

Pro Bono Attorney Guidelines

The National Immigrant Justice Center (NIJC) is pleased to begin a collaborative relationship with you as you and your firm accept this pro bono assignment. To reflect our shared understanding and commitment, we ask that you review these Pro Bono Attorney Guidelines.

NIJC welcomes corporate in-house legal teams and law firm partners to collaborate in pro bono work. NIJC's pro bono projects will place cases with a partnership but strongly prefers to not engage in managing the relationship. To this end, we suggest that: 1.) prior to engaging in a pro bono collaboration, the partners define the scope of the relationship to determine points of contact and division of labor and 2.) the law firm attorney is the attorney of record.

NIJC's Commitment to Pro Bono Attorneys

NIJC understands the majority of pro bono attorneys working with NIJC have limited immigration law experience. Attorneys who accept an NIJC case for pro bono representation can expect that NIJC will provide the support and assistance necessary to capably represent NIJC clients.

NIJC agrees to provide its pro bono attorneys with:

- Subject-matter specific legal trainings led by NIJC experts in the field. All training recordings are publicly available through NIJC's web page: <http://immigrantjustice.org/for-attorneys/legal-resources>. NIJC provides trainings on advanced topics throughout the year and upon request.
- Information regarding immigration law, practice, and procedure; sample applications, motions, and pleadings; documentation; and other case resources.
- Consultations with experienced NIJC practitioners regarding any case-related questions, theories and trial strategies. NIJC's attorneys remain current on immigration law, policy, and practice, and frequently serve as faculty at local and national immigration law trainings.
- Professional liability insurance. NIJC carries comprehensive professional liability insurance, which covers its pro bono attorneys. If you have had any legal malpractice or legal disciplinary complaints filed against you, please inform your NIJC point of contact. Failure to disclose prior disciplinary action could negate coverage by NIJC's insurance provider.
- Involvement in ground-breaking legal issues and an opportunity to interact with individuals from different cultural, ethnic, religious, and socio-economic backgrounds.
- Unique litigation experience, with opportunities to represent clients before a federal agency and/or the federal courts.
- Exceptional legal experience that will enhance career development.

Pro Bono Attorney Commitment

After accepting a case, the pro bono attorney will:

- Attend the next available NIJC training or watch NIJC's most recently recorded training online, if the attorney has not already attended a training.
- Provide representation from commencement to completion of the case, which may include an appeal within USCIS or to the Board of Immigration Appeals. This includes providing interpretation or translation services, where necessary.
- Transfer representation of the case to another attorney in the firm if the attorney is compelled to withdraw representation for any reason other than a conflict of interest or client misconduct. NIJC is unable to absorb pro bono cases in-house, except in very limited circumstances.
- Inform NIJC if new attorneys from the firm take over the case or are added to the legal team.
- Keep NIJC informed of the status of the client's case. NIJC maintains an agreement with every client referred for pro bono representation and remains of counsel.
- Provide NIJC with a copy of draft documents to allow NIJC time to review before filing and ensure all necessary arguments and claims have been presented. NIJC will provide pro bono attorneys with deadlines for the review of documents at the time of pro bono placement. Upon completion of the case, the attorneys should also provide NIJC with a copy of all filings.
- Contact NIJC if the attorney believes the client may be concurrently eligible for another immigration benefit. Applying for other immigration benefits may impact the client's case. NIJC's involvement in the case is limited to the matter referred for pro bono representation. If a client becomes eligible for another immigration benefit, NIJC may execute a supplementary retainer with the client to assist in seeking that benefit.
- Contact NIJC if the client needs assistance regarding other legal matters or has contact with a law enforcement agency. Other legal matters, particularly those involving the criminal justice system, may impact the client's immigration case. Although NIJC may be unable to provide technical support on non-immigration legal matters, NIJC has relationships with many other legal aid organizations that may be able to assist the client.
- Contact NIJC before speaking with the media or members of Congress about the case. NIJC is involved in immigration policy and advocacy efforts at the state and national levels, and with local and national media. Coordinating with NIJC will ensure that any advocacy efforts achieve the best possible result for the client.

By taking on an NIJC pro bono matter, you agree to these guidelines. If you have concerns or questions, please reach out to your NIJC point of contact prior to proceeding with an NIJC pro bono matter.