

Information on the Midwest Immigrant Defenders Alliance (MIDA)

This is a flier for immigration advocates and partners. If you would like to share information about MIDA with people in detention or their families, please use our FAQ flier.

WHAT IS MIDA?

The Midwest Immigrant Defenders Alliance (MIDA) seeks to provide high-quality immigration legal services for free to detained immigrants because there are not government-appointed attorneys in deportation cases. MIDA is a coalition of the National Immigrant Justice Center (NIJC), The Resurrection Project (TRP), The Immigration Project (TIP), and the Law Office of the Cook County Public Defender (CCPD).

Who qualifies for a free MIDA representative in the Chicago Immigration Court?

Individuals must meet all of the following criteria:

- In removal proceedings before the Chicago Immigration Court.
- In immigration detention. It does not matter where the detention center is located. Immigrants in the Chicago Immigration Court are commonly detained in Indiana, Wisconsin, and Kentucky.
- Household income under 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.
- Have not yet had their first immigration court hearing.
- Do not already have a different immigration legal representative.

How can I verify that my client or community member will receive help from MIDA?

- MIDA typically observes the first Master Calendar hearing of the week at the Chicago Immigration Court and follows up with individuals who indicate to the immigration judge at their initial hearing that they are interested in free legal services.
- MIDA is still growing, so it is not guaranteed that a representative will be available on the day of someone's initial hearing. Alternative options for legal representation are listed below. We hope to obtain more funding following the one-year pilot project, but for now there may be periods when MIDA is at capacity.
- You can contact MIDA to let us know someone has been detained, but we will not be able to confirm a MIDA representative will be providing a consultation until after the initial hearing.

Even if someone does not meet the above criteria or there is not a MIDA representative available at their hearing, they may still be able to obtain free legal help from other programs.

- **For non-detained Chicago residents**, call 312-660-1370 for NIJC or 312-666-3062 for TRP to request a consultation.
- **For detained individuals with cases in the Chicago Immigration Court**, call 773-672-6599 on Tuesdays from 11:00AM to 2:00PM CT to request a consultation with NIJC. Detained immigrants also can call collect at 312-583-9721 or use the pro bono platform and NIJC's 3-digit code, 565.
- **For other regions**, consult the national list of free immigration representatives: <https://www.justice.gov/eoir/list-pro-bono-legal-service-providers>. Not all courts have good access to free representatives, so it is important to look for one as soon as possible.
- Individuals have the right to hire a private representatives, if they can afford one.
- Individuals have the right to proceed with their cases without a legal representative, but we do not recommend this because immigration cases are extremely complicated and success rates are much higher with counsel.

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National Immigrant Justice Center (NIJC)

Heartland Alliance's National Immigrant Justice Center (NIJC) ensures human rights protections for low-income immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, with the goal of promoting access to justice, family integrity, and community safety. With offices in Chicago, Indiana, Washington, D.C., and San Diego, NIJC provides direct legal services to and advocates for these populations through impact litigation, public education, and policy reform. NIJC's immigration legal services are organized into distinct projects, including a Detention Project that for years has served detained immigrants in the Midwest.

Contact: Call 773-672-6599 on Tuesdays from 11:00AM to 2:00PM CT. Detained immigrants also can call collect at 312-583-9721 or use the pro bono platform and NIJC's 3-digit code, 565.

The Immigration Project (TIP)

The Immigration Project (TIP) has been providing low-cost, high-quality immigration legal services in Central and Southern Illinois for over 25 years. With offices in the Bloomington-Normal and Champaign-Urbana areas, TIP maintains an extensive network with partner organizations and specially trained community members to increase access to justice for immigrants and their families residing in the 86 counties that comprise its service area. As a natural expansion of its work across downstate Illinois, TIP is committed to the principles of universal representation to all immigrants who need assistance in the Chicago Immigration Court through MIDA.

Contact: Call 309-829-8703 ext. 113 or email xrivera@immigrationproject.org.

The Resurrection Project (TRP)

The Resurrection Project (TRP) builds relationships and challenges individuals to act on their faith, values, and ideals to create healthier communities. Since its founding in 1990, TRP has increased the availability of services and expanded opportunities for Chicago's low- and moderate-income Latinos. TRP is a trusted provider of culturally and linguistically inclusive services and helps enable families to fully participate and become invested in their communities. TRP serves families from all over the Chicago metropolitan region, though it has a deeply rooted presence in the predominately Latino and immigrant communities of Pilsen, Little Village, and Back of the Yards.

Contact: Call 312.666.3062.

Law Office of the Cook County Public Defender (CCPD)

Through the work of the Immigration Unit Pilot, Cook County is the largest county in the nation to provide public defenders to serve immigrant communities that do not have access to attorneys. In early 2022, Governor JB Pritzker signed Public Act 102-0410 into law and the Cook County Board of Commissioners passed a resolution in support of this initiative. This authorized the defender's office to begin representing noncitizens in removal proceedings.

Contact: Email pdimmigrationunit@cookcountyil.gov or call 312-603-0636 on Wednesdays from 9am-11am for non-detained people who are/were CCPD clients and detained people with Cook County ties.

