

Massachusetts Law Reform Institute

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RE: REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE TO DEVELOP ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS THAT WOULD REDUCE THE HARMFUL IMPACT OF IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT ON IMMIGRANTS IN MASSACHUSETTS

Issue: As the New Bedford raid illustrated, increased immigration enforcement has had a profound impact on the immigrant community here in Massachusetts as it has throughout the country. In addition to the national legislative reforms that would provide a path to legalization for the 12 million undocumented people in the U.S. and the national campaign to freeze or limit immigration raids, some administrative advocacy efforts could potentially help protect immigrants in the interim against certain harsh enforcement practices that have prevailed in recent years. The pro bono firm attorney would staff this project, helping MLRI immigration staff to coordinate MLRI's statewide Working Group (approximately ten lawyers and advocates) and prioritizing and developing potential reform proposals to raise with immigration agencies.

For example, among the proposals that could be developed are the following:

- A proposal to the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency to refocus certain enforcement priorities more specifically on defined serious criminal offenders and to expand the humanitarian basis for the use of prosecutorial discretion in other cases
- A proposal to the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Justice to simplify the procedures for immigrants to obtain certain forms of relief that allow them to remain in the U.S. for humanitarian reasons
- Inter-agency proposals to explore and address the possible racial impact of federal immigration crimes enforcement, as revealed in recent studies.