

# Communications Toolkit

Equal Justice Works  
Leadership & Development Training  
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# Communications Toolkit

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The following packet includes messaging, tip sheets and templates for Equal Justice Works Fellows to reference when speaking to the media, contacting the media and engaging on social media. We also include media highlights and analysis of articles that feature civil legal attorneys and the work they provide communities.

Included are:

- Messaging for Equal Justice Works and Civil Legal Aid
- Tips for Speaking to the Media
- Tips for Social Media
- Tips for Presentations
- Template Press Release
- Template Media Advisory
- Media Highlights and Analysis

Please note that the templates are given as an outline for you to update and add information about your project and the community you are serving.

The press release provided is designed for you to share with local media to promote the start of your project. Press releases should be shared with a targeted list of relevant media (reporters who cover stories on your issue area, legal reporters, courts reporters, local community reporters, etc.) when you have a newsworthy story or announcement to share with the press.

The media advisory template is structured to promote an informational session to recruit clients and share your project with the community. Media advisories typically promote specific events that media may be interested in covering or attending and that can be promoted publicly through calendar posts, community news boards and other local event listings.

These materials are a starting point for you to engage with media and the local community. Be sure to revise the materials to credit sponsors, host organizations and other relevant partners.

For additional questions, please contact Anita Adams at [aadams@equaljusticeworks.org](mailto:aadams@equaljusticeworks.org).

## Equal Justice Works Messaging

### **Equal Justice Works Messaging:**

- Equal Justice Works is an organization that funds lawyers who provide pro bono legal services to targeted communities.
- Equal Justice Works helps lawyers help communities.
- The Equal Justice Works Fellowships programs fund hundreds of public interest attorneys each year to close the justice gap on issues such as foreclosure, community economic development, immigration, civil rights, homelessness, access to healthcare, and domestic violence.

### **Message Diamond Example:**

1. I'm lucky enough to work as an Equal Justice Works Fellow and want to do all I can to help those facing fallout, such as eviction, from criminal cases.
2. For example, I was able to help an 85-year-old grandmother stay in her apartment by legally challenging the landlords' claims and showing that she was not responsible for her grandson's criminal charges.
3. I help those in jeopardy of losing their homes due to criminal cases and I can help those in your community.

**Topline Message for Civil Legal Aid:** Civil legal aid helps ensure fairness for all in the justice system, regardless of how much money you have.

### **Expanded Message:**

- Civil legal aid provides access to legal help for people to protect their livelihoods, their health, and their families. Civil legal aid makes it easier to access information — whether through easy-to-understand forms, including online forms; legal assistance or representation; and legal self-help centers — so people can know their rights.
- Civil legal aid also helps streamline the court system and cuts down on court costs. When we say the Pledge of Allegiance we close with “justice for all.” We need programs like civil legal aid to ensure that the very principle our founding fathers envisioned remains alive: justice for all, not the few who can afford it.

### **Additional Messaging and Talking Points**

**Civil legal aid helps ensure fairness for all in America's justice system, regardless of how much money you have.**

- Our civil justice system is facing a crisis. Millions of Americans cannot afford the legal help they need when facing life-changing situations, such as domestic violence, unlawful evictions, or the loss of veterans', health or disability benefits. They're left to navigate these complex legal situations on their own—and risk losing their families, homes and livelihoods in the process.
- Civil legal aid is critical to fulfilling our nation's promise of justice for all. It serves Americans of all backgrounds and ages, including those who face the toughest civil legal challenges: children, veterans, seniors, people with disabilities, and victims of domestic violence.

- Civil legal aid provides Americans with the legal tools they need to protect their families, homes and health.

**Civil legal aid leads the legal profession when it comes to innovations and new technology, making it easier for all Americans to access information and know their rights.**

- Creative programs, from easy-to-understand forms to legal self-help centers, are benefiting the civil justice system by making legal proceedings more accessible and efficient for all.

**Civil legal aid provides important return on investment for taxpayers, businesses and communities.**

- A lack of access to justice for some is a burden to all. Strengthening civil legal aid saves taxpayers and businesses money, restores communities and boosts local economies.
- Civil legal aid helps streamline the court system by fostering efficiency, reducing the number of unnecessary lawsuits and cutting down on court costs and staff overtime.
- Investing in civil legal aid saves money in the long run.

**What are examples of civil legal aid services?**

Civil legal aid provides:

- Easy-to-understand forms, including online forms, that people can use in civil legal proceedings.
- Legal assistance, including legal self-help centers, so people can know their rights.
- Legal representation to those who cannot afford it — because justice should not depend on how much money you have.

**Civil legal aid helps level the playing field.**

- Civil legal aid is one of the best strategies we have to tackle inequality and poverty.

# Tips for Successful Media Interviews

## 1. This is YOUR interview, NOT the reporter's

If you get a call from the media, always ask about the topic, angle, deadline and who else is being interviewed for the piece. Take control of the interview from the outset.

## 2. Develop your message diamond



1. Respond to the Question, Hit Your Message
2. Expand On Your Message – Provide An Example
3. Hit Your Message Again in a Slightly Different Way

## 3. Practice the interview

Find someone to throw tough questions at you. Prepare your response and how best to pivot to your message.

## 4. Avoid legal talk and industry jargon

Run your answers by someone from outside the legal field, and try to speak in terms everyone will understand.

## 5. Stories are better than statistics

A personalized anecdote is much more effective and memorable than numbers and percentages.

## 6. Less is more

Most taped sound bites are only 10-15 seconds long, and printed quotes are typically one sentence. Do not give the reporter too much information or latitude to define *your* message.

## 7. Play it cool

If asked a tough question, stay calm, be confident and bridge to your message. Remember, it's the reporter's job, so you shouldn't take it personally.

## 8. Never answer hypothetical questions

The reporter could use your response to make you look like you are predicting something that may not occur. React to an open-ended question by pivoting to your prepared answer.

## 9. Check interview background and know how to introduce yourself

Serve as a resource to media and introduce yourself as an Equal Justice Works Fellow.

## 10. Be Yourself

Smile, be friendly and informative. Build relationships with the media that can promote your program.

**11. Be a Resource for Media**

Be available for comment and to provide background knowledge to reporters even if you're not included in the story.

**12. Know Your Audience**

Tailor your responses to the outlet and the audiences it reaches. Be mindful about the reporter's and his or her audience's existing level of knowledge of your issues.

**13. Know to Whom You're Talking**

If you're speaking with a print journalist, review his or her previous stories. If you're appearing on television or radio, watch a past segment to get a sense of the show's tone and format.

**14. Write Down Your Headline**

Before every interview, write down the headline you hope will result from your interview. This will help you focus on the one thing you want to get across to the reporter.

## Social Media Tips

- 1. Ensure posts and profile content is appropriate**  
Don't comment or post anything that you would not feel comfortable sharing with your boss, supervisor or client.
- 2. Be professional at all times on social media**  
Don't post pictures or share links that are unprofessional or that could be offensive to others. Un-tag yourself or ask friends to remove photos that are not appropriate.
- 3. Re-read before posting**  
Double check your posts to ensure they are free of grammatical errors and typos and clearly communicate what you are trying to say.
- 4. Create a unified brand on all platforms**  
Define your area of expertise and ensure that you brand yourself and your profiles accordingly with concise profile descriptions of who you are, what you do and what your expertise is.
- 5. Be yourself**  
Social media isn't your firm's website. You can show your personality online, just ensure that your distinct voice is professional.
- 6. Keep profiles up-to-date**  
Keep your LinkedIn profile up-to-date with current job positions and professional associations. Join groups that relate to your project or profession.
- 7. Get Connected**  
Utilize the professional side of Facebook and Twitter by following and retweeting influencers in your community, issue area, legal community and local media as well as those who you meet at networking events and conferences.
- 8. Be a source**  
Use social media channels to provide information to your followers and friends. Share relevant information about your project issue area, as well as interesting legal news to establish yourself as a resource to your peers and the media.
- 9. Avoid Discussing Cases**  
Do not reference or provide details on any cases that you are working on. It is important to avoid mentioning recent wins or favorable judgments to maintain ethical standards.
- 10. Be Aware of the Legal Ethics Rules on Social Media**  
[The American Bar Association provides tips](#) on how to navigate social media and maintain ethical standards.

# Presentation Tips

## 1. Engage, Entertain and Educate

Every presentation is an opportunity to teach an audience, but they'll only learn if they are engaged in the presentation. Keep the 3 E's in mind when designing and delivering a presentation.

## 2. Include Compelling Stories

Compelling stories help engage, educate and entertain all types of learners.

## 3. Using Stats, Charts and Data

Use statistics and figures to BACK UP your thesis instead of figures BEING the thesis.

## 4. What's Your Headline?

Don't bury the lead. Say up front what your presentation will set out to prove and prove your thesis in the body of the presentation.

## 5. Use the Presentation Diamond

1. Tell them the **ONE** thing you want them to take away
2. Provide supporting points and examples
3. Remind them about the **ONE** thing you want them to take away



## 6. The Art of Powerpoint

Powerpoint is not a script. Use it as a guide, but don't include too much text or charts and graphs.

## 7. Connect with the Audience

Be aware of non verbal communications. Make eye contact with your audience. Think about how you can interact with your audience.

## 8. Step away from the Podium

The podium can be a barrier between you and your audience. Step away from it to better connect.

## 9. Practice, Practice, Practice

Learn how you best practice for a presentation. Do you need your script written out, in an outline or in bullets?

## 10. Dealing with Nerves

Nerves are natural. Do some quick exercises before you begin a presentation to get rid of some of the adrenalin. Deliberate breathing can help you slow down if you find that you are racing through a presentation.



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Media Contact:**

[Name]  
Equal Justice Works Fellow [or other title]  
[Phone]  
[Email]

**\*\*\*MEDIA ADVISORY\*\*\***

**Free Legal Services Available for [Target Community]**  
*Equal Justice Works Fellow Offers Pro Bono Legal Work for those with  
[Additional client-specific details]*

**LOCATION – Month XX, 2015** — Free legal services are available through [Project Name], an initiative by Equal Justice Works Fellow [Fellow Name]. [Project name] provides legal advice and representation to [client description] seeking counsel on [specifics on what legal services are available]. [Project Name] is in partnership with local nonprofit [host organization] and is funded by [sponsor name].

For those interested in learning more, an informational session will be held for potential clients at [Location]. For additional information about the program, please contact/visit [**Contact information**].

**WHAT:** [Brief description of the event]

**WHERE:** [Location Name]  
[Address]  
[Additional instructions]

**WHEN:** [Date]  
[Time]

*Note to media: Media interested in learning more about the [Project Name] or interviewing [Fellow’s Name], please contact [Name] at [phone] or [Email].*

###

**About Equal Justice Works**

Equal Justice Works is the national leader in creating public interest opportunities for law students and lawyers. Collaborating with the nation’s leading law schools, law firms, corporate legal departments, and nonprofit organizations. Equal Justice Works offers a continuum of opportunities that provide the training and skills that enable attorneys to provide effective representation to underserved communities and causes. Equal Justice Works is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. For additional information about Equal Justice Works, please visit <http://www.equaljusticeworks.org>.





**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Media Contact:**

[Name]  
Equal Justice Works Fellow [or other title]  
[Phone]  
[Email]

**Legal Fellowship Awarded to [Local] Attorney at [Host Organization]**  
*Equal Justice Works Fellowship Provides Funding for Attorney to Provide Pro Bono Legal Services to Local Community*

**LOCATION – Month XX, 2015** — Equal Justice Works, the national leader in creating public interest opportunities for lawyers, today announced that [Fellow Name] will serve as an [Equal Justice Works Fellow/correct title] at [host organization] in [City, State]. [Last name] will provide free legal services to [community group] through the [Project Name].

[Project Name], will allow [last name] to help provide pro bono legal counsel to people facing [project issue areas & and details on the project]. This project is being funded by the [sponsor name].

“Quote from fellow about the goals of the project and why you are excited to serve this specific community,” said [fellow name].

[Last name] is a graduate of [law school]. He/she previously served as [past relevant experience], and brings a knowledge of [issue area specifics].

“Quote from EJW representative / sponsor contact / host organization,” said [representative name].

For additional information about the program, please contact/visit [**Contact information**].

###

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## Media Highlights and Analysis

### [Texas rebuff of immigrant IDs leaves U.S.-born kids without proof of birth](#)

USA Today

Rick Jervis

August 17, 2015

DALLAS — For decades, immigrant moms in Texas could present county clerk's with a special ID — known as a matrícula consular — issued by the Mexican consulates throughout Texas to get birth certificates for their U.S.-born children.

But a recent about-face by state health officials and local clerk's offices on that policy has left dozens of women without the proper proof that their children are U.S. citizens, immigration attorneys said. And with school starting later this month, some of those families fear the lack of documentation could keep their children out of school.

In South Texas, 17 immigrant families have filed a federal lawsuit against the state, claiming their rights under U.S. law have been violated.

"A birth certificate is a right," said Miguel Solis, a trustee with the Dallas Independent School District. "The state is essentially taking away the one tool undocumented parents have to access that right."

Texas faced a border crisis last year where thousands of unaccompanied minors illegally crossed the state's southern border with Mexico, overwhelming federal facilities, and some immigrant advocates say the sudden, widespread rejection of the consular ID is fallout from that.

While a recent, last-minute action by the Dallas Independent School Board and the Dallas County Clerk's Office to expand the types of acceptable student enrollment documents might avert problems there, immigrant rights advocates and school officials said they fear a crisis still looms.

State law allows the use of a foreign ID if the mother to a U.S.-born child lacks a driver's license, passport or other U.S.-issued identification. The Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution states anyone born in the United States is a U.S. citizen.

While the state does not dispute their citizenship, it is requiring other forms of ID from parents to issue the birth certificates. In 2008, the Texas Department of State Health Services advised local clerk's offices across Texas that the matrícula consular would no longer be accepted because of security concerns. The FBI and Homeland Security, the memo said, have concluded that the consular IDs "are not a reliable form of identification."

In a statement, DSHS said it never accepted the matrícula consular as a verifiable ID — an assertion challenged by immigration attorneys — and the state is responsible for verifying identities.

"When it comes to obtaining a copy of a birth certificate, DSHS, county clerks and local registrars have a duty to verify the requestor's identity in order to protect the sensitive personal information contained on a birth certificate," the statement said. "The requirement that a requestor show valid identification also protects against fraud and identity theft."

Local registrars continued accepting the ID, however, said Jennifer Harbury, a lawyer with Texas RioGrande Legal Aid. But in the past few months, with the state still reeling from last year's border crisis, many local registrars and clerk's offices began declining the matricula consular, she said. The local offices also stopped taking IDs from the consulates of Central American countries, such as Honduras and Guatemala, leaving scores of women without access to their children's birth certificates, she said. Her office became inundated with phone calls from immigrant mothers whose U.S.-born children had no proof of their citizenry, she said.

In addition to trouble enrolling their children in school, these mothers also face difficulty claiming their children as their own if stopped by immigration officials, she said. Last month, Harbury helped the 17 families file a lawsuit in U.S. District Court against the state. Another 10 families will join them, she said.

"It's all over the state," Harbury said. "People are calling me from Del Rio, Laredo, El Paso. It's just a huge problem."

The trouble in Dallas began June 1 when Dallas County announced it would stop issuing birth certificates for children whose parents had only a foreign consular ID as identification. That touched off a storm of concern from school and county officials that children without proper ID would not be able to sign up for school. County Judge Clay Jenkins met with school board and county clerk officials to make sure all children would be enrolled.

"It is a real problem, clearly," Jenkins said. "Don't know how big of a problem it is here, but we don't want it to be a problem."

School district officials released statements saying they would not turn away any student, regardless of their immigrant status or their parents' IDs. All children will be enrolled, and parents have 30 days to produce ID, including the matricula consular, said André Riley, a school district spokesman.

Dallas appears to have avoided any crisis related to school enrollment, said Solis, the district trustee. But the matricula issue still must be resolved, he said.

"It's an issue the state needs to talk about and address," Solis said. "It's placing too many children in a difficult position."

**Analysis:** This is a great example of how a newsmaker can provide the informational background the reporter needs to write a complete story. While Harbury had only one quote, the information she offered to the reporter made it into the story as context. We often talk about the importance of being a source for a reporter to build relationships. This article is a great example of how to provide the information a reporter needs to help generate coverage.

## Students May Find Paths to Citizenship With New Legal Aid

Jefferson Public Radio

Zaidee Staveley

July 27, 2015

The University of California is the first public university in the United States to hire full-time attorneys to provide legal aid to its undocumented students and their families. Though the new legal center is based at the UC Davis Law School, the attorneys see students at campuses across California.

At their weekly meeting, the University of California's brand-new immigration attorneys share notes on how to reach the estimated 2,000 UC students who either lack legal immigration documents or have only temporary protection from deportation.

"I sent out an email to my student listserv with a message in caps and bold like, 'If your DACA is going to expire anytime in the summer or fall ... please let me know ASAP,'" says attorney Habiba Simjee, who is participating in the meeting by phone from UC Santa Barbara. She's referring to [Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals](#), a two-year protection for young people who came to the United States illegally as children.

The University of California is the first public university in the country to start a legal center on this level, with full-time attorneys to provide legal aid to undocumented students and their families.

The UC Undocumented Legal Services Center is based at the [UC Davis School of Law](#), but the attorneys see students at six other campuses, specifically those that don't have their own law schools: Santa Cruz, Riverside, Merced, San Diego, Santa Barbara and San Francisco.

The attorneys say they've helped more than 100 students since the center opened in November.

Some students need guidance to apply for the DACA program or renew it. Many students who already have that protection are seeking special permission to leave the country in order to study abroad.

UC San Diego ethnic studies and public health student Alexis Buz was one of them. He applied to go to Vietnam for a five-week course this summer.

"I'll also be researching and learning at a clinic that treats children in Vietnam who were born with defects due to exposure to Agent Orange," says Buz. "Ultimately, this will also give me the patient exposure, the knowledge and the cultural competency for when I want to apply for medical school."

Buz was born in Mexico, but he's been in the U.S. since he was 2. He says the free legal help from the Undocumented Legal Services Center went beyond his foreign study program. Perhaps even more importantly, the attorney who met with Buz in San Diego asked him a lot of questions about his family history.

"As we were discussing my family's dynamic, there were several things I realized and we realized," says Buz. "There would be a way for me to get an adjustment of status, which means I can probably, if things work out, get residency in the next few years."

This is a huge deal. Most undocumented immigrants in the U.S. don't have a

pathway to permanent legalization under current law. But as many as one in four young people can find a way — if they're able to meet with an attorney, says legal center director Maria Blanco.

"There's a potential there that doesn't get uncovered unless you really screen carefully," says Blanco.

One of those potentials is a [U visa, for victims of violent crime](#) who cooperate with police.

"We were surprised how many of our students were victims of violent crimes," says Blanco. "[But] a lot of students come from high-crime neighborhoods, which makes sense when you think about it."

The UC lawyers can also help students' parents, brothers and sisters with immigration matters. Blanco says the idea behind the legal services is to help undocumented students — and those with undocumented family members — to stay in school.

"When you help them emotionally, they do better academically as well," she says. "Just the stress of being in fear of their deportation, but also their families being at risk. Because of the stress, the students often stop and start. They drop out, then they come back. And some don't come back."

Not everyone agrees with the center's work. Student Claire Chiara is director of the [UC Berkeley College Republicans](#). She says if the university is going to provide legal services, they should be for all students.

"Students could get legal help for anything ranging from, my gosh, a divorce they're going through, to fighting any form of trial they might appear in," says Chiara. "So I think this legal aid for undocumented students is really an issue because it doesn't represent the entire student body."

UC President Janet Napolitano disagrees.

"Our undocumented students are in a special place, a unique place," says Napolitano. She funded the legal center as part of a \$5 million investment to support undocumented students. The money is from the President's Initiative Fund, which she is allowed to use to address needs around the UC system.

"It's the public policy of the state of California that they pay in-state tuition, that they qualify for financial aid. All we are doing is recognizing they are a special population," says Napolitano. "They have high needs. So if these students are going to be part of the UC family, and they are ... why not also do what we can to provide legal services?"

Napolitano says she wants universities in other states to follow the University of California's lead.

**Analysis:** Great feature on the work the legal center at UC Davis is doing. This is a strong piece that highlights many sides, includes quotes from the legal team and someone they help. We often talk about the value of what you do. The inclusion of the student who benefited from the legal services illustrates the value of what the legal team provides. Maria Blanco's quotes were strong and tight. They got to the point quickly and illustrated the need for student assistance.



## [Vermont Legal Aid sues over Reach-Up cuts for people on disability](#)

WCAX.com

Keith McGilvery

July 24, 2015

*Click on link to watch video*



Chris Curtis from Vermont Legal Aid.

A battle is brewing Friday between some of Vermont's neediest people and the state. It has to do with cuts to public assistance benefits. Backers of the suit say the cuts to Reach-Up are singling out families with disabilities.

Vermont Legal Aid is ready for battle.

"This lawsuit is hugely important to the lowest income Vermonters with disabilities," said

Friday, the nonprofit filed a class-action lawsuit against the state, fighting cuts to Reach-Up, a state public assistance program.

Curtis says a new Vermont law that counts monthly SSI income against Reach-Up benefits could be catastrophic, cutting \$125 a month from families.

"We're talking about housing, food, clothes on the backs of people who are living month to month on the very slimmest of margins," said Curtis.

A total of 860 Vermont households with disabled adult family members were recently notified their Reach-Up benefits will be cut Aug. 1.

"We know Reach-Up families are vulnerable that they don't have a lot of income available to them, but in fact with the SSI payments, these families do have more income at their disposal than other families on Reach-Up," said Ken Schatz, the commissioner of the Vermont Department for Children and Families.

Schatz declined an on-camera interview. He says other public assistance programs like LIHEAP and 3SquaresVT also look at SSI benefits when determining assistance and that the changes with Reach-Up were not done to punish folks with disabilities.

"That is not our approach at all, what we are trying to do is equalize the approach in terms of treatment of unearned income on households receiving benefits," said Schatz.

The move is saving the state \$1.6 million.

Vermont Legal Aid says the law is unconstitutional and discriminatory and that courts in Washington and West Virginia have issued injunctions to stop similar cuts.

"It's not fair, it's not right and we are going to fight it," said Curtis.

Schatz says the new formula will not impact children who receive SSI benefits.

We were told Governor Peter Shumlin was unavailable for comment Friday.

**Analysis:** We encourage everyone to watch the video that corresponds to this story. It is a powerful example of how stories are crafted with both sides getting an opportunity to respond. It also illustrates how sound bites need to be short and memorable when dealing with broadcast. We also see how a “no comment” or “declined an on-camera interview” resonates with viewers – not well. Chris Curtis was much more likeable. He identified the problem, showed how he is part of the solution and illustrated the value he brings to residents.

## California crackdown on Chinese immigrants alarms rights groups

**The Guardian**  
**Halima Kazem**  
**July 23, 2015**

Immigration officials in California are stepping up efforts to detain and deport Chinese nationals who have been convicted of felonies in the US but who China couldn't take back until now, rights groups and Chinese community advocates say.

The groups report that since early June, US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents have raided the homes of Chinese immigrants and detained dozens of people who were convicted of felonies decades ago.

"The people I spoke to who were recently detained by ICE had already served their time in prison for their offenses and most had been living as law-abiding citizens for more than 10 or 20 years," said Anoop Prasad, immigration attorney at the Asian Law Caucus, a San Francisco-based legal aid and civil rights advocacy serving low-income Asian Pacific American communities.

Prasad connects the apparent crackdown by ICE in California to talks in April between the Chinese minister of public security, Guo Shengkun, and the US secretary of homeland security, Jeh Johnson, which resulted in a cooperation agreement "to improve information sharing on repatriation and fugitive cases and provide regular status updates on cases of interest for which sufficient evidence is provided", according to US Department of Homeland Security documents.

The US has no extradition treaty with China. However, suspected criminals can be expelled for immigration violations.

The cooperation is a result of Chinese president Xi Jinping's extensive crackdown on government corruption and officials who fled overseas. In 2014, China's global operation to hunt down "economic fugitives" was codenamed Operation Fox Hunt, and Operation Skynet was started in April.

"In response to this cooperation, it looks like US officials asked China to provide travel documents for thousands of Chinese immigrants that the US wants to deport," said Prasad.

Virginia Kice, ICE's western regional spokeswoman, said in an email statement that a 27 March 2015 memorandum of understanding (MOU) between ICE director Sarah Saldana and director general for China's ministry of public security's Bureau of Exit and Entry Administration Zheng Baigang improved the US's process to establish the identity of Chinese nationals in detention, which is a necessary step for them to be deported.

Kice said the process requires Chinese experts to travel to the US and interview Chinese nationals who are to be deported, and verify their identity and citizenship. She said that the first team of experts traveled from Beijing to the US in late June and is currently interviewing Chinese nationals who ICE has designated as priorities for deportation.

"Prior to their return to China, the experts will provide ICE with a report outlining the results of their interviews," said Kice.

According to ICE's current immigration enforcement policies, immigrants convicted of a felony are most at-risk for deportation. In 2014 ICE deported almost 87,000 people who were living inside the US and were previously convicted of a crime.

However, Annette Wong, immigrant rights program manager for the San Francisco-based group Chinese for Affirmative Action, says detaining and deporting people who have already served their time in the US is like “double jeopardy”.

Wong gives the example of Daniel Maher, a 41-year old Chinese immigrant who was born in Macau and legally came to the US in 1977 with his family. Maher has been a program director at the Berkeley Ecology Center, a recycling centre in northern California, for 10 years.

Prasad, who is Maher’s immigration attorney, said when Maher was 20 he robbed a store with a group of other young men. He pleaded to three felony accounts and served five years in state prison. After serving his sentence Maher was detained by immigration authorities and in February 2000 was ordered to be deported. His green card was taken from him however according to ICE officials, Chinese authorities declined to provide the necessary documentation and a federal judge ordered immigration services to release him.

Maher was freed in August 2001 and said in a statement that he has checked in with immigration authorities regularly since then.

In June, 14 years after being released, Maher was detained again and is now in the Mesa Verde immigration detention facility in Bakersfield, waiting to be deported.

“On June 2, 2015, I was taken by ICE agents without any warning in a targeted sweep of Chinese nationals in the United States who have at some point in their lives been convicted of crimes as far back as two decades ago. Many of these individuals have already turned their lives around and have even started families,” Maher said in his statement.

Almost all of Maher’s family is in the US and Prasad said he doesn’t speak Chinese.

The Chinese embassy in Washington and the Chinese consulate in San Francisco did not respond to requests to be interviewed or provide information on Maher’s case.

Since being detained, Maher’s family, friends, coworkers and immigrant rights groups have been pushing for ICE officials to use their prosecutorial discretion and release Maher. Wong started an online petition which has almost 2,800 signatures.

“What he did at 20 has no bearing on the work he did at the ecology center and on the man we know and value,” said Amy Kiser, a director at the center, the recycling plant that Maher worked at. Kiser worked with Maher since 2005 and says the center is keeping his job for him.

She said she now sees how flawed the US immigration process is and that authorities need to look beyond a person’s rap sheet before deciding to deport them. “Daniel is not a threat to public safety. He is a big asset to our office and to his community,” said Kiser.

“For the last 10 years, I have strived to build on what I’ve learned and I have dedicated my life to educating others on the environmental impacts of plastic pollution on our precious, natural resources,” Maher said in his statement.

But Kice says that “As a convicted aggravated felon, Mr. Maher remains an enforcement priority based on his criminal history.”

**Analysis:** This is another good example of how you can be a resource for a reporter. You can provide the necessary background for a reporter and also get your quotes

included. Quotes need to be to the point. Be sure to watch the legal jargon – you want your entire audience to understand what you're saying.

## [Former teacher finds calling as Bay Area Legal Services attorney](#)

Tampa Bay Times

Erika Vidal Holmes

July 2, 2015



EVE EDELHEIT | Times

*Initially reluctant to study law, Kristen Lang became a lawyer so that she could be a voice for kids.*

TAMPA — Kristen Lang didn't want to be an attorney.

The journalism turned political science major only tinkered with the idea during her last year as an undergraduate at University of Florida.

"I remember reading this book about prepping for the LSAT, and it talked about the top 10 reasons not to go to law school," she said, laughing. "Every reason I had was on that list. I was like, 'I don't have any good reason.'"

Not yet, at least.

So she went a slightly different direction and applied with Teach for America after hearing an ambassador speak to one of her advocacy organizations.

"That's how I ended up in New York," she said.

The South Bronx to be exact, teaching a challenging but endearing group of sixth-graders at a school situated in the heart of a low-income community. She didn't know it at the time, but stepping into that classroom was her first step toward entering the courtroom.

Today, as an attorney for Bay Area Legal Service's L. David Shear Children's Law Center, Kristen represents dependent children up to age 5 in Hillsborough County.

"We represent the child directly as their attorney," she says. "We ensure their educational needs are met while they're in care, that their health needs are met, that any benefits they're entitled to are received, and that their case, to the best of our ability, moves as quickly and safely to permanency as possible."

Lang is their voice. Their protector. Their warrior. But she never would have ended up here if her eyes hadn't been opened by a world so vastly different from hers.

"I compare it to living your life in black and white, then living it in Technicolor," she says. "It's not

understanding the struggles of the low-income community and then being totally immersed in it.”

The majority of her students had been through more hardships than most adults. Housing insecurity. Food insecurity. Physical and sexual abuse. Witnessing homicides. Slowly, a strong case for becoming a lawyer started building. The “good reason” she couldn’t put her finger on back in college was beginning to make itself clear.

Then one day, she found it. Or more accurately, he found her.

“He was this tiny little thing,” she said, remembering the first time the boy from Brooklyn walked through her classroom door. She welcomed him in, helped him pick out a book and showed him to an empty desk so he could join the rest of the class for independent reading time.

“All my kids are quietly reading and I start hearing, ‘tshhh, tshh’. I turn around and he is ripping the pages in the book,” Lang said. “That was the start of a number of very alarming behaviors.”

It took about a month for his story to unravel. He’d been removed from his mother and placed with his father, then removed from his father and placed in foster care. Eventually, he ran away and lived on the streets for weeks.

“Twelve years old,” Kristen said. She pulls out a handwritten note from him.

*Dear, Ms. Lang Sorry for being very disrespectful and not listening to you ... sometimes I really put myself down because I have a really bad life would you please accept my appoligy(sic).*

“This is the reason I’m a lawyer,” Lang said, holding it up.

Lang enrolled in Yale Law School, which had an excellent loan repayment program for those specializing in public interest work. She spent her entire law school career focusing on at-risk kids.

Life as a public interest attorney means managing anywhere from 35-45 children’s cases at any given time. Kids like Fantasia, now 6, who had a rough start in life. Lang and the team at Bay Area Legal helped find her a forever home with Patricia Lockhart, a Tampa resident who works as a food support worker at Berkeley Preparatory School.

“Kristen was there for me and for her,” said Lockhart, 55. “Even now if I call her, she’s here. She’s like part of the family.”

In addition to Lang’s caseload, one of her biggest focuses is continuing the fellowship she wrote during her last year at Yale. The fellowship, which Bay Area Legal began sponsoring after she graduated, focuses on getting more children in care into high-quality education settings.

“You talk about ending the cycle of poverty or dependency, that’s where you need to start,” she said.

Just as the boy from Brooklyn and so many other kids helped open her eyes, she hopes the work she’s doing helps open other people’s eyes.

“We have this theory of our country that you work hard and you can be whatever you want to be,” she said. “I think it’s the right ideal. I think that it’s worth striving for while recognizing that it doesn’t exist. And I think we have to have an honest view of the struggles kids in these communities face, before as adults we want to hold them accountable for all the decisions that they’ve made. We need to have more investment in those communities to really

give them the opportunity to succeed.”

**Analysis:** This is a home run. The article illustrates the power of telling stories in interviews. It helps the audience relate and you can imagine Lang as a student and better understand who her students were and why she pursued law. Because this was a feature on Lang, the reporter was able to cover a lot of material, share a lot of stories and include many quotes. Lang did a great job of talking about the problem and the value she brings as a part of the solution.