

Immigration Legal Program Management Self-Assessment



CATHOLIC LEGAL
IMMIGRATION
NETWORK, INC.

INTRODUCTION

CLINIC has identified seven areas which, when developed fully, are strong indicators of a successful, charitable legal immigration program. CLINIC offers this self-assessment tool to identify program strengths and weaknesses so that improvements can be targeted and purposefully undertaken.

USING THE SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

The Self-Assessment Tool is a useful way to evaluate progress towards implementation. CLINIC recommends you use the Self-Assessment section by section, identifying feasible priorities for necessary improvements. Please contact your Field Support Coordinator for resources and other support when focusing on these program management components.

AREAS FOR SELF-ASSESSMENT:

- Community Analysis
- Program Management
- Integration Matters
- Financial Matters
- Staff Management
- Case Management
- Direct Legal Services

RATING SCALE:

1
No
Implementation

2
Minimal
Implementation

3
Moderate
Implementation

4
Complete
Implementation

COMMUNITY ANALYSIS

The program has a formal structure in place to gauge community need, community investment in the immigration program, and to encourage community involvement in both services and advocacy.

RATING SCALE:

1 No Implementation	2 Minimal Implementation	3 Moderate Implementation	4 Complete Implementation
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Indicator	Rating
1 Community analysis is updated annually and is broad in scope, including: client demographics, client needs, local legal and other service providers, and community supporters.	
2 Program services are in close proximity to immigrant neighborhoods.	
3 Immigrant services are not unnecessarily duplicated or overly concentrated in one neighborhood.	
4 Referrals to and from other service organizations are readily accepted based on eligibility criteria.	
5 Program is aware of state and local laws against unauthorized practitioners of law.	
6 Program has a protocol to follow if help is solicited by a client who has received erroneous help by an unauthorized practitioner of law.	
7 Outreach contacts are comprehensive, representing the diversity and dispersal of the immigrant community, and contact information is maintained in an organized manner.	
8 Outreach is conducted using paid and free radio and television announcements.	
9 Public speaking is a listed service provided by the program.	
10 Public speaking topics include the need for comprehensive immigration reform and ways undocumented immigrants can prepare for a legalization program.	
11 Catholic churches and institutions invite the program director for public speaking on migration and Catholic social teaching.	
12 Community partners are diverse and influential including businesses, law enforcement, teachers, elected officials, religious leaders of different faiths, local personalities, etc.	
13 Community partners include domestic violence shelters and legal service providers for civil legal needs.	
14 DHS offices, USCIS & ICE, are cultivated and counted as community partners.	

Indicator		Rating
15	Community partners and funders are invited to key program events.	
16	Local law enforcement views the immigration program as a valuable partner in providing protection to immigrant residents.	
17	Local law enforcement is trained on VAWA, T and U visa issues.	
18	Catholic diocesan leaders receive regularly scheduled reports on the immigration program's accomplishments and goals.	
19	Program has established and public positions on immigration and immigrant policy.	
20	Program has established procedures for advocacy activities including a master list of outreach contacts and a shared calendar of outreach activities.	
21	The Immigration program is an active participant in local advocacy efforts.	
22	Immigration program services and contact information are featured on the agency website, and the information is regularly updated.	

Implementation Priorities and Action Plan	Technical Assistance/Training Needed
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If you are seeking additional resources, please take a look at the following for ideas on how to improve the Community Analysis aspect of your program:

Chapter One of the Managing an Immigration Program: Steps for Creating and Increasing Legal Capacity manual: <https://cliniclegal.org/resources/guides-reports-publications/managing-immigration-program-steps-creating-and-increasing>

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

The program has a formal structure in place to supervise staff and legal cases, evaluate the program, and promote the program’s long-term growth.

RATING SCALE:

1 No Implementation	2 Minimal Implementation	3 Moderate Implementation	4 Complete Implementation
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Indicator	Rating
1 The program mission statement sets forth the program’s goals and target demographics, and it is made publically available.	
2 A program organizational chart is up-to-date reflecting the program’s positions, lines of authority down from the parent organization, and reflects legal supervision in addition to personnel supervision.	
3 DOJ agency recognition and accreditation are held for each facility’s address and staff where clients are served with legal immigration representation.	
4 Staffing levels are sufficient to cover the caseload of a departing attorney or other accredited representative when a vacancy is left unfilled.	
5 Case selection criteria reflects the program’s mission statement, is well-defined and documented.	
6 Client service agreement informs client and representative of actions to be taken if and why services can no longer be provided, including when a conflict of interest arises.	
7 The parent organization is supportive of new project initiatives within budgetary parameters and provides resource development support to expand services.	
8 The parent organization provides the immigration program with unrestricted operating funds.	
9 Program matters are easily communicated between program director and diocesan leaders, including the bishop, when necessary.	
10 The program committee or advisory board includes the foreign-born, also reflecting the diversity of the local immigrant community.	
11 The program committee or advisory board includes the foreign-born, also reflecting the diversity of the local immigrant community.	
12 Short and long-term goals are commonly known and shared by program staff.	
13 Crisis planning for the potential loss of legal staff has been undertaken.	
14 Internal program evaluation is a consistent exercise and has a direct effect on program director decisions (staffing, promotions, budgets, new projects, grant applications, etc).	

Indicator		Rating
15	Internal program evaluation is provided, occasionally, by outside, experts, whether paid or pro bono.	
16	Internal program evaluation tracks the outcomes for clients receiving legal representation.	
17	Client feedback is solicited and used to make program improvements, when appropriate.	

Implementation Priorities and Action Plan	Technical Assistance/Training Needed
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If you are seeking additional resources, please take a look at the following for ideas on how to improve the Program Management aspect of your program:

Managing an Immigration Program: Steps for Creating and Increasing Legal Capacity manual: <https://cliniclegal.org/resources/guides-reports-publications/managing-immigration-program-steps-creating-and-increasing>

Variety of CLINIC webinars on program management: <https://cliniclegal.org/category/resources-type/webinars>

INTEGRATION MATTERS

The program has a formal structure in place to encourage, pursue and implement immigrant-integration initiatives in an effort to serve needs outside of legal.

RATING SCALE:

1 No Implementation	2 Minimal Implementation	3 Moderate Implementation	4 Complete Implementation
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Indicator	Rating
1 Leadership and program staff are aware of the definition of immigrant integration and the role legal services plays in the integration of an immigrant into the receiving society.	
2 Promoting and encouraging integration within the community are program objectives.	
3 Funding is sought for integration-related endeavors.	
4 ESL/Citizenship test preparation classes and/or tax assistance preparation services are offered to clients who need these services either through a referral basis or in-house.	
5 Discussions between agency programs are had to determine where and how a more integrated service delivery model could be offered, so that immigrants receive information and services for all of their needs, not just legal.	
6 Measureable objectives for integration-related initiatives are created and included in the program and/or agency's business plan.	
7 Community partnerships are forged to design and plan a community-wide approach to encouraging and promoting immigrant integration.	
8 Staff attend training on integration-related topics in addition to legal trainings.	
9 Efforts are made to include the immigrant community in any integration-related program planning, in order to correctly reflect and address issues present in the community.	
10 The immigration program and the agency are aware of CLINIC's efforts to promote and encourage the development of integration initiatives, and staff access the resources available on the webpage and the technical support available through a CLINIC membership.	

Implementation Priorities and Action Plan	Technical Assistance/Training Needed

If you are seeking additional resources, please take a look at the following for ideas on how to improve the Integration Matters aspect of your program:

There are many resources regarding integration located on the CLINIC website, including toolkits on implementing a citizenship test preparation program, example integration programs from around the CLINIC network, and saved webinars on engaging with local government on integration initiatives:

<https://cliniclegal.org/integration>

FINANCIAL MATTERS

The program has a formal structure in place setting, collecting, and recording fees as well as securing sufficient funding for the immigration program’s needs.

RATING SCALE:

1 No Implementation	2 Minimal Implementation	3 Moderate Implementation	4 Complete Implementation
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Indicator	Rating
1 A Fee Schedule is established and based on the time and staffing costs each type of application requires for completion and case management.	
2 Fees charged are compatible with what other, similarly situated, local organizations charge to complete the same applications.	
3 Program calculates cost of case file management and review in its fee schedule.	
4 The Fee Schedule includes a fee waiver policy, which is processed by someone other than the legal representative for the case.	
5 Fees are collected before services are rendered.	
6 Cash for payment is discouraged and clients are required to pay with money order.	
7 Fees for services are collected by someone other than the staff person providing legal services.	
8 Deposits of fees received are made daily, or at the very least, more than once weekly.	
9 Payment policies and all other financial operations are documented in the program policies and procedure manual.	
10 Program staff review the annual budget, identifying their role in ensuring adequate income is generated and expenses are contained.	
11 Funding sources and desired amounts are identified annually as part of the budget-making process.	
12 Local funders are listed in the immigration program’s resource development database with names of contacts and records of engagement including conversations and proposals.	
13 Funders are invited to program events, when appropriate.	
14 Funders are cultivated before an application is submitted.	
15 Local funders receive all public relations information about the immigration program, including media stories.	

Implementation Priorities and Action Plan	Technical Assistance/Training Needed

If you are seeking additional resources, please take a look at the following for ideas on how to improve the Financial Matters aspect of your program:

Chapter 6 of the Managing an Immigration Program: Steps for Creating and Increasing Legal Capacity manual: <https://cliniclegal.org/resources/guides-reports-publications/managing-immigration-program-steps-creating-and-increasing>

STAFF MANAGEMENT

The program has a formal structure in place to train, supervise and retain immigration program staff.

RATING SCALE:

1 No Implementation	2 Minimal Implementation	3 Moderate Implementation	4 Complete Implementation
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Indicator	Rating
1	Legal supervision procedures are documented and implemented.
2	Legal supervision is provided and easily accessible.
3	Staff have accreditation at all recognized sites where they practice.
4	Supervisor and DOJ staff have a 'tickler' system for renewing accreditation without interruption of status.
5	Supervising attorney or accredited representative files G-28s on behalf of non-accredited staff's clients.
6	All legal staff are assigned immigration law training each year with a budget to support the training priorities.
7	Staff have direct access to the most up-to-date announcements on changes to immigration laws, regulations and procedures.
8	Immigration law resources at a minimum include current: INA, 8 CFR, CLINIC training manuals and Kurzban's Immigration Law Sourcebook.
9	Agency has general liability insurance, including Directors & Officers Insurance, for all staff and volunteers.
10	All staff have their own phone number, computer and email account.
11	Staff email addresses are supported by the organization and not an outside service provider, such as gmail, yahoo, aol.com, etc.
12	Employees have job descriptions and work plans, which are used for evaluation purposes annually and are updated each year.
13	Program has retention strategies built into staff benefits: vacation, maternity leave, flex time, health insurance, retirement benefits, etc.
14	Program provides promotions and other professional opportunities that help retain good staff.
15	New staff work on a probationary period with a review process completed before lifting probation.
16	New staff receive early formal training with close supervisor/peer monitoring of work, including client interviews and case files.

Indicator		Rating
17	Law students and/or volunteers are sought to assist legal staff with cases and administrative matters.	

Implementation Priorities and Action Plan	Technical Assistance/Training Needed
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If you are seeking additional resources, please take a look at the following for ideas on how to improve the Staff Management aspect of your program:

Chapter 3 of the Managing an Immigration Program: Steps for Creating and Increasing Legal Capacity manual: <https://cliniclegal.org/resources/guides-reports-publications/managing-immigration-program-steps-creating-and-increasing>

CASE MANAGEMENT

The program has a formal structure in place to manage case work in an effective, efficient and ethical manner as well as track program outcomes.

RATING SCALE:

1 No Implementation	2 Minimal Implementation	3 Moderate Implementation	4 Complete Implementation
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Indicator	Rating
1 All staff follow the same case management procedures for all cases, including how to open and close cases.	
2 Case management procedures are documented and are included in new staff orientation and supervision meetings.	
3 Special procedures are established to protect vulnerable clients (VAWA, T&U visas).	
4 Supervisor and DOJ staff have a 'tickler' system for renewing accreditation without interruption of status.	
5 The Intake Form records essential client demographic, immigration and contact information and services client seeks and provides for a thorough evaluation of a prospective client's immigration status and eligibility for a new immigration benefit.	
6 Scope of representation for each service is explained and documented in the client agreement.	
7 Legal service fees are assessed and explained based on scope of representation.	
8 Case assignments are based on staff skill levels and actual caseload responsibilities.	
9 Immigration case management software is available, and all staff are expected to use it in the same manner.	
10 Case management software is used program-wide for calendaring staff availability and major deadlines.	
11 Electronic data is protected, backed-up, kept confidential and accessible by only authorized users.	
12 Program policy indicates when G-28s are to be filed.	
13 Program supervisor monitors staff caseload on a regular basis to ensure that staff are handling an appropriate number and mix of cases.	
14 Program has an established case file review process including quality review before applications are submitted and cases are closed.	

Indicator		Rating
15	Legal representation is established in a Client Agreement after the a client is carefully screened for eligibility and is 100% ready with all supporting documentation, information and payment for government and agency fees.	
16	Declination of Services letters are given to individuals when the program decides not to accept a case and when a person is advised against seeking a particular benefit.	
17	Clients are informed in writing as to how long their case file is retained and how copies of appropriate documents can be obtained.	
18	Program's case file retention policy is in concert with the agency's policy and requirements of the state bar association's rule.	
19	Case files are secured with access limited to authorized staff.	
20	Agency or program has a written policy signed by staff about removing case files from the office.	
21	A client referral list is updated and used by staff when services are best provided externally or when a second opinion is in the person's best interest.	
22	Program has advertised appointment and/or walk-in policy and is clearly posted for people at the door to see.	

Implementation Priorities and Action Plan	Technical Assistance/Training Needed
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If you are seeking additional resources, please take a look at the following for ideas on how to improve the Case Management aspect of your program:

Chapter 5 of the Managing an Immigration Program: Steps for Creating and Increasing Legal Capacity manual: <https://cliniclegal.org/resources/guides-reports-publications/managing-immigration-program-steps-creating-and-increasing>

Case Management Toolkit: <https://cliniclegal.org/resources/case-management-toolkit>

DIRECT LEGAL SERVICES

The program has a formal structure in place to protect sensitive client information, establish scope of representation, and maintain case files in a consistent manner across all case workers.

RATING SCALE:

1 No Implementation	2 Minimal Implementation	3 Moderate Implementation	4 Complete Implementation
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Indicator	Rating
1 A confidentiality agreement is documented for all staff, interns and volunteers and signed by each party with access to client information.	
2 Confidentiality breaches are addressed according to agency policies and professional ethical rules.	
3 Conflict of interest is investigated in the intake process asking prospective clients if the program currently serves a spouse, adverse parties or client with an interest adverse to the agency.	
4 Program has a protocol to disengage from a case once a conflict is identified at any stage of service.	
5 Case files are in secured and locked cabinets.	
6 Staff space is conducive to confidential conversations with clients.	
7 Program has a signed and dated Client Agreement for all legal services it performs per client.	
8 Client Agreement contains information essential to forming and maintaining the legal relationship (contact information, services to be performed, client and agency obligations, fees charged, disengagement procedure for both client and agency).	
9 Client Agreements are reviewed with the client in the client's native language, agency provides the client with a copy and a copy is retained in the file.	
10 A tickler system is used by all staff uniformly to track case related dates and deadlines.	
11 Case file structure and maintenance review is conducted by a supervisor or peer.	
12 Solo practitioners in the absence of a legal supervisor use checklists for specific immigration forms and benefits for quality control purposes.	
13 Program has a standard case file construction policy, including hard and electronic copies, and all staff adhere to it.	
14 Case notes in electronic and paper files are kept to record important transactions and communications.	
15 Copies of all correspondences to and from the client as well as copies of payment receipts to the program are in the file.	

Indicator		Rating
16	Copies of all government correspondence regarding client's case and certified receipts as well as copies of all applications, supporting documents and payments to the government are in the file.	
17	Case closing letter to the client stating the final case outcome or reason for case closing is in the file.	
18	Group processing workshops are conducted and G-28s are filed for each completed case.	

Implementation Priorities and Action Plan	Technical Assistance/Training Needed
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If you are seeking additional resources, please take a look at the following for ideas on how to improve the Case Management aspect of your program:

Chapter 5 of the Managing an Immigration Program: Steps for Creating and Increasing Legal Capacity manual: <https://cliniclegal.org/resources/guides-reports-publications/managing-immigration-program-steps-creating-and-increasing>

Case Management Toolkit: <https://cliniclegal.org/resources/case-management-toolkit>