



AMERICAN **BAR** ASSOCIATION

ProBAR | South Texas Pro Bono
Asylum Representation Project

ProBAR Bulletin

South Texas Pro Bono Asylum Representation Project

Volume 4 Spring 2022



ProBAR assists migrants at the Brownsville bus station | Summer 2021

A Message from the Director...

Dear Friends,

When ProBAR was founded by the American Bar Association, the State Bar of Texas and the American Immigration Lawyers Association in 1989, our location was strategic. Central Americans fleeing violence in their home countries were arriving in the Rio Grande Valley border region. Once here, they were generally detained, and their need for immigration legal services was greater than the resources available. ProBAR helped to fill that gap by making connections with pro bono attorneys from other regions of the country who were able to assist.

Immigration law and policy have continued to change the experiences and legal needs of migrants in this border region, and our location continues to uniquely position us to respond in ways that support access to counsel, due process, and dignity for each person.

In July of 2019, law enforcement officials began to return asylum-seekers arriving in the Rio Grande Valley to Mexico to await their hearings under the Migrant Protection Protocols. To respond, ProBAR developed a team within our Legal Department to provide information, pro se assistance, and representation to asylum-seekers subject to the program, adding our efforts to the work of Project Corazon and members of our local legal community.

Meanwhile, the American Bar Association, of which ProBAR is a project, participated in a November 2019 [hearing](#) before the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security to voice the human rights issues and legal concerns witnessed by our team. In February 2020, the ABA also adopted a [policy](#) urging the federal government to maintain an asylum system that affords all persons seeking protection from persecution or torture access to counsel, due process, and a full and fair adjudication that comports with U.S. and international law.

When the Biden Administration initiated a wind-down of the MPP program in early 2021, our staff were encouraged, and we supported the process created for asylum-seekers with pending hearings to parole into the United States to await decisions in their cases. Alongside other members of the RGV Welcoming Committee, our team provided legal information and logistical support to asylum-seekers in transition.

However, in August 2021 a federal district court [enjoined](#) the termination of the MPP program. This means that the Biden Administration was ordered to reinstate the program. The reinstatement first affected other areas of the border, including El Paso and San Diego, before officials began to enroll asylum-seekers in our region in mid- to late-January.



ProBAR assists migrants at the Brownsville bus station
Spring 2021

The reinstatement of MPP means that asylum-seekers at the border in the Rio Grande Valley region again find themselves in need of legal information and representation and facing barriers to accessing legal services.

Since January, our team has assisted asylum-seekers subject to MPP in several ways. Through an effort coordinated by Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP, ProBAR attorneys have offered asylum-seekers who expressed fear of returning to Mexico information and counsel regarding the non-refoulement interview process. Beginning in mid-February, we have also provided legal education services at the Brownsville tent court in an effort to ensure that asylum-seekers have necessary information about the immigration legal process prior to their hearings.

It is not easy to resume these services after witnessing the serious impacts of this program after it began in 2019, but I am proud of our team for stepping into this important role at a time when our location at the border positions us to have an impact.

It's also true that MPP is far from the only program impacting migrants at the border. During 2022 to date, our team has continued to serve high numbers of unaccompanied children, including children who have crossed the border alone after being expelled to Mexico along with their parents. In addition to serving these children in local shelters overseen by the Office of Refugee Resettlement, our team has also reached increased numbers of children and their families with crucial legal orientations to help them to understand immigration proceedings and their rights. Our work has also assisted asylum-seekers blocked from entry to the United States by the Title 42 policy to seek humanitarian parole due to serious medical vulnerabilities that could not be addressed in Mexico.

More than 30 years since our founding, ProBAR's location remains strategic, positioning us to provide legal services that address the specific needs of migrants at the border through tailored legal education, representation, and connections to services. Our long history of critical services demonstrates our commitment to ensuring that all migrants have access to counsel, due process, and respect for their human rights.

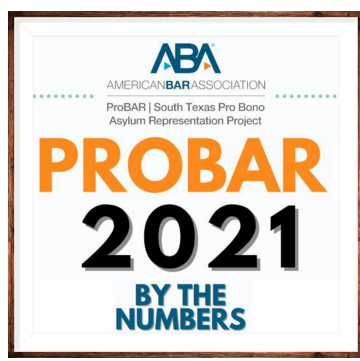
Whether you are a long-time partner or a new friend of ProBAR, we are grateful for your support in challenging times!

Sincerely,

Kimi Jackson

Kimi Jackson
ProBAR Director

Law with Humanity | Professionals with a Purpose



ProBAR by the Numbers

In 2021, ProBAR served more than 26,000 individuals from over 30 countries and received over 5,000 hours of volunteer support. Learn more about our team's work last year in our [ProBAR By the Numbers Infographic](#).

New & Notable



What is the MPP "Remain in Mexico" Program?

Between 2019-2021, tens of thousands of asylum seekers were forced to wait in dangerous conditions in Mexico under the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP) – or "Remain in Mexico" program. MPP ended last year, but a federal judge later ordered the government to restart the program.

So, what exactly is MPP? Click [here](#) for an infographic explaining MPP and its implications.



What is Title 42?

The CDC has announced that Title 42 will be terminated on May 23, 2022. The controversial Title 42 policy has been used to expel migrants without a hearing more than 1.7 million times since the beginning



¿Qué es el Título 42?

El CDC ha anunciado que el Título 42 se terminará el 23 de mayo de 2022. La controvertida política del Título 42 se ha utilizado para expulsar a los migrantes sin audiencia más de 1,7 millones de veces desde

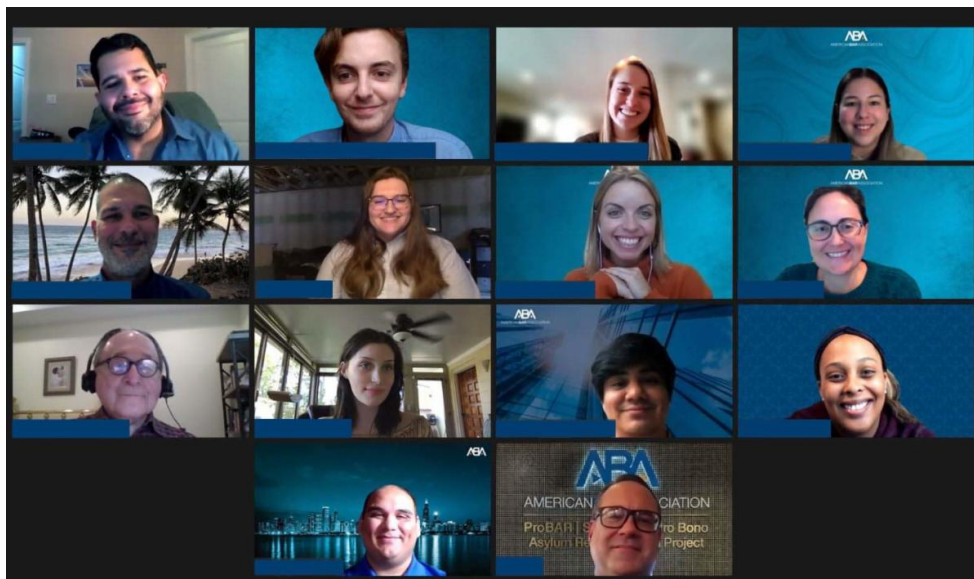
of the pandemic. Three states have now filed suit against the government, challenging the decision to terminate the policy.

Want to know more about Title 42? Check out our recently [updated Title 42 Infographic](#) to learn more.

el comienzo de la pandemia. Tres estados ya han presentado una demanda contra el gobierno, impugnando la decisión de cancelar la política.

¿Quiere saber más sobre el Título 42? Consulte nuestra [actualizada infografía](#) sobre el Título 42 para aprender más.

Get Involved!



Thank You to Our Law Student Volunteers!

This year, ProBAR has welcomed volunteers from the law schools at the University of Texas, Brooklyn Law School, the University of Minnesota (pictured), DePaul University, and Loyola University Chicago. Our volunteers assisted with several projects, compiling country conditions information that will support our client's asylum cases, preparing asylum-seekers subject to the Migrant Protection Protocols for their non-refoulement interviews, and creating resource material for our staff. Our team appreciates every volunteer's hard work, time, and dedication!

Volunteer with ProBAR!

ProBAR is recruiting volunteers to extend the reach of our services for immigrants in the Rio Grande Valley. If you are an attorney interested in working on migrants' cases pro bono, please fill out our [Pro Bono Interest Form](#). If you are passionate about providing crucial translation support to migrants, please fill out our [Remote Translation Program Interest Form](#). If you have any questions, please contact us at volunteer@abaprobar.org.



Volunteers from Roger Williams Univ. School of Law, March 2020

ProBAR: Work that Matters, a Team that Inspires!



ProBAR seeks dedicated advocates for Staff Attorney and other legal positions!

Join our Legal Team! Working at ProBAR is a unique opportunity to practice law with humanity alongside a team of dedicated professionals.

ProBAR's Legal Team is a diverse and growing team of passionate advocates who serve adults and unaccompanied children on the frontlines of immigration. Attorney positions at ProBAR include roles serving children in the custody of the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), adults in ICE custody, and asylum-seekers subject to Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP). Depending on their role, our attorneys may provide a combination of legal orientations, direct representation, and pro se assistance.

ProBAR also has opportunities for advocates without law degrees to contribute their skills to the provision of high-quality, compassionate, people-centered legal services.

[Learn More & Apply](#)

Join Our Team!

ProBAR is currently hiring for a number of positions in our Legal, Release Support, Outreach, and Shelter Services Departments.

[View current openings](#) and apply!

Support ProBAR

Show your support for ProBAR's work through a one-time or recurring gift.

[Make a donation](#) today.

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ProBAR is a project of the American Bar Association.

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