

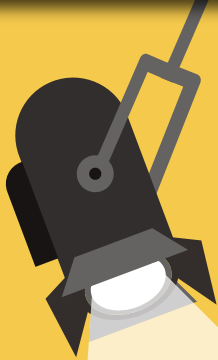


STATE BAR *of* TEXAS

# IMMIGRATION BULLETIN

Immigration & Nationality Law Section

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## SPOTLIGHT ON PROBAR

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## News from the Southern Border

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### ProBAR: A Team of Advocates Dedicated to Practicing Law with Humanity

More than 30 years ago, in 1989, thousands of Central Americans fled civil wars in their home countries and arrived at the U.S.-Mexico border in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas to seek protection. Upon arrival, many of them found themselves detained and facing an overwhelming need for free immigration legal services in a region where these resources were severely limited. The American Bar Association (ABA), the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA), and the State Bar of Texas collaborated to identify ways to address this urgent need, and the [South Texas Pro Bono Asylum Representation Project \(ProBAR\)](#) was born to mobilize pro bono legal assistance for detained immigrants and asylum-seekers.



From its earliest days, ProBAR has been a provider of critical legal services for migrants in the Rio Grande Valley border region, with a particular focus on the legal needs of people detained in federal immigration detention centers. Over the years our programs have evolved to address the needs of immigrants and asylum-seekers in this region, adding legal education programs, developing specialized approaches to legal services for unaccompanied children, and integrating social work into our holistic approaches. Most recently, we have also launched an Immigration Court Helpdesk program to serve unrepresented respondents at the Harlingen Immigration Court, including non-detained members of our community who are facing removal proceedings. Our location in Harlingen, Texas, has remained strategic, allowing us to respond in support of migrants impacted by border policies like Title 42 and the Migrant Protection Protocols that have presented significant obstacles to due process.

ProBAR's mission is to empower immigrants through high-quality legal education, representation, and connections to services. Many of the people we serve have traveled to the United States to seek protection from violence and persecution in their home countries and have recently crossed the border in or near the Rio Grande Valley region of South Texas. The diversity of our client population extends virtually around the world. While many of the individuals we serve come from Central America and Mexico, thus far in 2023 ProBAR has assisted individuals from more than 40 countries and who speak approximately 50 different languages.

ProBAR's services often begin with legal orientation presentations targeted to the needs of people in different circumstances - adults detained in ICE custody, unaccompanied children of a wide range of ages, adults who sponsor unaccompanied children for release from detention, among others. These presentations seek to build the participant's understanding of immigration proceedings, forms of legal relief that may be available, and one's rights while proceedings are pending. Armed with this information, participants are better equipped to make decisions about their cases, understand the important role a lawyer can play, and to engage in their cases as the process unfolds. The need for legal education in our region is high: during 2023 to date, the ProBAR team has offered legal orientation to more than 30,000 people.

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## About ProBAR

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Meanwhile, [research has shown](#) that an attorney's representation can have a tremendous impact on outcomes for people in removal proceedings. Each year ProBAR's team represents or creates connections to pro bono counsel for many children and adults in their pursuit of asylum and other forms of legal relief. In recent years ProBAR's representation has also extended beyond representation for asylum, cancellation of removal, or Special Immigrant Juvenile Status, to representing detained adults seeking release from congregate detention facilities during the COVID-19 pandemic, advocating for humanitarian parole or other exemption to restrictions on entry, and representing asylum-seekers forced to remain in Mexico.

For some ProBAR clients, legal education services become a point of connection to representation that can change the trajectory of their case for legal relief. For example, ProBAR staff met Boubacar, a West African asylum-seeker, while providing legal orientation services for adults in ICE custody. After the group session, Boubacar participated in a legal screening with a staff member who brought the information back to our team. From that point, ProBAR looked for ways to harness our resources to support Boubacar with his asylum claim, and we succeeded in securing a pro bono attorney to represent him for his merits hearing. Unfortunately, Boubacar's case was denied. A ProBAR Staff Attorney represented Boubacar on his appeal, at which point he received withholding of removal. However, he was again denied asylum and a pathway to citizenship. ProBAR then connected with an appellate clinic at Cornell Law School whose faculty agreed that the clinic would represent Boubacar in his second appeal, which was ultimately granted. Asked what winning asylum meant for him, [Boubacar replied](#), "Today, I am happy, because I am free."

While much of ProBAR's work centers on assisting people while their immigration process is playing out in the Rio Grande Valley, the third pillar to our mission has also been shaped by our location at the border. As people are released from detention and travel onward to destination cities around the country, ProBAR continues to play a role by facilitating connections with legal and social services. For example, children who are released from detention to reunify with a sponsor before ProBAR entered representation in their case may still be assisted with a legal referral or information about local pro bono providers in their new community. These connections give children and families important starting points to seek an attorney's assistance.

Meanwhile, ProBAR's team recognizes that when basic needs for medical care, housing, counseling, or other services are unmet, those needs may take precedence over an immigration case due to their immediacy. This led ProBAR in 2019 to integrate bilingual clinicians, with their unique training and perspectives, to work in partnership with our legal services professionals. ProBAR's Clinical Team assists hundreds of individuals annually with a wide range of needs – from supporting youth who turn 18, to serving residents at a nearby shelter for homeless immigrants and asylum-seekers, to



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## About ProBAR

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supporting staff in responding to a range of social service needs. And not only has ProBAR actively pursued this integration in our own practice, but [we have provided leadership](#) to organizations in our field who are also considering this step.

ProBAR's work has evolved significantly over the past more than 30 years. New approaches have been developed, and the team has responded to the ever-changing conditions at the border to address urgent needs facing immigrants and asylum-seekers in our region. Nevertheless, the organization has remained dedicated to empowering the individuals we serve, centering our clients in our advocacy, and, ultimately, to practicing law with humanity.

### Learn More or Get Involved

To learn more about ProBAR, please visit our [website](#) or follow us on [Facebook](#) or [LinkedIn](#).

Interested to get involved? ProBAR offers [pro bono opportunities for attorneys](#), as well as a [remote translation program](#) for volunteers with language abilities who are interested in translating documents needed for our clients' cases from various languages into English. Spanish, French, and Haitian Creole are our most requested languages, but we welcome volunteers with a range of language abilities.

Our team is growing! If you are interested in working with our team of passionate advocates, we encourage you to check out available opportunities on our [job board](#). We offer career opportunities for attorneys at multiple levels of practice experience – from Staff Attorney to Supervising Attorney, as well as roles for non-attorney advocates with a range of professional and academic backgrounds.

ProBAR also [welcomes donations](#) from individuals who feel compelled to support our work. Contributions help ProBAR to address areas of highest need, including by supporting responses to new developments in law and policy that affect immigrants and asylum-seekers in our region.



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## Shifting Paths to Protection: Title 42 and the ‘Asylum Ban’

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*By Luis Rios, ProBAR Supervising Attorney,*

*with contributions from Julissa Rodríguez, Senior Outreach Associate*

Seeking asylum in the United States is legal under both national and international law. Every day, thousands of migrants from all over the world arrive at our southern border to seek protection and opportunity. After arrival, their experiences are deeply shaped by a changing landscape of policies.

Located only miles from the United States-Mexico border, ProBAR sees the impacts of changes in border policy in the circumstances faced by our clients and the responses needed from our team to support migrants as policies change.

From March 2020 to May 2023, the Title 42 policy profoundly impacted the ability of people in need of protection to access and navigate the U.S. immigration system. Over a three-year period, people were immediately expelled from the United States nearly three million times without an opportunity to access the asylum process. When Title 42 ended, however, a newly implemented policy, the Circumvention of Lawful Pathways Final Rule, began to shape the asylum process in new ways.



Photo credit: Vail Kohnert-Yount

### **From Title 42 to Asylum Ban**

Section 264 from Title 42 of the U.S. Code stems from the 1944 Public Health Services Law that grants the government the ability to take emergency action to stop the “introduction of communicable diseases.” At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Trump administration began using Title 42 to prevent migrants from entering the U.S. President Trump’s stated rationale was that allowing migrants to continue entering the country could contribute to the rapid spread of the coronavirus disease. After several changes in stipulations, three previous expiration dates, and nearly 3 million expulsions later, Title 42 officially ended on May 11, 2023.

Immediately upon the end of Title 42, the Biden Administration implemented a new rule for people who might arrive at the southern border. This new rule, known as the Circumvention of Lawful Pathways Rule (CLP, or the “new Asylum Ban”), took effect on May 11, 2023, and is supposed to be in effect through May 11, 2025.

This new Asylum Ban creates a rebuttable presumption of ineligibility for asylum based on the manner of entry into the US and transit through third countries. There will be a presumption of asylum ineligibility for those people who entered the U.S. without inspection through the U.S.-Mexico border, or who presented at a port of entry without a CBP One appointment between May 11, 2023 and May 11, 2025, and who transited through a third country, such as Colombia, Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, Belize, and Mexico, without being denied asylum or any other form of protection. Certain categories of people are exempt from the New Asylum Ban, including people who used the U.S. Government’s CBP One application to request an appointment for immigration processing, unaccompanied children, Mexican nationals, and those authorized to travel according to DHS parole. Other people seeking entry to the U.S. might overcome the presumption of asylum ineligibility by demonstrating with a

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## Shifting Paths to Protection: Title 42 and the ‘Asylum Ban’

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preponderance of evidence that “exceptionally compelling circumstances exist.” Evidence of facing an acute medical emergency, an imminent or extreme threat to life and safety, and being a victim of a severe form of trafficking are some examples.

The Asylum Ban has already significantly limited access to asylum at the border. Thousands of people have tried to enter the United States after May 11 using the CBP One application, but the majority cross the river and enter the country without authorization due to a range of technical difficulties, financial inability to secure a compatible phone, and the limited availability of appointments. With the new Asylum Ban, individuals are placed in an Enhanced Expedited Removal process. If they fear returning to their home country, the Asylum Ban requires a Credible Fear Interview (“CFI”) be conducted within 24 hours, and the outcome of this incredibly important interview with an Asylum Officer determines their ability to formally apply for asylum. The quick turnaround time for an interview has made it challenging for people seeking asylum to have access to counsel and meaningful due process.

### What is Happening on the Ground?

ProBAR serves people transferred to ICE custody at the Port Isabel Detention Center (PIDC) or El Valle Detention Facility (EVDF) after their detention and processing in Customs and Border Protection (CBP) custody and has adapted our services to these changes occurring at the border. We have witnessed a reduction of the number of detained people in full immigration proceedings and a substantial increase in Credible Fear Interviews and Immigration Judge review hearings.

By late summer 2023, both detention centers were at capacity, and people were transferred to another detention center, deported to their home country or Mexico, or released from custody very quickly. The pace at which the deportation system operates under the Asylum Ban adds another layer of difficulty to providing critical legal services. Asylum officers conduct CFIs seven days a week, and the results could be issued on any day of the week. After the decision, individuals are quickly transferred, released, or removed to their home country. This situation constrains the window of opportunity for ProBAR to provide services that could make a dramatic difference on the ability of a detained person to understand the process, advocate for themselves effectively, or secure legal representation.

Advocates have already responded to the CLP policy by challenging its legality. On July 25, 2023, the United States District Court for the Northern District of California vacated the new rule in [East Bay Sanctuary Covenant v. Biden](#). The District Court made clear that the new law violates longstanding obligations under U.S. and International law. [This decision](#) lifted the new rule, meaning that, after a short stay, asylum processing at the border could return to the regime that was in place for decades before Title 42 and the CLP. However, on August 3, 2023, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit [blocked the lower court’s decision and ruled](#) that the CLP could remain in effect while the case moves through the appeal process, potentially up to arguments before the U.S. Supreme Court.

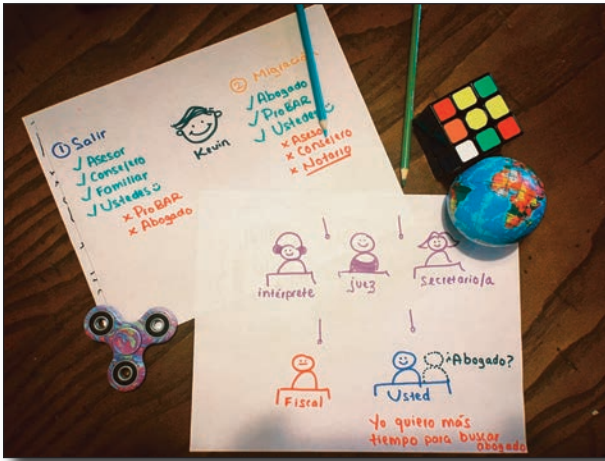
Despite these obstacles, legal services continue to change lives. ProBAR’s team remains focused on bringing hope, knowledge, and empowerment. People in immediate need of information have been oriented on the Asylum process, Credible Fear Interviews, Immigration Judge reviews, and Requests for Release, among other critical topics. ProBAR staff also directly represent clients, ensuring they have advocates in court or before Asylum Officers. ProBAR remains committed to identifying creative approaches to support migrants with information and assistance as they pursue legally available paths to potential relief.

To learn more about ProBAR and our work, visit [abaprobar.org](http://abaprobar.org).

To get involved, learn more about [career](#) or [pro bono opportunities](#) with our team.

## Advocates and Educators:

# ProBAR's Work with Unaccompanied Children



When advocates are asked to describe unaccompanied children, their responses often cite the children's strength, their bravery at undertaking the arduous journey to the U.S.-Mexico border alone, or their resilience as survivors of such difficult experiences at such a young age. Just as often, however, their responses identify their characteristics as children – funny, unique, and eager to learn, even amidst the uniquely challenging circumstances of migrating alone.

In recent years, ProBAR has served upwards of 20,000 unaccompanied children annually, but each individual child has their own story, their own set of circumstances, and their own unique strengths. A youth from Nicaragua may describe arrest and persecution by police on allegations of opposition

to the current government. An adolescent boy reports his strong desire to work to provide for his mother and siblings who struggle to make ends meet each week. A child shares their desperate excitement to reunify with their mother in the United States after 7 years of separation, years marked also by abuse at the hands of their caretaker in their home country. Not all children will qualify for legal relief under our immigration laws; however, all have the right to access legal services to learn about the immigration process and to consult with an attorney about their eligibility to remain in the United States.

As unaccompanied children enter the United States without a parent or legal guardian, they encounter an immigration system created for adults, with certain protections carved out in recognition of their unique vulnerabilities as children. Some children may present themselves at a port of entry, while others may cross the Rio Grande – many of them with the intention of seeking out Border Patrol officials to whom they will turn themselves in. Their initial detention is often in the custody of Customs and Border Protection, in different processing facilities the children refer to as the “icebox” or the “dog pound” due to the cold temperatures and high chain-link fencing separating groups of migrants. When officials determine they are unaccompanied children – because they are under age 18, do not have a parent or legal guardian present, and do not have lawful status in the United States, they receive a Notice to Appear in Immigration Court and are transferred to the custody of the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), which by statute should occur within 72 hours. In the various ORR facilities located throughout the Rio Grande Valley (RGV), ProBAR staff have their initial interactions with the children, building trust and establishing a foundation for future legal services.

Since 2003, ProBAR has provided legal education, representation, and connections to supportive services tailored to unaccompanied children detained in or released from ORR facilities. Know Your Rights (KYR) presentations, a right of all immigrant children as stated in Section 235 of the TVPRA (TVPRA § 235) have long been a core component of ProBAR's services for unaccompanied children. These presentations are critical as they provide children with important information about their rights and the immigration court process, as well as the opportunity to ask questions and be heard. Through the years, ProBAR staff have found creative ways to engage children of various ages and have developed child-friendly presentations that convey valuable information about the complex

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## Advocates and Educators: ProBAR's Work with Unaccompanied Children

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immigration legal system which they must navigate, often without legal representation. Importantly, an effective Know Your Rights presentation prepares children for future client-attorney relationships and empowers them to engage as respondents before immigration authorities.

After providing a Know Your Rights presentation, ProBAR's team also meets individually with each child to conduct a legal screening, drawing out information and listening to a child's story with a careful ear to facts that may help attorneys identify the child's eligibility for legal relief. The services that follow from the legal screening range widely based on children's circumstances – from legal referrals after their release from detention, referrals to the Young Center's child advocate program, or orientations at the Harlingen Immigration Court. ProBAR staff also recognize that building trust and rapport with a child may require more than one conversation, and the team's follow up often persists beyond the initial screening for children who remain detained in our region for extended periods of time.

For children who remain in the RGV, whether detained or living with a sponsor in the local community, ProBAR's attorneys provide crucial representation to help some of them secure immigration relief. This includes representation for applications before U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, removal defense before the Executive Office for Immigration Review, or representation to secure predicate orders with findings of abuse, abandonment, or neglect for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status before local state district courts. In the context of immigration proceedings where respondents, including children, do not have a right to appointed counsel, pro bono representation can make a tremendous difference.

ProBAR's child clients face many obstacles along their paths. [For client Mirian](#), leaving home on the challenging journey to the United States was driven by a need to flee ongoing abuse in her home country from which her parents had been unable to protect her. During the journey, she also witnessed violence that left a mark on her memory. Upon arrival in the United States, Mirian was placed in an ORR facility where she met ProBAR staff during a KYR presentation and legal screening. At first, it was difficult to trust a deeply personal story she had held privately for so long to these unfamiliar adults. Months passed, and Mirian was unable to find a family member willing to help her seek release from detention. She considered the ProBAR staff who had reached out to her in order to identify ways to assist her and decided to confide her story for the first time. That conversation turned into an offer of representation, and ProBAR's team filed an asylum application on behalf of Mirian. While awaiting adjudication of the application, Mirian's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday arrived, and she was transferred to an adult detention facility. Even in the face of this new challenge, she persisted with support from her parents and the ProBAR team, and a few months later she was granted asylum. Today, Mirian is a Lawful Permanent Resident with a path before her to create a life safe from violence and pursue her dreams in the United States.

ProBAR's work with unaccompanied children and youth like Mirian has also evolved over time to address the needs of children. During the 2018 family separation crisis, ProBAR served many children who had been separated from their parents by DHS officials only days before. The team diligently adapted our services to address this recent trauma and identify ways to help children understand where their parent might be and what might happen next in their case. Later, as the COVID-19 pandemic began in March 2020, [ProBAR's team made a difficult transition](#) to temporarily providing remote services over Zoom and similar platforms. The team succeeded in adapting, bringing tremendous creativity in the form of sharing music, incorporating pets and puppets, or

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## Advocates and Educators: ProBAR's Work with Unaccompanied Children

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employing trust-building questions to help children feel more comfortable. These remote experiences built a toolkit that they bring to their in-person services today.

ProBAR has also worked to innovate services to address the specific needs of the children served. For example, the team has long used a range of strategies to [share legal information with tender-age children](#) aged 12 and under. These strategies include role-play and having children create drawings of their home life and different legal concepts to give them an opportunity to process what they are learning. In 2021 our team completed a special project to improve language access for Mayan-language speakers. The [two Mayan-language Know Your Rights videos](#) produced are now used to assist children most comfortable speaking K'iche' and Ma'am to engage with the information in their strongest language. And more recently, in 2022, the team worked to provide training to share best practices and [ensure inclusive services for children with disabilities](#).

When ProBAR's team shares their victories on behalf of children, the experiences they cite vary greatly. Winning a child's case or seeing them adjust status and become Lawful Permanent Residents is always tremendously joyful. However, ProBAR staff take other victories seriously as well. As one long-time paralegal has described, a victory can be as simple as knowing that a child or youth, much like Mirian, now believes that someone cares about them and their story.

To learn more about ProBAR and our work, visit [abaprobar.org](http://abaprobar.org).

To get involved, learn more about [career](#) or [pro bono opportunities](#) with our team.

# Mobilizing Impact: Transforming Vicarious Resilience into a Driver of Pro Bono

By *Julissa Rodríguez, ProBAR Senior Outreach Associate*



**Emily Heger**

As a recent law school graduate and new attorney in 2019, Emily Heger was excited to begin her Equal Justice Works (EJW) fellowship with her host organization, [Human Rights Initiative of North Texas \(HRI\)](#). Early in her fellowship, Emily observed a colleague's hearing in immigration court and witnessed a client receive asylum. Although the client's win was incredibly exciting, an unexpected highlight was the Immigration Judge's genuine and heartfelt message to the client's legal team. Emily shares, "The Judge asked our team to stick around after the outcome was announced. She expressed her gratitude for us showing up and standing by the client." Additionally, this Judge also emphasized the importance of pro bono work and the potential it has to make a generational impact on a migrant and their family. Representation matters, and Emily recognized the impact she could make as she applied her longstanding passion for helping others to her emerging legal career.

Emily's 2-year fellowship began in the fall of 2019 and her project, co-sponsored by Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP and AT&T, centered around representing individuals fleeing gender-based persecution who were seeking asylum in the U.S. In 2020 much of the actual work of the project had to shift due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, Emily mobilized the heart and expertise of the attorneys she collaborated with at Akin and AT&T to partner with Lawyers for Good Government to provide pro bono assistance to individuals impacted by the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP) program.

Emily joined the Akin team shortly after her fellowship came to an end. In her current role as Senior Pro Bono Coordinator, she works directly with pro bono clients and mobilizes pro bono within the firm. Emily has seen the transformative power of pro bono work firsthand, in her own clients' cases, and through the initiatives, connections, and partnerships she has fostered as well.

She notes, "In my pro bono practice, I mainly represent folks who have fled or are fleeing persecution. Their ability to deploy so much strength to traverse oceans and countries to arrive here is inspiring and powerful. Being their advocate is an honor."

Due to the nature of serving clients seeking protection, Emily is mindful of the vicarious trauma that may affect attorneys. However, Emily has also reflected on the related concept of "vicarious resilience." She shares that this is something she has gained over the years after constantly being motivated by her clients' strength.

In addition to her own caseload, Emily helps to oversee pro bono cases that are referred to Akin through a network of nearly 100 legal services organizations engaged in direct services. Emily has also been involved in the firm's Afghan Asylum Project, formed through a Partner's personal connection, which currently represents more than 100 Afghan clients. The firm also was contacted by the White House during MPP to provide consultations to affected migrants. The Akin team responded by connecting with other firms to ultimately provide approximately 3,000 migrants with a consultation.

More recently, Emily and the Akin pro bono team supported migrants impacted by a tragedy that took place in Brownsville, Texas, this past May. This horrific incident resulted in the death and injury of several migrants at the Ozanam Center – a homeless shelter in the Rio Grande Valley that often houses migrants in need of a short-term

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## Mobilizing Impact: Transforming Vicarious Resilience into a Driver of Pro Bono

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place to stay. [ProBAR, the ABA's South Texas Pro Bono Asylum Representation Project](#), responded to the tragedy in our community by providing legal and social services support. Based on the needs ProBAR identified on the ground, ABA Commission on Immigration Director Meredith Linsky reached out to Akin, and the firm promptly responded to her call to action. Akin accepted three cases for direct representation, including for individuals who sustained serious injuries involving hospitalization and surgical intervention. Akin is representing these clients in their immigration court removal proceedings and for forms of immigration relief, including U-Visa applications and more. Since then, the firm has remained in close communication with ProBAR to discuss ways to deepen their impact and engage more pro bono attorneys. In fact, the firm is organizing a clinic for witnesses, victims, and family members of victims of the tragedy who may qualify for Temporary Protected Status and a work permit. This initiative will allow up to 50 to 60 individuals to receive legal representation. If you are interested in learning more or receiving updates, please visit [Akin Pro Bono's LinkedIn](#).

Emily encourages all attorneys considering pro bono – regardless of legal specialty – to get involved. Regardless of the field or area of law, pro bono work is incredibly impactful and can leave a longstanding outcome, as the Judge who spoke with Emily and her group mentioned. Emily states, “Know that you can trust a legal services organization; they are often run and led by attorneys and other wonderful staff that build support systems into their programs. Things like virtual office hours, mentorship, training, and more can help maximize your impact.”

Thank you, Emily, for your dedication, passion, and commitment to ProBAR's mission and work. Our team is incredibly grateful for your collaboration and the time and service you and your team provide to immigrants and asylum-seekers.

### **Interested in Pro Bono Opportunities?**

ProBAR's pro bono program is open to U.S.-licensed attorneys who want to make a difference in the lives of migrants. ProBAR offers a variety of case types – from release matters to merits cases, as well as mentorship for volunteer attorneys. If you are interested in learning more, please consider expressing your interest through our pro bono sign-up [form](#) or contact us at [volunteer@abaprobar.org](mailto:volunteer@abaprobar.org).

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## Reaching Out for Resources

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By *Vi Nguyen and Golare Dabiri Tanha*

### **Introduction:**

Whether you are new to practicing immigration law or are an experienced practitioner, do you find yourself looking for support, guidance, and resources to help you in your practice? Look no further! We have put together a comprehensive listing of resources that should help you find the support and guidance you need to practice immigration.

### **Professional Associations/Organizations in the Immigration Field**

With the constant changes in the political climate and their impact on various governmental components and their respective agencies such as the Department of Labor, Department of Homeland Security, or ongoing developments around the world from environmental crises to devastating wars forcing tens of thousands of people to migrate to the United States, the learning curve with the ever-evolving field of Immigration Law is real. That being said, there are many great resources for those wanting to learn the basics or sharpen their skills and knowledge in the Immigration Law.

#### American Immigration Lawyers Association “AILA”

One highly recommended resource is joining the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA). Founded in 1946, AILA holds 16,000 members through 39 chapters and 50+ national committees. Through AILA, you have access to extensive resources such as AILA university (where there are several online courses and video tutorials of all levels on various topics such as employment-based immigration, consular practices, etc.), webinars (there are frequent discussions done by expert panels or seminars on emerging topics in the field), and AILALink as well as helpful AILA Practice Pointers. Very specifically, AILA has a resource dedicated to new members, the AILA New Member Division. Once you become a member, you have the option to subscribe (free of charge) to several listservs and mailing lists. Another great feature of AILA membership is their e-newsletter AILA8. As a new practitioner, you may feel overwhelmed by the volume of information and constant changes in the law and regulations. AILA8 is a daily summary of top 8 immigration law news and resources.

Finally, AILA offers a Mentor Program where you can engage with a [network of experienced practitioners](#) and seek guidance on practice management, ethical issues, or etc.

#### State Bar of Texas

Besides AILA, another great resource for immigration practitioners includes the State Bar of Texas ([State Bar of Texas | Immigration \(texasbar.com\)](#)). When you visit the State Bar of Texas’ website, you can access helpful guides such as:

- Breathe Free: A Guide to Immigration
- Know Your Rights – Unaccompanied Detained Minors in Immigration Removal Proceedings

Like AILA, the State Bar of Texas also hosts an annual Immigration Law CLE held each year in February. The annual CLE event is broken into two parts over the span of 3 days:

- Immigration Law 101 – An introduction to the new or non-immigration attorney to successfully enter the practice area.
- Advanced Immigration Law – Deeper look into the law, as well as projection for the future of immigration law.

Also, the State Bar has made a commitment to offer high-quality CLE without regard to a lawyer’s financial situation. Please note that the TexasBarCLE offers scholarships for live courses, video replays, online cases and webcasts! For

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## Reaching Out for Resources

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more information about these scholarships, you can visit [texasbarcle.com/scholarship](https://texasbarcle.com/scholarship). Additionally, if you are a lawyer licensed for five years or less, you can attend most live and video replay seminars for 50% of the regular registration fee.

### Immigration & Nationality Law Section of the State Bar of Texas

As an extension of the State Bar of Texas, also consider the Immigration & Nationality Law Section of the State Bar. Immigration & Nationality Law Section of the State Bar of Texas specifically focuses on providing tools to help practitioners stay on top of the latest immigration updates. Some of the resources provided by the Immigration & Nationality Law Section of the State Bar of Texas include:

- Monthly CLE webinars on the latest immigration topics
- A legal writing workshop
- Access to pro bono opportunities

Membership dues for the Immigration & Nationality Law Section are just \$20/year. And, if you are lawyer licensed for 2 years or less, then the membership fee is waived!

### Professional Social Events

Whether you just started practicing or are a seasoned professional, you can find fantastic resources in our colleagues. One way to reach out to colleagues is through professional and social opportunities, as these are great ways to meet other practitioners. The largest of these events is the national AILA conference held annually; however, if you cannot make it to the annual AILA conference, consider the AILA Texas, New Mexico and Oklahoma Chapter conferences. This year, their conference is being held in Costa Rica. With a beautiful locale, CLE hours and the opportunity to relax among your colleagues, it is not surprising that the conference has been booked out completely!

Additionally, try checking out your local immigration group in your city and join their Happy Hour meetings. For example, in Houston, there is a “Houston Immigration Lawyers” Facebook group that meets each month for a Happy Hour social, in addition to the “Dallas AILA Chapter” which meets for CLEs. Connecting (and networking) with your colleagues gives you the ability to build trust, support and your reputation within the community.

Don't have the time to meet at socials? Don't fret! Consider joining online social media groups for immigration attorneys. With the continued growth of social media through different forums (i.e. Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.), there are an endless array of different immigration groups you can join. A sampling of Facebook groups include:

- Business Immigration Attorneys
- Nerdy Immigration Attorneys
- Texas Immigration Lawyers
- Dallas Immigration Lawyers
- Houston Immigration Lawyers
- Federal Court Immigration Lawyers

One great benefit of joining social media groups is that you have access to hundreds of attorneys who are dealing with or have dealt with the same or similar facts you are dealing with. Asking for guidance or advice is welcomed and feedback from other's experiences can often be very helpful.

*Continued on page 14*

## Reaching Out for Resources

*Continued from page 13.*

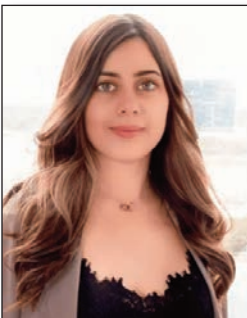
### Conclusion

With the ever-changing landscape that is immigration law, the one thing you can count on is having the resources to help you navigate through this exciting (but complex) area of law. Despite the unpredictable changes that can happen and the obstacles that come our way, immigration law can be a rewarding profession. With more than 45.3 million immigrants<sup>1</sup> in the United States, it is clear that immigration law will continue to grow and evolve.

And just like the law, new, as well as seasoned practitioners of immigration law must also learn to grow and evolve in order to be stronger advocates for our clients. Hopefully, these resources will help you to grow and expand your knowledge in Immigration Law.



**Vi Nguyen** is a senior attorney at Foster LLP in their Houston office. Named “Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch” in 2021, 2022 and 2023, Vi’s practice focuses on assisting clients navigate the employment-based nonimmigrant visa (H-1Bs, TNs, L-1, O-1s, etc.) and assisting individuals of extraordinary ability, outstanding researchers and professors, and multinational executives obtain permanent residence in the United States. Additionally, she has also extensive experience litigating in both immigration court and federal court. Vi graduated from Thurgood Marshall School of Law and received her undergraduate degree from the University of Texas at Austin. She is licensed to practice in Texas and is an active member of the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA), where she currently serves on the 2023-2024 AILA Member Engagement committee.



**Golare Dabiri Tanha** has been practicing exclusively in the area of business and employment immigration law since 2019 and is an associate attorney at Foster LLP at their Houston office. She received her J.D. from Tulane University, cum laude, where she was the recipient of the Merit-Based Scholarship. While in law school, she participated in the Tulane Immigrants’ Rights Practicum, served as the Managing Editor of the Tulane Environmental Law Journal, and was a Student Attorney in the Domestic Violence Clinic. In her third year, she served as the Research Assistant to Professor Hlass, the school’s immigration Professor and Director of Experiential Learning. Golare obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from the University of British Columbia. She is admitted to practice in Texas and the District of Columbia and is a member of the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) and currently serves on the 2023-2024 AILA Client Resources committee.

<sup>1</sup> Article: Frequently Requested Statistics on Immigr.. | [migrationpolicy.org](https://www.migrationpolicy.org)

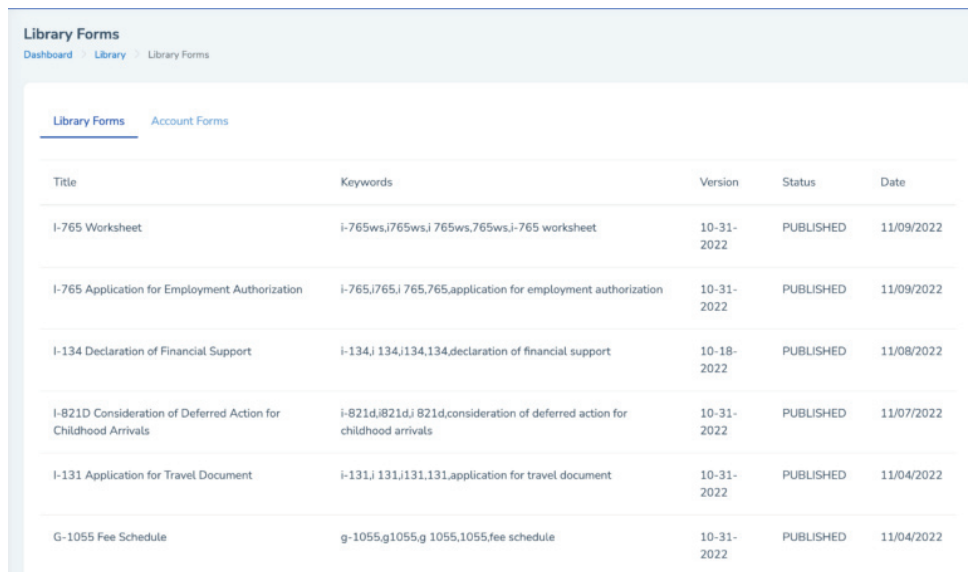
## LollyLaw Modernizes Immigration Form-Filing with Real-Time Client Collaboration Feature

It's no secret that one of the most laborious parts of immigration case work comes during the form-filing process. Packed with information that can often be tough to compile, attorneys and clients alike are on the hook to complete immigration forms right the first time, or run the risk of an unsuccessful immigration filing.

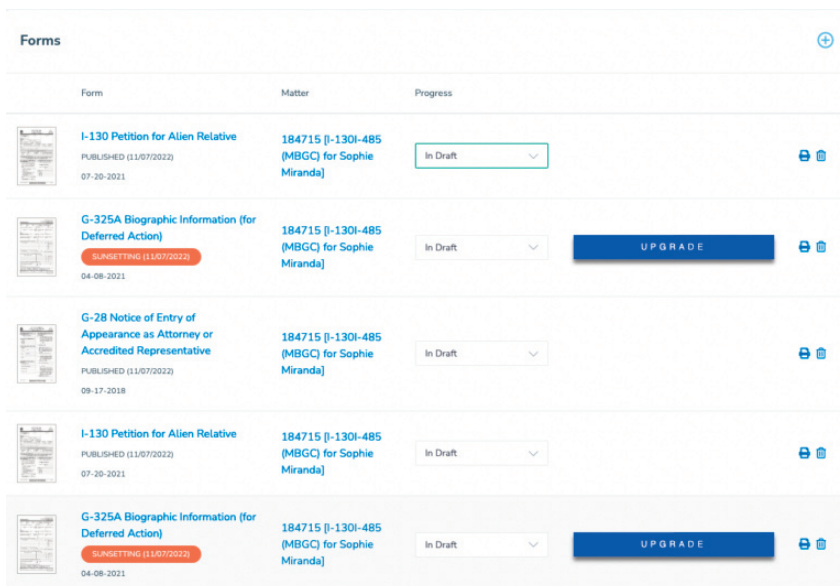
With these stakes in mind, LollyLaw is proud to introduce our first-to-market, real-time form collaboration feature, LollyForms. This native feature automates form-filing and allows immigration attorneys and clients to work collaboratively in real-time during the form completion. Additionally, LollyForms ensures that attorneys are using the most up-to-date edition of government forms by prompting them of the latest changes directly in the app. With LollyLaw, immigration attorneys never have to worry about applications getting denied simply because of outdated forms — let's uncover how LollyForms work.

### Complete Set of USCIS, DOJ, EOIR, Forms All In One Place

LollyLaw offers the most expansive set of immigration forms with over 125 USCIS, DOJ, and EOIR forms at your disposal — making it easy for immigration attorneys and clients to locate and access the correct immigration forms for any case type by doing a simple search. All forms are automatically updated within an hour of new version releases, so attorneys can ditch the hassle of hunting down the most recent versions elsewhere and can rely on accuracy from LollyLaw.



Title	Keywords	Version	Status	Date
I-765 Worksheet	i-765ws,i765ws,i 765ws,765ws,i-765 worksheet	10-31-2022	PUBLISHED	11/09/2022
I-765 Application for Employment Authorization	i-765,i765,i 765,765,application for employment authorization	10-31-2022	PUBLISHED	11/09/2022
I-134 Declaration of Financial Support	i-134,i 134,i134,134,declaration of financial support	10-18-2022	PUBLISHED	11/08/2022
I-821D Consideration of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals	i-821d,i821d,i 821d,consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals	10-31-2022	PUBLISHED	11/07/2022
I-131 Application for Travel Document	i-131,i 131,i131,131,application for travel document	10-31-2022	PUBLISHED	11/04/2022
G-1055 Fee Schedule	g-1055,g1055,g 1055,1055,fee schedule	10-31-2022	PUBLISHED	11/04/2022



Form	Matter	Progress
I-130 Petition for Alien Relative PUBLISHED (11/07/2022) 07-20-2021	184715 [I-130]-485 (MBGC) for Sophie Miranda	In Draft
G-325A Biographic Information (for Deferred Action) SUNSETTING (11/07/2022) 04-08-2021	184715 [I-130]-485 (MBGC) for Sophie Miranda	In Draft <b>UPGRADE</b>
G-28 Notice of Entry of Appearance as Attorney or Accredited Representative PUBLISHED (11/07/2022) 09-17-2018	184715 [I-130]-485 (MBGC) for Sophie Miranda	In Draft
I-130 Petition for Alien Relative PUBLISHED (11/07/2022) 07-20-2021	184715 [I-130]-485 (MBGC) for Sophie Miranda	In Draft
G-325A Biographic Information (for Deferred Action) SUNSETTING (11/07/2022) 04-08-2021	184715 [I-130]-485 (MBGC) for Sophie Miranda	In Draft <b>UPGRADE</b>

### Synced Contact Data Automatically Populates in Forms

LollyForms empowers immigration attorneys to speed up the form-filing process by automatically syncing data from LollyLaw contacts into forms. Information such as first name, address, employment information, and passport number, which often requires documentation across many forms, will automatically populate — saving clients time and getting them one step closer to filing.

Whenever there are new government form updates, LollyForms can sync data from the outdated form into the new form version with just a few clicks. LollyForms notifies users of form changes by marking prior editions as “Sunsetting” or “Expired” and prompts users

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**LollyLaw**

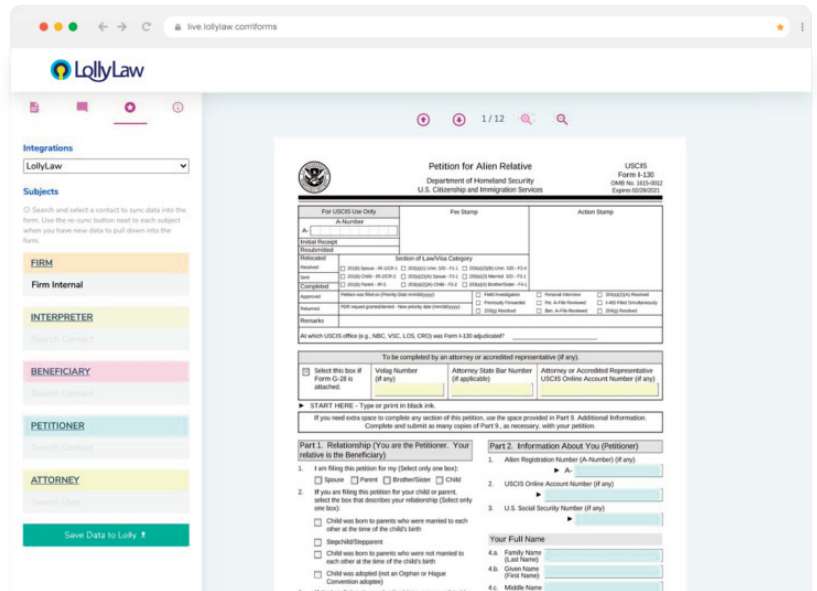
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to upgrade that form to the latest version. By working in LollyForms, clients no longer have to duplicate their efforts if a new form gets released while in the middle of a case.

To further streamline the form-filling process, immigration attorneys can pre-set and assign roles before allowing clients to fill out any immigration forms. By assigning roles like the applicant, attorney, and family members prior to form-filling, LollyForms will auto-populate assigned roles throughout the entire form — letting form-fillers to focus on only their roles instead of the entire document.

**Populate and Edit Forms with Clients In Real-Time**

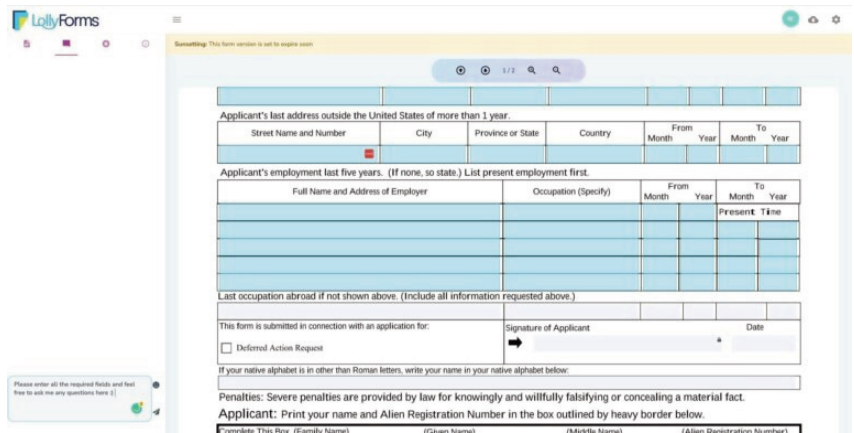
LollyForms allows immigration attorneys and clients to collaborate on each form in real-time to reduce tedious back-and-forth communication while maintaining version control of every form. Each form can be filled out through the web in a live collaboration mode, so attorneys can ensure the client’s information is filled out accurately. Think of it as simultaneously working on a Google Doc, but for Immigration PDF forms.



For example, if a client is unsure of what to put under “Legal Name Changes,” their attorney can access LollyForms at the same time and type the correct information in. Aside from filling out forms together, LollyForms is equipped with a real-time chat messaging box which lets clients ask questions directly in each form.

**LollyLaw Transforms and Modernizes the Outdated Form-Filling Process**

It’s important for immigration attorneys to stay on top of using the most recent form versions and ensure clients are filling out information accurately and in a timely manner. With LollyForms, immigration attorneys and clients alike can access the most expansive set of form libraries with 125+ forms to choose from, and collaborate in real-time to complete necessary forms. If you’re currently struggling with the form-filling process, connect with Briggs Jackson to see how LollyForms can help.



Schedule Time with Briggs at <https://calendly.com/lollylaw-briggs/lollylaw-demo>  
**Briggs@lollylaw.com**



**LollyLaw** helps immigration attorneys effortlessly manage cases and improve their productivity by leveraging cutting-edge features in an all-in-one software. Generative form-filling with the most expansive set of USCIS, DOJ, and EOIR forms in the industry allows attorneys to dynamically populate forms in seconds, and immigration-specific workflows are completely customizable to fit firm needs. Law firms can close cases and get paid faster with built-in payment plans and the widest range of payment options with LollyPayments. LollyLaw is tailor-made to help attorneys manage their immigration law firm from end to end.  
Briggs Jackson

Schedule Time with Briggs at <https://calendly.com/lollylaw-briggs/lollylaw-demo>  
**Briggs@lollylaw.com**

***Mention the State Bar of Texas Bulletin to get your 5% discount.***

**Schedule a demo before December 31, 2023, to get a 5% discount on our annual plan and earn a \$500 cash-back bonus when you sign up for LollyPayments.**