

April 19, 2024

NIJC Pro Bono Case List: 74 cases need pro bono representation.

Immigrants do not have the right to appointed counsel and without pro bono representation, many of NIJC's clients would be forced to seek immigration relief on their own. NIJC pro bono attorneys defend the legal rights of immigrants, prevent permanent family separation and deportation to persecution and torture, and help ensure access to justice for all.

This case list is divided into sections based on the type of case. All cases that require priority placement are listed at the top of the list and organized by case type. When you select a case type, the headline will provide basic information about the case. Additional information is available in the drop-down options below the headline.

- **Asylum - Affirmative:** Represent an individual or family who is affirmatively applying for asylum and will present their case before the Asylum Office.
- **Asylum – Defensive:** Represent an individual or family who is applying for asylum as a defense to removal and will present their case before the Immigration Court.
- **Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS):** Represent the guardian of an immigrant minor in state court proceedings to obtain a predicate order.
- **U Visa:** Represent an immigrant survivor of a crime committed in the United States.
- **VAWA:** Represent an immigrant survivor of family or domestic violence.

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Priority Matters

Priority Matters - Defensive Asylum

1. L. is a transgender woman from Mexico with a merits hearing on July 11, 2024. She speaks Spanish and lives in a western suburb of Chicago. (20-0140286).

Deadline: Merits hearing on 7/11/2024

Asylum Categories: Domestic and Gender Violence, LGBTQ+

Venue: Immigration Court

Language: Spanish

Location: IL

Country of Origin: Mexico

Client's Story

Growing up in Mexico, L. was subjected to bullying and discrimination by peers and community members who perceived her as LGBTQ. When she was about 18, a man at a party approached her, took her outside, and beat her brutally. He threatened to kill L., just as he had killed her cousin. L. then realized this was the same man who had murdered her gay cousin about a month earlier. After the man threatened L. again at another party, she fled Mexico.

Important Client Context

L. filed her I-589 after her one-year deadline, but she timely filed a Mendez Rojas class member notice with the immigration court so that her one-year delay should be excused. Her affidavit and supporting documents will be due to the court 15 days before her July 11, 2024 merits hearing.

NIJC Contact

Moises Lopez Soltero, mlopezsoltero@immigrantjustice.org

NIJC Case Number: 20-0140286

2. J. is a woman from Honduras. Her son, N., is a derivative on her asylum application and is also independently eligible for asylum. Their merits hearing is on October 15, 2024. They speak Spanish and live in Indianapolis.

Deadline: Merits hearing on 10/15/2024

Asylum Categories: Political Opinion, Religious Beliefs

Venue: Immigration Court

Language: Spanish

Location: IN

Country of Origin: Honduras

Client's Story

As a child, J. lived with an aunt and uncle. Her uncle molested her, and her aunt verbally abused her and forced her to work. One night in 2019, an armed man stopped J. while she was walking home and sexually assaulted her in a cemetery. J. believes her attacker was affiliated with a gang. J. became pregnant from the assault and fled because she feared that her rapist would come after her if he learned about the pregnancy.

Important Client Context

J. filed her asylum application in December 2020. Since this application was filed more than one year after J. entered the United States, her pro bono attorneys will need to argue that she merits an exception to the one-year filing deadline for asylum eligibility. NIJC will assist in making this argument. All affidavits and supporting materials to J.'s case will be due 15 days prior to her individual merits hearing. At a recent master calendar hearing, the judge informed J. that her merits hearing will be on October 15, 2024, however, her hearing date does currently appear in court's online system. Pro bono counsel will need to confirm the hearing date with the court and, if needed, advocate to ensure she does not lose her opportunity for a timely

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hearing.

NIJC Contact

Lili Henkel, lhenkel@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 21-0145602

3. K. is a woman from Guatemala. Her daughter, T., is a derivative on her asylum application and is also independently eligible for asylum. Their merits hearing is on October 24, 2024. K. and T. speak Spanish and live in a southwestern suburb of Chicago.

Deadline: Merits hearing on 10/24/2024

Asylum Categories: Domestic and Gender Violence

Venue: Immigration Court

Language: Spanish

Location: IL

Country of Origin: Guatemala

Client's Story

K. left Guatemala after being raped by a member of the Mara, resulting in the birth of her youngest son. During the beginning of the pandemic, Mara members came into K.'s town and began extorting, harassing, robbing, and assaulting people. They began to target K. after her husband, R., left Guatemala. While returning home one night, a member of the Mara raped K. inside her own home. K. was too fearful to return home after the attack and fled to the United States shortly thereafter.

Important Client Context

NIJC filed K. and T.'s asylum applications with the immigration court in September 2023. Because their applications were filed more than one year after they entered the United States, pro bono attorneys will need to argue that they merit an exception to the one-year filing deadline. NIJC will assist them in making this argument. All affidavits and supporting materials to K. and T.'s case will be due 15 days prior to their individual merits hearing, which is scheduled for October 24, 2024.

NIJC Contact

Lili Henkel, lhenkel@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 23-0163860

4. K. is a gay cisgender man from Colombia and Venezuela. He speaks Spanish and lives in the western suburbs of Chicago, Illinois. His merits hearing is on February 10, 2025.

Deadline: Merits hearing on 2/10/2025

Asylum Categories: LGBTQ+, Political Opinion, Religious Beliefs

Venue: Immigration Court

Language: Spanish

Location: IL

Country of Origin: Colombia

Client's Story

K. attempted to hide his sexual orientation his entire life due to pervasive homophobia in Colombia and Venezuela. Around 2022, K. participated in an LGBTQ march in Colombia. He wore feminine clothing, and a group of men attacked him. The assailants placed a chemical soaked rag over K.'s mouth that made him unconscious. When K. regained consciousness, he noticed wounds all over his body and experienced extreme rectum pain. K. attempted to file a police report, but the officials mocked him for his sexual orientation. A few months later, while K. was staying with his cousin in another part of Colombia, he received a death threat letter containing homophobic slurs and returned to Chile for a few months. After K. left Chile, he briefly returned to Colombia before fleeing to the United States.

Important Client Context

K. is dual national of Colombia and Venezuela. He is also a legal permanent resident of Chile. Pro bono counsel will need to argue that Colombia is K.'s primary country of citizenship and also that K. should not be returned to Venezuela nor Chile, as he

would face harm in either country because of his sexual orientation. K.'s asylum application was timely filed with the Chicago Immigration Court on January 9, 2024. All affidavits and supporting materials will be due 15 days prior to K.'s merits hearing, which is set for February 10, 2025.

If K. is granted asylum, he would like to petition for his child, who currently resides in Colombia.

NIJC Contact

Moises Lopez Soltero, mlopezsoltero@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 23-0164282

5. M. is a man from Cameroon. His merits hearing is on February 19, 2025. He speaks English and lives in a northern suburb of Chicago.

Deadline: Merits hearing on 2/19/2025

Asylum Categories: Political Opinion, Religious Beliefs

Venue: Immigration Court

Language: English

Location: IL

Country of Origin: Cameroon

Client's Story

Cameroonian government officials detained and tortured M. on two separate occasions, once in 2018 and once in 2019. Each time, he was detained for multiple days, tortured and beaten, and threatened with death. M. believes that the government officials did this to him because he was demonstrating for the rights of English-speaking Cameroonians. M. participated in a demonstration to protest for the rights of English-speaking people in Cameroon and he also lived in an area associated with English-speaking activists. The Cameroonian government also killed M.'s uncle and tortured his sister. In addition, English-speaking separatists threatened M., whom they accused of providing information about the separatists to the government during his detention. M. fled Cameroon, and he entered the United States in 2019. The Cameroonian government has searched for M. since he fled. His partner and children were also forced into hiding.

Important Client Context

M. filed his asylum application after his one-year deadline, but he timely filed a Mendez Rojas class member notice with the immigration court so that his one-year delay should be excused. His affidavit and supporting documents will be due to the court 15 days before his February 19, 2025 merits hearing.

NIJC Contact

Lili Henkel, lhenkel@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 22-0153206

6. M. is a man from Ecuador. His merits hearing is on February 24, 2025. M. speaks Spanish and lives in Chicago.

Deadline: Merits hearing on 2/24/2025

Asylum Categories: Political Opinion, Religious Beliefs

Venue: Immigration Court

Language: Spanish

Location: IL

Country of Origin: Ecuador

Client's Story

M. owned a small business in Ecuador where people could pay to use computers and printers. His shop was located near the local market where corrupt police officers frequently extorted vendors. Around August 2018, two officers left behind a flash drive after using computers in M.'s store. After they left, M. opened the flash drive and discovered evidence that they were overcharging market vendors. When

the officers came back to retrieve the flash drive, they warned M. that he would have problems if he had looked at the contents of the flash drive and spoke out against them. Afterwards, M. began to receive threats from the police and a gang affiliated with the police. Around January 2019, gang members kidnapped M. and took him to a remote location where they beat and robbed him. After this incident, M. fled the country. People continued to look for him at his shop and threatened to harm his girlfriend and daughter, which led them to flee as well.

Important Client Context

NIJC filed M.'s asylum application with the immigration court in April 2021. Because his application was filed more than one year after he entered the United States, M.'s pro bono attorneys will need to argue that he merits an exception to the one-year filing deadline. NIJC will assist them in making this argument. All affidavits and supporting materials to M.'s case will be due 15 days prior to his individual merits hearing on February 24, 2025.

NIJC Contact

Lili Henkel, lhenkel@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 20-0145604

Priority Matters - SIJS

7. S. is a 17-year-old girl from Colombia. She lives with her mother, who speaks Spanish, in a southwestern suburb of Chicago (Will County).

Deadline: Obtain Predicate Order by 11/8/2024

Venue: Family Court

Language: Spanish

Location: IL

Country of Origin: Colombia

Client's Story

S.'s father left her and her mother when she was five years old. She has not seen him since. S.'s father is currently in jail and has been there for the last 10 years. He calls her on occasion when he is allowed to use the phone. He does not provide her with any financial or emotional support. S.'s mother came to the US after receiving threats, and S. came shortly afterwards after receiving similar threats.

Important Client Context

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 abandonment and that it is not in S.'s best interest to return to Colombia.

The predicate order must be obtained before S. turns 18 in November of 2024.

NIJC Contact

Berenice Sanchez Ruiz, bsanchezruiz@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 23-0164410

Priority Matters - U Visa

8. I. is a woman from Ecuador who is eligible to file a U Visa application. I. speaks Spanish and lives in Chicago. (22-0159954)

Deadline: Application filed by 9/6/2024

Venue: USCIS

Language: Spanish

Location: IL

Country of Origin: Ecuador

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Client's Story

I. faced many years of physical and emotional abuse at the hands of her former partner. He was verbally abusive and I. tried to leave him many times. The case is based on an incident that took place outside their home when I.'s ex-partner was physically abusive and a bystander had to call the police. I. has attended therapy and obtained orders of protection against her ex-partner. She cares for her children, two of whom are eligible to be included as family members in her U Visa application.

Important Client Context

I.'s two minor children will be included as derivative family in I.'s U Visa application.

NIJC Contact

Jackie Mares, jmares@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 22-0159954

Priority Matters - VAWA

9. A. is a woman from Pakistan. A. is eligible to file a VAWA self-petition concurrently with an application for adjustment of status and employment authorization. A. speaks English and resides in Chicago.

Deadline: Application filed by 3/22/2025

Venue: USCIS

Location: IL

Language: English

Country of Origin: Pakistan

Client's Story

A. has been the victim of emotional, financial, physical, and mental abuse by her former U.S. citizen husband. A. married her ex-husband on 03/11/2022; he manipulated her into getting married. He acted inappropriately with her daughter from a previous marriage. He never had anything in his name and lived off A. He would threaten her with reporting her to immigration. According to A., he was discharged from the military due to a mental disorder, though she believes he manipulated them so he could be released. He shot her daughter's car while parked in front of the house. A. has no income and sells her belongings to support herself financially. The divorce between A. and her ex-husband was finalized on 03/23/2023, and A. has sought counseling.

Important Client Context

A. is eligible for VAWA and Adjustment of Status. Pro bono attorneys will complete both applications with A.

NIJC Contact

Jackie Mares, jmares@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 23-0164004

Asylum - Defensive

Expected Tasks: Legal research, Litigating in immigration court, Preparing affidavits, Preparing applications, Preparing client testimony, Working with vulnerable clients, Writing legal memos

10. K. is a gay cisgender man from Cuba. He speaks Spanish and lives in Chicago. K. is scheduled for a merits hearing on May 22, 2025. (23-0161988).

Deadline: Merits hearing on 1/23/2024

Asylum Categories: LGBTQ+

Venue: Immigration Court

Language: Spanish

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Location: IL

Country of Origin: Cuba

Client's Story

K. fears returning to Cuba because of his past advocacy for LGBTQ rights and HIV prevention work. He was detained with other gay men and HIV prevention activists and was surveilled in his neighborhood. K. entered the United States in May 2022, and timely applied for asylum.

Important Client Context

K. entered the United States on May 30, 2022, and timely applied for asylum pro se on January 9, 2023. All affidavits and supporting documents for K.'s case will be due 15 days prior to his individual merits hearing on May 22, 2025.

NIJC Contact

Moises Lopez Soltero, mlopezsoltero@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 23-0161988

11. K. is a gay cisgender man from Colombia. He speaks Spanish and lives in the western suburbs of Chicago. K. is currently set for a merits hearing on July 21, 2025.

Deadline: Merits hearing on 3/20/2024

Asylum Categories: LGBTQ+

Venue: Immigration Court

Language: Spanish

Location: IL

Country of Origin: Colombia

Client's Story

Throughout K.'s childhood, he was frequently perceived as LGBTQ. He was sexually assaulted on numerous occasions. He was called anti-LGBTQ slurs and ostracized at school. Around 2022, members of a local gang saw K. with his boyfriend and shouted anti-LGBTQ slurs at them. From then on, gang members harassed K. and his boyfriend nearly every time they left the house by shouting slurs and threats and by throwing stones and bottles at them. Later that year, gang members sent death threats to K. and his family. When the death threats began, K. and his siblings reported the threats to the neighborhood and city police but did not feel protected. A few weeks after the death threats began, K. and his family members left Colombia.

Important Client Context

NIJC timely filed K.'s asylum application with the Chicago Immigration Court on July 10, 2023. All affidavits and supporting documents for K.'s case will be due 30 days prior to his individual merits hearing.

NIJC Contact

Moises Lopez Soltero, mlopezsoltero@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 23-0161283

12. P. is a man from Venezuela. His wife, Q., and daughter, R., are derivatives on his application and are also independently eligible for asylum. Their next Master Calendar hearing is on April 17, 2024. P. and his family speak Spanish and live in a northwestern suburb of Chicago.

Deadline: Master calendar hearing on 4/17/2024

Asylum Categories: Political Opinion, Religious Beliefs

Venue: Immigration Court

Language: Spanish

Location: IL

Country of Origin: Venezuela

Client's Story

P., Q., and P.'s brother worked for the opposition party in Venezuela. In 2020, the Venezuelan government special action forces murdered P.'s brother for his political activity. Police searched, threatened, and interrogated P. several times because of his work to mobilize voters. Venezuelan police and government agents entered their

home and stole valuables on three occasions. P., Q. and R. fled Venezuela and arrived in the U.S. in June 2022.

Important Client Context

NIJC timely filed their I-589s in March 2023. Their next Master Calendar hearing is April 17, 2024. All affidavits and supporting materials for their case will be due 15 days prior to their individual merits hearing, which has not yet been scheduled.

NIJC Contact

Lili Henkel, lhenkel@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 22-0155558

13. J. is a woman from Ecuador. Her daughter, S. is a derivative on her application for asylum and is also independently eligible. Their Master Calendar hearing is scheduled for April 22, 2024. J. and S. speak Spanish and live in Chicago.

Deadline: Master calendar hearing on 4/22/2024

Asylum Categories: Domestic and Gender Violence

Venue: Immigration Court

Language: English

Location: IL

Country of Origin: Ecuador

Client's Story

When J. was a young woman, she met her first partner and the father of her first two children. He abused her for several years until they separated. She made several reports against him. J. met her next partner, the father of her third child, S., a few years later. He also severely abused J. throughout their relationship, beating and threatening her often. She finally separated from him after several years, but he continued to threaten her. J. then entered a relationship with a woman. She and her partner faced a lot of discrimination, harassment and threats for being together. J.'s second partner often called to threaten her, insult her, and even found her and beat her up again. Several months before coming to the United States, J. and her partner received a letter at their home calling them lesbians and telling them they were going to be killed. They began preparing to come to the United States and fled together with J.'s daughter S. as soon as they had the money to do so. J. and S. arrived in the United States in July of 2021.

Important Client Context

NIJC timely filed their asylum applications with USCIS. J.'s first Master Calendar hearing is on April 22, 2024. All affidavits and supporting materials will be due 15 days prior to their individual merits hearing, which has not yet been scheduled.

NIJC Contact

Lili Henkel, lhenkel@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 21-0150688

14. E. is a woman from Guatemala. Her daughters, C., A., and N. are derivatives on her application. N. is also independently eligible for asylum. Their next Master Calendar hearing is on April 30, 2024. E., C., A., and N. speak Spanish and live in Chicago.

Deadline: Master calendar hearing on 4/30/2024

Asylum Categories: Political Opinion, Religious Beliefs

Venue: Immigration Court

Language: Spanish

Location: IL

Country of Origin: Guatemala

Client's Story

Members of an organized criminal group in Guatemala tried to force E.'s daughter, N., into prostitution. When N. and E. refused, the criminal group threatened to kidnap N. Fearing for her life, N. fled to the United States. After N. fled, the same people who had targeted N. threatened to force E. into prostitution and to kidnap her other

daughters. E., C., and A. fled to the United States to seek safety.

Important Client Context

NIJC timely filed E.'s asylum application, which includes N., C., and A. as derivatives. NIJC also filed an independent asylum application for N. E.'s next Master Calendar hearing is on April 30, 2024. N. is in separate proceedings and does not have a scheduled future hearing date. E.'s and N.'s pro bono attorneys should be prepared to request that their cases be consolidated. All supporting documents will be due 15 days prior to their individual merits hearing, which has not yet been scheduled.

NIJC Contact

Lili Henkel, lhenkel@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 20-0141426

15. X. is a transgender woman from Guatemala. She speaks Spanish and lives in Chicago. Her master calendar hearing is May 10, 2024.

Deadline: Master calendar hearing on 5/10/2024

Asylum Categories: LGBTQ+

Venue: Immigration Court

Language: Spanish

Location: IL

Country of Origin: Guatemala

Client's Story

X. fled Guatemala because she could not be open with her sexual orientation or gender identity. As a child, her cousin sexually abused X. Her family later rejected her after she came out as gay. As an adult, she suffered another sexual assault and sexual harassment at work, ultimately forcing her to quit her job and return home. At home, her childhood sexual abuser raped her again with a gun to her head. A group of homophobic people beat her so badly that she had to have her appendix removed and surgery on her intestines.

Important Client Context

In 2019, X. timely filed a pro se asylum application in ICE detention. At the time, she was afraid to disclose her trans identity and only shared her sexual orientation. After suffering a sexual assault in detention and disclosing her gender identity, a nonprofit attorney helped her amend her asylum application. In Chicago, X. still lives with transphobic family members and has struggled to feel comfortable presenting as a trans woman. X.'s first master calendar hearing in Chicago is May 10, 2024. When a merits hearing is set, all affidavits and supporting materials will be due 15 days prior.

NIJC Contact

Moises Lopez Soltero, mlopezsoltero@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 21-0145690

16. O. is a bisexual cisgender man from Colombia. He speaks Spanish and lives in a suburb of Chicago, Illinois. His master calendar hearing is May 30, 2024.

Deadline: Master calendar hearing on 5/30/2024

Asylum Categories: LGBTQ+

Venue: Immigration Court

Language: Spanish

Location: IL

Country of Origin: Colombia

Client's Story

When U. was a teenager, guerrilla militants barged into his family's home and sexually assaulted him, forcing him to perform oral sex and anally penetrating him. Around 4 years later, when U. told his family he is sexually and romantically attracted to men and women, his family made homophobic comments to him and said that he probably liked being raped. U. attempted to hide his sexual orientation out of fear of

violence. However, in March 2023, three men drugged and kidnapped U., called him homophobic slurs, and took turns raping him. U. tried to report this to the police after the men released him, but the police laughed in his face and refused to take down the report. When U. started receiving death threats from his kidnappers, where they said they knew U. attempted to report them to the police, U. fled to the United States.

Important Client Context

U.'s asylum application was timely filed with the immigration court. All affidavits and supporting materials for U. will be due 15 days prior to his individual merits hearing, which will likely be set at the master calendar hearing on May 30, 2024. If U. is granted asylum, U. would like to petition for his son, who remains in Colombia.

NIJC Contact

Moises Lopez Soltero, mlopezsoltero@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 23-0164200

17. B. is a man from Mexico. His wife, S., and their child, R., are derivatives on A.'s asylum application and are also independently eligible for asylum. Their next Master Calendar hearing is scheduled for June 11, 2024. The family speaks Spanish and lives in a western suburb of Chicago.

Deadline: Master calendar hearing on 6/11/2024

Asylum Categories: Political Opinion, Religious Beliefs

Venue: Immigration Court

Language: Spanish

Location: IL

Country of Origin: Mexico

Client's Story

A married couple from Mexico, B. and S. operated a store. In December 2020, members of Los Oaxacos cartel began demanding extortion money from them in order to keep their store open. Members of the Los Oaxacos cartel then surrounded and monitored their store daily and called B. to threaten him if he did not pay the extortion money. The cartel members threatened that they would harm the couple's son and disappear the family if they defied the cartel. The cartel also indicated that they were specifically targeting him because he is Afro-Mexican. After a few months, the family fled to a different part of Mexico, but the cartel continued to contact and threaten B. The family fled to the United States and was placed in removal proceedings.

Important Client Context

They are scheduled for their first Master Hearing on June 11, 2024, in immigration court. NIJC has timely filed their I-589 asylum applications, and their case is ready for an attorney to request a final individual merits hearing. All supporting materials and affidavits will be due 15 days prior to their individual merits hearing.

NIJC Contact

Lili Henkel, lhenkel@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 22-0153688

18. C. and K. are lesbian cisgender women from Mexico. They speak Spanish and live in the Chicago suburbs. K.'s first master calendar hearing is August 8, 2024, and C.'s first master calendar hearing is November 15, 2025, but their cases can be consolidated.

Deadline: Master calendar hearing on 8/8/2024

Asylum Categories: LGBTQ+

Venue: Immigration Court

Language: Spanish

Location: IL

Country of Origin: Mexico

Client's Story

Growing up, C.'s brothers beat her and her partner K. for being lesbians. The couple

attempted to relocate to another part of Mexico, but C. 's colleague threatened, drugged, and sexually assaulted her. He said he wanted to teach C. to like men. He threatened to kill both C. and K. They tried to report the colleague to the police, but the police refused to help them because they are lesbians. C. and K. tried to move again but continued receiving threatening messages. They fled to the United States in 2022.

Important Client Context

C. and K. timely filed for asylum. C. has prior removal order, but it does not impact her asylum eligibility. K.'s first master calendar hearing is August 8, 2024. C.'s first master calendar hearing is November 15, 2025. Pro bono counsel may discuss consolidating the cases with clients. When a merits hearing is set, all affidavits and supporting materials will be due 15 days prior. Pro bono counsel may request a merits date at the scheduled master calendar hearing or file a motion to set for merits at an earlier date.

NIJC Contact

Moises Lopez Soltero, mlopezsoltero@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Numbers: 22-0160531, 22-0160453

19. C. and K. are lesbian cisgender women from Mexico. They speak Spanish and live in the Chicago suburbs. K.'s first master calendar hearing is August 8, 2024, and C.'s first master calendar hearing is November 15, 2025, but their cases can be consolidated.

Deadline: Master calendar hearing on 8/8/2024

Asylum Categories: LGBTQ+

Venue: Immigration Court

Location: IL

Language: Spanish

Country of Origin: Mexico

Client's Story

Growing up, C.'s brothers beat her and her partner K. for being lesbians. The couple attempted to relocate to another part of Mexico, but C. 's colleague threatened, drugged, and sexually assaulted her. He said he wanted to teach C. to like men. He threatened to kill both C. and K. They tried to report the colleague to the police, but the police refused to help them because they are lesbians. C. and K. tried to move again but continued receiving threatening messages. They fled to the United States in 2022.

Important Client Context

C. and K. timely filed for asylum. C. has prior removal order, but it does not impact her asylum eligibility. K.'s first master calendar hearing is August 8, 2024. C.'s first master calendar hearing is November 15, 2025. Pro bono counsel may discuss consolidating the cases with clients. When a merits hearing is set, all affidavits and supporting materials will be due 15 days prior. Pro bono counsel may request a merits date at the scheduled master calendar hearing or file a motion to set for merits at an earlier date.

NIJC Contact

Moises Lopez Soltero, mlopezsoltero@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Numbers: 22-0160453, 22-0160531

20. S. is a man from Togo. His next Master Calendar hearing is on September 4, 2024. He speaks French and lives in Chicago.

Deadline: Master calendar hearing on 9/4/2024

Asylum Categories: Political Opinion, Religious Beliefs

Venue: Immigration Court

Location: IL

Languages: French, English

Country of Origin: Togo

Client's Story

S. joined the PNP political party in 2017 to protest the lack of democracy in Togo. He became party secretary and mobilized individuals to join PNP protests. In 2018, the police beat S. during a protest and threatened to kill him. The police attempted to drag S. to their vehicle, but other protesters saw this and threw things at the officers. The police let go of S. and he was able to escape. With help from his father, S. fled to another village. He remained in hiding there for two weeks, but continued to receive threats daily via phone. During this time, the police gave S.'s father a summons for S. to go to the police station. S. fled to Brazil and lived there without status for almost two years until he received more threats. He then went to Mexico before entering the United States in 2021.

Important Client Context

S. timely filed his asylum application with the Chicago Immigration Court. All filings will be due 15 days prior to his individual merits hearing, which has not yet been scheduled.

NIJC Contact

Lili Henkel, lhenkel@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 23-0161245

21. C. is a woman from Cameroon. Her next Master Calendar hearing is scheduled for September 18, 2024. C. speaks French and lives in Chicago.

Deadline: Master calendar hearing on 9/18/2024

Asylum Categories: Political Opinion, Religious Beliefs

Venue: Immigration Court

Language: French

Location: IL

Country of Origin: Cameroon

Client's Story

C. was physically and emotionally abused by the father of her children for over 20 years. C. is Catholic. Her children's father abused her because she refused to convert to Islam and to change her name to an Islamic name. C. experienced abuse weekly and tried to escape several times, but her abuser found her every time and forced her to return to him. C. eventually fled to the United States.

Important Client Context

NIJC timely filed C.'s asylum application with the Chicago Immigration Court. All affidavits and supporting materials will be due 15 days prior to her individual merits hearing, which has not yet been scheduled.

NIJC Contact

Lili Henkel, lhenkel@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 22-0153318

22. H. is a gay cisgender man from Venezuela. He speaks Spanish and lives in Chicago. His first master calendar hearing is November 19, 2024.

Deadline: Master calendar hearing on 11/19/2024

Asylum Categories: LGBTQ+, Political Opinion, Religious Beliefs

Venue: Immigration Court

Language: English

Location: IL

Country of Origin: Venezuela

Client's Story

From a young age, H. faced abuse, harassment and bullying for being more effeminate. His father told H. he "would rather have a dead son than a gay son." H. learned to hide his sexual orientation out of fear. As an adult, H. was fired from his government job after his boss found out H. is gay. H. also believes he was fired because he refused to support President Maduro. H. relocated to another part of

Venezuela out of fear of political retaliation and other government sponsored violence. However, outside of the capital, he felt even more fear of being outed, attacked, and even killed because of his sexual orientation and political opinion.

Important Client Context

H.'s asylum application was timely filed with the Chicago Immigration Court. H.'s first master calendar hearing is November 19, 2024. When his merits hearing is set, all affidavits and supporting materials will be due 15 days prior. Pro bono counsel may request a merits date at the scheduled master hearing or file a motion to set for merits at an earlier date.

NIJC Contact

Moises Lopez Soltero, mlopezsoltero@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 22-0157128

23. E. is a HIV positive gay cisgender man from Venezuela. He speaks Spanish, and he lives in Chicago, Illinois. His first master calendar hearing is January 6, 2025.

Deadline: Master calendar hearing on 1/6/2025

Asylum Categories: LGBTQ+

Venue: Immigration Court

Language: Spanish

Location: IL

Country of Origin: Venezuela

Client's Story

E. has hidden his sexual orientation from a young age out of fear of homophobic violence. He was fired from his government job after he refused to participate in marches supporting President Maduro. He ultimately fled Venezuela after he was denied medical treatment in August 2022 because of his HIV status. E. felt he had no recourse because if he sought legal action, more people would know his HIV status, which he feared would lead to losing his job and further discrimination.

Important Client Context

E.'s asylum application was timely filed on August 11, 2023. All affidavits and supporting materials for E. will be due 15 days prior to his individual merits hearing. If the client and pro bono counsel agree, counsel can file a motion to set the case for merits.

NIJC Contact

Moises Lopez Soltero, mlopezsoltero@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 23-0161398

24. L. is a lesbian cisgender woman from Colombia. She speaks Spanish and lives in Chicago. Her first master calendar hearing is on January 16, 2025.

Deadline: Master calendar hearing on 1/16/2025

Asylum Categories: LGBTQ+

Venue: Immigration Court

Language: Spanish

Location: IL

Country of Origin: Colombia

Client's Story

L. faced violence and discrimination for dressing and acting in ways considered masculine. She was sent to the school psychologist to cure her "gay tendencies." When she came out to her mother, her mother rejected L. and beat her. A group of men then drugged, kidnapped, and raped L. because she dressed like a lesbian. Years later, a different group of men tried to grab and attack L. and a friend to "teach them how to be women." L. and her friend ran to the police, but the police refused to help them.

Important Client Context

Since 2017, L. mostly lived outside of Colombia because she could not tolerate the

homophobia. She spent several years in Brazil and briefly lived in Chile and Ecuador, but she did not request or have legal status or a work permit in any of these countries. Pro bono counsel will need to argue, with NIJC's support, that L. was not firmly resettled in any of these countries. L.'s asylum application was timely filed with the Chicago Immigration Court on July 10, 2023. When her merits hearing is set, all affidavits and supporting materials will be due 15 days prior. Pro bono counsel may request a merits date at the scheduled master calendar hearing or file a motion to set for merits at an earlier date.

NIJC Contact

Moises Lopez Soltero, mlopezsoltero@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 23-0161948

25. R. is a man from Colombia. His wife, M., and children, J., G., and S., are derivatives on his application and are also independently eligible for asylum. Their next Master Calendar hearing is on February 24, 2025. R. and his family speak Spanish and live in a southwestern suburb of Chicago.

Deadline: Master calendar hearing on 2/24/2025

Asylum Categories: Political Opinion, Religious Beliefs

Venue: Immigration Court

Language: Spanish

Location: IL

Country of Origin: Colombia

Client's Story

R. owned a computer repair business in Colombia. While doing a job in 2022, he accidentally discovered an organization that stole motorcycles and overheard an official's name. After finishing the job, he and his family received numerous threats. A police officer stopped R., placed him in the police car, and threatened him to stay silent about what he saw on the computer. Later, men kidnapped and beat R., threatening the life of his pregnant wife and disabled son. R. and his family fled Colombia and arrived in the US July 2022.

Important Client Context

Their next Master Calendar hearing is on February 24, 2025. All affidavits and supporting materials for their case will be due 15 days prior to their individual merits hearing, which has not yet been scheduled.

NIJC Contact

Lili Henkel, lhenkel@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 23-0161686

26. F. is a man from Mexico. His wife, C., and their children, T. and R., are derivatives on his application for asylum and are also independently eligible for asylum. Their merits hearing is on March 4, 2025. F. and his family speak Spanish and live in Chicago.

Deadline: Merits hearing on 3/4/2025

Asylum Categories: Political Opinion, Religious Beliefs

Venue: Immigration Court

Language: Spanish

Location: IL

Country of Origin: Mexico

Client's Story

F. and his eldest son, T., were working together at their wood mill in Mexico when members of a cartel approached them and demanded that T. start working for them. F. refused to let the cartel take his son and told the cartel members that T. wanted to remain with his family and earn an honest living. Soon after, the cartel members threatened to kill the entire family and kidnap T. if he did not work with them. The cartel gave the family two days to decide, and F. chose to flee with his wife and children. F., C., T., and R. entered the United States in December 2019.

Important Client Context

NIJC timely filed F., C., T., and R.'s applications for asylum. All documentation to their case will be due 15 days prior to their individual merits hearing, which is scheduled for March 4, 2025.

NIJC Contact

Lili Henkel, lhenkel@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 20-0143334

27. R. is a woman from Angola. Her sons, S. and T., are derivatives on her asylum application and are also independently eligible for asylum. Their Master Calendar hearing is on April 7, 2025. R., S., and T. speak Portuguese and live in Chicago.

Deadline: Master calendar hearing on 4/7/2025

Asylum Categories: Political Opinion, Religious Beliefs

Venue: Immigration Court

Languages: Portuguese, Spanish

Location: IL

Country of Origin: Angola

Client's Story

R. was a doctor in Angola during the COVID-19 pandemic. She refused to falsify documents and participate in the corruption in which her employer and the Angolan government were involved. R. participated in public protests against this corruption, and police detained her as a result. Unknown individuals attacked and sexually assaulted R. because of her opposition. R.'s son, S., was kidnapped by individuals who told R. that this had happened because of her political opinions. S. was later returned to R., and she fled with her children to the United States in March 2023. R. is also a domestic abuse survivor. Beginning in 2019 and lasting until she left Angola, R.'s former husband, from whom she is now separated, physically and emotionally abused her.

Important Client Context

R. has one U.S. citizen child, U. R. timely filed her asylum application with the immigration court in December 2023. NIJC timely filed independent asylum applications for S. and T. in February 2024. All affidavits and supporting materials for R., S., and T.'s case will be due 15 days prior to their individual merits hearing, which has not yet been scheduled. Pro bono counsel may request a merits date at the scheduled master hearing or file a motion to set for merits at an earlier date.

NIJC Contact

Lili Henkel, lhenkel@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 23-0166536

28. G. is a young woman from Honduras. Her son, P., is a derivative on her asylum application. Their merits hearing is on April 25, 2025. G. and P. speak Spanish and live in Northcentral Indiana.

Deadline: Merits hearing on 4/25/2025

Asylum Categories: Domestic and Gender Violence

Venue: Immigration Court

Language: Spanish

Location: IN

Country of Origin: Honduras

Client's Story

G. met, T., around 2018 and moved in with him. T. controlled G.'s actions throughout their relationship, dictating what she wore and locking her in the house. He abused her physically and emotionally. Around 2019, G. gave birth to T.'s son, P. G. and P. escaped from T. in 2020, but T. broke into the house where G. was living and forcibly took P. from her, demanding that G. return to his house. With help from family members, G. recovered P. and they moved to a different town in Honduras to hide

from T. G. began a relationship with another man, but feared that T. would never allow her to be free of him. She feared that T. would take P. from her again. In the winter of 2021, G. and P. fled Honduras and arrived in the United States.

Important Client Context

NIJC timely filed their applications for asylum. All affidavits and supporting materials will be due 15 days prior to their individual merits hearing, which is scheduled for April 25, 2025.

NIJC Contact

Lili Henkel, lhenkel@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 21-0152262

29. R. is a woman from Honduras. Her two children, S. and E., are derivatives on her application for asylum. Their next Master Calendar hearing is May 07, 2025. The family speaks Spanish and lives in Northern Indiana.

Deadline: Master calendar hearing on 5/7/2025

Asylum Categories: Political Opinion, Religious Beliefs

Venue: Immigration Court

Language: Spanish

Location: IN

Country of Origin: Honduras

Client's Story

When R. was a child, the director of her school molested her several times. As a teenager, a much older man forced her into a relationship in which he verbally and sexually abused her. R. left him after several years of abuse. Later, R. became involved in politics. The local gang told R. to help their gang leader get into her political party and threatened kill her otherwise. R. refused and fled the country with her children.

Important Client Context

NIJC timely filed their asylum applications. R.'s next Master Calendar Hearing is on May 07, 2025. All affidavits and supporting materials will be due 15 days prior to their individual merits hearing, which has not yet been scheduled.

NIJC Contact

Lili Henkel, lhenkel@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 22-0153250

30. L. is a man from Cuba. His Master Calendar hearing is scheduled for June 16, 2025. L. speaks Spanish and lives in the Western suburbs of Chicago.

Deadline: Master calendar hearing on 6/16/2025

Asylum Categories: Political Opinion, Religious Beliefs

Venue: Immigration Court

Language: Spanish

Location: IL

Country of Origin: Cuba

Client's Story

L. attended anti-government protests in July 2021. A few days later, police arrived at his house and began threatening him. They told him that unless he paid 200 pesos, he was going to be jailed. Eventually, L was put in jail and was detained for several days. Afraid to be jailed again, L. fled for the United States.

Important Client Context

NIJC timely filed his asylum application USCIS. L.'s first Master Calendar hearing is on June 16, 2023. All affidavits and supporting materials will be due 15 days prior to his merits hearing, which has not yet been scheduled.

NIJC Contact

Lili Henkel, lhenkel@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 22-0155448

31. P. is a man from Angola. His wife Q., and children, R., S., T., U., and V. are all derivatives on his application for asylum. P., Q., R., S., U., and V.'s merits hearing is on June 24, 2025. USCIS has jurisdiction over T.'s case; she is awaiting her asylum interview date. P. and his family speak Portuguese and live on the Southside of Chicago.

Deadline: Merits hearing on 6/24/2025

Asylum Categories: Political Opinion, Religious Beliefs

Venue: Immigration Court

Language: Portuguese

Location: IL

Country of Origin: Angola

Client's Story

P. was a teacher. As a government worker, he was expected to support the government in power, "the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola" (the MPLA). P. refused to participate in pro government marches and offer his support to the MPLA. P.'s wife, Q., occasionally showed support for the government's opposition and participated in anti-government marches. During one of these marches, security guards saw Q. and identified her as part of the opposition party. Soon after, P. and his family began to receive threatening phone calls in which they were accused of being traitors. P. believes that the MPLA was targeting them as anti-government. Over the next few months, P. was kidnapped, beaten, threatened with death, and persecuted. His wife and children were also victims of attempted harm including threats and attempted kidnapping. The family reported multiple instances of harm to the police, but they never received any protection. In September 2022, men on motorcycles followed and shot at P. and the children. Soon after, they obtained tourist visas to Brazil and fled Angola. From Brazil, they made their way north and entered the United States in February 2023.

Important Client Context

NIJC timely filed P., Q., R., S., U., and V.'s applications for asylum with the immigration court, and P.'s children are listed as derivatives on his application. All affidavits and supporting materials to their case will be due 15 days prior to their individual merits hearing on June 24, 2025. NIJC timely filed T.'s application for asylum with USCIS. All supporting materials for T.'s case will be due one week prior to her asylum interview. If P. is granted asylum before his daughter receives an interview, he will be able to file an asylee relative petition for her.

NIJC Contact

Lili Henkel, lhenkel@immigrantjustice.org

NIJC Case Number: 23-0163395

32. J. is a gay cisgender man from Colombia. He speaks Spanish and lives in the western suburbs of Chicago, Illinois. His defensive asylum application is pending with the immigration court. His merits hearing is on July 29, 2025.

Deadline: Merits hearing on 7/29/2025

Asylum Categories: LGBTQ+

Venue: Immigration Court

Language: Spanish

Location: IL

Country of Origin: Colombia

Client's Story

As a child, J.'s peers frequently called him anti-LGBTQ slurs because they perceived him as feminine. In 2018, men attacked and sexually abused J. while calling him slurs. J. contracted HIV from the assault. Later that year, another group of men beat J. while calling him anti-LGBTQ slurs and threatening to kill his family if he went to the police. J. fears living openly as a gay man in Colombia and fears that sharing his HIV status and abuse with anyone would put him at risk for further harm. J. believes

the Colombian police are corrupt and anti-LGBTQ and would not protect him from future harm. J. fled to the United State after meeting his partner online who told J. about the possibility of living freely as a gay person in the United States.

Important Client Context

J. timely filed his asylum application pro se on March 13, 2023. J. is currently set for a merits hearing on July 29, 2025. All affidavits and supporting documents for J.'s case will be due 15 days prior to his merits hearing.

NIJC Contact

Moises Lopez Soltero, mlopezsoltero@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 23-0161824

33. E. is a young man from Guatemala. He has a Master Calendar hearing is on August 6, 2025, but because he was a designated unaccompanied child, the asylum office has jurisdiction over his pending asylum claim. E. speaks Spanish and lives in Chicago.

Deadline: Master calendar hearing on 8/6/2025

Asylum Categories: Political Opinion, Religious Beliefs

Venue: Immigration Court, USCIS

Language: Spanish

Location: IL

Country of Origin: Guatemala

Client's Story

When E. was in high school, local gang members began to demand that E. help them with their illegal activities. E. refused, and the gang members pushed him to the ground. The gang members continued demanding that E. assist them. Each time, E. refused, and the gang members beat him. The gang then killed E.'s cousin for defying their demands. The gang's threats escalated to the point that the gang members threatened him with a gun in late 2020 or early 2021. E. fled Guatemala soon afterwards. Immigration officers apprehended E. and placed him in ORR custody.

Important Client Context

As a previously designated unaccompanied child, the asylum office has initial jurisdiction over E.'s case even though he is scheduled for a Master Calendar Hearing in immigration court on August 6, 2025. NIJC timely filed E.'s skeletal asylum application with USCIS. Affidavits and other supporting documents will be due one week prior to his interview at the asylum office, which could be scheduled at any time.

NIJC Contact

Lili Henkel, lhenkel@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 21-0150685

34. N. is a woman from Ecuador. Both N. and her partner, S., have individual asylum applications. Their merits hearing is scheduled for August 20, 2025. N. and S. speak Spanish and live in Chicago.

Deadline: Merits hearing on 8/20/2025

Asylum Categories: Domestic and Gender Violence

Venue: Immigration Court

Language: Spanish

Location: IL

Country of Origin: Ecuador

Client's Story

W., the father of N.'s son, abused N. both during and after their relationship. After W. verbally abused her and destroyed items in their shared home, N. filed a police report, went to court for domestic violence and moved out, taking their son with her. The police did nothing to help her. W. stalked and threatened N. When N. began a relationship with S., W. threatened S. W. also followed N. to her job, where he

physically assaulted her and threatened her with a knife. W. also assaulted S. at his job, resulting in an injury to S.'s arm. When N. became pregnant with S.'s child, W. continued to threaten them, saying he would make sure that N. lost the child. N. and S. fled Ecuador to escape W., who has continued to send N. threatening messages.

Important Client Context

NIJC timely filed N. and S.'s asylum application with the immigration court. R. has traveled to the United States and is currently waiting to be reunited with N. while in ORR custody. N. and S.'s child is a United States Citizen. All affidavits and supporting materials for their case will be due 15 days prior to their individual merits hearing, which is scheduled for on August 20, 2025.

NIJC Contact

Lili Henkel, lhenkel@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 23-0162173

35. K. is a woman from Ecuador. Her husband, L., and son, C., are derivatives on her asylum application. L. also independently filed for asylum. Their individual merits hearing is scheduled for September 18, 2025. K. and her family speak Kichwa and very limited Spanish. They live in Chicago.

Deadline: Merits hearing on 9/18/2025

Asylum Categories:

Venue: Immigration Court

Location: IL

Languages: Kichwa, Spanish

Country of Origin: Ecuador

Client's Story

K. and her husband, L., operated a general store in Ecuador. One day, two men vandalized K. and L.'s vehicle, demanded money from them, and threatened to kill them because of their indigenous identities. The same men later physically assaulted K. and L. at their business, and they had to seek treatment at the hospital for their injuries. After this attack, K., L., and C. went to live in hiding with L.'s family. The men found them and physically assaulted L.'s mother. K., L., and C. fled Ecuador and arrived in the United States around July 2023.

Important Client Context

NIJC timely filed K., L., and C.'s asylum applications. All affidavits and supporting materials for K., L., and C.'s case will be due 15 days prior to their merits hearing, which is scheduled for September 18, 2025.

NIJC Contact

Lili Henkel, lhenkel@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 23-0164427

36. K. is a man from Ecuador. His wife, L., and daughter, M., are derivatives on his asylum application, and L. is also independently eligible for asylum. K., L., and M.'s merits hearing is on October 9, 2025. K. and his family speak Spanish and live in Chicago.

Deadline: Merits hearing on 10/9/2025

Asylum Categories: Political Opinion, Religious Beliefs

Venue: Immigration Court

Location: IL

Languages: Kichwa, Spanish

Country of Origin: Ecuador

Client's Story

K. and his wife, L., operated a fruit stand in Ecuador. K. and L. were approached by gang members who threatened their lives if they did not give them the money they demanded. K. was physically beaten and robbed by the gang members while trying to protect L. K. and L. paid the gang members for a month up until they ran out of money. K. and L. fled Ecuador with their daughter, M., and arrived in the United

States around June 2023.

Important Client Context

NIJC timely filed their asylum applications with the immigration court. All affidavits and supporting materials for K., L. and M.'s case will be due 15 days prior to their individual merits hearing, which is scheduled for October 9, 2025.

NIJC Contact

Lili Henkel, lhenkel@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 23-0164144

37. W. is a man from Colombia. His wife, X., and daughters, Y. and Z., are derivatives on his application and are also independently eligible for asylum. W., X., Y., and Z.'s master calendar hearing is on April 29, 2026. W. and his family speak Spanish and live in a northwest suburb of Chicago.

Deadline: Master calendar hearing on 4/29/2026

Asylum Categories: Political Opinion, Religious Beliefs

Venue: Immigration Court

Language: Spanish

Location: IL

Country of Origin: Colombia

Client's Story

W. and X. protested at public demonstrations and participated in political meetings to organize support for leftist candidates in Colombia. In spring of 2023, they experienced threats from a paramilitary group opposed to their activities. They were targeted because they had relationships with liberal politicians through their construction company. The paramilitary group attempted to extort them for money, but they refused to provide it. Although the family reported their experience to the police, the police refused to provide them with any protection. Fearing for their safety, they fled to the United States.

Important Client Context

NIJC timely filed asylum applications for W., X., Y., and Z. Their Master Calendar hearing is scheduled for April 29, 2026. All affidavits and supporting materials to their case will be due 15 days prior to their individual merits hearing, which has not yet been scheduled.

NIJC Contact

Lili Henkel, lhenkel@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 23-0164381

38. H. is a bisexual cisgender man from Benin. His merits hearing is scheduled for June 24, 2026. H. speaks French and lives in Chicago, IL.

Deadline: Merits hearing on 6/24/2026

Asylum Categories: LGBTQ+

Venue: Immigration Court

Languages: French, Other

Location: IL

Country of Origin: Benin

Client's Story

H. fled Benin after he suffered several attacks related to his sexual orientation. The attacks began when neighbors walked in on him and a same-sex partner and beat them both. Soon after this first attack, several men approached and beat H. while threatening to kill him because of his sexual orientation. H. then began receiving threatening messages and left the city where he was living in order to be safe. When H. was chased and threatened because of his sexual orientation in this second town, he fled the country because he did not believe he could be safe anywhere in Benin. H. fled Benin in May 2021 and entered the United States in September 2021.

Important Client Context

NIJC timely filed H.'s I-589 on September 2, 2022. All affidavits and supporting materials for H.'s case will be due 15 days prior to his individual merits hearing. H. married a woman in 2019, feeling obliged to hide his sexual orientation. He and his wife have one child; his wife and child reside in Benin.

NIJC Contact

Moises Lopez Soltero, mlopezsoltero@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 22-0154068

39. A. is a man from Cuba. A.'s wife L. will be a derivative on his asylum application and is also independently eligible for asylum. A. and L. speak Spanish and live in a southern suburb of Chicago.

Asylum Categories: Political Opinion, Religious Beliefs

Venue: Immigration Court

Language: Spanish

Location: IL

Country of Origin: Cuba

Client's Story

A. was drafted for military service. When he refused to participate, he was detained, tortured, and subjected to beatings and threats to disappear him. Afterwards, A. continued to refuse to participate in the military and began protesting on the streets against the government. Later, A. began a small business, but his supplies were confiscated by government officials at the airport and later government inspectors came to his home to confiscate all of his work tools, equipment, and supplies. The inspectors threatened to disappear A. and extorted him for money. A. fled Cuba in early 2018.

L. was forced to participate in pro-government school and community events when she was young which solidified her anti-government beliefs. Later, L. became an attorney and worked for a state-owned company where she was singled out by her employer as someone who did not participate in pro-government events. L. was asked to testify falsely on behalf of her employer and when she refused, she was threatened, suspended from her job, and interrogated and sexually assaulted by the police. L. fled Cuba in July 2018. L. and A. met while still in Cuba, and later married *en route* to the United States.

Important Client Context

Although A. and L. were issued Notices to Appear (NTAs), the Department of Homeland Security has not filed the NTAs with the immigration court, so their asylum applications were timely filed with USCIS. Once their NTAs are filed with the court, they will be placed into court proceedings. All affidavits and supporting materials will be due 15 days prior to their individual merits hearing.

NIJC Contact

Lili Henkel, lhenkel@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 21-0150113

40. A. is a man from Ecuador. His wife, B., and daughter, C., are derivatives on his application and are also independently eligible for asylum. A. and his family speak Kichwa and live in Chicago.

Asylum Categories: Political Opinion, Religious Beliefs

Venue: Immigration Court

Languages: Kichwa, Spanish

Location: IL

Country of Origin: Ecuador

Client's Story

A. and his family are from a historically disenfranchised indigenous group in Ecuador. A. and B. participated in indigenous-led protests against the Ecuadorian government in 2022 and were injured by tear gas when the government attacked the

protestors. After the protests, government actors followed and intimidated A. and B. A few months later, masked men robbed them, stealing many of the animals from their farm. The masked men may have been associated with a high-security prison for gang members that the government recently placed in the family's community. When the A. tried to report the robbery to the police, the police refused to act. The family fled to the United States and were again robbed during their journey.

Important Client Context

NIJC timely filed the asylum applications for A., B., and C. They are awaiting the rescheduling of their Master Calendar hearing. All affidavits and supporting materials to their case will be due 15 days prior to their individual merits hearing, which has not yet been scheduled.

NIJC Contact

Lili Henkel, lhenkel@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 23-0164443

41. A. is a woman from Honduras. Her daughter, B., is a derivative on her application and is also independently eligible for asylum. They are currently waiting for their Master Calendar hearing to be rescheduled. They speak Spanish and live in Northern Illinois.

Asylum Categories: Political Opinion, Religious Beliefs

Venue: Immigration Court

Language: Spanish

Location: IL

Country of Origin: Honduras

Client's Story

As a child, an older cousin raped A. As a young woman, A.'s partner physically and verbally abused her over the course of several years. Once separated from her abusive partner, an armed MS-13 gang member demanded she become his girlfriend since she no longer had a husband. The MS-13 gang member threatened he would take A's young daughter, B., if she refused. A. and B. fled Honduras in 2019.

Important Client Context

NIJC filed their asylum applications with the immigration court, but because they filed more than one year after their arrival, A.'s pro bono attorneys will need to argue that they merit an exception to the one-year filing deadline. NIJC will assist them in making that argument. All documentation to their cases will be due 15 days prior to their individual merits hearing, which has not yet been scheduled.

NIJC Contact

Lili Henkel, lhenkel@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 21-0146245

42. A. is a woman from Mexico. Her daughter, B., is a derivative on her application and is also independently eligible for asylum. A. and B. speak Spanish and live in Chicago.

Asylum Categories: Domestic and Gender Violence

Venue: Immigration Court

Language: Spanish

Location: IL

Country of Origin: Mexico

Client's Story

A. has experienced domestic violence since she was a child. Her father forced her to marry a man when she was a young teen because she became pregnant with his child. This man was physically, sexually, and psychologically abusive to her throughout their relationship. When A. tried to separate from him, he took their two children and disappeared. She has only seen her eldest children once since then. A. later began a relationship with another man, B.'s father, who was also abusive. She left the relationship and was living alone with B. when she was robbed and assaulted

by people she thinks may have been in the local cartel. A few months after the initial assault, someone shot into her house and she began to receive menacing phone calls. She decided to leave her area because she no longer felt safe, and while she was waiting to cross the border to the United States, she saw a boy get stabbed. Because of these experiences, A. does not feel safe anywhere in Mexico.

Important Client Context

A. has an NTA, but it has not yet been filed with the immigration court. Until this occurs, USCIS maintains jurisdiction over her case. NIJC timely filed asylum applications for A. and B. with USCIS. All affidavits and supporting materials to her case will be due 15 days prior to her individual merits hearing, which has not yet been scheduled.

NIJC Contact

Lili Henkel, lhenkel@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 23-0165078

43. B. is a woman from Guatemala. Her daughters, C. and D., are derivatives on her application and are also independently eligible for asylum. B. and her family speak Mam and live in Chicago.

Asylum Categories: Political Opinion, Religious Beliefs

Venue: Immigration Court

Languages: Mam, Spanish

Location: IL

Country of Origin: Guatemala

Client's Story

B. is an indigenous woman from a rural area of Guatemala. Police refused to act when her father was killed a year ago and her uncle was assaulted. In order to build her house, B. had to borrow money from a local lender who later threatened to harm her if she did not pay him back on time. She has been unable to pay the interest on her loan, but many in her community still think she is wealthy because her partner works in the United States. Young girls have been kidnapped and raped in B.'s village, and she feared this could happen to her or her daughters.

Important Client Context

B. lives with her partner in Chicago, but NIJC does not represent him as a client. NIJC timely filed the asylum applications for B., C., and D. They are awaiting the rescheduling of their Master Calendar hearing. All affidavits and supporting materials to their case will be due 15 days prior to their individual merits hearing, which has not yet been scheduled.

NIJC Contact

Lili Henkel, lhenkel@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 23-0164176

44. C. is a woman from Venezuela. C. speaks Spanish and lives in a western suburb of Chicago.

Asylum Categories: Political Opinion, Religious Beliefs

Venue: Immigration Court

Language: Spanish

Location: IL

Country of Origin: Venezuela

Client's Story

C. was part of Venezuela's national criminal investigations unit. She witnessed how the government represses pro-democracy protestors when her unit became involved in arresting protestors. C. refused orders to work at a demonstration, and her supervisors punished her and prohibited her from resigning as a result of her opposition. Out of fear, C. fled the country. She believes that if she were to return to Venezuela, she would be detained and mistreated by the government.

Important Client Context

When C. entered the United States, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) issued her a Notice to Appear (NTA), but the NTA has not yet been filed with the immigration court. Unless and until her NTA is filed with the court, USCIS retains initial jurisdiction over her asylum application. For this reason, NIJC attorneys filed C.'s asylum application with USCIS in October 2021. Once her NTA is filed with the court, C. will be placed into court proceedings. All affidavits and supporting materials will be due 15 days prior to her individual merits hearing, which has not yet been scheduled.

NIJC Contact

Lili Henkel, lhenkel@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 21-0151462

45. G. is a woman from Honduras. Her son, E., and her partner, R., will be derivatives on her asylum application. G. speaks Spanish and lives in western suburb of Indianapolis.

Asylum Categories: Political Opinion, Religious Beliefs

Venue: Immigration Court

Language: Spanish

Location: IN

Country of Origin: Honduras

Client's Story

G. began receiving threats from her aunt's ex-partner because G. and her family refused to tell him where her aunt was after she fled Honduras. Another one of G.'s aunts was kidnapped by a local gang leader related to her aunt's ex-partner. Gang members tortured this aunt and left her for dead. G. and her partner, R., fled with her family to Mexico, but while in Mexico, G. began to receive threatening messages from gang members stating that they knew the family's whereabouts and would make them pay for disobeying.

Important Client Context

G., R., and E. were issued Notices to Appear (NTAs) by the Department of Homeland Security when they entered the United States, but their NTAs have not yet been filed with the immigration court, so USCIS retains initial jurisdiction over their applications for asylum. NIJC timely filed G., E., and R.'s asylum applications with USCIS. Once their NTAs are filed with the court, they will be placed into removal proceedings. All affidavits and supporting materials will be due 15 days prior to their individual merits hearing, which has not yet been scheduled.

NIJC Contact

Lili Henkel, lhenkel@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 21-0152573

46. K. is a man from Honduras. His next Master Calendar hearing was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic and has not yet been rescheduled. K. speaks Spanish and lives in Chicago.

Asylum Categories: Political Opinion, Religious Beliefs

Venue: Immigration Court

Language: Spanish

Location: IL

Country of Origin: Honduras

Client's Story

K. was part of an opposition political party in Honduras and was very active in the protest movement. In 2015, armed men from the Honduran military kidnapped and beat him. They threatened that he had to leave the country or end his participation in the political party. After K. escaped, he reported the kidnapping and torture to the police. After filing the police report, Honduran military and government officials constantly threatened K. that he had to leave the country. Fearing further attacks, he

fled to the United States July 2018.

Important Client Context

K. filed his application for asylum pro se with the immigration court. Because he filed more than one year after his arrival, K.'s pro bono attorneys will need to argue that he merits an exception to the one-year filing deadline. NIJC will assist them in making that argument. All affidavits and supporting materials to K.'s case will be due 15 days prior to his individual merits hearing, which has not yet been scheduled.

NIJC Contact

Lili Henkel, lhenkel@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 20-0143330

47. L. is a man from Honduras. L.'s Master Calendar hearing was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic and has not been rescheduled. L. speaks Spanish and lives in a southwestern suburb of Chicago.

Asylum Categories: Political Opinion, Religious Beliefs

Venue: Immigration Court

Language: Spanish

Location: IL

Country of Origin: Honduras

Client's Story

In 2018, L. was living with his former partner, D., when she began to receive threatening text messages from her ex-husband. Within a few days, D.'s ex-husband murdered her. Soon after, L. began to receive threatening messages from men associated with D.'s ex-husband. These men also started to intimidate L.'s family while they were looking for him. L. assisted D.'s family in making a police report about the murder, but nothing significant came of it and police even tried to blame L. for D.'s death. L. fled Honduras about a month after D.'s death, fearing that the same people who killed her would come for him next.

Important Client Context

L. filed a pro se application for asylum with the immigration court in 2020. Because this application was filed more than one year after he entered the United States, L.'s pro bono attorneys will need to argue that he merits an exception to the one-year filing deadline for asylum. NIJC will assist them in making that argument. All affidavits and supporting materials to L.'s case will be due 15 days prior to his individual merits hearing, which has not yet been scheduled.

NIJC Contact

Lili Henkel, lhenkel@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 20-0142467

48. L. is a woman from Cameroon. She, her partner O., and their daughter, B. The family speaks French and lives in Chicago.

Asylum Categories: Domestic and Gender Violence, Political Opinion, Religious Beliefs

Venue: Immigration Court

Language: French

Location: IL

Country of Origin: Cameroon

Client's Story

L. was forced into marriage as a child. Her husband routinely raped and abused her. He threw their newborn baby against the wall, killing the infant. After several years of horrific abuse, L. escaped and relocated to another city but was left homeless. While on the streets, she suffered multiple rapes. A woman found L. and offered her a place to stay, but the woman's husband also raped L. The woman and her husband then trafficked L. to Brazil, promising L. work as a maid in a family member's home, but instead forcing her into a life of prostitution. While in Brazil, L. met O., who had

fled Cameroon several years prior to escape political persecution. O. helped L. escape the forced prostitution, and the two relocated to another city in Brazil. After giving birth to their daughter, B., L. learned that her traffickers, who are members of the Nigerian mafia, continued to search for L., O., and B. and intended to kill them. Fearing for their lives, L., O., and B. fled to the United States.

Important Client Context

NIJC timely filed their applications for asylum with the Chicago Immigration Court. Their pro bono attorneys should be prepared to argue, with NIJC support, that the firm resettlement bar does not apply to their cases. All filings will be due 15 days prior to their merits hearing, which has not yet been scheduled.

NIJC Contact

Lili Henkel, lhenkel@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Numbers: 22-0155648, 22-0155670

49. L. is a woman from Guatemala. Her children, G. and J., are derivatives on her application for asylum and are also independently eligible for asylum. The family speaks Spanish and lives in the Indianapolis area.

Asylum Categories: Domestic and Gender Violence

Venue: Immigration Court

Language: Spanish

Location: IN

Country of Origin: Guatemala

Client's Story

L. endured sexual, physical, and emotional abuse from X., the father of her children. X. raped her regularly and threatened to kill her or her parents when she disagreed with him or tried to end the relationship. X. began selling drugs and was implicated in a triple femicide. When he was arrested, the victims' families surrounded L.'s house and threatened to kill her and her children as punishment for X.'s crimes. L. and her children fled Guatemala to escape the threats and X. Since arriving to the United States, X. has contacted L. and threatened to kill her for abandoning him.

Important Client Context

L. filed her asylum application pro se with the immigration court. Because L.'s application was filed more than one year after L. entered the United States, her pro bono attorneys will need to argue that she merits an exception to the one-year filing deadline for asylum eligibility. NIJC will assist them in making this argument. The family is awaiting assignment of a future hearing date. All affidavits and supporting materials will be due 15 days prior to L.'s individual merits hearing, which has not yet been scheduled.

NIJC Contact

Lili Henkel, lhenkel@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 22-0159967

50. L. is a woman from Venezuela. She is awaiting a new Master Calendar hearing date. L. speaks Spanish and lives in Chicago, Illinois.

Asylum Categories: Political Opinion, Religious Beliefs

Venue: Immigration Court

Language: Spanish

Location: IL

Country of Origin: Venezuela

Client's Story

L. owned and operated a textile factory in Venezuela. She was also an active member of the opposition party, Primero Justicia. L. participated in many marches and protests with the party. Starting in around 2016, L. received several threats at her factory. Members of a "colectivo," an armed pro-government group, came to her factory and told her that she had to pay them in order to support the revolution. She

paid what they requested so that they would leave and reported this to the police afterwards. Not long after, the colectivo requested even more money. L. eventually had to close her business completely, but even after closing the business, she continued to receive threats from the colectivo. On several occasions, colectivo members came by her house on motorcycle shouting her name and firing guns into the air. L. came to the United States in 2018 on a tourist visa, hoping she could return to Venezuela, but soon realized it was best to stay and seek asylum after her daughter reported that colectivo members continued to come to her home looking for her.

Important Client Context

L. timely filed for asylum with USCIS in 2019 but her case was referred to the immigration court after her interview with the asylum office. All affidavits and supporting materials to L.'s case will be due 15 days prior to her individual merits hearing, which has not yet been scheduled.

NIJC Contact

Lili Henkel, lhenkel@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 21-0147034

51. M. is a woman from Honduras. She speaks Spanish and lives in Indianapolis with her husband, T., and their children, who are derivatives on her asylum application. M., T., and three of their children each individually eligible for asylum.

Asylum Categories: Political Opinion, Religious Beliefs

Venue: Immigration Court

Language: Spanish

Location: IN

Country of Origin: Honduras

Client's Story

M.'s nephew, who is an imprisoned gang member, demanded that M. help him leave prison by lying to the police. M. refused to cooperate. After her refusal, her cousin threatened to harm M. and her family. M. noticed gang members surveilling her family and her home. Additionally, gang members threatened T. for his refusal to pay extortion fees. The family fled Honduras after they made a police report against M.'s nephew and the police did nothing.

Important Client Context

They entered the United States in 2018, were placed in removal proceedings, and applied for asylum. They filed for asylum after their one-year deadline, but are Mendez Rojas class members and timely filed class membership notices. They were set for an individual merits hearing in January 2023, but the immigration court cancelled the hearing. They are now awaiting their new merits hearing date. All supplementary filings will be due to court at least 15 days before the hearing date.

NIJC Contact

Lili Henkel, lhenkel@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 21-0151700

52. M. is a woman from Mexico. Her daughter, Y., is a derivative on her application and is also independently eligible for asylum. M. and Y. speak Spanish and live in West Central Illinois.

Asylum Categories: Domestic and Gender Violence

Venue: Immigration Court

Language: Spanish

Location: IL

Country of Origin: Mexico

Client's Story

M. endured many years of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse by her husband in Mexico. Over time, he became more violent towards her.. He threatened her with a machete and once, broke a number of items in their home including her cell phone,

leaving her without a way to communicate. M.'s husband verbally and emotionally abused their daughter Y. as well. M. and Y. escaped Mexico in 2022. After they fled, M.'s husband threatened to kill her.

Important Client Context

Although M. and Y. were issued Notices to Appear (NTAs), the Department of Homeland Security has not filed the NTAs with the immigration court, so their asylum applications were timely filed with USCIS. Once their NTAs are filed with the court, they will be placed into court proceedings. All affidavits and supporting materials will be due 15 days prior to their individual merits hearing.

NIJC Contact

Lili Henkel, lhenkel@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 22-0155215

53. M. is a woman from Mexico. Her first Master Calendar Hearing is on September 9, 2026. NIJC will file her application for asylum. M. speaks Spanish and lives in the Indianapolis area.

Asylum Categories: Political Opinion, Religious Beliefs

Venue: Immigration Court

Language: Spanish

Location: IN

Country of Origin: Mexico

Client's Story

M.'s daughter was killed by cartel members. Local government promised to investigate the incident and M. went to the city hall several times a week to check on the status of the investigation. M. began receiving phone calls from cartel members threatening to kill her if she did not stop going to the city hall to inquire. M.'s son also started receiving threats that M. would be killed if she did not stop inquiring about the investigation. M. was forced to close her small business after armed men drove past her shop with guns to threaten her. M. fled Mexico in September 2023.

Important Client Context

NIJC will file M.'s initial asylum application with the Immigration Court before September 1, 2024. All affidavits and supporting materials to M.'s case will be due 15 days prior to her individual merits hearing, which has not yet been scheduled.

NIJC Contact

Lili Henkel, lhenkel@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 23-0165552

54. N. is a woman from Honduras. N. speaks Spanish and lives in a northwestern suburb of Indianapolis.

Asylum Categories: Domestic and Gender Violence

Venue: Immigration Court

Language: Spanish

Location: IN

Country of Origin: Honduras

Client's Story

N.'s partner, and the father of her third child, was abusive and controlling. He raped N. and told her that he would not let her end the relationship. When N. became pregnant and refused to get an abortion, he threatened to kill her and the child. Out of fear, N. fled to the United States in late 2020, but at the border, N. was placed in the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP or "Remain in Mexico") program and was prevented from entering the United States to seek asylum. N. subsequently entered the United States and gave birth to her third child.

Important Client Context

Although N. was issued a Notice to Appear (NTA) at the border, it has not yet been filed with the immigration court. Unless and until her NTA is filed with the court,

USCIS retains initial jurisdiction over her application for asylum. NIJC filed N.'s asylum application with USCIS in November 2021. Once her NTA is filed with the court, she will be placed into court proceedings. All affidavits and supporting materials will be due 15 days prior to her individual merits hearing.

NIJC Contact

Lili Henkel, lhenkel@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 21-0147272

55. R is a woman from Cameroon. She speaks Cameroonian Pidgin English and lives in a northeast suburb of Chicago.

Asylum Categories: Political Opinion, Religious Beliefs

Venue: Immigration Court, USCIS

Language: Other

Location: IL

Country of Origin: Cameroon

Client's Story

R is a single mother who sold food to support her family in an Anglophone region of Cameroon. In early 2022, she was arrested by the Cameroonian military and accused of selling food to separatists. Policed officers tortured R. during interrogation and raped her multiple times while she was in prison. After R. was released from prison, the military began looking for her again. She was declared wanted for conspiring with separatist fighters. After the military came looking for her, R.'s family, including her children, went into hiding. She does not currently know their whereabouts. R. fled to Brazil. From there, she travelled to the United States and entered in late 2022.

Important Client Context

R has a Notice To Appear, but it has not yet been filed with the immigration court. Until this occurs, USCIS maintains jurisdiction over her case. R. timely filed a pro se asylum application with USCIS. All affidavits and supporting materials to her case will be due 15 days prior to her individual merits hearing, which has not yet been scheduled.

NIJC Contact

Lili Henkel, lhenkel@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 23-0164997

56. R. is a woman from El Salvador. Her son, A., is a derivative on her application, and is also independently eligible for asylum. R. and A.'s next Master Calendar hearing has not been scheduled. R. speaks Spanish and lives in a northern suburb of Chicago

Asylum Categories: Political Opinion, Religious Beliefs

Venue: Immigration Court

Language: Spanish

Location: IL

Country of Origin: El Salvador

Client's Story

During much of their relationship, R.'s ex-partner H., was verbally, physically, and sexually abusive. H. was a police officer in El Salvador. For some time, H. was able to hide his status as a police officer from the community and 18th Street gang members. Eventually, gang members took notice of his role. They began calling the family and sending pictures of R.'s daughter, threatening to kill the family if R. and H. did not pay the extortion fees. Although R. and her family repeatedly tried to relocate to other towns in El Salvador, the gang members continued to find them and targeted R.'s son A. for being the son of a police officer. H. fled to the United States and was granted asylum, but the gang continued targeting the family, particularly A., making it impossible for them to leave their home. Finally, R. fled to the United States with A. in late 2019.

Important Client Context

NIJC filed R. and A.'s asylum applications with the immigration court in November 2021. Since their applications were filed more than one year after entering the United States, their pro bono attorneys will need to argue that they meet an exception to the one-year filing deadline for asylum eligibility. NIJC will assist them in making this argument. All affidavits and supporting materials for R. and A.'s case will be due 15 days prior to their merits hearing, which has not yet been scheduled.

NIJC Contact

Lili Henkel, lhenkel@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 21-0147562

57. R. is a woman from Honduras. Her son F. and daughter L. are derivatives on her asylum application. R. and her children speak Spanish and live in southern Indiana.

Asylum Categories: Domestic and Gender Violence

Venue: Immigration Court

Language: Spanish

Location: IN

Country of Origin: Honduras

Client's Story

R. met her ex-partner, S., and he moved in with R. and her two children. S. was very controlling. He physically abused R. daily and tried to hit her children. Several months into their relationship, R. learned that her S. was a member of the MS-13 gang. Knowing that there is nowhere in Honduras that R. and her children could be safe from S., R. fled to Mexico with L. S. threatened to kill R., her mother, and her children if she did not return to Honduras. He told R. that he would find her in Mexico. R. returned to Honduras for F. and together she and her children fled for the United States.

Important Client Context

NIJC timely filed R.'s application for asylum with the immigration court. All affidavits and supporting materials to R., F., and L.'s case will be due 15 days prior to their individual merits hearing, which has not yet been scheduled.

NIJC Contact

Lili Henkel, lhenkel@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 20-0140788

58. R. is a woman from Honduras. She is waiting for her next Master Calendar hearing date. R. speaks Spanish and lives in Indianapolis.

Asylum Categories: Political Opinion, Religious Beliefs

Venue: Immigration Court

Language: Spanish

Location: IN

Country of Origin: Honduras

Client's Story

R.'s partner was a member of the MS-18 gang. Soon after R. and her partner started living together, her partner became controlling and abusive. He would not allow her to leave the house to see her family. He beat and raped her often. He told her that she had to stay with him and threatened to hurt and kill her if she tried to leave the relationship. R. reported him to the police once, but nothing came from it. She was also involved in the Libre political party and attended protests regularly over the course of several years. Police shot at, beat, and tear-gassed her and fellow party members at many protests. She fled the country and traveled to the United States in 2019 to escape the dangerous political climate and free herself from her abusive partner.

Important Client Context

R. timely filed her asylum application with the immigration court in 2019. All affidavits

and supporting materials to R.'s case will be due 15 days prior to her individual merits hearing, which has not yet been scheduled.

NIJC Contact

Lili Henkel, lhenkel@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 21-0146095

59. R. is a woman from Mexico. Her son, A. will be a derivative on her application for asylum and is also independently eligible for asylum. R. and A. speak Spanish and live in Chicago.

Asylum Categories: Domestic and Gender Violence

Venue: Immigration Court

Language: Spanish

Location: IL

Country of Origin: Mexico

Client's Story

R. lived in Mexico with her ex-partner and three children. Throughout their relationship, R.'s ex-partner severely abused her, including threats, verbal abuse, and physical abuse that resulted in R. needing to go to the hospital during her second pregnancy. R.'s ex-partner also physically and emotionally abused R.'s son A. About one week before R. and A. left Mexico for the United States, R.'s ex-partner attacked her with a machete. R. has two children who remain in Mexico with their paternal grandparents.

Important Client Context

Although R. and A. were issued Notices to Appear (NTAs) by the Department of Homeland Security when they entered the United States, their NTAs have not yet been filed with the immigration court. For this reason, NIJC filed skeletal asylum applications for R. and A. with USCIS. Because their applications were filed more than one year after they entered the United States, their pro bono attorneys will need to argue that they merit an exception to the one-year filing deadline for asylum. NIJC will assist them in making this argument. Once their NTAs are filed with the court, they will be placed into court proceedings. All affidavits and supporting materials will be due 15 days prior to R. and A.'s merits hearing.

NIJC Contact

Lili Henkel, lhenkel@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 21-0150662

60. S. is a woman from El Salvador. She and her son, J. are awaiting a new Master Calendar hearing date. S. and J. speak Spanish and live in a northwestern suburb of Chicago, Illinois.

Asylum Categories: Political Opinion, Religious Beliefs

Venue: Immigration Court

Language: Spanish

Location: IL

Country of Origin: El Salvador

Client's Story

S.'s step-father abused her throughout her childhood. The father of S.'s first child also beat and raped her. He prohibited her from studying or working outside the home. The abuse worsened when S. found a radio job. S. developed severe anxiety and depression. The father of her child admitted her to a psychiatric hospital and told staff she was crazy. While at the hospital, a nurse raped S. multiple times, leading to the birth of her second child, J. Later, S. worked as a television reporter. Her boss routinely sexually harassed her, forced her to report on violent, gang-related stories, and used his connections to highly ranked gang members to intimidate her against reporting him. After S. reported his treatment, members of the Mara 18 gang threatened her outside of her home, saying there would be consequences if she spoke out. In early 2019, gang members attacked and beat her brother. Soon afterwards, S. fled to the United States with her son.

Important Client Context

NIJC filed S.'s asylum application with the immigration court. Because this application was filed more than one year after S. entered the United States, her pro bono attorneys will need to argue that she merits an exception to the one-year filing deadline for asylum eligibility. NIJC will assist them in making this argument. All affidavits and supporting materials to S.'s case will be due 15 days prior to her individual merits hearing, which has not yet been scheduled.

NIJC Contact

Lili Henkel, lhenkel@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 21-0146760

61. V. is a woman from Guatemala. Her son X. is listed as a derivative on her application and is also independently eligible for asylum. The family speaks Spanish and lives in a western suburb of Chicago.

Asylum Categories: Domestic and Gender Violence

Venue: Immigration Court

Language: Spanish

Location: IL

Country of Origin: Guatemala

Client's Story

When V. was young, her father was killed and her mom moved to the United States, leaving V. and her younger sisters with an aunt who physically abused them. When V. and her sisters moved to a different aunt's home, another family member who was involved with a gang threatened the girls with violence and made sexual advances towards them. V.'s two sisters fled to the United States and were granted asylum, but V. stayed in Guatemala. When she was 17 years old, V. was in a relationship with a man and became pregnant. Once he learned of her pregnancy, V.'s partner began to verbally and physically abuse her. He tried to force V. to have an abortion. During this time, V. was living in her partner's home, where his family members also abused her and eventually caused her to be hospitalized for several days. About a year later, V. began a relationship with another man. When she confronted this man about being in a relationship with another woman, he punched her in the face and stomach, causing her to be hospitalized for about two weeks. Soon after, V. fled to the United States with her son, X., and later gave birth to her second child in the United States.

Important Client Context

Although V. and X. were issued a Notice to Appear (NTA) at the border, their NTAs have not yet been filed with the immigration court. Unless and until their NTAs are filed with the court, USCIS retains initial jurisdiction over their asylum applications. NIJC filed their asylum applications with USCIS on November 12, 2021. Once their NTAs are filed with the court, V. and X. will be placed into court proceedings. All affidavits and supporting materials will then be due 15 days prior to their individual merits hearing, which has not yet been scheduled.

NIJC Contact

Lili Henkel, lhenkel@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 21-0148257

62. V. is a woman from Honduras. Her children C. and T. are derivatives on her application for asylum and are also independently eligible for asylum. They are waiting for their Master Calendar hearing to be rescheduled. The family speaks Spanish and lives in Chicago.

Asylum Categories: Political Opinion, Religious Beliefs

Venue: Immigration Court

Language: Spanish

Location: IL

Country of Origin: Honduras

Client's Story

V.'s former partner, K., is a gang member in Honduras. During their relationship, K. physically and sexually abused V., tried to force her to have an abortion, and threatened to kill her if she ever left him. He also abused V.'s children and tried to force her son to join his gang by threatening to kill V. and her children if he refused. Gang members also attempted to extort V. by threatening to kill her and her children if she refused. V. and her daughters fled to the United States in late 2018.

Important Client Context

NIJC filed V., C., and T.'s applications for asylum with the immigration court, but because their applications were filed more than one year after they entered the United States, their pro bono attorneys will need to argue that V., C., and T. merit an exception to the one-year filing deadline. NIJC will assist them in making this argument. All affidavits and supporting materials to their case will be due 15 days prior to their individual merits hearing, which has not yet been scheduled. V.'s son L. entered the United States as an unaccompanied child and as a result, his case was in a different procedural posture. NIJC filed his asylum application with USCIS and USCIS granted him asylum in May 2021, which should be helpful when presenting the case of his mother and sisters.

NIJC Contact

Lili Henkel, lhenkel@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 20-0143706

Asylum - Affirmative

Expected Tasks: Legal research, Preparing affidavits, Preparing applications, Preparing client testimony, Working with vulnerable clients

63. D. is a man from Colombia. His wife W., son P., and daughter F., are derivatives on his asylum application. Counsel must file a separate asylum application with USCIS for D.'s stepdaughter, B., by May 31, 2024. D., W., P., F., and B. speak Spanish and live in Chicago.

Deadline: Application filed by 5/31/2024

Asylum Categories: Political Opinion, Religious Beliefs

Venue: USCIS

Language: Spanish

Location: IL

Country of Origin: Colombia

Client's Story

D. was a high-ranking police officer in Colombia. In 2015, the state transferred D. to a different district. He began to work with the Local Branch of the Judicial and Investigative Police (SIJIN) to help identify and capture individuals who were involved in micro trafficking. In 2018, the court called D. to testify as a witness in a hearing against accused micro traffickers. About a month after the hearing, D. noticed individuals on motorcycles watching and following him after work. In early 2020, D. stopped doing operational fieldwork and transferred to an administrative position after a serious car accident left him with physical impairments. Although D. was in a new position, W. and B. noticed men on motorcycles frequently watching their house. Unknown, suspicious individuals began to approach D. in public and ask him personal questions including about his past employment. Later that year, D. learned that a number of police officer's home addresses, including his own, had been shared in a group chat that included numerous micro trafficking affiliates. Around late 2021 or early 2022, D. and his family received a threatening note at their house. D. reported the harassment and threats to the police, but nothing came of it. D. and his family stopped leaving their house unless necessary. In spring 2023, they

fled to the United States on tourist visas.

Important Client Context

NIJC timely filed D.'s asylum application with USCIS. USCIS must receive B.'s asylum application by May 31, 2024. Affidavits and other supporting documents will be due one week prior to the family's interview(s) at the asylum office. Because interview timing can vary, pro bono counsel should plan to work up this case within 12-16 weeks of case acceptance.

NIJC Contact

Lili Henkel, lhenkel@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 23-0166261

64. D. is a gay cisgender man from Nigeria. He speaks English and lives in Northeast Indiana. His asylum application was timely filed, and he is now awaiting an asylum interview.

Asylum Categories: LGBTQ+

Venue: USCIS

Language: English

Location: IN

Country of Origin: Nigeria

Client's Story

Shortly after D. was forced into an arranged marriage, his wife caught him being intimate with a man. D. feared for his life, as LGBTQ relationships are criminalized in all of Nigeria. While D.'s wife did not tell others of his sexual orientation, he was later outed by an ex-partner. Since then, he has received numerous threats and had a police report filed against him for being LGBTQ.

Important Client Context

D. entered the United States in July 2023 on an F1 student visa and is currently taking courses at a community college. NIJC timely filed his asylum application on December 21, 2023, and he is awaiting an interview with the Chicago Asylum Office. Affidavits and other supporting documents will be due approximately one week prior to his interview at the asylum office. Because interview timing can vary, NIJC recommends pro bono counsel plan to work up this case within 12 weeks of case acceptance.

NIJC Contact

Moises Lopez Soltero, mlopezsoltero@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 23-0165369

65. J. is a woman from Honduras. Her son, R., and two daughters, A. and W., are derivatives on her application for asylum. J., R., A., and W. speak Spanish and live in Chicago.

Asylum Categories: Domestic and Gender Violence

Venue: USCIS

Language: Spanish

Location: IL

Country of Origin: Honduras

Client's Story

J. lived with her partner, Z., and their son, R. Z. physically and verbally abused J. after he heard that another man touched her. J. was hospitalized as a result of the abuse. After this happened, J. told her parents of the harm. J. and R. left to live with J.'s parents, but Z. found her and threatened to harm J. and her parents if they went to the police. Fearing for their safety, J. began living with Z. again, and he continued to abuse her. Sometime after this, J. gave birth to A. Several years later, J. left Z. He retaliated by taking R. and A. He kept them for months and did not allow J. to see or contact her children during this time. R. and A. eventually escaped and returned to J. In 2019, J. fled the country, but Mexican immigration officials deported her back to Honduras. She had become pregnant on her journey and gave birth to her youngest daughter, W., in Honduras. J. and her children lived with J.'s parents because she

received death threats from Z. In 2021, J. fled Honduras with W. to escape Z. About six months later, R. and A. traveled to the United States separately in order to join them.

Important Client Context

NIJC filed J.'s asylum application with her children as derivatives with USCIS in November 2023. Because the application was filed more than one year after the J.'s arrival, the family's case may be referred to the immigration court. Pro bono attorneys will need to argue that they meet an exception to the one-year filing deadline. NIJC will assist them in making this argument. All supporting materials will be due one week prior to the asylum interview. Because interview timing can vary, pro bono counsel should plan to work up this case within 12-16 weeks of placement.

NIJC Contact

Lili Henkel, lhenkel@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 23-0162595

66. M. is a woman from Nicaragua awaiting an asylum interview. She speaks Spanish and lives in Chicago.

Asylum Categories: Political Opinion, Religious Beliefs

Venue: USCIS

Language: Spanish

Location: IL

Country of Origin: Nicaragua

Client's Story

M. began attending anti-government protests frequently in 2018. Police often followed and harassed her for her political activism. In late 2019, police arrested M. for her connections with a prominent activist and held her in prison for about a week. During this time, police subjected her to routine interrogations in which they beat and sexually assaulted and her. M. still suffers from the permanent injuries that she sustained during this time. The government released M. on the condition that she provide a false testimony in trial against another activist. She refused to comply, and in early 2021, the government falsified drugs and arms trafficking charges against M. in order to arrest her again. Police kept M. jailed and drugged for nearly two weeks before transferring her to a penitentiary. M.'s mother contacted a civil rights attorney to defend her, but though the accusations were false and the government never produced hard evidence, a judge sentenced M. to 18 years in prison. Prison officials denied M. medical treatment and prescription medication. They forced her to spend one year in solitary confinement. After two years as a political prisoner, the Nicaraguan government exiled M. in February 2023 and sent her to the United States.

Important Client Context

NIJC timely filed M.'s affirmative asylum application. All supporting materials will be due one week prior to the asylum interview. Because interview timing can vary, pro bono counsel should plan to work up this case within 12-16 weeks of placement.

NIJC Contact

Lili Henkel, lhenkel@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 23-0163953

67. S. is a man from Nicaragua awaiting an asylum interview. S. speaks Spanish and lives in the Indianapolis area.

Asylum Categories: Political Opinion, Religious Beliefs

Venue: USCIS

Language: Spanish

Location: IN

Country of Origin: Nicaragua

Client's Story

In 2016, S. began attending community meetings regarding the police's ongoing poor treatment of civilians. Community leaders, including S.'s uncle, organized these meetings. Police learned of the meetings by having some of their associates attend. In February 2020, S. was working at home when the police arrived asking for his uncle. When S. told them that he did not know where his uncle was, they beat him. They then took S. and three other relatives to prison on accusations of being against the police. Prison officials deprived S. of medical attention and food. At times, the police did not allow his family to visit him. S. spent approximately three years as a political prisoner before the Nicaraguan government exiled him.

Important Client Context

NIJC timely filed S.'s asylum application. All supporting materials will be due one week prior to the asylum interview. Because interview timing can vary, pro bono counsel should plan to work up this case within 12-16 weeks of placement.

NIJC Contact

Lili Henkel, lhenkel@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 23-0163522

SIJS - Predicate Order

Expected Tasks: Litigating in state court, Preparing affidavits, Preparing applications, Preparing client testimony, Working with vulnerable clients

68. A. and P. are brothers aged 14 and 11, from Ecuador. They live with their mother, who speaks Quichua and Spanish, in Chicago (Cook County).

Deadline: Obtain Predicate Order by 8/1/2024

Venue: Family Court

Location: IL

Languages: Spanish, Quechua

Country of Origin: Ecuador

Client's Story

A. and P.'s mother and father separated when they were seven and five years old, respectively. Afterward, the brothers had no contact with their father, and he has never attempted to see them, reach out to them, or provide for them financially.

Important Client Context

A pro bono attorney will need to file a petition for sole allocation of parental responsibilities for A. and P. and obtain an order finding that A. and P.'s reunification with their father is not viable due to abandonment and that it is not in A. and P.'s best interest to return to Ecuador.

NIJC Contact

Berenice Sanchez Ruiz, bsanchezruiz@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 23-0162217

69. B., S., and L. are siblings aged 11, 6, and 3, from Honduras. They live with their mother, who speaks Spanish, in northeast Illinois (Will County).

Deadline: Predicate Order filed by 8/1/2024

Venue: Family Court

Location: IL

Language: Spanish

Country of Origin: Honduras

Client's Story

B., S., and L. have the same mother but have different fathers. B.'s father left when she was about three years old. Following their separation, B. would see her father about once a month, but he did not provide any financial support for many years. The last time B. spoke to her father was in 2021. S. and L.'s father was arrested for

kidnapping in Honduras and was recently convicted, receiving an 11-year prison sentence. S. and L. fled with their mother to the U.S. in 2021, and B. has since joined them here.

Important Client Context

A pro bono attorney will need to file two separate petitions for sole allocation of parental responsibilities: one for B. and another for S. and L and obtain orders finding that reunification with their respective fathers is not viable due to abandonment and that it is not in their best interest to return to Honduras.

NIJC Contact

Berenice Sanchez Ruiz, bsanchezruiz@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Numbers: 23-0161060, 23-0165052

70. P. is a 14-year-old girl from Colombia. She lives with her mother, who speaks Spanish, in a southwest suburb of Chicago (Cook County).

Deadline: Predicate Order filed by 8/1/2024

Venue: Family Court

Location: IL

Language: Spanish

Country of Origin: Colombia

Client's Story

P.'s parents separated when she was approximately a year old. Since her father left, he has not attempted to get in touch with her or provide any emotional or financial support. P. fled to the United States with her mother and half-brother in February 2023 after the family faced threats in Colombia.

Important Client Context

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

NIJC Contact

Berenice Sanchez Ruiz, bsanchezruiz@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 23-0164571

71. S. is a 6-year-old girl from Colombia who lives with her mother, who speaks Spanish, in a northwest suburb of Chicago (Cook County).

Deadline: Predicate Order filed by 8/1/2024

Venue: Family Court

Location: IL

Language: Spanish

Country of Origin: Colombia

Client's Story

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.

Important Client Context

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 abandonment and that it is not in S.'s best interest to return to Columbia.

NIJC Contact

Berenice Sanchez Ruiz, bsanchezruiz@immigrantjustice.org

NIJC Case Number: 23-0164380

72. I. is a 15-year-old boy from Mexico. He lives with his mother, who speaks Spanish, in a southwest suburb of Chicago (Will County).

Deadline: Predicate Order filed by 9/1/2024

Venue: Family Court

Location: IL

Language: Spanish

Country of Origin: Mexico

Client's Story

I.'s father's name was never on his birth certificate because his parents separated shortly before his birth. I. has never met his father, and they have never had contact. His father has never provided emotional or financial support. I. lived with his grandfather and uncle in Mexico and came to the United States in July 2023 to reunite with his mother.

Important Client Context

A pro bono attorney will need to file a petition for sole allocation of parental responsibilities on behalf of I.'s mother that establishes paternity and finds that I.'s reunification with his father is not viable due to his father's abandonment, and that it is not in I.'s best interest to return to Mexico.

NIJC Contact

Berenice Sanchez Ruiz, bsanchezruiz@immigrantjustice.org

NIJC Case Number: 23-0165079

73. F. is a 12-year-old boy from Venezuela. He lives with his mother, who speaks Spanish, in a Southwestern suburb of Chicago (Will County).

Deadline: Predicate Order filed by 10/1/2024

Venue: Family Court

Location: IL

Language: Spanish

Country of Origin: Venezuela

Client's Story

F. has not seen his father since he was five years old. His father stopped providing financial support when he was three years old. F. came to the U.S. in October 2022 to reunite with his mother.

Important Client Context

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

NIJC Contact

Berenice Sanchez Ruiz, bsanchezruiz@immigrantjustice.org

NIJC Case Number: 23-0165308

VAWA

Expected Tasks: Preparing affidavits, Preparing applications, Working with vulnerable clients

74. A. is a woman from Mexico. A. is eligible to file a VAWA self-petition concurrently with an application for adjustment of status and employment authorization. A. speaks Spanish and resides in Chicago.

Venue: USCIS

Location: IL

Language: Spanish

Country of Origin: Mexico

Client's Story

Heartland Alliance for Human Needs & Human Rights | National Immigrant Justice Center
111 W. Jackson Blvd., Ste. 800, Chicago, Illinois 60604 | ph: 312-660-1370 | fax: 312-660-1505 | www.immigrantjustice.org

A. has been the victim of emotional, financial, and physical abuse by her U.S. citizen son. On one occasion, A.'s son tried hitting her and threw objects at her. A. fled to another room to escape, and her son fled the home. As A. went outside, she witnessed her son damaging the windows of her other son's car. A. called the police and filed a report.

NIJC Contact

Jackie Mares, jmares@immigrantjustice.org
NIJC Case Number: 23-0165133