



How to Apply for Full Accreditation

March 6, 2024

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Meet Your Presenters



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Senior Field Engagement Strategist –
Field Engagement



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Staff Advocate – Training and
Technical Assistance



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Supervising Senior Attorney –
Training and Technical Assistance

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Changes were made to the Department of Justice Recognition and Accreditation (DOJ R&A) application forms (EOIR-31 and EOIR-31A) in Nov. 2023.

Throughout the presentation, recent changes to the application process will be highlighted in green.

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What will we discuss today?

- Brief background of DOJ Recognition and Accreditation
- Eligibility requirements for accreditation
- Preparing for full accreditation
- Assembling the full accreditation application
- Considerations for after approval
- R & A trends
- Resources

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What best describes your position in your organization?
(Select all that apply)

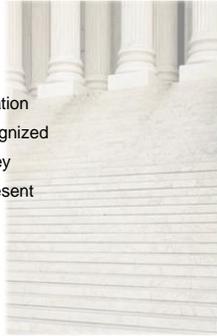
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Where are you in the application process?
(Select all that apply)

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What is DOJ R & A?

- The DOJ recognition and accreditation (DOJ R & A) program permits recognized organizations and their non-attorney accredited representatives to represent clients in immigration proceedings.
- 8 CFR §1292.11 and §1292.12



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Recognition and Accreditation Roster

<https://www.justice.gov/eoir/recognition-accreditation-roster-reports>

Recognized Organization	Accredited Representative	Accreditation Expiration Date	Representative Status
African Communities Together	Camara Conroy, Jamaica (2020 only)	06/30/26	Active
	Edie, Miriam Ezzamel (2020 only)	06/30/26	Active
African Community Education Program (ACEP) Inc.	Tyson, Kasha Sola (2020 only)	07/30/24	Active
	Samson, Wendell Sam (2020 only)	06/30/26	Active
African Cultural Alliance of North America Inc.	Johnson, Victor S. (2020 only)	04/30/26	Active
	Talbot-Jones, Nabilan (2020 only)	04/30/27 (Pending Renewal)	Active
African Hope Committee	Abrahamson, Catherine	01/01/25	Active
African Service Committee	Johnson-Pull, Clarence (2020 only)	06/30/26	Active
	McDonald, Beth Behre Ann (2020 only)	01/30/25	Active
	Compton, David Monroe (2020 only)	01/30/25	Active
	Gilley, Lillian Todd (2020 only)	04/30/26	Active
	Perreault, Catherine (2020 only)	05/30/25	Active
Agency for New Americans	Nguyen, Trucbinh (2020 only)	03/30/26	Active
	Tranbinh, Thi Phuong (2020 only)	01/30/24	Active
Al-Omer Labs, Inc.	Al-Omer, Simon Fawzan Othman	03/01/26	Active

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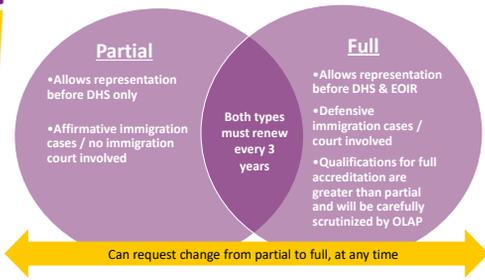
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Hypo

Claire has been a partial accredited representative for 2 years. Recently, more individuals in removal proceedings are requesting immigration legal assistance from her organization. There is a shortage of local immigration attorneys handling removal defense. The program director is seeking to expand immigration legal services to include removal defense and has asked Claire to consider obtaining full accreditation. What are some program considerations? What should Claire do to get started with the process?

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DOJ Accreditation: 2 Types



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Eligibility for Accreditation

- Must be an employee or volunteer of recognized organization
- Must have character and fitness to represent clients
- Must possess broad knowledge and adequate experience in immigration law and procedure
- Also, must establish individual possesses skills essential for effective litigation (full accreditation only)
- Cannot be an attorney eligible to practice law in the U.S.
- Cannot have resigned while under disciplinary investigation or proceeding
- Cannot be subject to any order disbaring or restricting practice of law
- Cannot be convicted of a serious crime anywhere in the world
- Cannot be contractor of the organization

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What is Character and Fitness?

Includes, but not limited to, examination of these factors:

- > Criminal background
- > Prior acts involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation
- > Past history of neglecting professional, financial, or legal obligations
- > Current immigration status that presents actual or perceived conflict of interest

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Do you need to obtain partial accreditation before full accreditation?

It Depends!

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Organization's Considerations

 <p>Community Need Who is doing removal defense in your community? Are there nonprofits serving low-income people? How many people is your program turning away or referring out for removal defense?</p>	 <p>Locality How far are you from the immigration court? Is there a federal, state, or local detention center in your area? Is there a Legal Orientation Program in your area and, if so, do they need help with referring cases?</p>	 <p>Program Capacity Does it make sense for your program to expand services? How will you staff these services? How will you fund the services? Is leadership supportive of your full accreditation?</p>
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Community Need
 Who is doing removal defense in your community?
 Are there nonprofits serving low-income people?
 How many people is your program turning away or referring out for removal defense?

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Organization's Considerations

 Community Need Who is doing removal defense in your community? Are there nonprofits serving low-income people? How many people is your program turning away or referring out for removal defense?	 Locality How far are you from the immigration court? Is there a federal, state, or local detention center in your area? Is there a Legal Orientation Program in your area and, if so, do they need help with referring cases?	 Program Capacity Does it make sense for your program to expand services? How will you staff these services? How will you fund the services? Is leadership supportive of your full accreditation?
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Locality
 How far are you from the immigration court?
 Is there a federal, state, or local detention center in your area?
 Is there a Legal Orientation Program in your area and, if so, do they need help with referring cases?

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Organization's Considerations

 <p>Community Need Who is doing removal defense in your community?</p> <p>Are there nonprofits serving low-income people?</p> <p>How many people is your program turning away or referring out for removal defense?</p>	 <p>Locality How far are you from the immigration court?</p> <p>Is there a federal, state, or local detention center in your area?</p> <p>Is there a Legal Orientation Program in your area and, if so, do they need help with referring cases?</p>	 <p>Program Capacity Does it make sense for your program to expand services?</p> <p>How will you staff these services?</p> <p>How will you fund the services?</p> <p>Is leadership supportive of your full accreditation?</p>
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Program Capacity

Does it make sense for your program to expand services?

How will you staff these services?

How will you fund the services?

Is leadership supportive of your full accreditation?

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Organization's Considerations

 <p>Community Need Who is doing removal defense in your community?</p> <p>Are there nonprofits serving low-income people?</p> <p>How many people is your program turning away or referring out for removal defense?</p>	 <p>Locality How far are you from the immigration court?</p> <p>Is there a federal, state, or local detention center in your area?</p> <p>Is there a Legal Orientation Program in your area and, if so, do they need help with referring cases?</p>	 <p>Program Capacity Does it make sense for your program to expand services?</p> <p>How will you staff these services?</p> <p>How will you fund the services?</p> <p>Is leadership supportive of your full accreditation?</p>
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Applicant's Considerations



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Mentorship

- Establish mentor/mentee relationship
 - In-House mentor (Attorney or Full Accredited Rep)
 - Partner Organizations
 - Private Attorneys
 - Remote Mentorship
- Shadowing
- Document prep
- Writing



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Court Observation

- How to attend
- Types of hearings
 - Master Calendar Hearings (open to public)
 - Custody Redetermination Hearings or Bond hearings
 - Merits or Individual Hearings
- Frequency
- Types of Cases
 - Asylum/ Withholding/ Convention Against Torture
 - Non LPR cancellation
 - LPR Cancellation



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Court Observation cont.

SAMPLE LOG OF COURT EXPERIENCES AND OBSERVATIONS FOR FULL ACCREDITATION

LOG OF EXPERIENCES AND OBSERVATIONS AT THE IMMIGRATION COURT FOR [NAME OF APPLICANT]

DATE	LOCATION	TYPE OF CASE
February 13, 2022	Charlotte Immigration Court	Individual Hearing with mentor DANIEL. For Case was dealing with cancellation of removal.
March 21, 2022	Charlotte Immigration Court	Individual Hearing with mentor DANIEL. For cancellation of removal case.
August 15, 2022	Charlotte Immigration Court	Master Calendar Hearing. Cases included asylum, cancellation of removal, and adjustment of status.
September 26, 2022	Charlotte Immigration Court	Master Calendar Hearing. Cases included asylum and cancellation of removal.
October 3, 2022	Charlotte Immigration Court	Master Calendar Hearing. Cases included asylum, cancellation of removal, and adjustment of status.

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Training Options

- [CUNIC's partial to full training program](#)
- [EOIR – Model Hearing Program](#)
- [Immigration Advocate Network Calendar](#)
- [ASISTA Trainings](#)
- [National Immigration Project](#)

Knowledge is power!



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The Accreditation Application

- Cover letter with list of enclosures
- Form EOIR-31A (Oct. 2022 Version)
 - Information about past accreditations
 - <https://www.justice.gov/eoir/file/eoir31A/download>
- Supporting documentation



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The Application Process

- File Form EOIR-31A for each staff person seeking full accreditation
- OLAP reviews application and may request additional information
- USCIS has 30 days to respond
- OLAP sends letter with decision in writing (separate decisions for R&A)
- Processing time varies

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Application Tips

Include



- All supporting documentation in the initial application.
- Cover Letter
- EOIR- 31A (October 2022 version)
- Resume
 - Include list of forms completed/assisted
 - If including trainings, submit proof (certificate, affidavit, etc.) & signatures on all training certificates.
- Court observations demonstrating training and experiences (log)
- 2 Letters of Recommendation
- 2 redacted writing samples demonstrating written trial and appellate advocacy skills.

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Application Tips cont.

Don't include

- Unnecessary information.
- Information older than three years for trainings.
- PowerPoint presentations or agendas from trainings.
- Do not include shadowing hours



Describe

Describe experience in detail. Focus on immigration.

Proofread

Make sure information is consistent.

Respond

Respond to any OLAP requests promptly.

Peer Review

Seek help from CLINIC before applying, if you're an affiliate.

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After Approval

-  [Executive Office for Immigration Review | eRegistration Validation Process \(justice.gov\)](#)
-  Tips for beginning court practice
-  Requirements for reporting changes
-  Email R-A-Info@usdoj.gov

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Renewal of Accreditation

- Updated resume with list of substantive immigration law trainings since date of most recent approval of accreditation
- Proof of trainings dated after most recent approval of accreditation; Copy of last letter of accreditation approval
- Information about previous accreditations with any organization(s).
- Frequency of service provided (see next slide)

NOTE: Letters of recommendation are not required for renewal.

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Frequency of Services

B. Representative's Knowledge and Experience

Does the representative possess broad knowledge and adequate experience in immigration law and procedure? No Yes If "no," please explain.

If applying for renewal of partial or full accreditation, how frequently has the representative provided direct legal representation before USCIS or EOIR within the past three years or since last accredited? USCIS: Approx. # G-28s* EOIR: Approx. # of E-28s*

If applying for partial accreditation, attach the following documents:

- A description of the representative's qualifications, including education and immigration law experience
- A list of all relevant, formal, immigration-related training with certificate of training from the training organization or similarly verifiable record (only for the past three years for renewal of accreditation)

*** You might need to write "see addendum" and attach an explanation if you have not filed any G-28s/E-28s. You might include pro se work, consultations where a G-28 was not filed or other outreach in your explanation.**

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What happens if a program loses its only accredited representative?



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R&A Trends

- 
Processing Times
- 
Background checks
- 
Proof of trainings
- 
Virtual Hearings
- 
E-mail submission

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Resources

- ❑ R&A Toolkit and Step-by-Step Guide: <https://www.cliniclegal.org/toolkits/recognition-accreditation>
- ❑ EOIR R&A Website and FAQs: <https://www.justice.gov/eoir/recognition-and-accreditation-program>
- ❑ CLINIC training calendar: <https://www.cliniclegal.org/training/calendar>
- ❑ IAN training calendar: <https://www.immigrationadvocates.org/nonprofit/calendar/>
- ❑ EOIR's Model Hearing Program: <https://www.justice.gov/eoir/model-hearing-program>
- ❑ E-Registry: <https://www.justice.gov/eoir/e-registry-program>
- ❑ If you are a NAC partner/affiliate and would like to receive R&A assistance, please contact Jessica Hernandez, jhernandez@cliniclegal.org

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2024 CLINIC Affiliation

- Non-Catholic Immigration Legal Services Providers can request to join the network as subscribers
 - Subscriber eligibility, benefits and process to request for application: <https://cliniclegal.org/find-legal-help/affiliates/subscription>
- 2024 Annual dues for subscription: \$1,800
- Get in-depth technical assistance on legal issues and program management, including on your DOJ R&A application

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Questions?

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Embracing the Gospel value of welcoming the stranger, CLINIC promotes the dignity and protects the rights of immigrants in partnership with a **dedicated network** of Catholic and community legal immigration programs.

cliniclegal.org

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