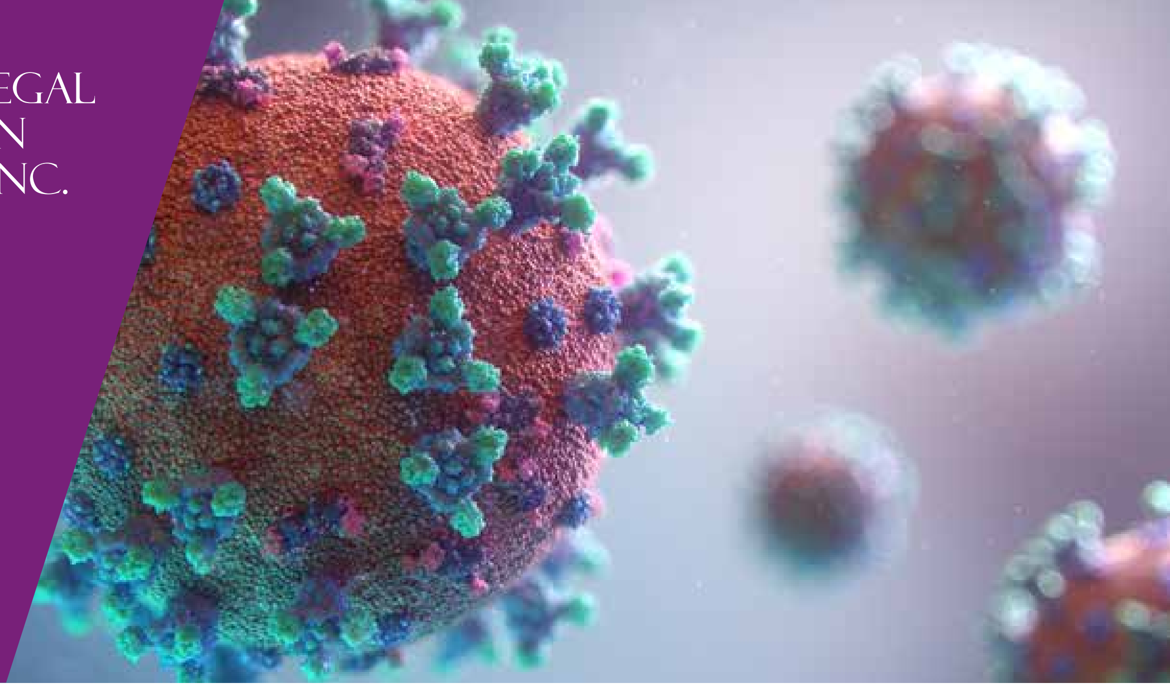
CATHOLIC LEGAL IMMIGRATION NETWORK, INC.



UPDATED PRACTICE ADVISORY: IN FOR THE LONG HAUL WITH THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND SOCIAL DISTANCING MEASURES

The COVID-19 pandemic and social distancing measures to combat the spread of the virus may be here for longer than we first anticipated. As we search for the "new normal" in providing legal services remotely, here are some extra program management tips that may help you.

CREATE AN EXTENDED PLAN AND POLICIES TO ENSURE CONTINUATION OF SERVICES AND CLIENT COMMUNICATION

1. **Re-examine your COVID-19 plans and policies you initially instituted. Please see here for CLINIC's initial practice advisory on providing legal services during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, CLINIC has a sample pandemic plan available here. It may be necessary to readjust your COVID-19 plans and policies as you listen to your clients and staff by asking the following questions:**

- Remote work – How are staff coping with remote work? How is the technology and equipment working out for staff? How are they coping with balancing home and remote work? Is the staff able to maintain productivity? Can you make any improvements on your remote work and meeting skills?
- Remote interaction with clients – Are you able to smoothly set up virtual meetings and phone appointments to continue providing legal services and consultations? How about clients who do not have access to internet, technology, or other equipment? What other ways have you explored to extend your services to clients, or is it better to establish limitations on the type of services, screening or a certain number of applications?

- Collection of fees – Are you able to collect fees from clients and set up channels to receive payment by credit card? Is the designated staff or staff in rotation able to handle checks or money orders coming in the mail? Is there a way to help clients who are unbanked and usually pay by cash?
- Office closures and mail flow – Many offices are physically closed while the staff works remotely, but there may be a designated staff or rotating staff members who are in the office to sort mail, scan and upload documents, log in checks/money orders, and print/ship applications. Assess whether the arrangement is working based on staff's feedback and rearrange as necessary.

2. **Keep up-to-date with the new and fast-changing guidelines so that you can advise your clients and successfully handle their pending cases. By this time, many government agencies – such as USCIS, EOIR, ICE, DHS, DOJ and DOS – have announced their guidance and policies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.**
3. **Update immigration services' website, social media, newsletter, or other channels to regularly communicate with clients and potential clients about any changes.**

IMPLEMENT DACA PLAN USING IDEAS FROM CLINIC'S DACA RESOURCE PAGE

1. **Continue to file your DACA renewal cases as we wait for the impending Supreme Court of the United States' decision on DACA amid the pandemic. It is better to file DACA renewals before the SCOTUS decision. Even if a negative SCOTUS decision is reached, there is a chance that USCIS will adjudicate already-filed DACA renewal cases. USCIS recently announced that it may use previously collected biometrics for adjudicating new employment authorization cards, which could make the processing of DACA renewals quicker than before.**
2. **Follow CLINIC's website and newsletters closely for the SCOTUS decision on DACA and prepare your DACA clients and community for a possible negative SCOTUS decision. You will first want to focus on preparing DACA clients for the consequences of DACA termination and counsel them on possible enforcement actions as well as warning them about immigration scams or unauthorized practice of law, then move onto educating the community you serve. You can view a detailed DACA action plan on CLINIC's website here.**

PROVIDE ONGOING STAFF APPRECIATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF VOLUNTEERS

1. **Set up a regular check in time with your staff for updates, if not in place already. Use this time to listen to their concerns and challenges. Studies have shown that employees look to their managers for guidance on dealing with a crisis or sudden changes. As managers and program directors, provide a positive trickle-down effect to the employees who may be facing difficulties in a remote work setting, such as home distraction, isolation, lack of information, or financial anxiety.**
2. **Communicate more than usual with virtual and face-to-face methods for personal check-ins in addition to the usual stream of emails and phone calls to offer encouragement and appreciation for the ongoing work. Staff morale can be very low during this stressful time. Provide opportunities for remote social interaction before virtual meetings so that staff has time to engage in casual conversations outside of the work projects and cases.**

3. **Ask yourself and agency leadership if staff are being given much-needed flexibility for work hours or other hourly benefits to manage unusual home demands such as parental support for children in school.**
4. **Engage volunteers with your organization by providing information and educational materials about immigration updates or your organization's milestones. Non-profit organizations rely heavily on volunteers when it comes to serving vulnerable populations. While volunteer engagement in the current climate is not easy, you may have already volunteers who are not actively working due to the remote work policies. When we are safely out of this social distancing period, volunteers will still feel connected to the mission of your programs and engaged with the important issues, thus can easily resume volunteering.**

EVALUATE CASE MANAGEMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES TO AVOID LIABILITY AND MALPRACTICE

1. **Evaluate policies and procedures related to the agency's scope of work during this time. Will you continue to offer services on a limited basis? Will you take on new clients or just focus on already open cases? Either way, it is important to develop policies and procedures related to office closures, intake/screening, client appointments, the handling of current cases, taking on new cases, etc.**
2. **Continue to identify clients who are most likely to be severely impacted in the short term and prioritize these cases. However, it is important that you communicate to all your clients and manage their expectation as to how and when their cases will be completed.**
3. **Consider the health and safety of staff and clients, current community needs, and the current capacity at your agency when determining whether to accept new cases. Some may decide not to accept new cases for now and may choose to open up slowly on a case-by-case basis.**
4. **Revisit the application review process for quality control. It is important that applications are reviewed for thoroughness and accuracy before they are filed. Utilize your case management system (like Lawlogix) to its fullest capacity and reach out to case management system experts to learn more about how to make electronic application review process more efficient and secure.**
5. **Ensure that clients receive all documents related to the resolution of their case when closing case files. If the case is being closed to due to a client's decision not to further pursue the case (because of financial or health complications), make sure that such reasons are clearly documented.**

PLAN TO ENGAGE FUNDERS ON YOUR NEXT YEAR'S BUDGET PRIORITIES AND NEEDS

1. **Work with leadership to identify next year's budget priorities and needs for the immigration program, and create talking points for funders about emerging immigration issues your program will respond to and contend with which need their financial support. Include any available data points on local/national impact of Covid-19 on your community, your program, and USCIS services.**
2. **Determine which existing and/or new funders you wish to approach, how you will approach them, who will do it for each funder and an approximate timeline.**

WORK WITH AGENCY LEADERSHIP ON INDIVIDUALIZED DONOR STRATEGY TO GAIN MORE DONATIONS FOR IMMIGRATION SERVICES

1. **Set a goal for how much you wish to raise in donations, based on current and future immigration program budget needs and priorities.**
2. **Ensure that immigration program is included in any overall agency donor strategy and is prioritized to receive a portion of those donations.**
3. **Prepare key data points on immigration program outputs and outcomes, along with a few good client stories for use in appeals.**

WORK WITH LEADERSHIP ON BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS FOR FY '21 (JULY TO JUNE OR JANUARY TO DECEMBER)

1. **Review current and anticipated program revenue from client fees in light of office closures, with possibility of an extended closure.**
2. **Keep in mind that case selection may account for more revenue generating cases if accepting new cases during office closure.**
3. **Discuss with leadership the anticipated loss in program revenue and whether deficit can be covered with agency subsidy, loans or potential grants or donations.**
4. **Identify with leadership ways to mitigate the loss so services and staff will not be substantially affected if program budget will be reduced in FY' 21.**

CONNECT CLIENTS TO ELIGIBLE RELIEF FUNDS VIA CARES ACT AND SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION LOANS

1. **Unfortunately, the Small Business Administration, or SBA, has stopped accepting new applications for the Paycheck Protection Program and the Economic Injury Disaster Loan Emergency fund. While lawmakers are currently discussing the possibility of additional funding to these programs, below are some tips to help your agency be prepared, for if, the SBA begins to accept new applications.**

- Familiarize yourself with loan requirements and eligibility, as different loan programs vary.
- Review the application and ensure you have all necessary documents accessible. You can review and download the Paycheck Protection Program application.
- Find an approved lender.
- Consider and research alternative relief options. If you already have a business relationship with an SBA Express lender, your agency may eligible for the SBA Express Bridge Loans or SBA Debt Relief.
- Check to see what financial benefits your state is offering. Some state and city officials are offering additional COVID-19 relief to include businesses.

IMMIGRANT COMMUNITY INTEGRATION IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

1. **Ask the immigrant community what it needs from your organization in order to address its most pressing needs**
2. **Encourage local officials that have released state/city COVID-19 relief to include all members of the community regardless of legal status**
3. **Partner with other organizations to provide accurate health information to underserved populations in appropriate languages**
4. **Adjust advocacy priorities in response to current issues appearing in the community, such as lack of workplace protections for essential workers**
5. **Promote immigrants' contributions to your community, particularly those made to make the community healthy and safe, on social media, in publications, and where otherwise appropriate**

OTHER RESOURCES

www.natlawreview.com/article/how-to-manage-your-law-firm-remotely-during-covid-19

thinkimmigration.org/blog/2020/03/16/business-continuity-planning-immigration-law-practice-in-the-era-of-covid-19/

unitedwedream.org/2020/04/frequently-asked-questions-about-daca-renewals-in-the-middle-of-covid-19-crisis/

www.managementcenter.org/article/5-tips-for-managing-remotely-during-covid-19/

thewellnesssociety.org/free-coronavirus-anxiety-workbook (self-care resource)