



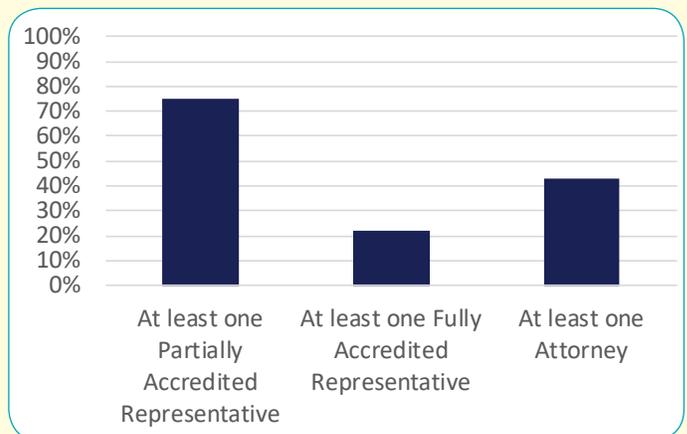
## Accredited Representatives and Access to Justice

What is an accredited representative? An accredited representative is a non-attorney who has demonstrated to the Department of Justice that they have enough education and experience in immigration law to provide immigration legal services. The purpose of the program is to improve access to justice by increasing the number of representatives serving low-income immigrants. Accredited representatives must work for a non-profit organization providing immigration legal services to low-income clients.

### Top 5 benefits of the Accreditation Program

- Forms a strong public/private partnership to combat fraud and unauthorized practice of immigration law
- Promotes efficiency in U.S. government agencies through well-prepared applications and court appearances.
- Cost-effective program for the U.S. government
- Provides education and services to low-income communities that would otherwise be difficult to reach
- Qualifies non-profits for federal and state funding for citizenship and integration

### Legal Representatives in CLINIC's Network Our Affiliates Employ:



Numbers are approximate and based on 2017 CLINIC affiliate survey

### Timeline of the Accreditation Program

- 1958** – First Regulations put in place and first non-profit organization Recognized under the program. The program was managed by the DOJ Board of Immigration Appeals.
- 1994** – The program reached 300 recognized organizations.
- 2012** – EOIR requested stakeholder input on possible regulatory revisions.
- 2017** – New Regulations went into effect, shifting the program to be managed by the DOJ Office of Legal Access Programs.
- 2018** – The program reached 900 recognized organizations



### **Valentina's\* Accredited Representative Story**

Valentina and her children came to the United States from Grenada in 2007 to escape her abusive husband. But after remarrying in the United States, her new husband also became abusive. Valentina sought help at Hispanic Services Council in Tampa, Florida. Their Accredited Representatives advised Valentina of her rights and helped her and her children obtain green cards under the Violence Against Women Act. Since receiving permanent residency, Valentina accomplished her childhood dream of becoming a nurse. Valentina's daughter is following her mother's hardworking footsteps and is now attending the University of Florida on a full scholarship.

### **Laura's\* Accredited Representative Story**

After living in the U. S. for 14 years, Laura was suddenly at risk for deportation because she was undocumented. Laura's first attorney was expensive and did not give detailed updates on her case. The attorney quit, forcing Laura to go to court alone. The judge approved an application for permanent residence and canceled her deportation order, but Laura did not understand her status, and did not receive a permanent residency card. Three years later, Laura still believed she was undocumented and wasted \$6,000 on another attorney to try to figure out her situation. The attorney took her money but did not help improve her immigration status. Feeling lost and disappointed, she contacted Catholic Charities Jacksonville, Florida. In just a few hours, an Accredited Representative resolved Laura's situation with an immigration officer and Laura received her green card. After years of living in fear and spending thousands of dollars on careless attorneys, Laura was happy that someone finally treated her situation with the attention and importance it deserved.

**CLINIC's Affiliates are Available to help Low-Income Immigrants in 49 States and Washington DC.**



For additional information on the Recognition and Accreditation Program and CLINIC's network of representatives, contact CLINIC's advocacy department at [advocacy@cliniclegal.org](mailto:advocacy@cliniclegal.org).

\*Name has been changed to protect identity