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## State Distributes \$8.1M for Immigrant Legal Centers

Joel Stashenko, New York Law Journal

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The state has awarded \$8.1 million in grants to legal services providers to ensure compliance with requirements for representation of immigrants outlined by the U.S. Supreme Court in [Padilla v. Kentucky](#), 559 U.S. 356 (2010).

The grants will go to eight groups that will operate regional centers of immigration legal support, assistance, training and education for the attorneys providing mandated representation to immigrant clients in Criminal and Family Court. The state grants, \$1.35 million to each group, are being provided over the next three years by the Office of Indigent Legal Services (ILS).

The grant recipients and the regions in which they will provide assistance are: Immigrant Defense Project (New York City); the Legal Aid Society of Nassau County and the Legal Aid Society of Suffolk County (Long Island); the Legal Aid Society of Westchester County (Hudson Valley); the Albany County Public Defender (Northeastern New York); the Oneida County Public Defender (central New York), and the Volunteer Lawyers' Project of the Erie County Bar Association and the Legal Aid Society of Rochester (western New York).

The providers on Long Island and western New York will work together.

*Padilla* decreed that immigrants must receive accurate and comprehensive advice about the impact their case has on their ability to remain in the United States.

ILS director William Leahy said the immigrant program will be coordinated by the office director of regional initiatives, Joanne Macri. He said it is expected that the state will re-fund the program if it is successful after the three-year period.

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