

Department Of Justice Recognition and Accreditation Program

Building Legal Capacity in your Organization

Citizenship education programs and naturalization services providers can expand their offerings to include immigration legal services by having their organizations recognized and their non-attorney staff members or volunteers accredited by the Department

of Justice (DOJ). Only authorized immigration service providers are allowed to explain immigration options to clients, provide advice about which documents to submit, and communicate with USCIS about immigration cases.

Who are authorized service providers?

Authorized immigration service providers include: (1) representatives accredited by the DOJ's Office of Legal Access Programs (OLAP) who work for DOJ Recognized Organizations, and (2) U.S. attorneys who are eligible to practice law in and are members in good standing of the jurisdiction where they are licensed and who are not subject to any order restricting their ability to practice law.

With very few exceptions, OLAP must approve non-attorneys who wish to provide immigration legal services. These Accredited Representatives, who work at DOJ Recognized Organizations, provide essential support to USCIS and the public. For example, they provide educational materials and legal services to help immigrants navigate the immigration system, assist clients in completing forms, and prepare and accompany clients at USCIS interviews. Organizations that want to provide such immigration legal services must apply with OLAP.

Organizational Eligibility

To be eligible for recognition, an organization must meet the requirements described at [8 C.F.R. § 1292.11](#), including:

- Establish that it is a non-profit religious, charitable, social service, or similar organization;
- Demonstrate that it provides immigration legal services primarily to low-income and indigent clients within the United States;
- Demonstrate the organization's currently valid federal tax-exempt status or pending application for the same;

- Apply simultaneously to have at least one employee or volunteer approved as an accredited representative;
- Demonstrate access to adequate knowledge, information, and experience in immigration law and procedure; and
- Designate an authorized officer to act on its behalf.

Individual Eligibility

To establish an individual's eligibility for accreditation, an organization must meet the requirements under the regulations at [8 C.F.R. § 1292.12](#), which include demonstrating that the individual:

- Has the character and fitness to represent clients before the Department of Homeland Security and/or Executive Office for Immigration Review;
- Is employed by or is a volunteer of the organization;
- Is not an attorney, as defined by [8 C.F.R. § 1001.1\(f\)](#);
- Has not resigned while a disciplinary investigation or proceeding is pending and is not the subject of an order restricting the individual in the practice of law;
- Has not been found guilty of, or pleaded guilty to, a serious crime; and
- Possesses broad knowledge and adequate experience in immigration law and procedure.

Want more information?

Want more information? Below are some helpful web links to learn more about DOJ recognition and accreditation:

- [DOJ Recognition and Accreditation Homepage](#)
- [Recognition and Accreditation FAQs](#): Contains answers to more than 60 frequently asked questions about the application process and requirements.
- [Form EOIR-31](#): Request for New Recognition, Renewal of Recognition, Extension of Recognition of a Non-Profit Religious, Charitable, Social Service, or Similar Organization
- [Form EOIR-31A](#): Request by Organization for Accreditation or Renewal of Accreditation of Non-Attorney Representative
- [USCIS Avoid Scams](#): Learn more about the role USCIS has in the recognition and accreditation application process.



**U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services**

www.uscis.gov/citizenship