

## 2017 in Review

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There is no question that 2017 was a difficult year for immigrants. However, in spite of the atmosphere of uncertainty and dread, or perhaps because of it, many communities banded together in support of their immigrant friends, family, and neighbors like never before, and we at Global Law Advocates saw many successes for our clients. The following is a summary of the bad and the good from 2017:

### THE BAD.

1. The Trump administration ended the immigration enforcement priorities put in place by Obama. Now, immigrants no longer have the reassurance that ICE is focusing on criminals and those who recently entered the country. Instead, any undocumented immigrant could be targeted by immigration authorities. This new policy greatly contributed to the growing sense of fear in the immigrant community.

2. Processing for U Visas, which give eventual legal status to those undocumented immigrants who cooperate in the investigation of certain serious crimes against them, slowed down in the last year, meaning that the long wait time for visas became even longer.

3. Adjustment of status to permanent lawful residence, consular process overseas to permanent lawful residence, and naturalization (citizenship) cases are also taking longer for interview or decision. With wait times approaching one year, the process of gaining legal status in the U.S. became a greater test of patience in 2017. President Trump's direction for immigration authorities to practice "extreme vetting" for all immigrant and non-immigrant applications meant that information-collecting on each applicant more than quadrupled in many types of applications.

4. The Department of State has begun "extreme vetting" at US consulates overseas, meaning that applicants for consular process must now prepare to have their immigration history, criminal record, and character examined much more carefully and in much greater detail than in the past.

5. Applicants for adjustment of status and U Visas had to meet higher standards in the last year, and we expect that trend to continue in 2018.

6. The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program was rescinded in September, and along with it the option for DACA recipients to apply for Advance Parole, permission to reenter the country after travel for humanitarian purposes.

### THE GOOD.

1. In response to the Trump administration's promise to take action against immigration, communities across the country have risen up with energized support for immigrants and their families.

2. There has been no change in eligibility for Adjustment of Status, Naturalization, Consular Process, or I-601A waivers.

3. The end of DACA prompted a wave of public support for Dreamers, and lawmakers have increased their efforts to pass immigration reform for undocumented immigrants who were brought to the U.S. as children.

4. Immigration advocates and lawyers fought back against travel bans on primarily Muslim countries in 2017, and won victories in the courts that forced the Trump administration to modify and in some cases rescind the bans.

5. Many lawyers and activists have dedicated themselves to helping the undocumented, especially those facing deportation proceedings.

6. Seattle and King County, along with various other cities and counties across the U.S. implemented policies against cooperating with immigration enforcement.

7. Seattle and King County launched the Immigrant Legal Defense Network, a fund for removal defense for local immigrants.

8. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit ruled that Temporary Protected Status (TPS) counts as a lawful entry, expanding TPS recipients' eligibility to gain legal residence.

9. Here at Global Law Advocates, we won ALL of our 2017 immigration cases—230 in total—including Adjustment of Status, Consular Process, I-601A Waivers, U Visas, Naturalization, and DACA.

Even after a year as tough as 2017, the good outweighs the bad. We at Global Law Advocates encourage you to continue to hold on to hope, because things will get better. Happy New Year!

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