NSLAC 2026

Mission

NSLAC provides accessible, quality, equitable, free legal services in the areas of domestic violence, housing, and immigration to give low-income, at-risk community members access to justice and the opportunity to live productive and secure lives.

Service Area & Client Eligibility

NSLAC serves clients living in Lake County and the northern suburbs of Cook County. To be eligible for NSLAC's services, clients must live at or below 250% of the federal poverty level. In 2026 that equates to a household income of $82,500 for a family of four. There are no income requirements for Domestic Violence clients. NSLAC intentionally does not accept funding from the Legal Service Corporation (LSC), making it one of the only agencies in the area that can provide services to undocumented immigrants.

Law Practice Areas

The Domestic Violence Law Practice handles cases focused on survivors' safety, including Plenary Orders of Protection, divorce, custody, and other family law matters. The team, including two social workers, conducts outreach, builds partnerships, and helps survivors access supportive resources while and after advocating for them in the courtroom. All staff undergo trauma-informed training to best serve survivors.

The Housing Law Practice assists renters facing housing insecurity, including with evictions, lease disputes, repairs, and subsidy termination. Rising rents have left many families struggling to meet expenses. While evictions can't always be avoided, having legal representation helps ensure a fair process and offers options to lessen the impact, like negotiating move-out dates, applying for rental assistance, or sealing eviction records to protect future rental opportunities.

The Immigration Law Practice offers full-scale immigration services, including family-based petitions, adjustment of status, TPS, VAWA petitions, and asylum cases. NSLAC is the only program in the area providing free immigration services to low-income noncitizens, regardless of status. The team also conducts outreach to the community through Know Your Rights presentations and short-term guardianship consultations.

Cases Opened by Law Practice Areas - 2026:

*As of 9/30/2026

Domestic Violence: 419

Housing: 250

Immigration: 689

Pro Bono: 183

Operational Overview - 2026:

*As of 9/30/2026

Active Cases: 995

Cases Opened All Time: 13,840

Budget Revenue: $4,844,998

Budget Expenses: $4,832,571

Staff Size (FTE): 46

Number of Attorneys: 21

Number of DOJs: 3

Social Workers: 4

Immigrant Legal Support Program (ILSP) Overview

*As of 9/30/2026

51 Workshops

386 Screenings

847-737-4042
Info@NSLegalAid.org
NSLegalAid.org

Client Demographics

71% BIPOC

70% Female

59% Noncitizens

50% Speak a Language Other Than English

NSLAC services can involve a one-hour counsel and advice session up to full representation. All services are provided at no cost to the client, even when a case takes months or years to complete.

NSLAC is supported by a portfolio of granting agencies, private donors, and its annual special event. State government funding is the most significant source for NSLAC programs, often distributed through secondary organizations.

NSLAC staff speak 10 languages in addition to English, including Spanish, Urdu, Dari, Pashto, Korean, Serbian, Portuguese, Russian, Ukrainian, and Hebrew. An on-demand interpreting service is used for any other language needs.

What Our Community Is Searching For

These are the most searched legal topics this quarter, reflecting urgent needs across our community.

Power of Attorney: Protecting Your Property and Finances

The importance of creating legal plans to protect your property and finances cannot be underestimated. Without the appropriate legal documents, someone you trust may be unable to manage these assets during an emergency. Establishing a Power of Attorney helps ensure that someone you trust has the legal authority to handle important financial matters if you are unable to.

What is Habeas Corpus?

Habeas Corpus allows individuals to challenge the government if they are detained unlawfully. This right is granted to all individuals within the United States, regardless of their immigration status. A successful petition for Habeas Corpus can get a client released from detention and returned to their family.

Essential Documents to Carry If Stopped by ICE

Carrying important documents during an ICE encounter can help establish your identity, immigration status, and time spent in the United States. Depending on your situation, these may include a Green Card, work permit, immigration notices, or proof of U.S. residency. Keeping these documents secure and accessible can help you prepare for an unexpected ICE encounter.

What Happens If I am Detained or Arrested by ICE?

Understanding what happens during an ICE arrest or detention can help you protect your rights. If detained, you have the right to remain silent, seek legal representation, and explore possible options for release. Knowing the detention process, how to locate a detained loved one, and when to seek legal assistance can help you and your family navigate this challenging situation.

Finding Safety, Building Stability

NSLAC's Client was a student seeking safety and the return of their independence.

The Client was physically, sexually, and emotionally abused by their partner. The abuser worked near the Client's school and placed trackers on the Client's vehicle. Seeking an end to the constant fear and hope for a new life without abuse, the Client pursued an Emergency Order of Protection. The Client initially contacted a well-known domestic violence social service agency who referred the Client to NSLAC for legal representation. NSLAC's DV Team represented the Client for nearly three months, and the case was resolved through a two-year no-contact order.

Additionally, NSLAC's social work team walked alongside the Client during the case and provided referrals to trauma-informed counseling organizations. After the case closed, the Client shared a note of gratitude: **"I'm so grateful for the help I've been given and am extremely satisfied with my experience working with the attorney and their team. You guys really helped save my life. Thank you."**