

Pro Bono Attorney Guidelines

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

NIJC's Commitment to *Pro Bono* Attorneys

NIJC understands the majority of its *pro bono* attorneys have limited immigration law experience. NIJC's *pro bono* partners report that asylum, VAWA, U visa, Trafficking and SIJ cases are the most interesting, challenging, and rewarding cases of their careers. Attorneys who accept an NIJC case for *pro bono* representation can expect that NIJC will provide the support and assistance necessary to capably represent NIJC clients.

NIJC agrees to provide its *pro bono* attorneys with:

- asylum, VAWA, U visa, Trafficking and SIJ trainings. NIJC offers basic training courses in each of these topics about once every three months and upon request as staff resources are available. NIJC provides advanced trainings in the form of round table discussions on advanced immigration topics several times each year.
- information regarding immigration law, practice, and procedure; sample applications, motions, and pleadings; documentation; and other case resources.
- consultations with experienced NIJC practitioners regarding any case-related questions, theories and trial strategies. NIJC's attorneys remain current on immigration law, policy, and practice, and frequently serve as faculty at local and national immigration law trainings.
- professional liability insurance. NIJC carries comprehensive professional liability insurance, which specifically covers its *pro bono* attorneys.
- involvement in ground-breaking legal issues and an opportunity to interact with clients from different cultural, ethnic, religious, and socio-economic backgrounds.
- unique litigation experience, with opportunities to represent clients before a federal agency or the U.S. Circuit Courts of Appeals.
- exceptional legal experience that will enhance a *pro bono* attorney's career development.

By accepting a pro bono matter, the *pro bono* attorney and/or firm must have the resources necessary to provide successful representation free of charge. These resources include, but are not limited to: providing office space to meet with your client, preparation and mailing costs, copies of documents and obtaining translators, if needed.

Pro Bono Attorney Commitment

NIJC expects that after accepting a case, the *pro bono* attorney will

- attend the next available NIJC training, if the attorney has not already attended a training.
- provide representation from commencement to completion of the client’s case as defined in the retainer signed by NIJC and the client.¹
- transfer representation of the case to another attorney in the firm if the attorney is compelled to withdraw representation for any reason other than the emergence of a conflict of interest or a termination of representation due to client misconduct. NIJC is unable to absorb *pro bono* cases in-house, except in very limited circumstances.
- inform NIJC of any transfer of representation within the firm or addition of attorneys to the legal team assigned to the case.
- keep NIJC informed of the status of the client’s case. NIJC maintains an agreement with every client referred for *pro bono* representation and remains “of counsel.”
- contact NIJC if the attorney believes the client may be concurrently eligible for another immigration benefit. Applying for other immigration benefits may impact the client’s case.
- contact NIJC if the client seeks assistance regarding other legal matters. NIJC’s involvement in the client’s case is limited to the matter specified in the NIJC retainer. NIJC is unable to provide technical support on other legal matters beyond the scope of the NIJC retainer. If a client becomes concurrently eligible for another form of relief, NIJC may execute a supplementary retainer with the client to assist in seeking that benefit.
- contact NIJC before speaking with the media or any members of Congress about the case. NIJC is actively involved in immigration policy and advocacy efforts at the state and national levels, and with local and national media. Coordinating with NIJC will ensure that any advocacy efforts achieve the best possible result for the client.

Attorney Name (print and sign) _____ Date _____

Law Firm _____ Bar Admission Date _____ State of Admission _____ Bar Number _____

Have you had any legal malpractice or legal disciplinary complaints filed against you? If yes, please explain.

Please fill out the Pro Bono Attorney Guidelines and return it to VAWA/U Visa Pro Bono Project Coordinator, Sylvia Wolak, by email (swolak@heartlandalliance.org). Once NIJC receives the guidelines and the client conflicts check has cleared, NIJC will forward the client file to you.

Thank you for your support!

¹ Each type of immigration relief involves different legal actions to complete the case. Please contact VAWA/U Visa Pro Bono Project if you have a question regarding the type of legal action necessary to fully complete your client’s case.