

Remote Legal Support Guide

Project Profile: ABA Commission on Immigration



Project Profile: American Bar Association, Commission on Immigration

Organizational Overview

The American Bar Association's Commission on Immigration advocates for modifications in law and governmental practice, provides education to the immigration legal community, and assists pro bono programs that encourage volunteer lawyers to represent individuals in immigration proceedings.

Project Process and Tools

The Commission on Immigration partnered with the Office of New Americans Miami Dade, Americans for Immigrant Justice, AILA South Florida Chapter, Catholic Legal Services of Miami, Florida Immigrant Coalition, Florida Legal Services, and HIAS to run virtual clinics for Haitian, Ukrainian, and Venezuelan migrants seeking Temporary Protected Status (TPS). The clinic assists Ukrainian migrants seeking TPS following the forthcoming publication in the Federal Register. The virtual clinics are free for applicants and held via Zoom on the third week of each month with appointments on Thursday afternoons, Fridays, and Saturdays.

During the clinic, volunteer "Form Preparers" (attorneys who do not practice immigration law and law students) are placed into Zoom breakout rooms with an applicant and, if needed, an interpreter. Form Preparers help applicants complete the TPS and work authorization applications, review evidence, and draft cover letters to accompany the applications. Form Preparers are connected to a WhatsApp chat with "Legal Captains" (immigration attorneys with TPS experience), who enter the breakout rooms to answer questions and review all forms before they are finalized.

Working with Pro Bonos

All volunteers receive a comprehensive Virtual TPS Clinic Tip Sheet. The Tip Sheet is divided into three sections: "Frequently Asked Questions," "Before Your Shift," and "Day of Clinic."

Frequently Asked Questions are divided into three parts: eligibility, forms, and consequences of applying.

Before Your Shift Information and Materials include:

- Required recorded trainings on TPS 101 Legal Trainings that are Venezuela-focused, Haiti-focused, and Ukraine-focused, TPS Forms and Evidence Training, Virtual Volunteer Orientation
- Optional recorded trainings on Complex Issues for Venezuelan Dual Nationals, Haitian TPS seekers, USCIS FAQ, various practice advisories and practice pointers
- Step-by-step instructions on TPS eligibility and ineligibility
- Technology requirements for volunteers

- A guide to understanding the general flow of a volunteer shift, including Zoom login information

Day of Clinic Information and Materials include:

- Links to PDF versions of the TPS and Employment Authorization applications with interpreter and form preparer information already filled out, and with sections that do not need to be completed grayed out, so volunteers only complete the necessary parts of each form
- Checklists for each part of the process including reviewing the TPS process with the client, completing the forms with the applicant, legal review, and tips for best practices
- Clear warnings and examples of red flags that necessitate a conversation with one of the Legal Captains
- Detailed instructions on completing the cover letter and identifying evidence for each eligibility requirement
- USCIS fee chart with information depending on applicant circumstances
- List of USCIS addresses categorized by applicant location
- Checklist of information to give client regarding next steps and typical timeline

Contributed by:

Emily McCabe

Senior Staff Attorney

ABA Commission on Immigration