



# All About DOJ Recognition and Accreditation

February 14, 2024




**Meet your  
presenters**



# Overview

# Acronyms

- 1) **DOJ R&A**: Department of Justice Recognition and Accreditation
- 2) **OLAP**: Office of Legal Access Programs (In charge of DOJ R&A program)
- 3) **EOIR**: Executive Office for Immigration Review (In charge of OLAP and immigration court proceedings)
- 4) **USCIS**: U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (In charge of immigration applications that do not go through court)
- 5) **G-28 (USCIS) / EOIR-28 (EOIR)**: Forms to request Notice of entry of appearance as attorney or representative
- 6) **EOIR-31 & EOIR-31A**: Two forms that are submitted to OLAP to request DOJ R&A.
- 7) **RFE**: Request for Evidence
- 8) **Authorized Officer**: A designated person at an organization who is the primary communicator with OLAP regarding DOJ R&A.



Changes were made to the Department of Justice Recognition and Accreditation (DOJ R&A) application forms (EOIR-31 and EOIR-31A) in Nov. 2023.

Throughout the presentation, recent changes to the R&A application process will be highlighted in green.

# What does this webinar cover?

Requirements and processes for DOJ Recognition

Requirements and processes for DOJ Accreditation

The DOJ R&A Application Cover Letter

Tips for DOJ R&A Applications

What to expect after DOJ R&A Approval

Next Steps and Resources

# What is your main objective in attending this training? (Select all that apply.)

- A. My organization and staff/volunteers are applying for first-time recognition & accreditation.
- B. I am a first-timer, and I am here to learn.
- C. I am a partially accredited representative and will be renewing.
- D. I am a fully accredited representative and will be renewing.
- E. My organization is recognized and will be renewing.
- F. My organization is interested in applying for DOJ extension of recognition.

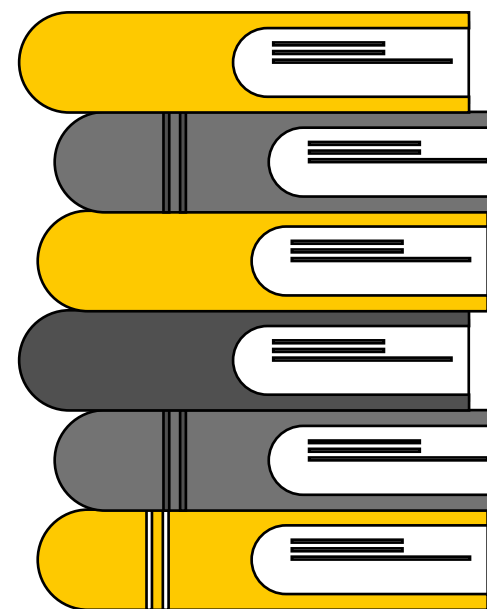
# What best describes your position in your organization? (Select all that apply.)

- A. I am a fully accredited representative.
- B. I am a partially accredited representative.
- C. I am a program manager or executive director.
- D. I am an attorney.
- E. I am the authorized officer of my organization.
- F. I work/volunteer for a non-profit that does not currently offer immigration legal services.
- G. I am staff/volunteer support for an organization that does offer immigration legal services.
- H. I am not affiliated with a non-profit.

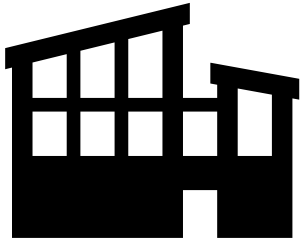


# What is DOJ R&A?

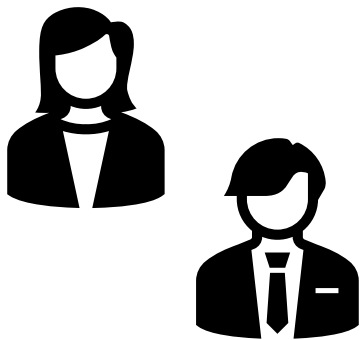
- The recognition and accreditation program permits recognized organizations and their non-attorney accredited representatives to represent clients in immigration proceedings.
- 8 CFR §1292.11 and §1292.12



# Definitions



**DOJ Recognition:** The authorization given to a **non-profit organization**, by the Department of Justice (DOJ), allowing that organization to offer immigration legal services through DOJ accredited representatives.



**DOJ Accredited Representative:** The **individual person**, who is authorized to practice immigration law through a DOJ Recognized organization.

# Why apply for DOJ R&A?

**Maintain or  
increase capacity**

**Strengthen &  
professionalize  
program**

**Ensure better  
client services**

**Ensure quality of  
immigration  
advice**

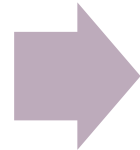
**Lower staffing  
costs**

**Avoid  
Unauthorized  
Practice of Law**

**Free to apply**

# The R&A Application Process

File Form EOIR-31 for agency recognition and Form EOIR-31A for each staff person seeking accreditation.



OLAP reviews application and may request additional information.



USCIS has 30 days to respond.



OLAP sends letter with decision in writing (separate decisions for R&A).



Processing time varies.

[USCIS District Office Locator](#)  
[DOJ R&A Program Information](#)

[CLINIC's Step-by-Step Guide](#)

# Recognition and Accreditation Roster

<https://www.justice.gov/eoir/recognition-accreditation-roster-reports>

ALABAMA			
Recognized Organization	Date Recognized	Recognition Expiration Date	Organization Status
<b>Birmingham</b>			
Hispanic Catholic Social Services Principal Office 92 Oxmoor Road Birmingham, AL 35209 (205) 987-4771	07/18/12	01/26/27	Active
Hispanic Interest Coalition of Alabama Principal Office 117 South Crest Drive Birmingham, AL 35209 (205) 942-5505	10/10/08	06/08/26	Active
<b>Dothan</b>			
Catholic Social Services Archdiocese of Mobile Dothan Extension Office 557 West Main Street Dothan, AL 36302 (334) 793-3601	04/06/00	03/01/25	Active
<b>Mobile</b>			
Catholic Social Services Archdiocese of Mobile Principal Office 188 South Florida St.	04/06/00	03/01/25	Active

# Know your dates of expiration for DOJ Recognition and for DOJ Accreditation!

Recognized Organization	Accredited Representative	Accreditation Expiration Date	Representative Status
African Communities Together	Camara Ceesay, Jainaba (DHS only)	06/05/26	Active
	Hailu, Meron Eyassu (DHS only)	06/05/26	Active
African Community Education Program (ACE) Inc.	Yawo, Kaska Beh (DHS only)	07/05/24	Active
African Cultural Alliance of North America Inc.	Guannu, Wonder Kou (DHS only)	10/16/25	Active
	Jabateh, Voffee S. (DHS only)	01/10/26	Active
	Tadjiddine, Nakkiat (DHS only)	10/28/23* (Pending Renewal)	Active
African Hope Committee	Fikremariam, Getachew	06/16/25	Active
	Mefotso Fall, Clarisse (DHS only)	09/29/26	Active
African Services Committee	Bilissalou, Bath Belvie Arc (DHS only)	01/20/25	Active
	Corrigan, David Munoz (DHS only)	01/20/25	Active
	Giles, Lillian Todd (DHS only)	09/28/26	Active
	Sweeney, Corinne (DHS only)	08/08/25	Active
Agency for New Americans	Aguilar, Yasmin (DHS only)	03/16/26	Active
	Hodzic, Slobodanka (DHS only)	11/05/24	Active
Al Otro Lado, Inc.	Daly, Bryce Frances Graham	03/26/26	Active

## **Question time...**

**True or False?**

**There is a fee associated with DOJ Recognition and Accreditation applications.**



# DOJ Recognition



# Eligibility for Recognition

Must be a non-profit religious, charitable, social service or similar organization

Must provide services primarily to low-income and indigent clients within the U.S.

If org. charges fees, must have a written policy for persons unable to pay

Must have Federal tax-exempt status

Must have at least 1 accredited rep

Must have access to adequate knowledge, information, & experience in immigration law & procedure

Must designate authorized officer to act on org's behalf

# The Recognition Application

Cover letter with list of enclosures



Form EOIR-31, (Oct. 2022 Edition)

<https://www.justice.gov/eoir/file/eoir31/download>

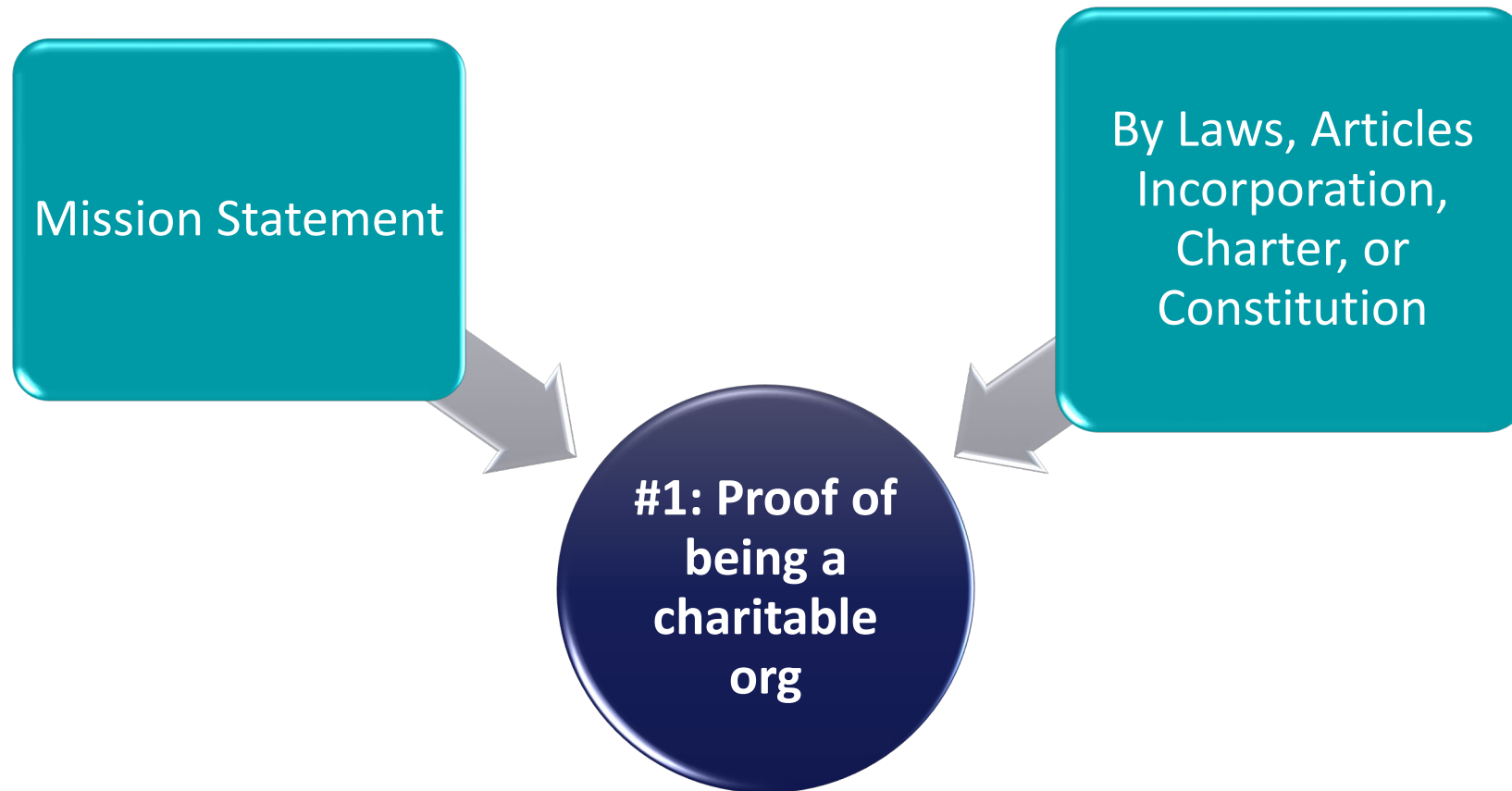


Supporting documentation

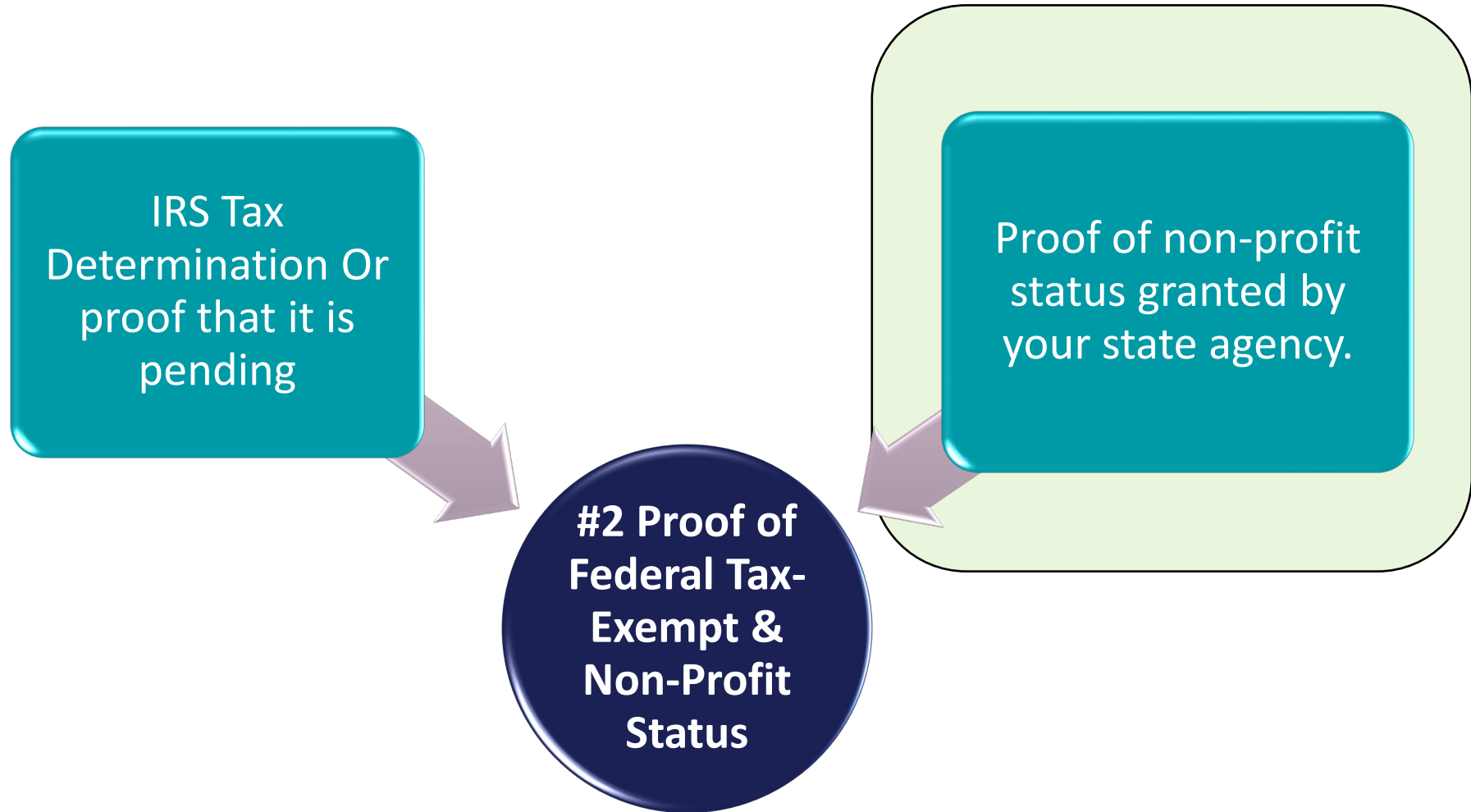


Note: Must also include an application for accreditation of at least one staff person or volunteer. Conditional Recognition.

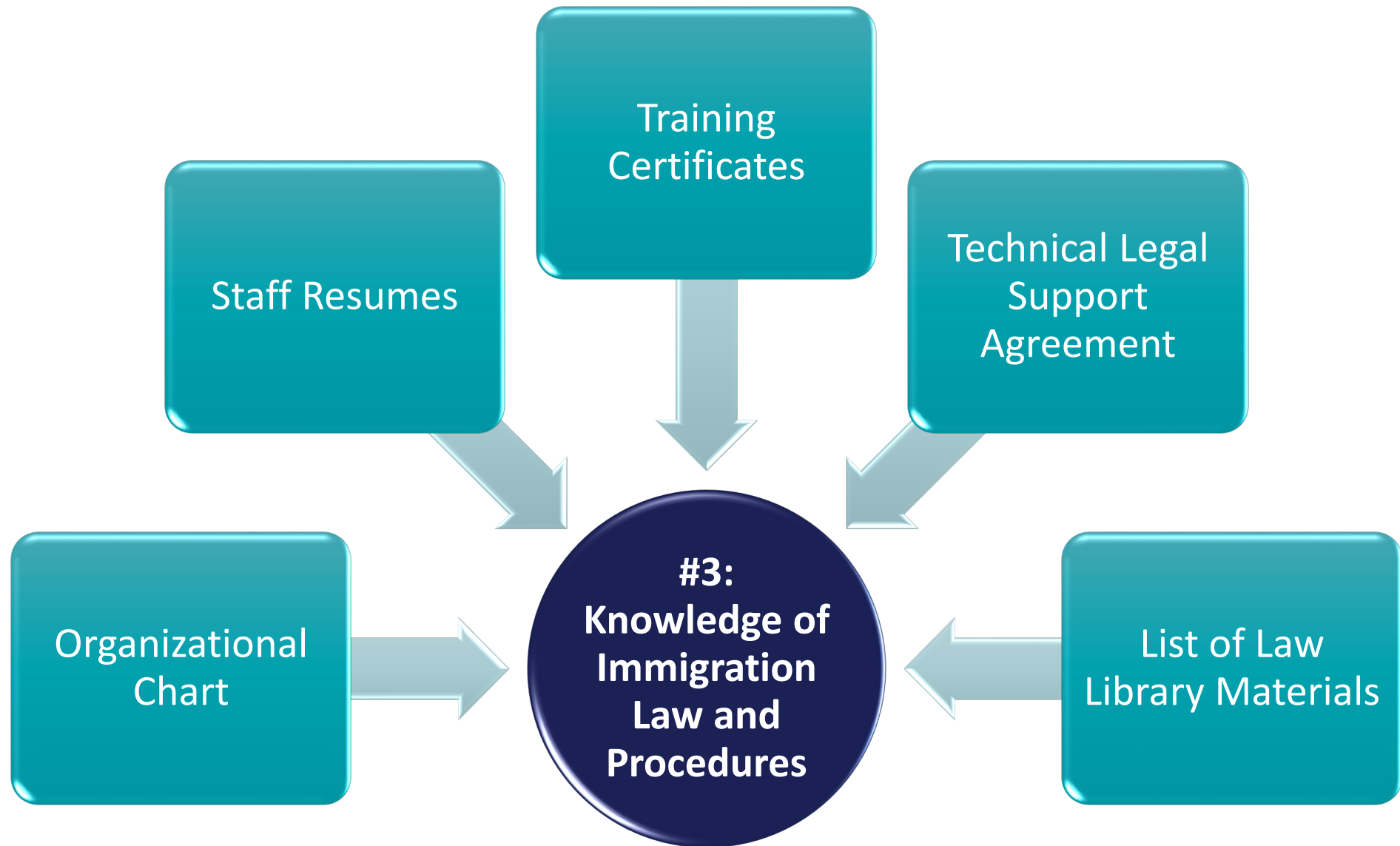
# Supporting Documentation for Recognition



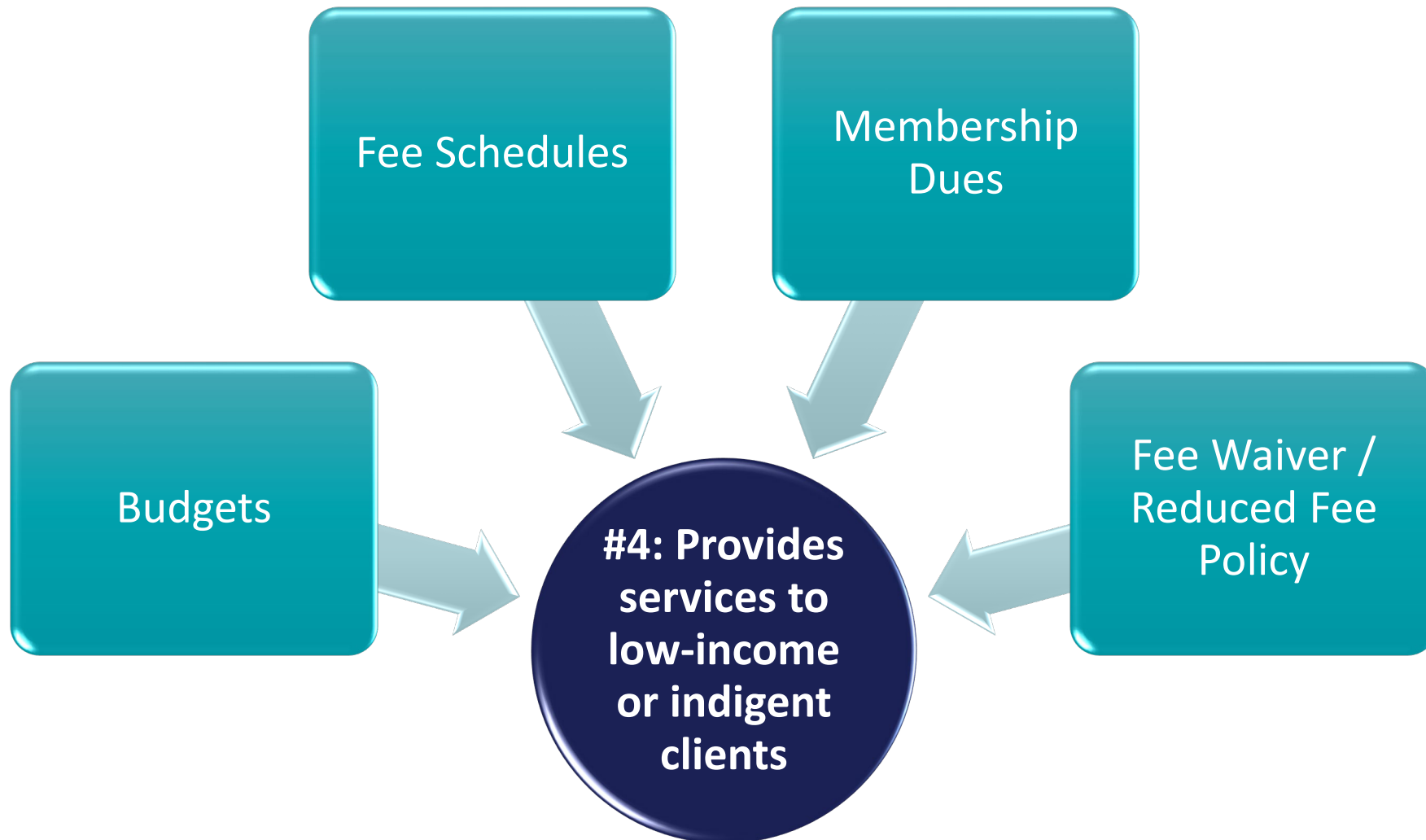
# Supporting Documentation for Recognition



# Supporting Documentation for Recognition



# Supporting Documentation for Recognition



# Recognition History

What organization name(s) has your organization or Authorized Officer previously applied under?

Prior disapproval or termination date (if applicable)

## Part 2. Type(s) of Recognition Requested (check all that apply)

### **Initial Recognition** *Complete Parts 1-4, 6, 8, 9*

What organization name(s) has your organization or Authorized Officer previously applied under?

Prior disapproval or termination date (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_ (Month/Day/Year)

### **Renewal of Recognition** *Complete Parts 1, 2, 4-6, 8, 9; to report updates, complete Part 3.*

Recognition expiration date: \_\_\_\_\_ (Month/Day/Year)

### **Extension of Recognition** *Complete Parts 1, 2, 7-9; to report updates, complete Part 3.*

Number of offices for which requesting extension of recognition (excluding headquarters): \_\_\_\_\_

## Part 3. Information About Organization

# Technical Legal Support

What does this mean?

OLAP requires organizations to demonstrate that they have access to adequate knowledge, information, and experience in immigration law. For agencies that do not have an attorney on staff, they will need to show additional proof of “technical legal support.”



# Options to show technical legal support:

- 1) Include a letter from attorney or fully accredited representative stating:
  - Background and qualifications in immigration law
  - Knowledge of agency/staff
  - Will answer immigration law and procedure questions for agency
  - If any fees charged for this support
  - Good to recommend agency/staff as well
- 2) CLINIC provides TLS for affiliates. More information:  
<https://cliniclegal.org/find-legal-help/affiliates/subscription>
- 3) Show that you have an attorney on staff who can provide immigration law support.

# Extension of Recognition



In lieu of filing separate application for each sub-office, can file single application for two or more offices.



For each sub-office, must attest that organization periodically conducts inspections, exercises supervision and control over accredited reps, and provides access to adequate legal resources.



OLAP may require separate recognition if distinct operations, management structure, or funding sources exist.

# Extension of Recognition

## Submit:

- **Cover Letter**
- **Form EOIR-31**
- **Documentation of eligibility:**
  - Current org chart
  - List of law library resources for all offices
  - Current budget
  - Current fee schedule



# Inactive Status



Notify OLAP within 30 days if you lose any of your accredited reps.



If you lose your **only** accredited rep you are placed on inactive status for up to 2 years (mark your calendar with 2-year deadline).



Must Renew Recognition by expiration date, even if on inactive status.



When applying for a new rep, mention that you are on inactive status in the cover letter.

# Recognition Renewal

First-Time Applicants renew after two years (conditional recognition) and then renew every six years after that

Must demonstrate that you remain eligible

Submit Form EOIR-31 with cover letter and updated documentation as needed

Org chart, Law library, Budget, TLS letter, Fee waiver, Fee schedule

Include Annual Summaries since last recognition date & last Accreditation approval letter

## Question time...

**Which of the following are some of the requirements for DOJ Recognition? (Check all that apply.)**

- A. Access to technical legal support**
- B. Tax-exempt status**
- C. An attorney is on staff or is a volunteer**
- D. An accredited representative is on staff or is a volunteer**

## **Question Time ...**

**True or False?**

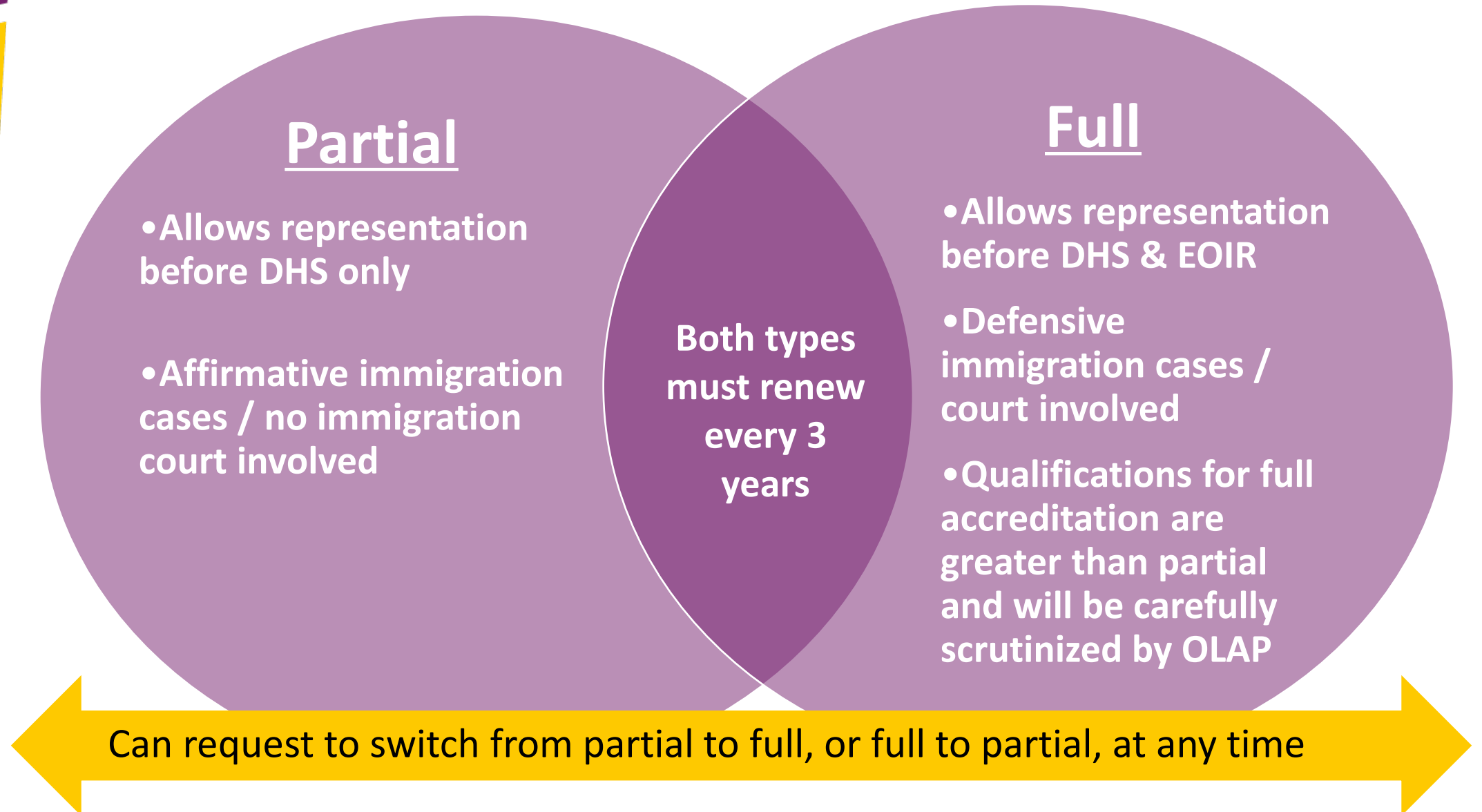
**If an organization's headquarters is approved for DOJ Recognition, then DOJ Accredited Representatives can practice law out of any of the sub offices associated with the organization.**

The graphic features a dark blue background with a white, irregularly shaped border. On the left side, there are two vertical rectangular blocks: a yellow one on top and a teal one below it. At the bottom, there is a purple rectangular block. The text 'DOJ Accreditation' is centered in white, bold, sans-serif font.

# DOJ Accreditation



# DOJ Accreditation: 2 Types



# Eligibility for Accreditation

Must be employee or volunteer of organization

Must possess broad knowledge and adequate experience in immigration law practice and procedure

Must have character and fitness to represent clients

Cannot be a contractor

Cannot be convicted of a serious crime anywhere in the world

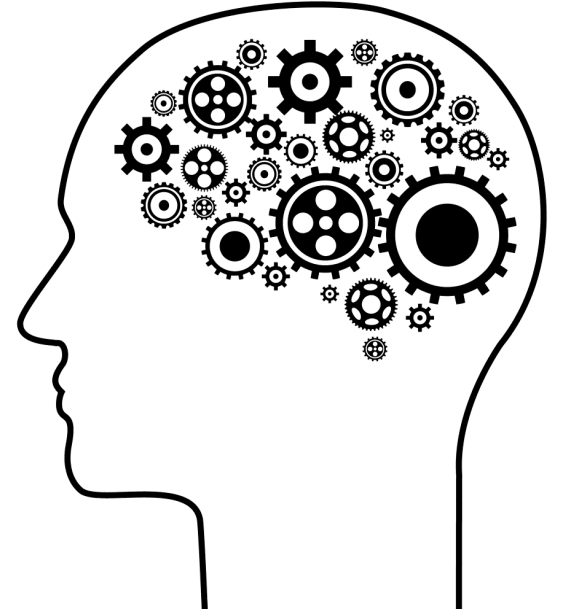
Cannot be subject to any order disbarring or restricting practice of law

Cannot be attorney who is eligible to practice law in the U.S.

Cannot have resigned while under disciplinary investigation or proceeding

# The Accreditation Application

- Cover letter with list of enclosures
- Form EOIR-31A (Oct. 2022 Version)
  - Information about past accreditations
  - <https://www.justice.gov/eoir/file/eoir31A/download>
- Supporting documentation



## Part 2. Qualifications for Accreditation

### A. About the Representative

Is the representative an attorney as defined in 8 C.F.R. § 1001.1(f)?  No  Yes

Representative's status with the organization  Employee

Volunteer

Other \_\_\_\_\_

If a previous accreditation application has ever been submitted on the representative's behalf, please provide:  
(attach additional sheets if necessary)

Date	Organization Name	Outcome (e.g. Approved, Disapproved, Withdrawn)
1. <u>2018-present</u>	<u>Immigration Non-Profit Inc.</u>	<u>All approved</u>
Reason(s) for leaving organization, if applicable: <u>N/A</u>		
2. <u>2014-2018</u>	<u>The Other Non-Profit People Inc.</u>	<u>All approved</u>
Reason(s) for leaving organization, if applicable: <u>Relocated.</u>		

Form EOIR-31A

If accredited previously at more than two orgs, you might need to write into the blanks "see addendum," and attach an addendum.

# Supporting Documentation for Accreditation

## Resume

- Describe immigration law hands-on experience
- Include list of trainings and forms completed/assisted
- Immigration focused and recent information

## Trainings

- Copies of certificates, affidavit of attendance, or other proof of trainings attended
- No older than three years

## Letters of recommendation

- 2 letters of recommendation
- Must address the individual's qualifications to practice immigration

## For full accreditation only

- Evidence of court skills.
- Log demonstrating training and experience in immigration court.

# What Training is Needed?

<b>Core Trainings (Required)</b>	<b>Others (Recommended 5-6)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A Comprehensive Overview of Immigration Law Practice and Procedure Course (Ex: CLINIC's COIL Course)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduction to Family-Based Immigration</li><li>• Grounds of Inadmissibility</li><li>• Citizenship &amp; Naturalization</li><li>• VAWA, U, &amp; T Visas</li><li>• Understanding and Preparing Waivers</li><li>• Immigration Consequences of Crimes</li><li>• Representing Asylum Applicants</li><li>• Removal Proceedings</li></ul>

# Training Tips



Should be ongoing and recent



Mix of in-person, e-learning, and webinars recommended



Keep good records of all trainings attended, *especially certificates*



List trainings on resume



List who gave the training, title, date, location, type of training, duration (hours)



Include \$ for ongoing training in annual budget

# What is character and fitness?

Includes, but not limited to examination of these factors:

- Criminal and financial background checks
- Prior acts involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation
- Past history of neglecting professional, financial, or legal obligations
- Current immigration status that presents actual or perceived conflict of interest



# Partial Accreditation Renewal

- Must demonstrate that you remain eligible.
- Submit:
  - Cover letter
  - Form EOIR-31A (Oct. 2022 Version)
  - Supporting documentation (listed on next slide).

# Supporting Documentation for Renewal of Accreditation

- Updated resume with list of substantiative immigration trainings since date of most recent approval of accreditation
- Proof of trainings dated after most recent approval of accreditation;  
Copy of last letter of accreditation approval
- Information about previous accreditations with any organization(s).
- Frequency of service provided (see next slide)

**NOTE: Letters of recommendation are not required for renewal.**

# Frequency of Services

## *B. Representative's Knowledge and Experience*

Does the representative possess broad knowledge and adequate experience in immigration law and procedure?  No  Yes If "no," please explain.

**If applying for renewal of partial or full accreditation**, how frequently has the representative provided direct legal representation before USCIS or EOIR within the past three years or since last accredited?

USCIS: Approx. # G-28s\* EOIR: \_\_\_\_\_

**If applying for partial accreditation**, attach the following documents:

- A description of the representative's qualifications, including education and immigration law experience
- A list of all relevant, formal, immigration-related training with certificate of training from the training organization or similarly verifiable record (*only for the past three years for renewal of accreditation*)

**\* You might need to write "see addendum" and attach an explanation if you have not filed any G-28s. You might include pro se work, consultations where a G-28 was not filed or other outreach in your explanation.**

## Question Time ...

True or False?

**Partially accredited representatives can give advice on removal proceedings, as long as they do not legally enter appearance with EOIR.**

## Question Time ...

True or False?

After my accreditation is approved, ongoing training is required.

## Question Time ...

Can someone who graduated from law school apply for accreditation?

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. Maybe

## Question Time ...

**Which of the following should an accreditation applicant disclose to OLAP regarding character and fitness (Check all that apply.):**

- A. A speeding ticket**
- B. An expunged DUI**
- C. Defaulted student loans**
- D. Unpaid child support**



# The Cover Letter



# Why is the cover letter so important?

- There is one cover letter for the entire application.

• The changes made to the DOJ R&A forms, instructions and [FAQs](#) altered some of the evidence that OLAP requests to support DOJ R&A applications. Some of that information can be added to the cover letter.

- Signed by Authorized Officer.

• **CLINIC will revise our sample cover letter to incorporate important information to meet these new requirements.**

- OLAP's address has changed to Suite 2400.

# New headings that should be included in the cover letter:

## Recognition Initial and Renewal

- Explanation of state non-profit status. (only include if agency does not have proof attached)
- Explanation of services offered/to be offered and brief organization history.

## Extension Initial and Renewal

- Statement from the Authorized Officer regarding, inspection, supervision, and access to legal resources at extension sites.



# Tips for DOJ R&A

# Application Tips

## Include

- Include all supporting documentation in the initial application.
- Include duration (hours) for each training.
- Include proof for every training (certificate, affidavit, etc.).
- Signatures on all training certificates.

## Don't include

- Don't include unnecessary information.
- Don't include information older than three years for trainings.
- PowerPoint presentations or agendas from trainings.

## Describe

Describe trainings and experience in detail. Focus on immigration.

## Proofread

Make sure information is consistent.

## Respond

Respond to any OLAP requests promptly.

## Peer Review

Seek help from CLINIC before applying, if you're an affiliate.

# Current Affiliates- Affiliate Support Form

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

User Account

Subscribe

Log out



About Us ▼

Advocacy ▼

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 DONATE



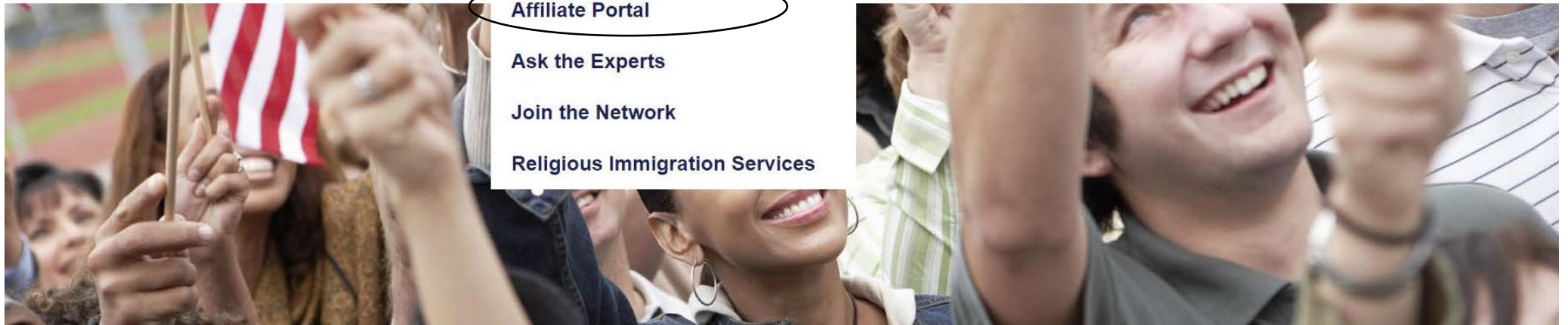
Affiliate Directory

Affiliate Portal

Ask the Experts

Join the Network

Religious Immigration Services



# Welcome!

## Important Affiliate Information for 2024

[Click here](#) to read more about other important dates and action items for Affiliates in early 2024, including regarding Affiliate renewal and Convening registration.

Use the links below to access many of CLINIC's support services.

- **Affiliate Directory**

- If you're looking for an Affiliate near you, please use this directory.

- **Affiliate Support Form**

- CLINIC staff answer program management questions Monday to Friday on a wide range of topics including DOJ Recognition and Accreditation, case management, policies and procedures, and general affiliate questions. **You will receive a response within 3 business days of submitting your question through this form.**

- **Ask the Experts**

- CLINIC's attorneys answer substantive legal questions from Monday to Friday on a wide range of topics that include family-based immigration,

**What to expect  
after DOJ R&A  
approval?**

# What do I need to track for DOJ Recognition after approval?

DOJ Recognition is initially awarded on a conditional basis and will need to be renewed after 2 years. After that, recognition will need to be renewed every 6 years.

For more information on Annual Summaries see [CLINIC's Step-By-Step Guide](#).

In order to renew, OLAP will ask for reporting called “annual summaries.” OLAP collects all this information at once. So, it is important to make sure that your organization is gathering this information on a yearly basis and keeping it organized until it’s time to submit for renewal.



## Reporting

Respond to any OLAP requests promptly.

Promptly report any changes to OLAP (within 30 days)

Email [R-A-Info@usdoj.gov](mailto:R-A-Info@usdoj.gov)

## Record Keeping

Copies of fee schedules and waiver policies

Annual summaries

Must have 6 years of records for renewal of recognition

## Posting

Org. may be required by OLAP to post certain public notices regarding R&A

Has not been implemented

# Do I need to track anything for DOJ Accreditation after approval?

DOJ Accreditation lasts for three years. After three years, you will be required to renew. For renewal you will need the following information:

- Certificates of trainings since your last approval
- Updated Resume
- All dates for which you have *ever* applied for DOJ Accreditation at *any* organization.
- An estimated number of cases for which representation has been entered within the last three years.

(See previous slide on [Accreditation Renewal Documentation](#))

## Question Time ...

True or False?

I should report any changes at my organization to OLAP via email within 30 days.



# Next Steps and Resources

# How do I get started on DOJ R&A?

## Obtain Immigration Experience and Knowledge

- Get formal training in immigration law (such as COIL course)
- Take 5-6 Other courses on immigration law practice and procedure
- Get hands-on experience working under an authorized legal service provider

## Begin gathering supporting documents

- Fee schedule
- Waiver/reduction policy
- Org chart
- Budget
- Other (supporting documents)

# How do I get started on DOJ R&A?

## Get Legal Resources

- Gather and purchase law library resources
- Include virtual and print items.
- Consider subscriptions to virtual resources

## Get Legal Support

- Secure technical legal support (attorney on staff or external agreement)
- CLINIC Affiliation

# Resources

- **R&A Toolkit and Step-by-Step Guide:**

<https://cliniclegal.org/R&A>

- **EOIR R&A Website, Forms, and FAQs:**

<http://www.justice.gov/eoir/recognition-and-accreditation-program>

- **CLINIC training calendar:**

<https://cliniclegal.org/training/calendar>

- **IAN training calendar:**

<https://www.immigrationadvocates.org/nonprofit/calendar/>

# 2024 CLINIC Affiliation

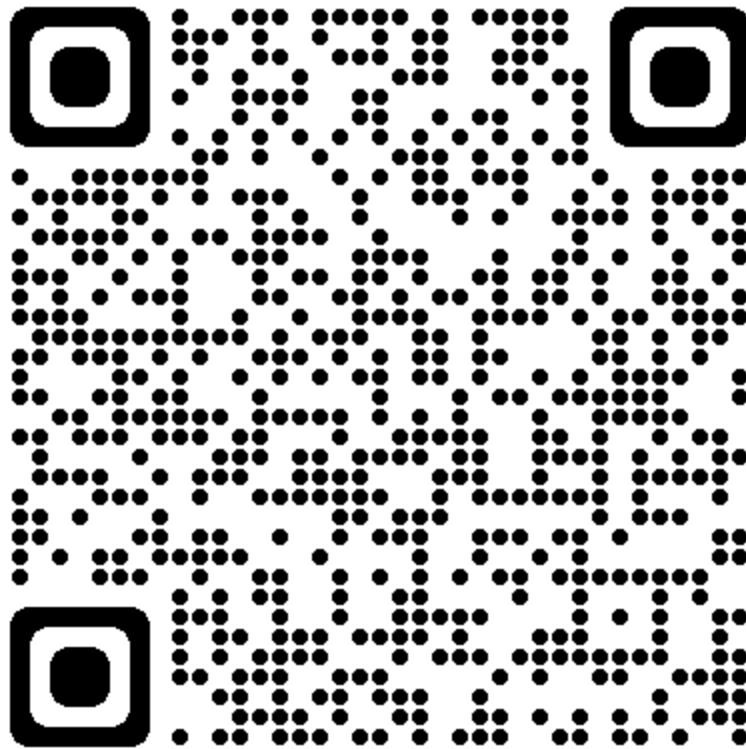
- Non-Catholic Immigration Legal Services Providers can request to join the network as subscribers
  - Subscriber eligibility, benefits and process to request for application: <https://cliniclegal.org/find-legal-help/affiliates/subscription>
- 2024 Annual dues for subscription: \$1,800
- Get in-depth technical assistance on legal issues and program management, including on your DOJ R&A application





**Questions?**

# Tell us What you Think!



<http://tinyurl.com/DOJRA2024>

# National DOJ R&A Study

- Current Accredited Reps and Authorized Officers will be invited this Spring (~ April 2024) to participate in a National DOJ R&A Study.
- CLINIC and a coalition of national partners led by Villanova University and Center for Migration Studies will be conducting the first National DOJ R&A Study of its kind.
- The study will aim to collect data that helps to better understand the role of Accredited Representatives within legal service organizations & the people who fill those roles.



**Embracing the Gospel value of welcoming the stranger, CLINIC promotes the dignity and protects the rights of immigrants in partnership with a dedicated network of Catholic and community legal immigration programs.**

[cliniclegal.org](http://cliniclegal.org)