



## **In-House Asylum Application Services: A Quick Guide**

Based on Best Practices from:

**Catholic Community Services of Utah & Caritas Legal Services - Catholic Charities Archdiocese of San Antonio**

### Staffing Strategy

- **1.0 FTE Immigration Attorney/Program Manager:** Provides intake and screenings, asylum representation, and coordination of pro bono attorneys
- **1.0 FTE Immigration Specialist:** Prepares I-360 and I-485; provides interpretation and document translation (Dari and Pashto speakers)
- **1.0 FTE Interpreter:** Provides interpretation and document translation for asylum cases

### Recommended Training

VECINA's Free E-Course: [Representing Afghan Nationals in Affirmative Asylum](#)

### Asylum Application Step-by-Step Process

- 1. Intake and Orientation with Client**
  - a. Individual or group orientation on immigration options
  - b. Individual assessment of case's immigration needs and pathway eligibility
  - c. Determine which type of immigration relief the client would like to pursue
    - i. If Asylum: conduct Asylum Intake (see [Sample English/Dari Asylum Intake Form](#))
  - d. Provide referrals to mental health counseling
  - e. Provide checklist of documents needed for asylum application
- 2. Legal Practitioner Preparations**
  - a. Develop fact patterns to help prepare template briefs
  - b. Group caseload by case type
  - c. Consult training materials and country conditions reports (cf. [USCCB APA Legal Resource Library](#))
- 3. Referral to Mental Health Services and Psychological Evaluation**
- 4. Preparation of I-589 and Client Declaration**
  - a. Prepare application and client declaration using client's intake form and submitted documents
- 5. Application Preparation Meetings with Client**
  - a. Meet with client 3x or more for application follow-up
  - b. Prepare, review, and finalize application and client declaration with the client
  - c. Have client read back their entire application & client declaration in a language they understand
  - d. Ensure all printed evidence included in the application
- 6. Interview Preparation**
  - a. Mock interview modeled on sample USCIS asylum officer questions (see [Sample of Verbatim Questions and Insights from Former Asylum Officer](#))
  - b. Open questions: Has client ever been harmed in Afghanistan; Why client fears returning to Afghanistan; How Taliban would know client returned; Any place in Afghanistan client feels safe
  - c. Remind the client of questions about travel to other countries, visas held, etc.
  - d. Go through security questions a second time
- 7. Coordination of lodging, transportation, meals, and interpreter for interview**