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**