

SIJS Predicate Order Pro Bono Case List

The cases on this list have all been screened and determined to be eligible for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status. NIJC is representing the children in their immigration matters and will attend all immigration court dates with the child. The pro bono attorney will be taking on the state court matter only, representing the parent or guardian to obtain a custody or guardianship order with the special findings necessary for SIJS. Family court is the designated court for custody orders, while probate court is the designated court for guardianship and post-18 guardianships. NIJC will work closely with the pro bono attorney to ensure that the pleadings and orders in state court comply with the immigration requirements. If you have any questions about these cases, please contact Berenice Sanchez Ruiz at 773-672-6607 or bsanchezruiz@immigrantjustice.org.

1. D. and A. are siblings aged 14 and 12, from Honduras. They live with their mother, who speaks Spanish, in northern Illinois (Lake County). (24-0167073)

D. and A.'s father was physically abusive to their mother, and both children witnessed this abuse. As a result, their mother decided to separate from their father. Shortly thereafter, she immigrated to the United States. During this transition, D. and A. stayed with their aunt. D. arrived in the United States in July 2023, and A. arrived in August 2023. They were able to reunify with their mother at that time. Since their parents' separation, their father has contacted them only once and has not provided financial or emotional support to D. and A.

A *pro bono* attorney will need to file a petition for sole allocation of parental responsibilities on behalf of D. and A.'s mother and obtain an order finding that D. and A.'s reunification with their father is not viable due to abandonment, neglect, and abuse, and that it is not in D. and A.'s best interest to return to Honduras.

2. J., C., and A. are young siblings from Guatemala. They live with their mother, who speaks Spanish, in a northwest suburb of Chicago (Kane County). (23-0166102)

The children's mother separated from their father when J. was 9, and while she was pregnant with twins C. and A.. Their father stopped emotional and financial support after the separation, and the younger siblings have never had any contact with their father. The children were raised by their mother until she came to the U.S. in 2021 to find work, leaving her children in the care of their grandparents. In their mother's absence, J. was attacked and threatened by his father and father's family, so he fled to the U.S. in October of 2022 to reunify with his mother. C. & A. also arrived in the U.S. as unaccompanied children in July of 2023, and were able to reunite with their mother.

A *pro bono* attorney will need to file a petition for sole allocation of parental responsibilities on behalf of J., C. & A.'s mother and obtain an order finding that the children's reunification with their father is not viable due to his abandonment, and that it is not in their best interest to return to Guatemala.

3. K. and D. are half-brothers from Mexico, aged 13 and 9. They live with their mother, who speaks Spanish, in northwest Chicago (Cook County). (24-0167057, 24-0167055)

K. and D. share the same mother but have different fathers. Both K. and D.'s fathers split from their mother when she was pregnant with each of them. K. and D. were never supported emotionally or financially by their fathers, and they do not have relationships with them. K. has had no contact with his father since he was five years old. D. has not had contact with his father since he was three years old. D.'s mother came to the United States after fleeing gang threats, and K. and D. followed shortly afterward.

A *pro bono* attorney will need to file two separate petitions for sole allocation of parental responsibilities on behalf of K. and D.'s mother and obtain orders stating that reunification with K. and D.'s respective fathers is not viable due to abandonment, and that it is not in K. and D.'s best interest to return to Mexico.

4. A. is an 18-year-old boy from Honduras. He lives with his uncle, who speaks Spanish, in western Illinois (Rock Island). (24-0167052)

A.'s parents separated when he was five years old. Subsequently, he was raised by his paternal grandparents. He maintained daily contact with his father, while his mother visited him only twice a year and communicated with him sporadically via text. A.'s mother did not provide him with financial or emotional support.

A *pro bono* attorney will need to file a petition for guardianship on behalf of A.'s uncle. They will need an order finding that A.'s reunification with his mother is not viable due to her neglect and that it is not in A.'s best interest to return to Honduras.

5. S. is a 7-year-old girl from Colombia who lives with her mother, who speaks Spanish, in a northwest suburb of Chicago (Cook County). (23-0164380)

S. was a year old when her parents separated. After their separation, S.'s father only provided her with money for 3 months. Since then, S. has not seen her father, and he has not attempted to contact her or provide any financial or emotional support. S.'s mother fled Colombia in October 2022 after receiving threats from guerrillas. S. was left behind with an aunt who is part of the LGBTQ+ community, and because of that, both S. and her aunt received threats. S. fled shortly afterward and joined her mother in the United States in July 2023.

A *pro bono* attorney will need to file a petition for sole allocation of parental responsibilities on behalf of S.'s mother and obtain an order finding that S.'s reunification with her father is not viable due to his neglect and abandonment, and it is not in S.'s best interest to return to Colombia.

6. Z. is a 12-year-old boy from Mexico living with his mother, who speaks Spanish, in West Chicago (DuPage County). (24-0167053)

His parents separated when he was about five years old due to his father's physical abuse of his mother, which Z. often witnessed. After the separation, Z. initially lived with his aunt in Mexico while his mother came to the United States in early 2022. During this time, his father provided financial assistance only occasionally and inconsistently. In June 2023, Z. reunited with his mother in Illinois. Since arriving in the United States, Z. has had minimal contact with his father.

A *pro bono* attorney will need to file a petition for sole allocation of parental responsibilities on behalf of Z.'s mother and obtain an order stating that reunification with his father is not viable due to the abuse and neglect, and that it is not in Z.'s best interest to return to Mexico.