-based legal education efforts.

5. Legal Clinics: Access to Legal Services

In addition to community education, OCJF hosted two general consultation legal clinics in 2025.

These clinics provided free, non-representational legal consultations with volunteer attorneys and DOJ-accredited representatives.

Clinic activity included:

95 appointments scheduled

89 clients served

100% appointment fill rate

6% no-show rate



Clinics were supported by:

14 volunteer attorneys and DOJ-accredited representatives

50+ non-legal volunteers, primarily coordinated through partnerships with unions and OCJF's volunteer network.

Common issue areas addressed during clinics included DACA-related questions, victim-based immigration relief, asylum matters, detention and family separation concerns, child-based relief inquiries, status maintenance, and general immigration legal guidance.

6. Legal & Enforcement Context

- Frequent immigration **policy changes and litigation-driven eligibility shifts**
- Increased **enforcement** activity across Orange County
- Widespread fear and confusion within immigrant communities
- Rapid spread of **misinformation**, often via social media

These conditions directly shaped LEP programming. Educational materials required frequent updates—often within days—and traditional rights education increasingly needed to be paired with real-time policy explanations and enforcement-specific guidance.

7. Public Education, Narrative & Movement Alignment

In addition to workshops and legal clinics, LEP supported broader public education and movement-aligned efforts related to immigration enforcement and policy changes.

Beyond Direct Services

LEP supported countywide understanding and coordination through:

- Creating public-facing materials such as **one-pagers, FAQs, and social media graphics**
- Participating in **press conferences, public meetings, podcasts, and coalition spaces**
- Collaborating with litigators and legal partners to **support class action litigation**, develop screening tools, and translate litigation developments into community-facing education



8. Illustrative Community Impact

Community feedback highlights how access to timely legal information translated into real-world outcomes during enforcement encounters.

Know Your Rights in Practice

A participant used a Know Your Rights card obtained through an OCJF workshop during an ICE encounter on a bus, resulting in no further questioning.

Preparedness Preventing Harm

After learning about enforcement rights through LEP programming, a community member closed their business when ICE arrived; enforcement eventually left the property without detaining employees.

These anonymized examples illustrate how preventative legal education can materially reduce harm by equipping individuals with practical, actionable knowledge at critical moments.

9. Methodology & Data Integrity

LEP data is drawn from a combination of internal workshop trackers, legal clinic summary reports, community interest and intake forms, evaluation tools, and staff documentation. Information is reviewed internally and compiled annually to support program oversight, planning, and accountability.

While LEP does not provide direct legal representation, OCJF maintains clear boundaries regarding service scope and reporting. Standardized data collection practices help ensure accuracy and consistency across activities, supporting transparent communication with community partners, funders, and the public.

10. Looking Ahead

As enforcement activity and policy uncertainty continue, OCJF anticipates sustained—and potentially increased—demand for legal empowerment programming.

Looking Ahead, LEP Will Focus On:

- Maintaining responsiveness to rapidly changing legal and enforcement conditions
- Strengthening staffing, volunteer coordination, and program infrastructure
- Continuing coordination with legal clinics, the Bond Fund, and advocacy partners

LEP will remain a core component of OCJF's broader community defense strategy, ensuring immigrant communities have the tools and information needed to navigate an increasingly complex legal landscape. Sustaining this work requires continued investment in staff capacity, language access, and community-based infrastructure that allows legal empowerment to function as preventative community defense.

