

# ACTION PLAN

## Obtaining Department of Justice (DOJ) Full Accreditation for

---

(Name(s) of Partial Accredited Representative(s) Here)

### Step 1: Conduct a Preliminary Assessment for Expanding Immigration Services

1. Assess the need/demand for removal and deportation defense in the community and whether or not you are currently meeting the need.
2. Assess the capacity and interest of the immigration program to take on immigration court cases or increase the numbers of these cases for programs that already offer this service.
  - Consider the following: What program and staff resources are required to take (or increase the number of) immigration court cases in your immigration program? How will this impact current immigration services and the program's budget? What program and financial resources are available to expand your immigration services to offer removal and deportation defense?
  - Engage leadership about the importance and need of having (or increasing) removal and deportation defense.
  - Identify one or more partial accredited representative who are qualified and interested in taking immigration court cases.
3. If you are a CLINIC affiliate, contact your [Field Support Coordinator](#) with any questions about expanding services to include immigration court cases.

### Step 2: Understand the Requirements for Full Accreditation

1. Review the [Step-by-Step Guide](#) for information about the requirements for full accreditation and sample documents for the application.
2. If you are a CLINIC affiliate, contact your [Field Support Coordinator](#) with any questions about the requirements or application for full accreditation.
3. Review the documents required for the application. The full accreditation application package consists of:
  - Form EOIR-31A (<https://www.justice.gov/eoir/file/eoir31A/download>)
  - Brief cover letter
  - Resume describing your qualifications
  - Copies of certificates, agendas, and other proof of recent trainings attended
  - Two redacted writing samples demonstrating written trial and appellate advocacy skills (i.e. motions, declarations, or pleadings for court cases assisted with; written assignments completed for court skills training; etc.)
  - Log of experiences and observations at the immigration court

- Two letters of recommendation from: 1) a mentor who is an immigration attorney or fully accredited representative and can vouch for your knowledge and experience with immigration court cases and 2) another attorney or fully accredited representative OR your current supervisor who can vouch for your knowledge and experience

### **Step 3: Secure a Local Mentor (Attorney or Full Accredited Representative)**

1. Identify a local attorney mentor (or full accredited representative mentor) who works on immigration court cases and is willing to help you obtain full accreditation. This will entail allowing you to shadow the mentor, accompany him/her to immigration court, and assist with preparing cases for court (legal research and writing). It is important to have this relationship set up as early as possible to start developing the immigration court experience needed for full accreditation.
2. If you are a CLINIC affiliate and unable to find a local mentor, contact your [Field Support Coordinator](#).

### **Step 4: Create a Timeline for the Process**

1. The Program Director and staff should decide on a timeline for when everything will be completed. The timeline should include time allocated for staff to work on immigration court cases with the attorney mentor and observe master and individual hearings; when to submit the full accreditation application; and when the full accredited representative will start receiving immigration court cases after the application is approved.

### **Step 5: Obtain the Training Required for Full Accreditation**

1. Attend several master calendar hearings at the immigration court, with or without the attorney mentor. Note: Master calendar hearings are open to the public.
2. Work with the attorney mentor on immigration court cases and attend individual hearings, as permitted.
  - Discuss case selection with attorney mentor. Choose cases that will provide you with the opportunity to help draft motions, pleadings, declarations, etc. Note that you will need to submit two immigration court related writing samples for your application.
3. Start a log for all your immigration court experience and observations. It should include the date, location, and description of your immigration court experience or observation.
4. Register and attend formal immigration court trainings and webinars. Find trainings at: <https://cliniclegal.org/> and <https://www.immigrationadvocates.org/>.

### **Step 6: Prepare the Full Accreditation Application**

1. Assemble your full accreditation application. Refer to the list of required of documents for the full accreditation application listed above.
2. Submit the best draft of your full accreditation application package to your [Field Support Coordinator](#) for review, if you are a CLINIC affiliate.
3. Mail your full accreditation application (original) to the DOJ Office of Legal Access Programs (OLAP). Be sure to mail a copy to your U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) District Director. If you are a CLINIC affiliate, email a copy to your [Field Support Coordinator](#).

### **Step 7: Continue Preparing for Expansion of Services**

1. Continue to work with your local attorney mentor and take immigration court trainings to maintain your immigration court knowledge and experience while you wait for a decision from OLAP.
2. Upon approval, inform other service providers, local partners, and the immigrant community in your area that you are expanding your services. If you are a CLINIC affiliate, be sure to inform your [Field Support Coordinator](#).
3. Complete the eRegistry process. All fully accredited representatives who wish to practice before the immigration courts and the BIA must complete the eRegistry process. You can find more information here: <https://www.justice.gov/eoir/internet-immigration-info>.