

AILA/PAIR/EOIR PRO BONO PROJECT

The AILA/EOIR/PAIR Pro Bono Program is a collaborative project between the American Immigration Lawyers Association (**AILA**) and the Political Asylum Immigration/Representation (**PAIR**) Project. This Program is strongly supported by the Boston Immigration Court's administration (**EOIR**) and its Immigration Judges. Some of the Immigration Judges have already participated in the different trainings.

The purpose of this Pro Bono program is to provide Pro Bono legal assistance and different levels of representation to detainees and people in immigration proceedings. The Program is divided into different stages or cycles, different levels of representation, and with several opportunities to provide much-needed Pro Bono assistance to this segment of the immigration community.

1. "Know Your Rights"

Currently there are three visits to different detention centers per month, at the Suffolk County HOC, the Bristol County Correctional Facility, and to the Plymouth County Correctional Facility. During these visits, supervised volunteer lawyers provide consultations to detainees, and can screen potential cases for Pro Bono representation. The time commitment for these visits are about four to six hours, and additional time and work might be necessary to follow up the initial screening, which will be decided on a case by case basis.

2. Bond Representation

The first Pro Bono bond cases were successfully accomplished in January 2008, and throughout the past few years dozens of detainees were released on bond through this pro bono program. The Boston Immigration Court accepts attorneys entering an appearance for bond only; allowing them to withdraw after the bond hearing, so the pro bono can limit an appearance to the bond proceedings only. The time commitment for a bond case can be between ten and sixty hours per case, and it definitely depends on the type of case.

3. Representation in Removal Proceedings

Full blown representation is being provided pro bono now to an increasing number of immigrants in proceedings, through this program. Most cases referred to pro bono attorneys are cancellation of removal (LPR/Non LPR); Refugee adjustments with a waiver; adjustment of status, and asylum cases. Many detainees have also benefited from having a pro bono attorney representing them to request the immigration judges to issue a voluntary departure order. The time commitment for one full case also depends on the complexity of the case, which is not always clear from the beginning (as much as we try to screen every possible issue in each case), but an estimate amount of hours could be about sixty to eighty hours.

• SUPERVISION AND MENTORING:

The pro Bono work is supposed to be a good experience for pro bono attorneys, but is also meant to be a service for those immigrants unrepresented while their immigration proceedings are taking place. The goal is to have as many respondents represented as possible, to try to compensate the unlevelled situation immigrants can be in this process that changes so many people's lives.