1. Advocate against the detention of immigrant mothers and children.

2. Volunteer for a week or weekend with the CARA Pro Bono Project in Dilley or Karnes, Texas.

3. Represent the women on asylum and related-relief before the immigration court.

4. Assist the women with change of addresses and pro se changes of venue.

5. Accompany women to their ICE-supervised release or ICE ankle monitor check-ins.

6. Develop a list of referrals to private attorneys willing to take cases low bono

7. Educate immigrants and others about the dangers of immigration fraud.

8. Donate to the CARA Pro Bono Project.

CLINIC advocates for the end of the U.S. policy of detaining families who arrive in the U.S. seeking protection from crime and violence in their home countries. It also participates in the CARA Family Detention Pro Bono Representation and Advocacy Project, working to provide legal representation to these families.

Learn more about this issue and let us know what you are doing to help end family detention at cliniclegal.org/cara. We will gather and organize your responses to help in our efforts to mobilize supporters around the nation.
1: Advocate against the detention of immigrant mothers and children.

Write an op-ed or call your local representative or senator with the message that detention of vulnerable populations such as asylum seekers and families with young children is never appropriate. In 2009, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) largely ceased its practice of detaining families. It closed its largest family detention center after a lawsuit challenged the unacceptable conditions. Yet, in response to large numbers of families arriving in 2014, ICE reinstated the practice. It currently holds mothers and their children in facilities in Dilley and Karnes City, Texas, run by for-profit prison companies, as well as in an ICE-run facility in Berks County, Pennsylvania. There are alternatives to detention that are less costly and far more appropriate for children, including releasing families into the care of local organizations with access to critical social and family case management services and legal counsel.

2: Volunteer for a week or weekend with the CARA Pro Bono Project in Dilley or Karnes, Texas.

You don’t have to be an attorney to volunteer in a Texas family detention center. Attorneys are only necessary for procedures in front of immigration judges. These are just a small part of the volunteer experience. If you speak Spanish, you will be invaluable. If you don’t speak Spanish, perhaps you have computer or social media skills. There are many ways to help as an on-the-ground volunteer. Few experiences get you more in the trenches than this. It is an excellent opportunity to positively affect the lives of detained women and children. You may see an emergency response plan in action, build interviewing skills and learn first-hand about the Obama administration’s family detention policy. This will help you inform your colleagues, friends and family about the barriers women and children encounter in their quest for safety. Past volunteers who were partially accredited BIA representatives used the experience to successfully apply for full-accreditation. Learn about volunteering at at cliniclegal.org/cara.

3: Represent the women on asylum and related-relief before the immigration court.

If you are a fully accredited representative or attorney, you are authorized to represent foreign nationals in immigration court. Whether you have represented many asylum cases or none in this forum, CLINIC’s Training and Legal Support team can assist you. We can provide sample materials, answer specific procedural questions, find you a local mentor and review submissions. If the client was a prior CARA Pro Bono Project client, you would not be starting from scratch. The CARA on-the-ground staff and volunteers will have a file that may include the client’s ICE, Asylum Office, EOIR and medical records as well as affidavits and documents from the home country with translations.

4: Assist the women with change of addresses and pro se changes of venue.

If your agency is not equipped to provide full representation on defensive asylum and related claims, you can still inquire as to the next hearing date, ensuring that the hearing is scheduled in the proper venue given the client’s current residence. If, upon calling the EOIR hotline at 1-800-898-7180, you learn that the hearing is elsewhere, consider assisting with filing a change of address and pro se change of venue. EOIR recently approved a pro se change of venue and CLINIC translated the document into Spanish so the women can fully comprehend the documents they are signing. This is complicated because each time a document is filed with EOIR, the same document must be filed with the corresponding ICE OPLA office. The two different agencies do not share files. This assistance will avoid the women having to travel far to attend hearings or, worse, receiving in absentia removal orders.
5: Accompany women to their ICE-supervised release or ICE ankle monitor check-ins.
Ankle monitors cause the women undue stress, discomfort and stigma. Yet often the women are forced to wear the ankle monitors until they obtain relief from the immigration judge or Board of Immigration Appeals. If your agency is not equipped to provide full representation on defensive asylum claims, you can also assist by accompanying women to their check-ins with the local ICE Field Office or the ICE ankle monitor contractor, GEO BI. There you can advocate for the removal of the ankle monitor. Or, recruit members of the clergy to accompany the women to these appointments. Though ICE may require Form G-28 to allow you to attend the meeting, submitting this form will give you authority to be present and monitor the manner in which in authorities interact with the women. It will not bind you to being present for court representation.

6: Develop a list of referrals to private attorneys willing to take cases low bono.
We know one organization alone cannot meet the demand for legal representation in this asylum-seeking community. Increasing awareness of the need within the private bar and forming relationships with private attorneys who are willing to take cases on a low bono basis is an easy way to expand services and nurture empathy. CLINIC has capacity-building expertise and relationships that we can share with you as you seek to make such connections. For example one way to generate awareness and participation is to host an event during which you screen a documentary on why women and children flee Central America and inviting an immigrant to tell her story afterwards.

7: Educate immigrants and others about the dangers of immigration fraud.
There have been reports of scams targeting the family members of women and children, asking for payment to facilitate the release process. There are also reports of “notarios” charging a lot of money to submit change of address and change of venue forms. There are other bad actors who will try to deceive the families as they await their immigration hearings. It is critical that individuals only seek immigration advice from qualified legal service providers such as a local Catholic Charities agency. These non-profits can also help with reporting fraud to the Federal Trade Commission or the state agency entrusted with investigating attorney impostors. For more information, visit stopnotariofraud.org.

8: Donate to the CARA Pro Bono Project.
We know you want to help. If you are unable to take any of the above actions, you can still show your support by donating to CLINIC’s efforts to end family detention at cliniclegal.org/cara. Your donations will provide much needed-resources that will ensure asylum-seeking mothers and their children are able to access protection.