

FEATURE / THE NONPROFIT IMMIGRATION SECTOR

Where Compassion Meets Technology

How nonprofit and pro bono immigration practices are using modern case management to do more, with less, for the people who need them most.

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FEATURED ORGANIZATION

CARECEN of Washington, D.C.

Housing counseling, tenant organizing, and the case for stronger infrastructure.

INTRODUCTION

A Human Process, Held Together by People

Immigration law sits at one of the most consequential intersections in American legal practice. It is technical, document-heavy, and unforgiving of administrative error. It is also, for the people moving through it, a deeply human passage marked by uncertainty and hope.

Nonprofit and pro bono organizations carry a disproportionate share of this work. They serve clients who often have nowhere else to turn, and they do so under conditions that would strain any private firm: rising caseloads, lean staffing, and rules that change without warning. Yet they remain the connective tissue that keeps families together and communities intact during the most vulnerable moments of a person's life.

This issue of the *CampLegal Monthly Digest* looks at how those organizations are using modern case management to expand their reach without compromising the care that defines their work. We begin in Washington, D.C., with the team at CARECEN.

BY THE NUMBERS

600+

Nonprofit immigration legal services organizations operating across the United States.

Source: Urban Institute, Immigrant Legal Aid Organizations in the United States.

EDITOR'S NOTE

What we mean by “infrastructure” in nonprofit legal work.

When most observers describe what nonprofit immigration practices need, they cite funding and staffing. Both are correct, and both are incomplete.

The third constraint is operational. Even fully funded teams lose hours every week to fragmented tools, unsearchable file shares, and ad hoc tracking systems that fall apart at scale. Infrastructure is what allows mission to compound rather than dissipate.

This issue focuses on practices that have closed that gap, and on what other organizations can learn from how they did it.

CONTINUED / CARECEN DC IN PROFILE

ORGANIZATION PROFILE

CARECEN DC: A Community Anchor in Practice

ORGANIZATION

CARECEN DC

PROGRAM

Housing Services

REGION

Washington, D.C.

PLATFORM

CampLegal

A Mission Built on Stability

CARECEN DC's Housing Program operates from a clear premise: every person deserves a safe and stable place to live. For the Latino families across the District and the broader Washington metropolitan area whom CARECEN serves, housing is rarely a standalone issue. It intersects with rising rents, language access, tenant rights, and the ever present concern of displacement.

The organization meets these realities with patience, cultural fluency, and a refusal to treat people as case numbers. Clients are met in the language they prefer, in spaces designed to feel welcoming rather than transactional.

What the Work Looks Like

01

HUD-Approved Counseling

Free, one to one housing counseling that helps clients navigate rental disputes, foreclosure concerns, and eligibility questions. Sessions are conducted in English or Spanish.

02

Bilingual Workshops

Group sessions that function as community circles. Clients ask questions, share experiences, and learn from one another in a setting designed for trust rather than intake forms.

03

Tenant Organizing

Direct support for tenants who are forming associations, negotiating repairs, and pushing back against unsafe conditions or unfair practices. Advice converts to collective action.

CONTINUED / FROM ADVICE TO ACTION

ORGANIZATION PROFILE / CONTINUED

From Advice to Action

What distinguishes CARECEN is its insistence on follow through. The organization does not stop at advice. Counselors help clients leave with a plan. Workshops translate into tenant associations. Tenant associations translate into negotiated repairs and lasting stability. The arc is from individual support to collective power, and it is intentional.

Sustaining that arc requires structure. Counseling sessions, group workshops, urgent housing matters, and tenant meetings move in parallel, often on the same day. Without a system that keeps every thread organized, even the most committed staff lose hours to administration that should be spent with clients.



We do not simply offer advice. We help tenants take action, form associations, and advocate for long term stability in their buildings.

ON THE CARECEN APPROACH

CARECEN uses CampLegal to keep the operational layer of this work organized. The platform tracks cases, manages documents, and coordinates a team that includes attorneys, counselors, and community organizers. Less time is spent locating files. More time is spent with the families who came in needing help.

The result is a nonprofit that scales without losing what makes it effective: a relationship to its community that no software can replace, supported by software that respects what the relationship requires.

With thanks to CARECEN DC for its ongoing service to the community.

FIELD DATA

The Capacity Gap

300%

Demand for nonprofit immigration legal services has grown by more than three hundred percent over the past decade.

Funding and staffing have not kept pace. The result is a sector doing more with less every year, and a widening gap between the people who need representation and the organizations equipped to provide it. Closing that gap requires investments in people, in funding, and in the operational systems that allow small teams to serve large caseloads without compromising the quality of their work.

ON THE CAMPLEGAL PLATFORM

3,500+

Immigration practices using CampLegal nationwide.

27+

Case types supported across humanitarian, family, and employment work.

100%

Browser based. No installation. No IT overhead.

WHAT THE PLATFORM DOES

Built for Teams That Cannot Afford to Lose a Single Hour

CampLegal gives nonprofit immigration practices a single place to manage forms, deadlines, documents, and client communication. Three capabilities matter most for teams operating at capacity.

01

Centralized Case Management

Forms, deadlines, documents, and client notes live in one auditable system. Nothing gets lost in inboxes or shared drives.

INCLUDES

- 27+ case types out of the box
- Document request tracking
- Two way client portal

02

Workflow Automation

Templates, reminders, and assignment rules eliminate the repetitive administrative work that consumes nonprofit staff time.

INCLUDES

- Automated reminders
- Reusable letter and email templates
- Configurable workflows

03

Coordinated Team Practice

Built for organizations with attorneys, accredited representatives, caseworkers, volunteers, and rotating staff.

INCLUDES

- Role based access controls
- Cross team task assignment
- Time tracking and billing

CLOSING

Stronger Systems, Stronger Communities

Immigration nonprofits are among the most leveraged organizations in the American legal system. A small team can change the course of dozens of lives in a single month, but only when it is freed from the operational drag that comes with high volume work and limited resources.

Organizations like CARECEN show what becomes possible when mission and infrastructure align. Counselors stay in front of clients. Attorneys stay focused on advocacy. Administrators stay ahead of compliance. The work scales without losing its meaning.

CampLegal exists to support that work. The platform is built specifically for immigration practice, used today by more than three thousand five hundred firms and organizations across the United States, and offered with discounted pricing for qualifying nonprofit and pro bono programs. Stronger systems lead to stronger nonprofits, and stronger nonprofits lead to stronger communities.

**If you lead a nonprofit immigration program,
we would like to hear how you work.**



**Because we empower the teams
who empower people.**

TO LEARN MORE

Visit camplegal.com
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Ask about nonprofit pricing

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