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BAR ASSOCIATION
OF ERIE COUNTY

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES FOR ATTORNEYS INTERESTED IN PROVIDING PRO BONO IMMIGRATION ASSISTANCE TO WESTERN NEW YORK'S IMMIGRANT COMMUNITY

Members have expressed interest in providing pro bono services or volunteering their time to help immigrants in Western New York. The organizations listed are responding to rapidly changing conditions and evolving law and the BAEC is providing the best available information for our members so you may explore suitable volunteer roles. The training, scope of work, interpreter support, and availability of professional liability coverage varies by program. It is your responsibility to identify an appropriate opportunity for your skills, background and time and the terms of each role you accept. Attorneys must generally be admitted in NYS to provide pro bono legal services unless an exception is noted.

The BAEC supports and celebrates the dedicated attorneys in our community who contribute their time and expertise to pro bono work, ensuring that the promise of justice remains accessible to all.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

HABEAS PETITIONS (CHALLENGES TO AN IMMIGRANT'S DETENTION)

Assist with filing habeas petitions on behalf of detained immigrants.

Who can help: Attorneys admitted and experienced in practicing in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of New York.

Who to contact to volunteer: [ECBA Volunteer Lawyers Project](#); [Immigrant ARC](#)

ADJUSTMENT OF STATUS: LAWFUL PERMANENT RESIDENCY ("GREEN CARDS") FOR REFUGEES

Meet and help families who arrived as refugees or asylees apply for lawful permanent residency by filling out required applications, preparing them for interviews with USCIS, and sending out FOIA requests for previously submitted applications to ensure accuracy.

Who can help: Any attorneys who go through applicable program training. Law students and non-lawyers may be able to help with clinics by meeting with applicants to gather information needed for Green Card applications (Form I-485) and by sending FOIA requests under the supervision of an experienced immigration attorney.

Who to contact to volunteer: [ECBA Volunteer Lawyers Project](#); [Journey's End Refugee Services](#); [International Institute of Buffalo](#)

NATURALIZATION

Help lawful permanent residents (those with Green Cards) apply for their citizenship, including preparing them for the citizenship test.

Who can help: Any attorneys who go through applicable program training. Law students and non-lawyers may be able to help with clinics by meeting with applicants to gather information needed for Naturalization applications (Form N-400) and by sending FOIA requests under the supervision of an experienced immigration attorney.

Who to contact to volunteer: [ECBA Volunteer Lawyers Project](#); [Journey's End Refugee Services](#); [International Institute of Buffalo](#)

FAMILY PREPAREDNESS & ESTATE PLANNING

Provide estate planning services including drafting and executing powers of attorney, healthcare proxies, wills, guardianship and Person in Parental Relationship forms. Volunteer opportunities also include helping immigrants gather their emergency contact information, document where important papers are kept, and preparing for the care of family members such as minor children in the event of parental detention.

Who can help: Attorneys experienced in family law, elder law, estate planning, and matrimonial law. Law students and non-lawyers may be able to assist with clinics by meeting with clients, gathering necessary

information, and filling out required paperwork under the supervision of an experienced attorney.

Who to contact to volunteer: [Jericho Road Community Health Center/Vive Shelter](#); ad hoc clinics/opportunities in the community

COURT ACCOMPANIMENT/OBSERVATION

Observe Buffalo Immigration Court during set hours and take notes documenting detentions and other issues that may arise. Individuals can also volunteer to accompany immigrants who must attend court appearances in person.

Who can help: Any attorneys or non-lawyers.

Who to contact to volunteer: [Friend of the Court program - Immigrant ARC](#); individual accompaniment - [Justice for Migrant Families](#)

OTHER WAYS TO HELP

- Monetary donations to the organizations listed below. Donate directly or host a fundraiser to help educate the community and support these organizations.
- Share appropriate "Know Your Rights" information with your networks. Printable materials in many languages are available from the New York Immigration Coalition: www.nyic.org/resources-training/kyr/.
- Help train attorneys and non-lawyers to provide immigration services.
- Host presentations on "Know Your Rights" and other valuable information for immigrants and community members. Reach out to Alicia Quebral at the BAEC (aquebral@eriebar.org) if you're interested in doing this!
- Contact Betsy Bergen, Esq. for additional ways to get involved.

IMMIGRANT SERVING ORGANIZATIONS

- [Buffalo Immigrant and Refugee Defense](#)
 - Anyone can call or text (716) 222-2190 to ask for help.
- [Catholic Charities Immigration & Refugee Assistance](#)
- [ECBA Volunteer Lawyers Project](#)
 - Contact Maria Valeri, Esq., Pro Bono Coordinator, mvaleri@ecbavlp.com, (716) 847-0662 ext. 321
- International Institute of Buffalo
 - Contact volunteers@iibuff.org
- [Immigrant Arc](#)
- [Jericho Road Community Health Center](#)
- [Jewish Family Services](#)
- [Journey's End Refugee Services](#)
- [Justice for Migrant Families](#)
 - Public hotlines for assistance:
 - While detained: (716) 427-4917
 - Post release: (716) 202-0611