



Immigrant Connection Legal Network
Policies & Procedures Manual

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Immigration Legal Services

One of the largest felt needs of immigrant individuals and families is access to immigration legal services (ILS). With access to quality ILS, foreign-born residents and families gain and/or maintain lawful immigration status - enabling them to achieve employment security, financial stability, and reunification with family members, as well as a host of additional benefits essential for individuals and families to thrive.

Immigrants face many obstacles in the United States, namely, a lack of access to local legal services and the high cost of legal services. Immigrant Connection (IC) addresses these obstacles head-on by providing low-cost, high-quality immigration legal services through Local IC Sites in under-resourced areas across the country.

“Federal regulations at [8 C.F.R. § 1292.1\(a\)\(4\)](#) allow non-attorney “Accredited Representatives” to represent [immigrants] before the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR), which includes the immigration courts and the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA). These representatives are accredited through the Recognition and Accreditation (R&A) Program, which aims to increase the availability of competent immigration legal representation for low-income and indigent persons, thereby promoting the effective and efficient administration of justice. Accredited Representatives may only provide immigration legal services through Recognized Organizations. Only non-profit, federally tax-exempt entities may apply to be recognized.”

Department of Justice (DOJ) accredited legal representatives (hereafter “Legal Representatives”) with IC provide consultations for immigration questions and help clients determine eligibility for available immigration pathways regardless of immigration status, race, ethnicity, gender, age, marital status, abilities, sexual orientation, and/or religious affiliation.

Local IC Sites willingly comply with DOJ policies regulating the R&A Program. At IC, the goal of providing immigration legal services is not proselytization, church participation, attendance, membership, or any other motives related to the church's relationship with the client. **Our sole focus is providing professional assistance in navigating immigration pathways and ensuring the best possible outcomes for our clients in compliance with United States law and DOJ regulations.**

Legal Representatives at Local IC Sites provide legal assistance with cases related to:

- Family and Marriage-Based Applications
- Naturalization Petitions
- Lawful Permanent Resident Renewals

- Employment Authorization Renewals
- Adjustment of Status
- Consular Processing
- Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)
- Affirmative Asylum
- U & T Visas
- Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)
- Temporary Protected Status (TPS)
- Non-Immigrant Visas (Initial & Extension)
- Religious Worker Visas

Mission, Vision & Values

Immigrant Connection (IC), a faith-based organization, was established in 2014 as a direct response to the biblical call to love, welcome, and serve immigrants. The IC movement was born out of a group of diverse community leaders from around the country who committed themselves to addressing the unique needs of immigrant individuals and families. They saw clearly how the lack of immigration legal services caused severe distress, loss of opportunity, and increased insecurity for immigrants, so they committed to finding a way to serve through ILS.

VIDEO: [Our immigrant neighbors remain at the center of our mission, vision, and values](#)

Mission: Ensuring greater access to high-quality, low-cost immigration legal services across the United States.

Vision: When every immigrant in the United States has access to immigration legal services, all families and communities can thrive.

Values: Loving Welcome, Innovative Excellence, Church-Based Expansion, Community-Based Leadership, and Mutual Partnership.

Digging Deeper Into Our Values

Loving Welcome: The life and teachings of Jesus compel us to love, welcome, and value immigrants. We affirm the rights of immigrants, each made in the image of God, and we are committed to seeing immigrant families and individuals thrive in their local communities.

Innovative Excellence: We are committed to excellence and innovation as we build programs and systems to train, launch, and resource a national network of sustainable sites offering high-quality immigration legal services in local communities.

Church-Based Expansion: A church-based model enables us to bring immigration legal services access to hard-to-reach communities in a sustainable manner: 1) churches

exist in nearly every town/city, 2) church-hosted sites drastically reduce start-up and overhead costs, and 3) churches are trusted local entities.

Community-Based Leadership: Our training and leadership model is focused on “home-grown” leaders, experts, and staff. We equip and empower individuals to become immigration legal experts in their own localities and to serve their own neighbors, communities, and regions through immigration legal services.

Mutual Partnership: We build authentic, mutual partnerships in order to make a lasting impact for immigrants. Every partner creates with us a future where all immigrants have access to immigration legal services.

What Differentiates Immigrant Connection?

Immigrant Connection: IC is the largest and fastest-growing church-based immigration legal service movement in the United States. With a proven track record of growth and impact, IC is uniquely situated as a leader in the immigration legal services field, in faith-based response to immigrant neighbors, and in national partnerships providing further service to immigrants.

Immigrant Connection National: IC National leads and guides the expansion of the IC Legal Network, and ensures the movement remains mission-driven in its programs, models, and partnerships. To ensure greater access to high-quality, low-cost immigration legal services, IC National launches new sites and oversees the sustainability and growth of the IC Legal Network.

Immigrant Connection Legal Network: The collective group of Local IC Sites across the country makes up the IC Legal Network. As members of the IC Legal Network, Local IC Sites are unified in mission and quality standards as they provide direct immigration legal services. Each person representing IC as staff or volunteer lives out the values of IC through their unique contribution of time, talent, resources, and commitment; they express their faith by extending welcome, love, and service to immigrants.

Mission-Focused Models: IC has an immigrant-centered model focusing on: (1) increasing access to services, and (2) removing barriers to services.

- **Church-Based Expansion:** IC National mobilizes and equips churches nationwide to host immigration legal services sites, ensuring through this model the mission is fulfilled in innovative and sustainable ways. Church-based sites drastically reduce overhead costs associated with launching and running a legal office, churches are known in local communities as places of refuge and hospitality, and holistic services are often offered through local churches.
- **High-Quality, Low-Cost Services:** All Legal Representatives in the IC Legal Network are accredited by the DOJ and have the specific, focused education, and experience to provide the highest quality of immigration legal services to clients

while keeping legal fees affordable. In addition, Local IC Sites can provide immigration legal services at a fraction of the cost a client would pay an attorney. Legal services costing \$3,000-\$5,000+ with an attorney cost a client about \$350.

- **Under-Resourced Communities:** IC expands into areas and regions with growing foreign-born populations that have limited or no access to immigration legal services. There are not enough immigration legal services providers in the country, and just like there are “food deserts,” where a community does not have access to a good grocery store, there are *immigration legal service deserts* in both rural and urban areas. This is significant in a system where timeliness matters.

Policy Rationale

Since 2014, IC has continued to expand in size, reach, and impact. To ensure the organization’s programs, sites, and services remain mission-driven, IC National is committed to implementing and enforcing policies that maintain and uphold quality standards of the IC Legal Network. This Policies & Procedures Manual outlines significant policies each Local IC Site willingly agrees and adheres to as a member of the IC Legal Network.

These policies and procedures do not encompass every detail required to operate an ILS program. Rather, they offer a framework to grasp the role and responsibilities of a Local IC Site as a member of the IC Legal Network.

Being part of the IC Legal Network means Local IC Sites are committed to upholding and adhering to IC’s shared mission, vision, and values. For the collective benefit, each Local IC Site follows specific policies outlining our shared responsibilities and roles.

While these policies outline the requirements of Local IC Sites within the IC Legal Network, it is imperative each Local IC Site maintains written procedures documenting the site’s ILS program management. Such written procedures will increase clarity and efficiency and provide a smooth transition upon change of pastoral leadership and/or immigration legal services staff.

Immigrant Connection National

Established in 2020, IC National remains an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit with its own board of directors, executive director, staff, and separate annual budget. IC National leads and oversees the growth and sustainability of the IC Legal Network to ensure greater access to high-quality, low-cost immigration legal services across the United States.

IC National's roles and responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- I. Moving the mission forward of ensuring greater access to low-cost, high-quality immigration legal services across the United States;
- II. Assisting local churches and nonprofits with the recognition and accreditation process, including training, providing access to resources for legal development and program management, and preparing all applications to meet requirements for initial DOJ recognition and accreditation;
- III. Monitoring compliance of all Local IC Sites and Legal Representatives under the DOJ R&A Program regulations as an IC recognized site with accredited legal representative(s);
- IV. Securing a technical legal support provider and negotiating terms of service and costs for the IC Legal Network;
- V. Securing relevant and tailored legal liability insurance for the IC Legal Network and managing related costs;
- VI. Providing ongoing legal training through the annual conference, webinars, IC Legal Network monthly calls, trainings with legal experts, expanded legal libraries, online resources, and more;
- VII. Sustaining a growing, healthy IC Legal Network through annual site check-ins, access to program management resources, national partnerships where available and appropriate, and grant opportunities; and
- VIII. Coordinating standardized data collection and reporting processes to collectively share the story of impact and reach of IC across the United States.

IC National seeks to remove obstacles to maximize the efficiency and impact of each Local IC Site. Above all, we work together to ensure high-quality services and cost savings for clients in each unique context.

Immigrant Connection Legal Network

A church or nonprofit applies for and is approved as a partner of IC National to launch a Local IC Site, during which the site becomes recognized, and representatives become accredited through the DOJ to provide immigration legal services within the community.

By signing the Launch Pathway Agreement (LPA) and IC Legal Network MOU (MOU) and making the Launch Pathway Investment, a church willingly enters a partnership with IC National. Technical legal support and IC National financial and staff support begin on the date these agreements are signed by the church/nonprofit leadership and site leadership, making a church an official participant in the IC Launch Pathway.

IC National works alongside church leadership to submit the initial application for recognition of the site and accreditation of the identified representative(s) on the Launch Pathway. Once a site is recognized, its' representative(s) accredited, and its' legal liability insurance secured, immigration legal services can begin immediately as the church transitions to a Local IC Site in the IC Legal Network.

While partnering with IC is not a requirement to provide immigration legal services under the DOJ R&A Program, receiving IC National’s support as a member of the IC Legal Network provides access to the following services and benefits:

- Experienced guidance through the technicalities of the DOJ’s R&A Program application process, as well as subsequent renewal processes;
- Comprehensive legal liability insurance;
- Well-resourced technical legal support;
- Access to digital and hard copy legal library resources;
- Coaching and mentoring from experts in the field;
- Grant opportunities for site launch and sustainability;
- Community of skilled and experienced practitioners;
- Effective case management system, immigration;
- On-demand translation services through Boostlingo;
- Scheduling system software through Acuity Scheduling;
- Discounts to immigration resources through partnering organizations;
- Expanded client base through IC corporate partnerships; and
- Professional development opportunities through conferences, workshops, webinars, pre-application coursework, and more.

As a member of the IC Legal Network, the Local IC Site understands its role and responsibilities outlined in the LPA and MOU and aligns itself with the standards and practices of not just the DOJ R&A Program, but the heightened standards, practices, and requirements of a Local IC Site within the IC Legal Network.

The following information details the policies and procedures necessary to ensure a Local IC Site is:

1. Adhering to the standards of the IC Legal Network, and
2. Implementing the DOJ R&A Program as it is intended.

IC National and Local IC Sites serve as partners within the IC Legal Network to carry out their respective missions.

Through a unique partnership, we are not fully autonomous nor are we an employee/employer relationship. We intentionally partner together with mutuality and shared mission in relationship. We need each other.

This allows us to reciprocate value individually (locally) and collectively as the larger IC Legal Network for the benefit of the clients we serve.

IC National does not employ Local IC Sites or provide legal services to immigrants who are served by Local IC Sites. However, IC National monitors Local IC Sites’ compliance with the responsibilities of the DOJ’s R&A Program and the policies within this manual

outlining the quality of services required to ensure that each Local IC Site continues to remain a partner in the IC Legal Network.

Local IC Site Status Policy

When a Local IC Site signs the LPA and MOU and commits the Launch Pathway Investment, the process to become a DOJ recognized site begins. Once recognition is approved by the DOJ, a Local IC Site must maintain recognition with the DOJ and continue in best practices as a Local IC Site. To ensure [DOJ recognition requirements](#) are upheld and maintained across the IC Legal Network, IC National requires Local IC Sites to complete and submit the following annually:

Annual Program Documentation (Completed annually by January 31)¹

- Annual summary report of clients served and services rendered
- Actual and proposed budgets for previous and upcoming program year
- Review of current staff and active Legal Representatives
- Fee schedule and fee waiver policy
- List of legal library resources
- List of board meeting dates

Annual Site Check-In Calls with IC National (Completed annually at site anniversary)

- Complete Annual Site Check-In to review each Local IC Site's program year and connect with IC National staff.

Update IC National with Material Changes (Within 14 days of Legal Representative(s) status change and as needed for all other staff)

- Name change
- Address change
- Pastoral transition
- Staff changes
- Authorized Officer change
- Fee schedule change
- Financial challenges with ongoing ILS costs
- Any changes substantially impacting the site's ability to serve immigrant clients and effectively file cases

Site Management Policy

As a Local IC Site, the office serves as an ambassador of IC with respect to mission, vision, values, and highest standards of services to immigrants. We work together to

¹ Reference for **Annual Review** requirements under [8 C.F.R. § 1292.11](#)

ensure compliance with the DOJ R&A Program and maintain the highest standards of immigration legal services for IC clients.

As a Local IC Site, it is important that all sites implement the following protocol and notice as a DOJ recognized site and as a member of IC:

- 1) **A Local IC Site must display recognition and accreditation approval letters within the office where services are offered and display the protocol for clients and/or staff to submit a complaint, and²**
- 2) **A Complaint Protocol must be displayed and covered in the Client Services Agreement.³**

Being a DOJ recognized site requires oversight and accountability, as well as effective program management. The IC model identifies and implements key roles and responsibilities within a Local IC Site to align with the DOJ's R&A Program regulations and to comply with IC values. Please see outlined roles below:

- I. **Authorized Officers** serve as the DOJ recognized site's point of contact when the organization communicates with EOIR on all recognition and accreditation matters.⁴ The Authorized Officer has the authority to speak and act on behalf of the organization in matters related to the DOJ R&A Program. An Authorized Officer need not be the highest-ranking person in the organization but must be familiar with the organization's immigration services and accessible to communicate with the DOJ R&A Program when needed. Examples of commonly appointed designated Authorized Officers are:
 - Executive Directors
 - Legal Directors
 - Board Members
 - District Leaders
 - Legal Representatives
 - Site Directors
- II. **Board of Directors** main role is to provide governance and accountability as the system of oversight and approval of changes to program management.
- III. **Host Pastors** are usually the lead pastor or senior pastor of the church, connecting the mission of the congregation to the mission of IC.
- IV. **Site Directors** manage day-to-day operations, increasing awareness within the community, and implementing and monitoring policies and procedures.
- V. **DOJ Legal Representatives** provide immigration legal services to clients seeking pathways of immigration in the United States

² 8 C.F.R. § 1292.14

³ 8 C.F.R. § 1292.14(c)

⁴ 8 C.F.R. § 1292.11(a)(5)

- VI. **Legal Assistants** support through administrative legal tasks such as forms, cover letters, supporting documents, and client follow up.
- VII. **Receptionist/Support Staff** serve as the first point of contact of the office and provide administrative support with answering phones, scheduling appointments, and overall office support.

As well as implementing minimum DOJ R&A Program requirements, a Local IC Site will also conduct program evaluations to review effectiveness, efficiency, and impact. IC National will resource Site Directors and their boards with tools to assist with initiating and implementing this ongoing evaluation.

Legal Liability Insurance Policy

As a member of the IC Legal Network and in accordance with DOJ R&A Program requirements, each Local IC Site must maintain legal liability insurance to practice immigration law. Legal liability insurance insures the IC Legal Network as a whole, the individual Local IC Site, the partnering church/nonprofit, active Legal Representatives, and any other affiliates against risk or damages in practicing immigration law.

IC National is the legal liability insurance policy holder for the IC Legal Network and each Local IC Site receives coverage under this unique and tailored insurance policy. As the policy holder, IC National implements policies around legal liability to mitigate risk for the whole IC Legal Network.

Legal liability insurance is renewed annually in May and Local IC Sites are invoiced for this cost based on annual rates provided by the insurer.

As a result, it is policy that all Legal Representative(s) status changes must be reported to IC National within 14 calendar days of termination or beginning of employment by submitting changes with the “Local IC Staff Change(s) Form” which can be accessed on www.ICWelcome.org.

Complaint Policy

As referenced in the Site Management Policy, a DOJ recognized site must post a **Complaint Protocol** available for public view and access. The posting must include all the contact details outlined by the EOIR.⁵ A sample posting is available in the [Appendices](#).

Also as a member of the IC Legal Network covered by IC National legal liability insurance, Local IC Sites must adhere to and comply with the following:

⁵ [Immigration Court Practice Manual, 140-151](#)

- I. **When a Local IC Site receives a case denial notice, the notice must be reviewed by the Site Director, and in turn, basic information must be submitted to IC National within 14 calendar days including the type of case denial, why the case was denied, and who the point of contact is for the case.** To access the “Local IC Site Case Denial Form” for promptly submitting case denials, go to www.ICWelcome.org.
- II. **All formal complaints must be submitted to IC National within 48 hours of receiving notice.** A copy of the formal complaint and/or Preliminary Inquiry Pursuant to 8 C.F.R. §292.3(d)(2) from the Office of the Chief Counsel, Department of Homeland Security, is required. IC National will coordinate the needed support and parties to investigate and resolve formal complaints. All formal complaints should be emailed immediately to the Executive Director of IC National. All complaints made directly to IC National, on behalf of a client with a Local IC Site, will be addressed by IC National.
- III. **Client services agreements** must be on record for each represented client.
- IV. **Recordkeeping and client file retention** is a minimum of 7 years electronically and/or hardcopy.
- V. Deductible costs will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis with IC National. If there is blatant error or misrepresentation, the \$5,000.00 insurance policy deductible may be passed on in part or whole to the Local IC Site.

Technical Legal Support Policy

As a member of the IC Legal Network and in accordance with the DOJ R&A Program regulations, each Local IC Site is required to work with the technical legal support provider identified and contracted by IC National. As of 2022, IC Legal Network’s technical legal support provider continues to be Catholic Legal Immigration Network (CLINIC).

The cost of technical legal support is incurred by the Local IC Site and should be accounted for in its annual budget. The technical legal support provider and annual costs are subject to change. Costs are renewed each year in relationship with the technical legal support provider and Local IC Sites are invoiced by IC National at the beginning of each program year (January/February).

Supplemental technical legal support outside of the system in place with CLINIC is strictly prohibited. A Local IC Site seeking supplemental legal counsel outside of the technical legal support provider identified and contracted for the IC Legal Network, must submit a request in writing to IC National for approval.

CLINIC

<https://www.cliniclegal.org/>
8455 Colesville Road, Suite 960
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Phone: (301) 565-4800
Fax: (301) 565-4824

Ask the Expert: Linked under “**Find Legal Help**” dropdown on CLINIC website.
Email Subscription: <https://www.cliniclegal.org/email>
Affiliate Login: <https://www.cliniclegal.org/user/login>

Host Church Support & Surplus Management Policy within IC Model

To ensure the financial sustainability and mission effectiveness of the IC model of ILS programs, this policy outlines the principles and practices for managing positive revenue (surplus) at the end of each fiscal year, as well as the essential role of host church support.

Host Church Support

Local IC Sites are made sustainable through the generosity and investment of the Host Church covering overhead costs like rent and utilities for the Local IC Site. It is best practice for host churches to cover additional needs, such as equipment, office supplies, and even some administrative and support costs. The greater the support from the host church, the quicker the Local IC Site can achieve financial sustainability.

Sustainability and Financial Requirements

While the IC model is designed to move Local IC Sites towards sustainability, and many sites are able to budget for all ILS costs within their first year, sometimes achieving financial sustainability takes longer. Required ILS program annual costs include fees for:

- Case management software,
- Technical legal support, and
- Legal liability insurance.

IC National provides support as needed and available through grant requests and awards for eligible expenses. If a Local IC Site is unable to cover these costs continually, it will become the responsibility of the Host Church to cover these expenses to ensure the site remains operational.

Use of Surplus

A surplus is allowed and beneficial, provided it is used for the furtherance of the purpose and mission of the Local IC Site. The DOJ Office of Legal Access Programs (OLAP) and any outside funders require that any surplus generated from ILS fees or

donations be used for the ILS program. This is demonstrated in budgets and annual summary reports. Surpluses can be allocated for activities such as:

- Raises for program staff
- Benefits for program staff (vacation leave, sick leave, medical insurance, and performance bonuses)
- Hiring new staff or increasing staff hours
- Paying IC National invoices (rather than requesting grant funds to cover the cost)
- Investing in training, library resources, and professional development
- Creating or adding to a legal fund for pro-bono cases
- Expanding outreach efforts and community engagement
- Fundraising activities for the Local IC Site
- Establishing a reserve or emergency fund, not to exceed six months of operating expenses + annual fixed costs for the site (technical legal support, legal liability insurance, and case management software)
- Building or office improvements benefitting the ILS program and the host church and increase the ability for immigrants to easily access the Local IC Site or allows the program to meet OLAP requirements

Prohibited use of surplus funds includes church programming or expenses that solely benefit the church without overlapping with the ILS program.

Principal, Intake & Extension Site(s) Policy

It is important to provide distinctions for principal, intake, and extension sites and when to establish one or both as a Local IC Site.

Intake and extension sites are permitted within the DOJ R&A Program regulations and as a Local IC Site within the IC Legal Network. However, it is important to understand the role of an intake and/or extension site and to evaluate with IC National whether these types of sites are viable for a Local IC Site.

In evaluating the need for an intake or extension site, our policy asserts that two separate organizations should establish and maintain two separate principal offices. This model allows for clients to access multiple healthy, efficient, and sustainable Local IC Sites within the same city, fostering mutual partnerships. This keeps our network on mission to ensure access, even if this means multiple access points to services in the same community.

Intake sites are physical locations run by separate entities outside of the principal office location where initial consultations are conducted a maximum of once a week as outreach or in partnership with a host organization serving a specific community outside of the principal community. It is important to note that all legal work must be conducted at the principal office. Intake sites are solely a point of connection with clients for consultations and/or final signings.

A Local IC Site will work with IC National to determine the viability of a potential intake site and complete the requirements to add the location to IC's legal liability insurance policy with an agreement on file.

Extension Sites are subordinate offices or locations that have the same operations management, structure, and funding sources as the headquarters of the principal office. Upon approving an initial request for recognition or a request for renewal of recognition, or at any other time, the DOJ may extend the recognition of an organization to any office or location where the organization offers services. To request extension of recognition, sites must consult with IC National to determine whether an application should be submitted to EOIR. If an extension site does not align with the policies set forth here and within the IC model, IC National may determine an extension site is not the best way forward.

When determining whether an office qualifies as an extension of the headquarters (principal site), EOIR will generally ask the following questions:

1. Is the extension office part of the same legal entity as the headquarters?
2. Is the extension office under the same Board of Directors as the headquarters?
3. Is the extension office within the same line of management as the headquarters?
4. Do the managers at the extension office report directly to the headquarters?
5. Does the headquarters have central oversight of the personnel and procedure at the extension office? Is headquarters involved in the hiring of personnel at the extension office? Does the headquarters set program policies and standard practices for the extension office?
6. Does the headquarters conduct periodic site visits of the extension office? If so, how often? How does headquarters communicate with the personnel at the extension office?
7. Does the headquarters have centralized legal resources and training for the personnel at the extension office?
8. Where is the extension office geographically located with respect to the headquarters?
9. How many extension offices does the headquarters have?
10. Does the extension office receive any funding directly from the headquarters?
11. How does the headquarters determine how to fund the extension office?

12. Is the extension office included in the headquarters' legal malpractice insurance policy?
13. Has the headquarters had prior issues with supervising other extension offices?

To have its extension office approved, a headquarters does not need to meet all the factors above; however, it should be able to meet most of the factors. EOIR will consider a totality of the circumstances to determine if an organization's recognition should be extended from the headquarters to a separate office.

Extensions are viable when there is one robust, sustainable principal office with multiple locations that can support an ILS program across its multiple existing locations.

IC National recognizes that while extension sites are a possibility, they are not often the most conducive to the IC model. Principal offices are more effective because each organization and church benefits from its own supervision and controls. Previously, extensions were considered a potential way to merge two separate organizations, but this approach does not align with the DOJ R&A Program regulations or IC model.

Site Suspension & Termination Policy

If a Local IC Site violates any provision of the MOU or the IC Legal Network Policies & Procedures Manual, IC National may suspend new legal services at the Local IC Site or terminate the Local IC Site as a member of the IC Legal Network and the rights and benefits afforded to the Local IC Site.

IC National staff will notify the Local IC Site in writing of the suspension and effective date. During suspension, a Local IC Site will not conduct new consultations or accept new clients. The length of a Local IC Site's suspension will depend on various factors, such as how quickly it resolves the issues leading to its suspension. A suspension will last a minimum of three months with no maximum time a Local IC Site may be suspended. IC National and the Local IC Site will work together to determine a timeline for resuming casework or for terminating the Local IC Site.

If a Local IC Site wishes to resign from the IC Legal Network, it must give 60 days written notice. A Local IC Site may terminate the MOU and resign as a member of the IC Legal Network if it is unwilling or unable to comply with the MOU and/or standards of conduct outlined in the IC Legal Network Policies & Procedures Manual, it does not have adequate funds or leadership to continue as a member of the IC Legal Network, for any other reason, or for no reason.

Upon resignation or termination of a Local IC Site as a member of the IC Legal Network, a Local IC Site may not continue to use the IC logo, branding, or words "Immigrant Connection," "IC," "IC Legal Network," or any words substantially similar to any of the foregoing, as a part of any of the Local IC Site's promotional activities (e.g., letterhead,

business cards, clinic brochures and signs, website, etc.), and it will no longer be entitled to receive any of the support or resources IC National provides to the IC Legal Network.

Whether suspension or termination, a Local IC Site and IC National will work together to ensure all clients are served per the site's client services agreement. This will include a checklist of actions to audit, assign clients and cases, and proactively communicate with current clients to ensure no gap in services.

DOJ Legal Representative Status Policy

To be considered a Legal Representative in the IC Legal Network, an individual must be accredited by the DOJ and remain in good standing as a Legal Representative.

In addition, Legal Representatives in the IC Legal Network must meet the following IC quality standards with annual requirements and evaluation:

I. Time Commitment & Case Work

- a) All active Legal Representatives must designate a minimum of 16 hours a week for legal consultations and case work as outlined in the IC Legal Network MOU.
- b) A Legal Representative is required to conduct 100% of casework within the recognized site.
- c) Legal consultations and client appointments can be conducted outside of the recognized site if part of an established IC Partnership or approved intake site.

II. Ongoing Legal Training

- a) Required attendance and participation in the IC Annual Conference (last week of September). Site Directors and Legal Representatives who are absent from the annual conference two consecutive years without prior approval could result in suspension.
- b) At minimum, four (4) registered and certified webinars per year.

III. Supervision & Accountability

- a) Legal Representatives must have supervision and accountability, including procedures/practices in place involving a case review process.
- b) Legal Representatives must know and understand how to access technical legal resources for navigating complex cases and questions that are outside of their knowledge and experience.

A practitioner within the IC Legal Network will commit to providing high-quality services with the standards of care set forth by the DOJ in [8 CFR § 1003](#) highlighted below:

- **Competency⁶**

⁶ § 1003.102(c)

- **Diligence**⁷
- **Communication**⁸

Immigrant individuals and families remain at the center of our mission, vision, and values which drives our desire as a legal network to comply with the regulations set forth by the DOJ, while seeking to go above and beyond to ensure the highest quality of services for every client.

Full DOJ Accreditation Policy

The IC Legal Network operates on a sustainability model relying on low-cost fees generated through an office's caseload. This model necessitates a strong emphasis on capacity and efficiency. The DOJ R&A Program regulations allow partially accredited legal representatives to handle a diverse range of cases before the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and the Department of State (DOS).

While fully accredited legal representatives can handle cases before the EOIR and Immigration Court, these cases significantly reduce their caseload capacity. Removal cases are complex, time consuming, and often require multiple travel commitments to Immigration Courts. These factors can jeopardize an office's sustainability through fees, necessitating a shift towards external fundraising, that often detracts from the Local IC Site's primary focus on serving immigrants.

For these reasons, IC National discourages moving towards full accreditation as it does not align with our model of service and sustainability. We want every Legal Representative to be knowledgeable in providing full consultations on removal cases, but not necessarily handle them unless certain conditions are met.

The exception to this policy requires fully sustainable Local IC Sites and Legal Representatives to be:

- I. Operating with multiple full-time staff;
- II. Serving over a thousand clients annually;
- III. Generating sufficient resources to support a staff member's pursuit of full accreditation to begin handling removal cases; and
- IV. Rendering services as a partial Legal Representative a minimum of three (3) active years before pursuing full accreditation.

Only under these conditions would a staff member's limited case capacity be justified. Any individual or Local IC Site considering pursuing full accreditation must seek

⁷ § 1003.102(q)(1)

⁸ § 1003.102(r)(1)

approval from IC National. This is necessary due to the liability risks involved in taking on removal cases, which could impact the entire IC Legal Network. Approval ensures alignment with IC's overall mission and sustainability goals.

Addition of DOJ Legal Representative(s) Policy

To fulfill the mission to provide high-quality immigration legal services, Local IC Sites are required to ensure qualified and committed people join their local staff. This requirement is especially important when it comes to adding Legal Representatives to a site roster as it impacts direct services. It is crucial IC National vets and approves all potential Legal Representatives to ensure the highest quality of services and to mitigate risk in the provision of immigration legal services.

IC National assumes risk and liability of the IC Legal Network.
The addition and removal of a Legal Representative is not only a Local IC Site matter but a matter that impacts the greater IC Legal Network.
A Local IC Site must give IC National prior notice regarding major staffing changes, especially when adding/removing Legal Representatives.

Any Site Director wishing to add a Legal Representative is required to complete the "Questionnaire to Determine the Addition of a DOJ Legal Representative." A Site Director must contact the IC National Director of Site Sustainability to begin the initial assessment and for guidance on adding and/or removing Legal Representatives to/from the IC Legal Network roster.

Once the potential Legal Representative completes the initial assessment, IC National will work with the Site Director to determine whether the individual should proceed with pursuing training and accreditation. Because decisions on adding new Legal Representatives impact the whole of the IC Legal Network, the final decision will be made together between the Site Director and IC National, leaning into our value of mutual partnership.

Please note that because IC National is responsible for holding risk and liability for the entire IC Legal Network, additions of Legal Representatives to the roster without the input of IC National and notice to add an individual to the legal liability insurance policy, is a violation of the IC Legal Network Policies & Procedures and may result in the suspension or removal of the Legal Representative(s) and/or the Local IC Site.

Removing DOJ Legal Representative(s) Policy

Removing a Legal Representative from the DOJ R&A Program Roster requires multiple steps. Below are the steps a Site Director takes for removing a Legal Representative from the DOJ R&A Program roster with assistance from IC National:

- I. Whether this decision is initiated by the Site Director or the Legal Representative, and whether the Legal Representative changes roles in the office or departs from the Local IC Site, IC National and/or the Local IC Site (Authorized Officer or Site Director) must clearly communicate to the Legal Representative they can no longer provide immigration legal services. They cannot use their knowledge to advise people regarding their immigration legal cases as this will be unauthorized practice of law with possible criminal consequences.
- II. The Legal Representative signs a "Removal of Accreditation" letter affirming their understanding that they cannot provide immigration legal services from the date signed. A copy will be provided to the departing Legal Representative and submitted to IC National.
- III. The Site Director notifies the Director of Site Sustainability within 1-2 business days of learning the departure of the Legal Representative to ensure submission of the roster change through a letter to OLAP.
- IV. IC National will supply a letter template to the Site Director and/or Authorized Officer to submit to OLAP within 2-3 business days unless otherwise specified:
 - a. Email the letter to r-a-info@usdoj.gov
 - b. CC the Director of Site Sustainability
- V. IC National will remove the Legal Representative from the IC Legal Network roster and update the insurance carrier with the removal.
- VI. It is the responsibility of the Site Director, with available guidance and oversight of IC National, to thoroughly audit cases, appropriately transfer cases, information, files, etc. to other Legal Representatives within the Local IC Site:
 - a. Make a list of submitted G-28 cases by the Legal Representative
 - b. Create a new G-28 on file for any of those clients/cases
- VII. It is the responsibility of the Site Director to remove the Legal Representative's name and photograph from the Local IC Site's website and other social media, promotional materials, and outreach materials. The Site Director must take all the necessary steps to terminate the Legal Representative's access to electronic and hard copy client files and client communications.
- VIII. Site Director and IC National retain copies of all correspondence.

Attorney Status Policy

Any Site Director seeking to add an attorney to practice immigration law with a Local IC Site must contact IC National to ensure the attorney meets and understands the requirements of the IC Legal Network. IC National will review and require the following:

- Copy of CV
- Copy of State Bar Certification
- COIL training certification
- Legal liability insurance risks and parameters (covered only to practice immigration law)
- Other areas of legal expertise and how the site plans to insure against other areas of law outside of IC National's legal liability insurance policy
- Oversight and accountability process

Once the above requirements are established and submitted, IC National will work with the Site Director to determine whether the individual should proceed with pursuing additional immigration law training. Similar to the policy for adding Legal Representatives, decisions on adding attorneys also impact the whole of the IC Legal Network. The final decision will be made together between the Site Director and IC National, leaning into our value of mutual partnership.

Please note that because IC National is responsible for holding risk and liability for the entire IC Legal Network, additions of attorneys to the Local IC Site without the input of IC National and notice to add an individual to the legal liability insurance policy, is a violation of the IC Legal Network Policies & Procedures Manual and may result in the suspension or removal of the attorney(s) and/or the Local IC Site.

Recognition & Accreditation Renewal Policy

IC National provides support for initial applications for recognition and accreditation with the DOJ. However once approved, the Local IC Site and Legal Representative(s) are responsible for maintaining site recognition and legal representative accreditation through the DOJ. IC National provides guidance and resources for the renewal, but it is ultimately a Site Director's and/or Authorized Officer's responsibility to meet the necessary renewal application requirements for both site recognition and accreditation renewal.

Renewal Cycles

Once the DOJ grants recognition, a site will have two years of initial recognition status. After renewal of the initial recognition status, renewals will occur every six (6) years.

Once the DOJ grants accreditation to a Legal Representative, accreditation renewals will occur every three (3) years.

Noncompliance with Renewal Requirements

If a Local IC Site fails to apply for renewal in a timely and complete manner, the DOJ will refuse recognition status. If a Local IC Site loses recognition status, it will be removed from the DOJ R&A Program roster and will no longer be considered an IC Local Site.

If a Legal Representative fails to apply for renewal in a timely and complete manner, the DOJ will remove the individual from the DOJ R&A Program roster. The DOJ's removal of a Legal Representative will result in the termination of legal liability insurance and IC Legal Network status, prohibiting practice of immigration law through consultations, casework, and client representation.

Remote Work for DOJ Legal Representatives Policy

Casework must be conducted and completed in the principal office.

Intakes by phone and video consultations, called virtual consultations, are permitted but must be conducted from the principal office.

Remote work by support staff in a Local IC Site is determined by the board and Site Director through written policies and procedures. If you have questions about remote work policies, please contact IC National for more guidance and clarity.

Case Management Policy

As a member of the IC Legal Network, each Local IC Site is required to maintain high-quality case management and systems protocol.

Client Screening/Intake

During the initial appointment, the client will complete an intake, and the office will document an initial consultation within the case management software. If a client needs assistance in a foreign language, the client has the option to meet with a staff member who can provide a consultation in the client's preferred language, bring an

interpreter to the consultation, or the Local IC Site can access Boostlingo on-demand translation services as available.

The caseworker will inform the client of his/her rights as well as responsibilities toward the Local IC Site, including the right to confidentiality. The Local IC Site will work cooperatively with USCIS in the client's best interest, but will safeguard the interests of its clients, particularly undocumented individuals. The services offered by the Local IC Site include:

- I. Determining the immigration options available to the client;
- II. Preparing the forms to file for obtaining the immigration benefit;
- III. Alerting the client of the need for accurate information; and
- IV. Follow-up, including referral to outside resources that will better serve the client.

All prospective clients must sign a Client Services Agreement in order to become a client of a Local IC Site.

Case Closing/Discharge

A Local IC Site should keep a case record of every client from intake through closing the case. A closing letter is sent to the client when the case is approved or denied. If the client needs additional information concerning future actions, this information will be included in the closing letter.

In addition, the client will be informed that the Local IC Site will retain his/her case file for seven (7) years. After closing a case, the client file must be kept a minimum of seven (7) years.

Electronic Case Management Policy

Each Local IC Site in the IC Legal Network is required to use elmmigration, a web-based case management software program serviced by Cerenade. Each Local IC Site has its own implementation of the software, restricted to its Local IC Site and users with unique access and credentials. Each Local IC Site is responsible to learn and use elmmigration efficiently and effectively.

IC National oversees the implementation and best practices of elmmigration to standardize tracking and reporting requirements for efficiency, accuracy, and timeliness of the information within each unique system. IC National provides access to training materials and best practices for standardized use of elmmigration.

Confidentiality Policy

Protected Personal Information (PPI) is considered any information that could lead to individual identification. Local IC Sites should have procedures in place for the secure

storage and disposal of hardcopy and electronic data generated from elmmigration or created for entry into elmmigration. PPI should be stored in locked drawers/file cabinets and hardcopy data should be shredded before disposal. Electronic PPI, including data contained on thumb drives, computer hard drives, and/or other media, should be reformatted before disposal.

Each state uniquely regulates privacy practices regarding PPI. It is important that each Local IC Site review their state's laws protecting personal information and implement the standards required by their state.

Data collection, confidentiality, and data sharing should be discussed with the client at the time of intake and agreed upon with a Client Services Agreement.

Reporting Policy

As a member of the IC Legal Network, each Local IC Site is required to provide timely and accurate reports. Accurate reporting supports the health and growth of the IC Legal Network and ultimately ensures that the mission to serve immigrants with low-cost and high-quality immigration legal services can be fulfilled through the IC Legal Network.

Local IC Sites are required to submit monthly case reports and annual reports scheduled within elmmigration. Each report pulls aggregate data, ensuring confidentiality of clients' information, and is subject to change each year depending on IC National's reporting requirements. IC National will provide technical support with these reporting requirements annually.

A Local IC Site participating in an IC corporate partnership or another ongoing IC Legal Network program will have additional reporting requirements set forth in the program agreement for each respective partnership and/or program.

Branding & Communications Policy

As a member of the IC Legal Network, a Local IC Site will acquire the "Immigrant Connection" name and come under the "Immigrant Connection" brand. Local IC Sites are required to maintain the "Immigrant Connection" name in the DOJ R&A Program roster and in the branding for the local site.

The "Immigrant Connection" name and logo are trademarked and can only be used by members of the IC Legal Network. If a Local IC Site departs from the IC Legal Network, "Immigrant Connection" name, logo, and branding may no longer be used by the site (in the DOJ R&A Program roster and in the branding for the recognized site).

A Local IC Site can access logos and colors of the IC Movement. See "[Local IC Site Logo Guidelines](#)" in the [Appendices](#) for more detailed guidelines.

As members of the IC Legal Network, each Local IC Site is a representation of and reflects the “Immigrant Connection” name, brand, IC Legal Network, IC National, and broader IC Movement. A Local IC Site may not, however, speak for or on behalf of the national organization, national brand, or IC National. If you need clarification or input, please contact the IC National Director of Strategy & Advancement.

Local IC Sites are required to make sure all public communication (online, print publications, public messages, etc.) adhere to and reflect the values of IC. This is important whether you are creating messaging for clients, partners, the general public, or media. If Local IC Site staff are uncertain about whether a Local IC Site’s public communication adheres to and reflects the values of IC, please contact the IC National Director of Strategy & Advancement.

Whistleblower Policy

In keeping with the policy of maintaining the highest standards of conduct and ethics, IC National will investigate complaints of suspected fraudulent or dishonest use or misuse of its resources and/or property by staff, board members, Local IC Sites, Site Directors, Legal Representatives, church leadership, volunteers, or clients. To maintain the highest standards of service, IC National will also investigate complaints concerning its programs and services.

Staff, board members, Site Directors, Legal Representatives, church leadership, volunteers, clients, or community members are encouraged to report suspected fraudulent or dishonest conduct or problems with services provided, pursuant to the procedures set forth below. This policy supplements, and does not replace, any procedures required by law, regulation, or funding source requirements.

Reporting

A person’s concerns about possible fraudulent or dishonest use or misuse of resources or property, or program operation, should be reported to the Director of Operations (if a National or Local Site employee or volunteer); to the Chairperson of the IC National Board of Directors (if a board member); to the Executive Director (if a client or community member). If, for any reason, a person finds it difficult to report his or her concerns to such person, concerns may be reported directly to the Executive Director and/or the Chairperson of the IC National Board of Directors. To facilitate reporting of suspected violations where the reporter wishes to remain anonymous, a written statement may be submitted to one of the individuals listed above.

Investigation

All relevant matters, including suspected but unproved matters, will be promptly reviewed and analyzed, with documentation of the receipt, retention, investigation, and treatment of the complaint. Appropriate corrective action will be taken, if necessary, and findings may be communicated to the reporting person and their supervisor, if appropriate. Investigators will endeavor to maintain appropriate confidentiality, but confidentiality is not guaranteed.

No Retaliation

No director, officer, employee, volunteer, Site Director, DOJ Legal Representative, church leadership, or client who in good faith reports suspected fraudulent or dishonest use or misuse of its resources or property or complaints concerning the services it provides and programs IC runs shall suffer harassment, retaliation, or adverse employment or other consequences. An employee, site leadership, or accredited representative who retaliates against someone who has reported a violation in good faith is subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment, recognition, accreditation and/or network affiliation. This Whistleblower Policy is intended to encourage and enable employees and others to raise serious concerns within the organization and/or network prior to seeking resolution outside the organization and/or network.

This protection from retaliation is not intended to prohibit national leadership from taking action, including disciplinary action, in the usual scope of their duties and based on valid performance-related factors. Individuals making complaints must be cautious to avoid baseless allegations; affiliates who intentionally make false allegations are subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the IC Legal Network MOU, Launch Pathway Agreement, and/or this Policies & Procedures Manual.

Immigrant Connection National Contacts

To learn more about each staff member, visit: <https://www.icwelcome.org/people>.

Zach Szmara Founder & Executive Director	zach@icwelcome.org
Courtney Tudi Senior Advisor	tudi@icwelcome.org
Courtney Peñaranda Director of Site Launch	courtney@icwelcome.org
Sera Han Director of Strategy & Advancement	sera@icwelcome.org
Autumn Gale Director of Operations & Administration	autumn@icwelcome.org
Kristin Statham Director of Site Sustainability	kristin@icwelcome.org
Carrie Afanador Director of Partnerships	carrie@icwelcome.org
Carina Requeno TRAIL Specialist	carina@icwelcome.org
Joanna Lopez Aguilera TRAIL Specialist	joanna@icwelcome.org
Clay Crofford Communications Specialist	clay@icwelcome.org
Kathy Drury Administration & Logistics Coordinator	kathy@icwelcome.org
Brittany Troeger TIP Program Specialist	brittany@icwelcome.org
Matt Miller TIP Program Coordinator	matt@icwelcome.org
Emily Tellez Partnerships Coordinator	tellez@icwelcome.org
Nate Urban Communications Specialist	nate@icwelcome.org
Imke Nickelson Citizenship Specialist	imke@icwelcome.org

Immigrant Connection Legal Network Resources

To access the IC Legal website, use: www.ICWelcome.org

Login Password: ICLegal

- Checklists
- Questionnaires
- Office Forms
- Cover Letters
- Reflection Tools
- CLINIC - Ask the Experts, Resources, & Training Calendar
- ILRC Webinars
- Training Courses
- Immigrant Connection Welcome Programs (Citizenship Classes & Conversational English Classes)
- IC Legal Network Policies & Procedures Manual and required documentation

Appendices

Sample Complaint Protocol Posting

This local site is part of the Immigrant Connection Legal Network and you can contact the Immigrant Connection National Office at anytime for any reason by calling 317-210-3173 or emailing info@icwelcome.org.

If you believe either a Recognized Organization or an Accredited Representative has engaged in misconduct, you should contact the entities listed below, depending on whether the alleged misconduct occurred before DHS or before EOIR and whether alleged fraud was involved. Please include as much information and supporting documentation as possible with any complaint that you submit to either DHS or EOIR.

- i) **For concerns about practice before DHS, send an email to:**

DisciplinaryCounsel@uscis.dhs.gov

- ii) **For concerns about practice before EOIR, submit [Form EOIR-44](#) and supporting documents to:**

United States Department of Justice
Executive Office for Immigration Review
Office of the General Counsel
5107 Leesburg Pike, Suite 2600
Falls Church, VA 22041
Attn: Disciplinary Counsel

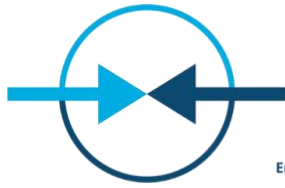
- iii) **For concerns about possible fraud**, contact the EOIR Fraud and Abuse Prevention Program at:

Hotline: 1-877-388-3840

EOIR.Fraud.Program@usdoj.gov

- b) See [EOIR's webpage](#) on submitting feedback or complaints for more information.
c) If you believe that a DOJ Recognized Organization or Accredited Representative no longer qualifies for recognition or accreditation, or if you have other concerns about the conduct of a DOJ Recognized Organization and/or Accredited Representative, you may email the R&A Program at: R-A-Info@usdoj.gov.

Local Immigrant Connection Logo Guidelines



**IMMIGRANT
CONNECTION**
Ensuring greater access to high-quality, low-cost immigration legal services
throughout the United States

301 E Linden Ave
Logansport, IN 46947
PO Box 7078
Fishers, IN 46038
317-210-3173
info@icwelcome.org
www.icwelcome.org

Local IC Site Logo Guidelines

- A. IC National logo files are here for you to use in your site's branding:
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1YgaEHWdr0_7wt_pBVogp1vRgShBvCXge?usp=sharing
- B. Adjustments for your site's branding:
- Colors changes may be made to the logo.
 - Some churches use IC National colors, some churches use color branding of their host church, some churches/new sites create a new color scheme, etc.
 - Changes may not be made to the Immigrant Connection name.
 - For the circle version of the logo - no adjustments may be made (except for color) to the logo or the Immigrant Connection name.
 - The circle/arrow logo element as well as the placement of the Immigrant Connection name around the circle element was specifically and purposefully designed



Original version



Sample color change

- For the horizontal version of the logo - no adjustments may be made to the circle/arrow element. The placement of the name "Immigrant Connection" may be adjusted if you'd like to fit your church/site/city name under it.



Original version



Sample addition of name version



Sample addition of name and color change version

- i. The font on the IC logo is Basis Grotesque. If adding your church/site/city name under the Immigrant Connection name, you may use this font or other font based on your site's branding. However, the Immigrant Connection name must remain in the same Basis Grotesque font.
- e. It is helpful for your site's future marketing/design efforts to create a logo that (a) works on both light and dark backgrounds, or (b) create two versions of the logo - one that works on a dark background and one that works on a light background.



- f. Please send a draft of your new logo to the IC Director of Advancement & Strategy before you finalize your new logo.

Immigrant Connection Legal Network Policies & Procedures Manual Receipt

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF IMMIGRANT CONNECTION LEGAL NETWORK POLICIES & PROCEDURES MANUAL

I acknowledge that I have been made aware of the Immigrant Connection Legal Network Policies & Procedures Manual and a copy of the Manual, in electronic and/or paper form, has been made available to me for review. I acknowledge that I understand it is my responsibility to read the Manual and familiarize myself with the policies and procedures contained therein.

I agree to comply with all the policies and procedures applicable to my position within my Local IC Site as a member of the IC Legal Network.

I further understand that this Policies & Procedures Manual is not an employment contract and that changes may occur in the Manual. Questions about the Manual may be directed to IC National.

The below signatories have read the terms and conditions as set forth above and agree to comply with all information contained herein.

Site Director Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date Signed: _____

DOJ Legal Representative Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date Signed: _____

DOJ Legal Representative Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date Signed: _____