



# PRO SE ASYLUM MODULE SERIES FOR AFGHANS TOOLKIT

Leveraging Limited Resources to Meet the Needs of  
Your Community: A Guide for Legal Service  
Providers



AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION  
Commission on Immigration



**Welcome Legal Alliance**



AMERICAN **BAR** ASSOCIATION

Commission on Immigration



**Welcome Legal Alliance**

# Pro Se Asylum Module Series for Afghans Toolkit

Leveraging Limited Resources to Meet the Needs of Your Community: A Guide for  
Legal Service Providers

Copyright November 2022

Authors and Contributors:

Emily McCabe, Adonia Simpson, Deena Sharuk, Edgar Alarcon, Alexander Nasserjah, Santiago Palacios, Stephanie Baez, Rachel Zoghlin Bautista, Sara T. Ghadiri, Florence Otaigbe, Nora Salitan, and Jennie Guilfoyle

**This Toolkit is not legal advice. This is for informational purposes only and should not substitute your own research and analysis.**

For more information, please contact [immigrationprobono@american.org](mailto:immigrationprobono@american.org).

## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	5
About this Toolkit .....	5
About the American Bar Association’s Commission on Immigration .....	5
About Welcome.US’s Welcome Legal Alliance .....	5
Format and Participants .....	6
Format .....	6
Participants.....	6
Modules at a Glance .....	8
Tasks to Complete Before the Module Series Begins.....	9
Trainings for Volunteers .....	14
Training Phases Required for All Volunteers .....	14
Law and Procedure Trainings .....	14
Form Preparation Trainings.....	14
Declaration Drafting and Interview Skills Trainings .....	14
Evidence Gathering Trainings.....	15
Additional Non-Attorney Volunteer Training on the Unauthorized Practice of Law .....	15
Training for Immigration Legal Services Organizations .....	16
Resources for Applicants .....	16
The Modules .....	16
Workshop Styles.....	16
Week One: Introduction to Series.....	18
Week Two: Crafting Your Personal Narrative .....	20
Week Three: Finishing the Application .....	23
Week Four: Commons Issues and Form Review.....	25
Week Five: Evidence .....	27
Week Six: Cover Letter and Filing Options.....	31
Week Seven: Post-Filing and the Asylum Interview.....	34
Week Eight: Final Review and Status Check .....	37

Condensing the Module Series and Other Workshop Models to Consider .....	38
Sample Recruitment Emails for Volunteers.....	40
For Pro Bono Attorneys.....	40
For Non-Attorney Volunteers.....	41
Sample Promotional Materials for Applicants.....	42
Email.....	42
Flyer.....	43
Sample Module Series Agreements.....	44
Pro Se Asylum Module Series Applicant Agreement .....	44
Pro Se Asylum Module Series Volunteer Agreement .....	45
Sample Potential Applicant Intake Sheet .....	46
Template Welcome Email for Applicants .....	49
Template Reminder Email for Applicants .....	50
Template Post-Module Email for Applicants .....	51
Sample Cover Letter .....	52
Template Cover Letter .....	54
Sample Index of Exhibits.....	55
Template Index of Exhibits .....	56
Template Sworn Declaration in Support of Asylum .....	57
Template Certificate of Translation .....	58
Sample Certificate of Translation .....	58
Template Explanation of Unavailability of Documents .....	59
Template Missed Asylum Interview and Reschedule Request.....	60
Common Questions Asked in Asylum Interviews – English and Farsi .....	61
Addendum A: Checklist for Best Practices for Remote Series via Zoom .....	67

Addendum B: Fake Fact Pattern and Dialogue Suggestions.....	69
Addendum C: Frequently Asked Questions.....	74
Addendum D: Template Slides .....	84
Week One.....	85
Week Two.....	93
Week Three .....	97
Week Four .....	100
Week Five .....	104
Week Six .....	108
Week Seven.....	112

## Introduction

### About this Toolkit

This Toolkit was created as a “course in a box” that includes outlines, trainings, templates, and samples. The goal is for legal services organizations to implement the eight-week Module Series, specifically designed for asylum-seekers from Afghanistan, to help (1) meet the needs of their communities and (2) encourage pro bono work, all while using minimal organizational resources. The Module Series can be adapted to meet the needs of the communities being served and the resources of the organization. If you would like more information or are interested in adapting this Toolkit for a different population, please email [immigrationprobono@americanbar.org](mailto:immigrationprobono@americanbar.org).

### About the American Bar Association’s Commission on Immigration

Guided by resolutions adopted by the American Bar Association (ABA) House of Delegates, the Commission on Immigration (COI) works to coordinate and strengthen the ABA’s response to legal developments and to address the needs of immigrants and newcomers. The ABA Board of Governors has designated immigration to be a legislative priority of the ABA in every Congress since 1992. The Commission works to achieve its goals to ensure fair treatment and full due process rights for immigrants, asylum-seekers, and refugees within the United States through various projects including South Texas Pro Bono Asylum Representation Project (ProBAR), Immigration Justice Project of San Diego (IJP), the Children’s Immigration Law Academy (CILA), the Detention and LOP Information Hotline, and the COI pro bono, educational, and advocacy efforts.

- [Visit americanbar.org/immigration](https://www.americanbar.org/immigration) to stay up to date on programming and learn about our work at the border and beyond.
- **Donate to [the Commission](#)**, or directly to [CILA](#), [IJP](#), or [ProBAR](#) to advance access to counsel and due process for migrants!
- **Volunteer** as a pro bono attorney, accredited representative, or translator by expressing interest on this Pro Bono interest form.
- **Stay informed** by signing up to receive our [monthly pro bono newsletter](#) highlighting ways to get involved and programming opportunities.
- **Follow the Commission on social media** ([Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#)) to stay informed on programming and ways to help.

### About Welcome.US’s Welcome Legal Alliance

Welcome.US is a new national initiative built to inspire, mobilize, and empower Americans from all corners of the country to welcome and support those seeking refuge here. Welcome.US began with our new Afghan neighbors and has expanded to those fleeing Ukraine, while also building a durable capacity and ability to welcome other newcomers. Welcome.US operates on

the evidence that direct participation with newcomers transforms both the welcomer and those being welcomed. Welcome.US's ultimate ambition is for every American community – and the nation as a whole – to have the resources and willingness to welcome newcomers, now and in the future.

The Welcome Legal Alliance (WLA) is a collaborative project among the American Immigration Council, ABA COI, Human Rights First, VECINA, and Welcome.US to serve Afghan asylum seekers with volunteer legal assistance (both limited and full scope representation) in preparing and filing their applications before the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

## Format and Participants

### Format

The Module Series is designed to occur on a weekly basis with each module scheduled for 90 minutes. It can be performed in-person, remotely, or in a hybrid format. If performed remotely, be sure to use a software or application that offers breakout rooms. For Zoom, see our [Zoom Best Practices Checklist](#). This Series is intended to be led by pro bono attorneys with legal service provider staff attorneys available as necessary. Non-attorney volunteers are encouraged to participate as well and help run the Series. The format requires that the asylum-seekers are highly proficient in the English language (writing, reading, and speaking). In the future, ABA COI and WLA hope to offer guidance on adapting this Series for non-English speakers.

### Participants

The Pro Se Module Series will not be the best fit for all programs, participants, and asylum-seekers. In this Series, there are four categories of participants:

- Applicants:
  - Role: individuals will receive information about asylum law and the process, draft their I-589s and declarations, collect evidence, and complete homework tasks which will culminate in completion and submission of fully documented asylum applications.
  - Limitations: individuals must be somewhat technologically savvy, be proficient in English, be highly literate, have viable claims, and not be subject to any major bars to asylum.
  - Time commitment: 12 class hours, approximately 15 hours outside of class to complete homework assignments and gather materials for their asylum cases.
- Legal services organization staff attorneys:
  - Role: staff attorneys will organize and schedule the Modules, receive and screen asylum-seekers, and set up the logistics (e.g., create the Zoom invites or find donated space to hold the Module Series in-person). Staff attorneys will administer trainings for the volunteers (both attorney and non-attorney). Please

see [Trainings for Volunteers](#) and [Resources for Applicants](#) that staff attorneys are encouraged to use and tailor to their individual Module Series. Staff attorneys may sign limited scope representation agreements with the asylum-seekers. Staff attorneys should be available for advanced questions that may arise during the Modules that the attorney volunteers are not able to answer. Staff attorneys may also need to help review documents.

- Time commitment: one staff attorney should be on call during classes (the individual does not need to attend but should know what is being discussed in the Module that day), approximately 12 hours preparing and facilitating the Module Series.
- Attorney volunteers:
  - Role: attorney volunteers may deliver lectures to the asylum-seekers, lead workshops, review and revise I-589s and supporting documents with the applicants, and answer case-specific questions pursuant to the limited scope agreement. Attorney volunteers may also review homework.
  - Limitations: individuals must agree to comprehensive training on asylum law (or have a background in asylum law prior to participating in the Series) and be comfortable with the limited scope of representation.
  - Time Commitment: 12 class hours, approximately 15 hours outside of class for trainings and class preparation or follow-up.
- Non-attorney volunteers:
  - Role: individuals may interpret, provide minimal translation services, provide technical assistance to the attorneys, help with administrative duties, and assist asylum-seekers in filling out or editing information on their I-589s. Non-attorney volunteers will also review homework. Anyone interested in helping asylum-seekers is encouraged to volunteer and common examples of groups that may be interested include law students, college students, community members, members of local religious institutions, and professional interpreters.
  - Limitations: individuals must be highly literate, agree to comprehensive training, agree to and sign confidentiality agreements, and be comfortable working directly with clients.
  - Time Commitment: 12 class hours, approximately 15 hours outside of class for trainings and class preparation or follow-up.



## Modules at a Glance

<b>Introduction and Form I-589, Part A</b>		
Week 1	<p>Lecture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introductions</li> <li>• Know Your Rights presentation</li> <li>• Overview of asylum</li> <li>• Introduction to evidence gathering</li> <li>• Roadmap of upcoming modules</li> </ul> <p>Workshop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice getting into breakout rooms</li> <li>• Start Part A of the Form I-589, Application for Asylum</li> </ul>	<p>Homework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fill out Part A of the Form I-589</li> <li>• Begin gathering evidence</li> </ul>
<b>Crafting Your Personal Narrative</b>		
Week 2	<p>Lecture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidance on drafting a narrative</li> <li>• Family member information that must be included on the Form I-589</li> </ul> <p>Workshop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Part A of the Form I-589</li> </ul>	<p>Homework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft declaration</li> </ul>
<b>Finishing the Application</b>		
Week 3	<p>Lecture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use declaration draft to fill out Parts B and C of the Form I-589</li> <li>• Parts D, E, F, or G of the Form I-589 should be left blank</li> </ul> <p>Workshop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review declaration draft</li> </ul>	<p>Homework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue/finish declaration drafting</li> <li>• Finish Parts B and C of the Form I-589</li> </ul>
<b>Common Issues and Form I-589 Review</b>		
Week 4	<p>Lecture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TRIG issues</li> <li>• Firm resettlement issues</li> <li>• Persecutor bar issues</li> <li>• Index of exhibits preparation</li> </ul> <p>Workshop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete review of Form I-589</li> </ul>	<p>Homework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gather evidence</li> <li>• Start index of exhibits</li> <li>• Finish declaration</li> </ul>

<b>Evidence</b>		
Week 5	Lecture/workshop <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examine evidence and identify missing pieces</li> <li>• Certificates of Translation</li> </ul> Workshop <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review declaration</li> </ul>	Homework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get evidence translated</li> <li>• Gather additional evidence</li> </ul>
<b>Cover Letter and Filing Options</b>		
Week 6	Lecture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role of cover letters</li> <li>• Filing options               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ By mail (copies, photos, addresses)</li> <li>○ Online</li> </ul> </li> </ul> Workshop <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review index of exhibits</li> <li>• Discuss filing by mail vs. online</li> </ul>	Homework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft cover letter</li> </ul>
<b>Post-Filing and the Asylum Interview</b>		
Week 7	Lecture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What happens after filing Form I-589</li> <li>• Asylum interview process</li> <li>• Tips and strategies for interviews</li> </ul> Workshop <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mock interview</li> </ul>	Homework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finalize and organize asylum application and packet</li> <li>• File asylum application and packet</li> <li>• Refer to VECINA’s interview prep clinic</li> </ul>
<b>Final Review and Status Check</b>		
Week 8	Lecture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thank the volunteers and applicants</li> <li>• Kindly ask that the applicants keep staff informed of the updates in their case</li> </ul> Workshop <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final review of documents</li> <li>• Status check for each applicant</li> </ul>	Homework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• File asylum application and packet</li> </ul>

Tasks to Complete Before the Module Series Begins

The organization will have several action items to complete before they are able to offer the Pro Se Asylum Module Series to asylum-seekers. The organization must make some

programmatic decisions before the Series, and other decisions will depend on the availability of volunteers. The [ABA COI](#) and WLA may be able to recruit volunteers to support the organization's efforts and provide some trainings and resources. The organization should have a plan and vision of how the Module Series will proceed but remain flexible and adaptable in the event that circumstances change. The following is a proposed order of events but keep in mind that many of these activities can happen simultaneously or occur in a different order than provided below.

1. Organization staff should consult with their organization's General Counsel or malpractice provider to inquire to what extent, if at all, their malpractice insurance will cover volunteer attorneys doing this work. This information will inform what kinds of attorneys can participate and how. Relatedly, decide who will complete and sign Part E of the I-589, Preparer Information. Is this something a designated staff attorneys will do or should the volunteer attorney fill out the information and sign?
2. Consider your preferred ratio and class size.
  - Decide the number of attorney volunteers you intend to recruit and how it will impact the size of the class and the availability of the attorney volunteers to assist when needed in the workshops and for final reviews.
    - We recommend for every eight applicants that there is at least one volunteer attorney to ensure each applicant has access to the attorney(s).
  - Decide the number of non-attorney volunteers you intend to recruit and how it will impact the size of the class and one-on-one time available to each applicant.
    - What ratio are you seeking (e.g., 1:1, 1:2, 1:3) that will provide help to a large number of applicants but also ensure the assistance is high quality and thorough?
3. Recruit volunteer attorneys to be the lecturers and preparers/reviewers in the workshops.
  - Decide what roles the volunteer attorneys will fill.
    - Lecturers:
      - Do you want one attorney to lecture alone for all eight weeks?
      - Do you want two (or more) attorneys to split the lectures?
        - ❖ This can be done with two lecturers for each class.
        - ❖ This can be done with lecturers splitting the lecture weeks between them.
        - ❖ This can be done with multiple lecturers by splitting the Module Series into phases: form preparation, declaration drafting, evidence gathering, and interview preparation.
      - Do you want these same attorneys to work directly with the pro se asylum seekers during the workshops?
      - Do you want the attorneys to review homework assignments?
      - Do you want the attorneys to sign Part E of the I-589 or do you want the organization's staff to prepare and sign this section?

- Form preparers and workshop reviewers:
    - Do you want the attorneys to stay at the “front” of the room to be available for questions?
    - Do you want the attorneys to work directly with the pro se asylum-seekers during the workshops?
    - Do you want the attorneys to review homework assignments?
  - Use existing relationships with past interested volunteers and/or build new relationships to identify potential attorney volunteers.
    - Draft your [recruitment email](#) and then tailor it to the individual or firm.
    - For ideas, check out Children’s Immigration Law Academy (CILA)’s numerous resources on [Creative Pro Bono Models](#).
    - Get the word out by enlisting the help of local lawyer organizations, such as ABA COI, the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA), your state’s Bar, and any local or affinity bar associations or lawyer interest groups.
4. Recruit [non-attorney volunteers](#) to assist in the Series.
- Decide what roles they will fill for the Series.
  - Administrative assistance: do you want one or more volunteers to assist in the various administrative tasks that may arise during the Series? Example tasks include:
    - General:
      - Advancing the PowerPoint slides for the lecturer.
      - Collecting and organizing the homework.
      - Reminding applicants about class and homework for the following week.
    - In-person:
      - Setting up the computer and projector.
      - Setting up the PowerPoint.
      - Reorganizing the room to make it conducive to the Series.
      - Handing out resources and copies of the slides at the end of class.
    - Virtual:
      - Ensuring the platform/meeting is scheduled for the correct time, equipped with breakout rooms, and that all applicants and volunteers have the link.
      - Being available by email or phone for any applicants or attorneys that are experiencing technical difficulties.
      - Managing the virtual waiting room for when students and the attorneys arrive.
      - Following up each module with an [email](#) of the PowerPoint slides for the applicants.
  - Preparers and reviewers in the workshops:
    - How involved do you want the non-attorneys in the reviewing and preparing process?
    - Do you want the non-attorneys to review the applicant’s homework and flag any concerns for the volunteer and staff attorneys?

- Use existing relationships with past non-attorney volunteers and/or build new relationships to identify potential volunteers.
    - Draft your [recruitment email](#) and then tailor it to the individual or school.
    - For ideas, check out Children’s Immigration Law Academy (CILA)’s numerous resources on [Creative Pro Bono Models](#).
    - Get the word out by enlisting the help of local law schools, universities, community colleges, religious institutions, and community groups.
5. Consider your preferred training format (live or recorded) and provide [recorded trainings and resources](#) to volunteers.
- Provide volunteers with a [Commitment Agreement](#).
  - Require training for volunteers on substantive law:
    - Immigration 101,
    - Asylum, and
    - Circuit court precedent.
  - Require training for volunteers on asylum procedures:
    - Affirmative asylum process,
    - Local guidance,
    - Location of nearest asylum office, and
    - Any additional information on local asylum office practices or policies (e.g., tendency to interview derivatives first).
  - Require training for volunteers on cultural humility and trauma-informed care.
  - Require training for volunteers on internal processes:
    - Tracking information, and
    - Technical information.
6. Schedule the Module Series and draft the promotional materials, such as a [promotional email](#) and [promotional flyer](#).
- Finalize any last-minute planning needed for the Series.
    - In-person considerations:
      - Secure a space large enough to accommodate all applicants and volunteers and that is available for all eight weeks and there is sufficient availability of more private meeting areas for the workshop.
        - ❖ Is there a local library that might be amenable to pairing up for the Series? Is there a religious institution willing to lend space?
      - Confirm that there is proper hardware available in the room, including computers, desks, and chairs.
      - Draft a COVID plan in case there is a class exposure or if cases rise to a dangerous level in the area.
    - Virtual considerations:
      - Secure a platform that offers both lecture and workshop formats.

- Ensure everyone receives the virtual invitation early and then follow-up with the invitations the day before as well.
    - Prepare and share [promotional materials](#).
      - Whether in-person or virtual, be clear on how you are offering the Module Series in all communications.
7. Recruit asylum-seekers for the Series.
- Evaluate current clients that may be appropriate for the Series.
  - Use existing relationships with community organizations that may have outreach to recent arrivals from Afghanistan and/or build new ones.
    - Get the word about by sharing [promotional materials](#) with the help of community leaders, religious institutions, other local immigration organizations, and social services organizations that may serve the Afghan population in your area.
  - Provide a simple yet informative registration link.
    - The information provided on the registration link should inform interested individuals of the following:
      - Structure of the Series.
      - Commitment required on the applicant's part.
      - Dates of the Modules.
      - Individuals will be contacted and screened by the organization.
      - A note that not all interested individuals will be eligible for this Module Series and space is limited.
8. [Screen](#) potential applicants.
- Only straightforward cases are a good fit for this Series.
  - If any of the following apply, it is likely best to refer the asylum-seeker to an immigration attorney or legal services organization for full representation:
    - Complicated terrorism-related inadmissibility grounds (TRIG) facts.
    - Potential persecutor bar.
    - Currently or previously in removal/deportation proceedings.
  - Applicants should possess:
    - Strong ability to speak and understand English.
    - Strong ability to read and write in English.
    - The above could be relaxed for in-person workshops with available interpretation.
  - If the Module Series is being held virtually, asylum-seekers should be available to sign on each week from somewhere that is private and quiet.
  - Provide applicants with a [Commitment Agreement](#).

## Trainings for Volunteers

### Training Phases Required for All Volunteers

There are four distinct phases to for training the volunteers:

- Law and procedure,
- Form preparation,
- Declaration drafting and interview skills, and
- Evidence gathering.

### Law and Procedure Trainings

Attorneys and non-attorney volunteers will need substantive training on asylum (both the law and procedures). The following are some great resources to offer volunteers:

- [Asylum Toolkit for Pro Bono Attorneys](#) (HIAS and ABA COI Nov. 2022)
- [Asylum Toolkit for Pro Se Afghan Applicants](#) (HIAS and ABA COI Mar. 2022)
- Toolkit in [Dari](#)
- Toolkit in [Pashto](#)
- Asylum law and procedure for individuals from Afghanistan
- [Asylum for Afghan Clients 101](#) (HIAS and ABA COI) (Jan. 2022)
- [Asylum for Afghans 201: Bars to Asylum and Common Concerns](#) (HIAS and ABA COI) (Mar. 2022)
  - Companion Bars to Asylum Question & Answers (HIAS)
- [Asylum for Afghans 202: Preparing for Afghan Asylum Interviews](#) (HIAS and ABA COI) (Mar. 2022)
- [Asylum for Afghans: Updates and Lessons Learned](#) (HIAS and ABA COI) (Aug. 2022)
- [Asylum for Afghans 202: the Asylum Interview](#) (HIAS and ABA COI) (Mar. 2022)
- [Representing Afghan Nationals in Affirmative Asylum Proceedings](#) (VECINA)

### Form Preparation Trainings

- Form and instructions
- [I-589, Application for Asylum and Withholding of Removal](#) (USCIS)
  - Check here for the latest I-589 edition and instructions.

### Declaration Drafting and Interview Skills Trainings

- [Cultural Humility and How it Applies to Lawyers Working with Afghan Clients](#) (HIAS and ABA COI) (Feb. 2022)
- [An Introduction to Storytelling in the Asylum Context](#) (VECINA)
- [Asylum 102: Working with Clients and Drafting an Effective Affidavit](#) (HIAS)

- [Practice Guide for Statements as Evidence: Drafting and Editing Declarations, Affidavits, and Letters](#) (ABA COI) (Jun. 2022)
- [Companion recorded training](#) (ABA COI) (Jun. 2022)

## Evidence Gathering Trainings

It is also critical to remind volunteers that the Afghan asylum process is new and changes are frequent. Keep the volunteers informed so they may have the most up-to-date information, ask questions, and understand it in order to address questions or concerns that may arise during the Series. A good technique for this to keep a running list of [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#).

## Additional Non-Attorney Volunteer Training on the Unauthorized Practice of Law

It is important to stress with non-attorney volunteers the seriousness of engaging in the unauthorized practice of law. The following is a thorough and succinct advisal.

The unauthorized practice of law is a dangerous endeavor that threatens to defraud immigrant applicants and respondents and deny them access to immigration benefits and relief for which they qualify. It is important to educate applicants on the risks of working with *notarios*, or individuals in the U.S. who falsely represent themselves as qualified to offer legal advice or services regarding immigration or other matters of law.<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, because this course involves volunteers, comprised of both attorneys and non-attorneys, it is imperative that all volunteers safeguard against inadvertently engaging in the unauthorized practice of law. All volunteers (both attorneys and non-attorneys) must make it clear that they are not representing the applicants and clarify their roles (e.g., educator, technician, etc.). Non-attorney volunteers are not permitted to offer legal advice. Examples of legal advice include but are not limited to providing analysis of the strength of a legal case, applying the facts to the law, and suggesting a theory for a case. Attorneys can and should provide generalized legal orientation regarding asylum and the navigation of the application process. In one's discretion, an attorney may offer legal analysis and advice in a particular case, for example, during workshops, but attorneys should be clear with applicants about the nature of the advice and that they are not representing the participant. It is worth noting that offering legal advice without being clear about one's role and the nature of the advice has the possibility of opening the attorney up to the implications of a lawyer-client relationship including liability.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> For more information on Notario Fraud see: the ABA Commission on Immigration's guidance "About Notario Fraud" at:

[https://www.americanbar.org/groups/public\\_interest/immigration/projects\\_initiatives/fightnotariofraud/about\\_notario\\_fraud/](https://www.americanbar.org/groups/public_interest/immigration/projects_initiatives/fightnotariofraud/about_notario_fraud/)

<sup>2</sup> For more information on the Unauthorized Practice of Law (UPL) see: the ABA Model Rules for Professional Conduct Rules 5.5 and 5.3 available at:



## Training for Immigration Legal Services Organizations

These resources are being developed presently. Please check back soon for future updates.

### Resources for Applicants

Applicants will greatly benefit if provided with information to read on their own time with samples and templates, many of which are included in this Toolkit. These materials will help the applicants understand the lectures better, leading to better discussions and stronger cases, and promoting active participation in the workshops. The following are great additional resources to provide applicants:

- [Asylum Toolkit for Pro Se Afghan Applicants](#) (HIAS and ABA COI Mar. 2022)
  - Toolkit in [Dari](#)
  - Toolkit in [Pashto](#)
- *We suggest providing this in the [welcome email](#) and [weekly reminder emails](#), directing the clients to the exact page or section relevant.*
- [Interview Prep for Asylum Applicants from Afghanistan](#) (VECINA)
- [Afghan Operation Allies Welcome \(OAW\) Parolee Asylum-Related Frequently Asked Questions](#) (USCIS Jun. 2022)
- [Frequently Asked Questions: EADs for Afghans](#) (CLINIC Nov. 3, 2022)

### The Modules

This Series can be modified depending on the needs of the applicants and available volunteers.

### Workshop Styles

In advance of the Series, consider logistics for how to run the workshops, keeping in mind that asylum-seeker privacy should be a paramount concern.

- Asylum adjudications are kept confidential given the highly sensitive nature of the claims and any dangers that exist for witnesses and potential derivatives abroad. It is imperative to foster an environment in which asylum-seekers' identities and accounts are, to the extent possible, kept private. Consider encouraging applicants to only use pseudonyms while discussing themselves, witnesses, or elements of their cases in the presence of other applicants of the class. Furthermore, it is imperative to highlight the commitment to confidentiality held by each volunteer and attorney as well as the importance of using accurate information in any filings to the U.S. government.

---

[https://www.americanbar.org/groups/professional\\_responsibility/publications/model\\_rules\\_of\\_professional\\_conduct/model\\_rules\\_of\\_professional\\_conduct\\_table\\_of\\_contents/](https://www.americanbar.org/groups/professional_responsibility/publications/model_rules_of_professional_conduct/model_rules_of_professional_conduct_table_of_contents/) as well as your local jurisdiction's professional conduct rules with respect to UPL.

Logistical options for workshop (occurring after group lecture):

- Option 1: In-person workshop
  - Ideally, the space provided for the workshop has multiple rooms. After the weekly group lecture has concluded, asylum-seekers wait in their seats in the main room to start on their homework. Volunteers will work with asylum-seekers one-on-one in separate rooms to ensure privacy.
  - The asylum-seekers remain in their seats and the volunteers take asylum-seekers one at a time to a corner of the room to review and discuss the homework or topic of the week. Volunteers must ensure the asylum-seeker's privacy while working with them.
  - The class is asked to wait outside (or in a separate room), and the volunteers work with the asylum-seekers one at a time in separate parts of the room. Volunteers must ensure the asylum-seeker's privacy while working with them.
- Option 2: Virtual workshop (due to the nature of virtual meetings, it would be best to decide on a plan before the start of class)
  - After the weekly group lecture has concluded, the applicants are each sent to a breakout room and the volunteers alternate going into the breakout rooms.
  - The class remains in the lobby and the volunteers are each in a separate breakout room with one volunteer stationed in the lobby. The applicants are sent, one at a time, to the different breakout rooms.
  - For virtual workshops, it is advised to have a separate chat (e.g., WhatsApp, Teams Chat) for non-attorney volunteers to request assistance from the volunteer attorneys. Remind volunteers to omit any identifying information in the request for help if it is going into the shared chat (e.g., "legal question in breakout room 3" as opposed to "Sam was born in Jordan, is this an issue for their case?").
- Option 3: Hybrid workshop
  - A mix of the above may be a great option when the participants (applicants and volunteers) are in various locations. For example, the applicants and organization might be located in Southwest Tennessee, but the volunteers are in New York City, Houston, and Chicago.
  - For the hybrid option, consider partnering with a local public library to reserve a room each week so that applicants can have access to a computer and a secure internet connection during class.

Attorney and non-attorney options for workshops:

- Option 1: Non-Attorney Volunteer Led
  - In-person: Non-attorney volunteers will work directly with the applicants one-on-one, while attorney volunteers are available at the front of the room to be called over by the non-attorney volunteers for any issues or concerns. Volunteers must ensure that the physical space used preserves the applicant's privacy from others in the room.
  - Virtual: Non-attorney volunteers will work directly with the applicants one-on-one in private breakout rooms. Attorneys are available in the lobby or main

room of the virtual platform and non-attorney volunteers can call on them for any issues or concerns. Remind volunteers to omit any identifying information in the request for help if it is going into the shared chat (e.g., “legal question in breakout room 3” as opposed to “Sam was born in Jordan, is this an issue for their case?”).

- Option 2: Attorney and Non-Volunteers Together
  - In-person: Non-attorney volunteers and attorney volunteers work together with applicants one-on-one. If exploring this option, attorneys still must be available for questions and concerns so be sure to create a system for non-attorney volunteers to request assistance from the attorneys without interfering with the one-on-one time between the attorney and the applicant they are assisting. Volunteers must ensure the applicant’s privacy while working with them.
  - Virtual: Non-attorney volunteers and attorneys work together directly with applicants. If exploring this option, the attorneys still must be available for questions and concerns so be sure to create a system for non-attorney volunteers to request assistance from the attorneys without interfering with the one-on-one time between the attorney and the applicant they are assisting. Remind volunteers to omit any identifying information in the request for help if it is going into the shared chat (e.g., “legal question in breakout room 3” as opposed to “Sam was born in Jordan, is this an issue for their case?”).

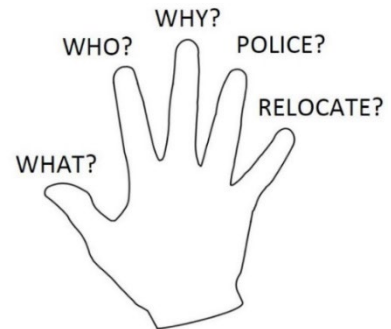
## Week One: Introduction to Series

### Lecture

The lecture for Week One serves as an introduction the Series.

- Introduce the Module Series (estimated 30 minutes).
  - Welcome everyone to the class.
  - Lecturer(s) introduce themselves.
  - Non-attorney volunteers should introduce themselves.
  - As provided in the [Template Slides](#), use the Choose a Name slide to foster community in the group while respecting privacy. Ask the applicants to choose a name from the list and introduce themselves to the class with that name. The name they choose in Week One will be the name used in every group setting for all eight weeks. Make clear to the applicants that when in one-on-one settings (such as the workshops), the volunteer will use the individual’s actual name.
  - Explain the roles of those involved and the goals of the Series.
    - Lecturers and volunteers are not applicants’ lawyers.
    - Lecturers and volunteers cannot answer specifics about a case in group settings (save them for the breakout rooms).
    - Lecturers and volunteers are here to help explain and guide applicants through the process.

- Present Know Your Rights (KYR) (estimated 15 minutes).
  - Explain that applicants may be eligible for multiple forms of relief and that most types of relief allow the applicant to hold more than one status (e.g., can be a TPS holder and asylum-seeker).
  - Address the Afghan Adjustment Act and how it is not yet law and individuals should seek other immigration benefits now.
  - Briefly address diverse benefits and forms of relief, including:
    - Operation Allies Welcome Parole,
    - Temporary Protected Status,
    - Special Immigrant Visa,
    - Family-based,
    - U Visa,
    - T Visa, and
    - Special Immigrant Juvenile Status.
  - Make the KYR part of class interactive by quizzing the applicants (and volunteers!) on immigration law basics by asking the class or using the poll features.
    - True or **false**: I can only ever apply for one type of case with immigration.
- Overview asylum law (15 minutes).
  - Persecution,
  - Nexus,
  - Protected grounds,
  - One-year filing deadline,
  - Hand Model (right),<sup>3</sup> and
  - Quiz the applicants (and volunteers!) on asylum basics by asking the class or using the poll features.
    - True or **false**: I can only get asylum based on my political opinion.
    - True, false, or **depends**: I am no longer able to apply for asylum because I have been here more than one year.
- Discuss evidence gathering (estimated 5 minutes).
  - Advise applicants to start collecting evidence now.
  - Advise applicants to start obtaining translations now.
    - Explain that any document not in English must be accompanied by an English translation and include a [Certificate of Translation](#).
    - Translator must be a non-party to the case, over age 18, and who is able to translate from the original language competently and faithfully into English.



<sup>3</sup> The “hand model” was originally created by Al Otro Lado.

- Provide examples of what to compile as evidence.
- Quiz the applicants (and volunteers!) on evidence gathering by asking the class or using the poll features.
  - True or **false**: A professional, paid translator must translate my documents.
  - **True** or false: I should start gathering evidence now.
- Do a visual walk through of Part A of the I-589 and address common issues, which include:
  - Listing all names used (even if a typo on a government form),
  - Being honest about gaps in employment history, and
  - Being honest about not knowing exact addresses.
- Provide a roadmap of remaining modules (estimated 5 minutes).
- Assign homework (estimated 5 minutes).
  - Applicants should fill out Part A of the I-589.
    - Show the applicants where Part A begins and ends by screen sharing.
  - Applicants should begin gathering evidence.
  - Volunteers should provide applicants with a [sample](#) and [template](#) Certificate of Translation.

### Template Slides

Template PowerPoint slides are available [here](#).

### Workshop

Use the remainder of Week One’s time to practice the workshop routine and start Part A of the Form I-589. If virtual, practice utilizing the breakout room features of the platform. If in-person, show individuals the different rooms (or parts of rooms) that will be used during the workshops. Once applicants understand the process, spend a few minutes reviewing where to find the Form I-589 on the USCIS website and what section they should complete by next week.

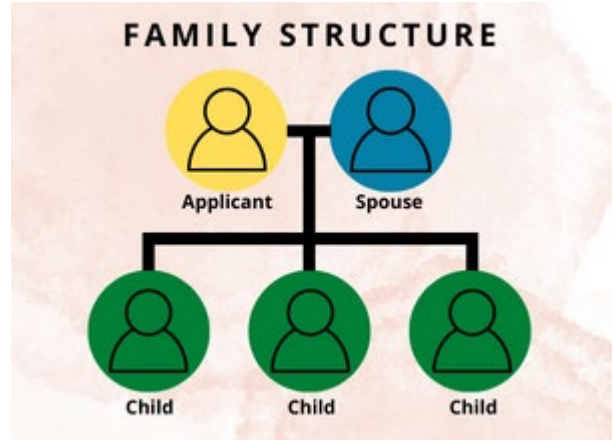
## Week Two: Crafting Your Personal Narrative

### Lecture

The lecture for Week Two addresses responding to questions about family members and drafting the personal statement.

1. Explain how applicants should respond to questions about family members on the Form I-589 (estimated 15 minutes).
  - a. What does “family” mean on the Form I-589?

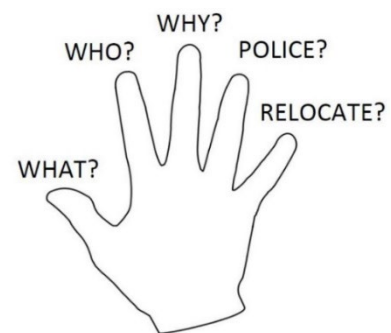
- i. Family generally refers to the applicant, applicant’s spouse, and applicant’s children, unless otherwise indicated on the form. For example, many times the form will say “family members, including sibling and parents.”
- ii. Sometimes USCIS lists who they mean by family members and sometimes they do not. If the specific relation is included



in the question, use that (e.g., Part C, Question 1: have you, your spouse, your child(ren), your parents or your siblings ever applied to the U.S. government for refugee status, asylum, or withholding of removal?).

- b. How to handle name variations for family members?
    - i. This is not uncommon, especially for those whose native language does not use the Roman alphabet. Explain in the Supplement B and asylum interview that the family member’s legal name (e.g., the name on their passport) is spelled slightly different than how the applicant spells their name. If the asylum officer has a question about the different spellings, they will ask.
  - c. What if applicant does not know the answer?
    - i. If the applicant does not know an answer to a question, they should not guess. Instead, they should simply admit that they do not know. If the reason they do not know is directly related to the claim, then the applicant should be prepared to explain that. For example, in an intimate partner violence case, a spouse may not know their partner’s exact immigration history or current location. The applicant can indicate on the form and in the declaration that they do not know and that the reason they do not know relates to the basis of the claim.
  - d. Consider a visual walk through of the related questions on the Form I-589 and common issues.
2. Guide applicants on how to write a persuasive and easy-to-read narrative while presenting the information in a trauma-informed and culturally humble way (estimated 15 minutes).
- a. Applicants should only include information they know to be true or that they honestly believe based on what they know. All information provided should be relevant to the case. See [Template Declaration in Support of Asylum](#). General tips to share with applicants include:
    - i. Provide some background. Education, jobs, family structure, birthplace, and current age are all common things to address in a declaration.
    - ii. Be honest. There is no benefit and only consequences to lying.

- iii. Be specific. For example, saying “I think the mayor will find me and torture me like he did to my brother” is much more powerful than “I think I will be in danger.”
      - iv. Be open. Explain not just what happened but its impact. For example, if an individual was attacked on the street at night, that person may still be afraid to go outside at night.
      - v. Remember anything mentioned in the application, declaration, and interview is confidential. The asylum office will not share this information with any foreign government or any individual.
    - b. Applicants should be aware that it may take a few drafts before the declaration is ready. The declaration brought to the next class should be a final draft.
      - i. For some, the first draft may be therapeutic, and the information may be flowing and come naturally. For others, the first draft may be very difficult to start or finish. Both of these responses are natural and okay. Tell applicants to recognize how they are feeling and if they need to reach out for emotional support, do so.
      - ii. There will likely be information that is relevant to the legal case that must be explored further.
      - iii. There will probably be information that is not relevant for the asylum case that should be taken out of the declaration. This does not mean the information is not important and is not intended to minimize the applicant’s experiences and feelings. For applicants that are particularly verbose, suggest that they keep their first draft declaration in a safe spot and maybe return to it one day to transform it into a novel!
      - iv. Explain to applicants to focus on quality not quantity of the declaration and that the declaration should cover each of the five aspects of the Hand Model.
    - c. Utilize the Hand Model when deciding what to write in the declaration.
      - i. Each of the five questions (who, what, why, police, relocate) should be addressed in the declaration.
      - ii. The Hand Model can also assist in determining what kind of evidence might be probative.
3. Assign homework (estimated 5 minutes).
- a. Applicants should draft their declarations.
  - b. Volunteers should provide a [Template Declaration](#) to each applicant to help guide them.
  - c. Volunteers should direct applicants to pages 20-24 (Sample Annotated Declaration in Support of Asylum) of the [Asylum Toolkit for Pro Se Afghan Applicants](#) (HIAS and ABA COI Mar. 2022).
    - i. Toolkit in [Dari](#)
    - ii. Toolkit in [Pashto](#)



## Template Slides

Template PowerPoint slides are available [here](#).

## Workshop

Week Two will feature a workshop to review Part A of the Form I-589 (Week One's homework assignment). The exact structure of the workshop will depend on the class size and the number of volunteers, but the goal is to have one-on-one time to review each applicant's Form I-589 Part A. While applicants wait for assistance, they can begin their homework.

Use Week Two's workshop as an opportunity to test out a workshop model as the substance of the workshop is generally straightforward.

## Week Three: Finishing the Application

### Lecture

The lecture for Week Three tackles finishing the application.

1. Instruct applicants on how to use their declarations to complete the Form I-589 (estimated 10 minutes).
  - a. Parts B and C
    - i. Instruct applicants to use their declaration to help fill out Parts B and C of the I-589.
    - ii. The declaration does not to be completely finalized to start work on Parts B and C.
  - b. Part D
    - i. Instruct applicants to collect one passport-style photograph for Part D.
    - ii. Instruct applicants not to sign Part D yet.
  - c. Part E
    - i. Instruct applicants not to fill out Part E and explain that they will receive a completed Part E form signed by either the organization staff attorney or the lecturer, as decided by the organization.
  - d. Parts F and G
    - i. Instruct applicants to leave Parts F and G blank.
  - e. Consider a visual review of the application and address common issues and questions.
2. Discuss the various protected grounds (estimated 15 minutes).
  - a. Protected grounds: the reason the persecutor harmed or seeks to harm the applicant is because of something in the applicant that they cannot change or should not have to change.



- i. Race: the term race is interpreted to encompass “all kinds of ethnic groups that are referred to as ‘races’ in common usage.” May overlap with nationality.
    - 1. For example: Lilian fears return to her country because she is Afro-Latina; Lilian identifies and is perceived by society as a Black woman.
  - ii. Religion: may be categorized as 1) a belief, 2) an identity, and 3) a way of life. In a famous case, a woman won asylum because she was viewed by society as not traditional enough in her religious beliefs (*Matter of S-A-*, 22 I&N Dec. 1328 (BIA 2000)).
    - 1. For example: Anh fears return to her country that is predominantly Christian due to her recent conversion to Buddhism.
  - iii. Nationality: a person’s citizenship but also their ethnic or linguistic group, including tribes and indigenous groups. May overlap with race.
    - 1. For example: Naeku fears return because he is a member of the Maasai tribe.
  - iv. Political opinion: behavior motivated by an ideal or conviction of sorts.
    - 1. For example: Billy fears return because he supports the Green Party (an unpopular political party).
  - v. Particular social group: a group that is composed of members who share a common characteristic, a group that has a clear parameters of who is a member, and a group that is socially distinct in the society (*Matter of M-E-V-G-*, 26 I&N Dec. 227, 237 (BIA 2014); *Matter of W-G-R-*, 16 I&N Dec. 208 (BIA 2014)).
    - 1. For example: Ping fears return because of his relation to his wife.
  - b. Explain how any of the protected grounds can also be imputed to the applicant (meaning that even if the ground does not apply to the applicant, if the persecutor *thinks* the protected ground applies to the applicant that is sufficient).
    - i. For example: Charles’ father was a popular leader of the local labor union. Although Charles never attended any union meetings and is privately neutral about the labor union, the local mayor believes Charles is going to continue his father’s legacy and Charles fears persecution if he returns.
3. Assign homework (estimated 5 minutes).
- a. Applicants should try to finish their declarations.
  - b. Applicants should finish Parts B and C of the Form I-589.

### Template Slides

Template PowerPoint slides are available [here](#).

## Workshop

The majority of Week Three will be in a workshop format. Volunteers should review the applicant's declarations and be well versed in [trauma-informed and cultural humility best practices](#). Additionally, volunteers should brainstorm about the potential protected grounds relevant to the applicant's case (e.g., race, religion, nationality, political opinion, and particular social group). The non-attorney volunteers should discuss the protected grounds with the attorney volunteers, who can help explain the protected grounds to the applicants. Applicants waiting for assistance can start their homework.

If there is not enough time or volunteers to finish reviewing the declaration during the workshop, try to finish the additional review within 48 hours of class, so the applicants have enough time to edit the declarations and use them to answer Parts B and C.

## Week Four: Commons Issues and Form Review

### Lecture

The lecture for Week Four will address common issues in Afghan asylum cases.

1. Explain common inadmissibility issues and asylum bars (20 minutes).
  - a. Inadmissibility: when there is something in an applicant's history that USCIS may dislike or need more information on before USCIS can decide the applicant's case. There are many kinds of inadmissibility factors, including criminal convictions and unlawful entries into the United States.
  - b. Firm resettlement
    - i. Generally, a person is not able to receive asylum if they traveled to a third country where the person holds lawful permanent/renewable status or applied for lawful permanent/renewable status.
    - ii. Note: layovers or stops between evacuation and arrival to the United States are typically not a problem.
  - c. Persecutor bar
    - i. Generally, a person is not able to receive asylum if the person has participated in harming others on account of their race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group.
    - ii. Individuals who served in the military will be subject to additional questions at their interviews (which add significant time).
  - d. Terrorism-related inadmissibility grounds (TRIG)
    - i. Generally, someone who participated in terrorist activities or supports terrorist groups or activities is not eligible to receive asylum.
      1. Support is broad: includes giving money, providing goods and services, and public displays of support (e.g., social media post).
    - ii. TRIG exemptions for Afghan cases:

1. Afghan Civil Servants: certain applicants employed as civil servants under Taliban rule, specifically, at any time from Sept. 27, 1996, through Dec. 21, 2001, or on or after Aug. 15, 2021.
2. Afghan Allies: Afghans who supported U.S. military interests by fighting or supporting those who fought in the resistance movement against the Taliban, and Afghans who took part in the conflict against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. The exemption does not include those who targeted non-combatants or U.S. interests, committed certain types of human rights violations or abuses, or acted on behalf of a designated terrorist organization.
3. Insignificant or Limited Material Support: individuals who provided insignificant or certain limited material support to a designated terrorist organization.
  - a. These include instances in which the support is incidental to a routine social or commercial transaction; incidental to certain humanitarian assistance; provided in response to a reasonably perceived threat of physical or economic harm, restraint, or serious harassment; and where the support provided is considered minimal and inconsequential.
  - b. This may include paying a small amount to pass through a Taliban checkpoint to flee Afghanistan; paying the Taliban for utilities such as electricity or the telephone; serving the Taliban at one's place of business when to refuse would jeopardize one's livelihood; or paying a fee to obtain a passport or other identity documents necessary to flee Afghanistan.
  - c. This exemption does not include individuals who share the goals or ideology of the Taliban, provided preferential treatment to them or who intended to support the Taliban through their activities.
- iii. Any interactions with the Taliban will be scrutinized by the asylum office. Be prepared to explain the circumstances in the declaration and interview.
2. Describe how to identify and organize documents for the [Index of Exhibits](#) (estimated 5 minutes).
  - a. Goal: to list the applicant's attached evidence in a clear and organized manner (as opposed to the goal of the declaration, which is to tell the applicant's story).
  - b. The index is where all required evidence (such as the applicant's passport, I-94, etc.) and supporting evidence is organized and listed. Preview that next week's lecture focuses on evidence in more detail.
3. Assign homework (estimated 5 minutes).
  - a. Applicants should finish gathering evidence.

- b. Applicants should start making a list (an index) of the documents they are planning to submit with the application.
- c. Volunteers should provide applicants with a [sample](#) and [template](#) of the Index of Exhibits.

### Template Slides

Template PowerPoint slides are available [here](#).

### Workshop

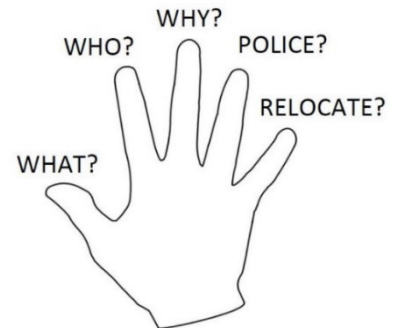
The majority of Week Four will be in a workshop format. Volunteers will review the applicants' Forms I-589 in their entirety. Time permitting, the attorneys should review the Forms I-589 during this workshop after the non-attorney volunteer has finished their review.

## Week Five: Evidence

### Lecture

The lecture in Week Five will focus on examining evidence and identifying missing pieces.

1. Review the Hand Model (estimated 5 minutes).
  - a. Is there at least one piece of evidence that addresses each of the five facets?
  - b. Remember the declaration is a piece of evidence that should prove all five pieces.
2. Explain the role of evidence in asylum cases (estimated 10 minutes).
  - a. Standard: fundamental fairness.
  - b. Evidence should be authentic (unchanged and unedited) and relevant.
  - c. Explain identity vs. supporting evidence.
    - i. Examples of identity evidence:
      1. Birth record,
      2. Passport (each page),
      3. I-94,
      4. Marriage certificate, if applicable,
      5. Proof of termination of any prior marriages, if applicable, and
      6. Arrest records.
    - ii. Examples of supporting evidence:
      1. Medical reports,
      2. Police reports,
      3. Affidavits from derivatives, friends, colleagues, or family members,
      4. Affidavits from witnesses,
      5. International reports, and



- 6. News reports.
- 7. Keep it clear and try not to be duplicative
- iii. Volunteers should know the hierarchy of evidence.
- d. Explain contradictory evidence and what to do if evidence is not available or original evidence is not available (e.g., screenshots are okay to use).
- 3. Provide examples to apply the evidence lesson (estimated 20 minutes).
  - a. Pedro's case is based on his religion. What types of evidence can help prove his religion? And what elements might the evidence prove?
    - i. Letters from friends and family
      - 1. May support the "what" element if they witnessed harm against Pedro, if they experienced harm themselves, or if they have heard of others experiencing similar harm.
      - 2. May support the "who" element if they witnessed harm against Pedro or others in similar situations.
      - 3. May support the "why" element by confirming Pedro's religion and explaining that they have seen a pattern or practice of people of this religion being targeted.
      - 4. May support the "police" element if they accompanied Pedro to the police or help explain why he did not or could not go to the police.
      - 5. May support the "relocate" element by explaining why Pedro would not be safe in another part of the country.
    - ii. Letters from religious leaders (e.g., imam, rabbi, priest)
      - 1. May support the "what" element if they experienced or have heard of others experiencing similar harm.
      - 2. May support the "why" element by confirming Pedro's religion and explaining that they have seen a pattern or practice of people of this religion being targeted by the same people targeting Pedro.
    - iii. Any religious certificates (e.g., baptism, conversion)
      - 1. May support the "why" element by confirming Pedro's religion.
    - iv. News articles
      - 1. May support the "what" element with recent articles of people in similar situations being harmed.
      - 2. May support the "who" element with recent articles referencing the known perpetrators of this harm.
      - 3. May support the "why" element by showing a pattern and practice of harm against people of this religion, given recent articles.
      - 4. May support the "police" element by highlighting articles that state the government is the perpetrator or is unable or unwilling to control the perpetrators.
      - 5. May support the "relocate" element with recent articles showing that no part of the country is safe from the perpetrators, or they

have an intricate network of information (e.g., spies, communication channels, check points).

v. Reports

1. May support the “what” element with recent reports of people in similar situations being harmed.
  2. May support the “who” element with recent reports referencing the known perpetrators of this harm.
  3. May support the “why” element by showing a pattern and practice of harm against people of this religion, given reports articles.
  4. May support the “police” element by highlighting reports that the government is the perpetrator or is unable or unwilling to control the perpetrators (e.g., government supports the perpetrators, government is corrupt).
  5. May support the “relocate” element with recent reports showing that no part of the country is safe from the perpetrators, or they have an intricate network of information (e.g., spies, communication channels, check points).
- b. Helga’s case is based on her relationship to her mother. What types of evidence can help prove her relationship? And what elements might the evidence prove?
- i. Birth certificate
    1. May support the “why” element demonstrating that Helga’s mother is legally recognized as such.
  - ii. Family photos
    1. May support the “why” element demonstrating that Helga and her mother have a close relationship and others in the community saw them together at various functions.
  - iii. Letters from friends and family
    1. May support the “what” element if they witnessed harm against Helga, if they experienced harm themselves, or if they have heard of others experiencing similar harm.
    2. May support the “who” element if they witnessed harm against Helga or others in similar situations.
    3. May support the “why” element by confirming Helga’s relationship with her mother and explaining that they have seen a pattern or practice of family members being targeted.
    4. May support the “police” element if they accompanied Helga to the police or help explain why she did not or could not go to the police.
    5. May support the “relocate” element by explaining why Helga would not be safe in another part of the country.
  - iv. News articles
    1. May support the “what” element with recent articles of people in similar situations being harmed.

2. May support the “who” element with recent articles referencing the known perpetrators of this harm.
3. May support the “why” element by showing a pattern and practice of harm against family members, given recent articles.
4. May support the “police” element by highlighting articles that state the government is the perpetrator or is unable or unwilling to control the perpetrators.
5. May support the “relocate” element with recent articles showing that no part of the country is safe from the perpetrators, or they have an intricate network of information (e.g., spies, communication channels, check points).

v. Reports

1. May support the “what” element with recent reports of people in similar situations being harmed.
2. May support the “who” element with recent reports referencing the known perpetrators of this harm.
3. May support the “why” element by showing a pattern and practice of harm against family members, given reports articles.
4. May support the “police” element by highlighting reports that the government is the perpetrator or is unable or unwilling to control the perpetrators.
5. May support the “relocate” element with recent reports showing that no part of the country is safe from the perpetrators, or they have an intricate network of information (e.g., spies, communication channels, check points).

4. Assign homework (estimated 5 minutes).

- a. Applicants should get evidence translated.
- b. Applicants should identify and gather additional evidence.
- c. Volunteers should provide applicants with a [sample](#) and [template](#) Certificate of Translation. Volunteers should also provide applicants with a [Template Explanation of Unavailability of Documents](#).

**Template Slides**

Template PowerPoint slides are available [here](#).

**Workshop**

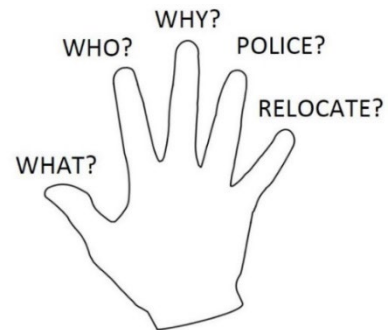
The workshop for Week Five focuses on reviewing the applicants’ declarations. This time can also be used for reviewing the I-589.

## Week Six: Cover Letter and Filing Options

### Lecture

The lecture for Week Six concerns the last steps before filing the application and the filing process.

1. Describe the role of [cover letters](#) in asylum cases.
  - a. Cover letters are intended to guide the asylum officer through the documents and information provided.
  - b. Cover letters should be short in length – remember there is an index.
  - c. Cover letters should state the following information:
    - i. Principal applicant’s name and A number,
    - ii. Derivative names and A numbers, and
    - iii. Quick summary of the case in 1-3 sentences.
      1. Use the Hand Model as a guide.
2. Explain the different filing options and procedures.
  - a. Filing via online steps:
    - i. Create a myUSCIS account.
    - ii. Click “add form” and select “I-589.”
    - iii. Complete the form.
      1. Note: there is no way to import a completed I-589, instead the applicant will have to manually enter the information for each question.
      2. Know that some of the form structure is slightly different for the online form and there are some hiccups.
      3. Additionally, the applicant will have to upload each type of evidence individually (e.g., I-94 copy, full passport copy).
    - iv. Advise the applicants to download the form before submitting to USCIS and download the form after submitting it to USCIS for their records. The two forms will look very different from each other.
    - v. Advise the applicants to sign up to receive notifications (by email and/or text message) for any updates on the case.
  - b. Filing by mail steps:
    - i. Prepare the filing packet.
      1. Attach the passport-style photo to page 9 of the I-589.
      2. Organize the filing packet in the following order:
        - a. Cover letter,
        - b. Index,
        - c. Form I-589,
        - d. Principal applicant’s declaration,
        - e. Identity documents, and
        - f. Supporting evidence.





- ii. Double check that each signature page is signed and dated, such as:
  - 1. Cover letter,
  - 2. Declaration(s),
  - 3. Form I-589 (page 9, and any addendum pages), and
  - 4. Certificates of Translation.
- iii. Once the filing packet is complete, make the following copies of the original filing packet:
  - 1. One copy that will be sent to USCIS (in addition to the original).
  - 2. One additional copy of the entire packet for each family member included on the application and who qualifies as a derivative for USCIS, and
  - 3. One copy of the entire packet for the applicant's records.
- iv. When ready to file, include the following in the packet:
  - 1. The original filing packet,
  - 2. One full copy of the entire packet for USCIS, and
  - 3. One additional copy for each family member included on the application.
- v. Write OAW on the envelope in big, bold print.
- vi. Mail the packet.
  - 1. Use a mail service with tracking).
- c. Explain online filing vs. filing by mail (10 minutes)
  - i. Which is faster?
    - 1. Online: the receipt notices are almost instantaneous.
    - 2. By mail: the receipt notice will take at least a few weeks to arrive.
  - ii. Which is easier?
    - 1. Online: applicants must enter all information from scratch and upload each piece of evidence individually.
    - 2. By mail: applicants must print several copies.
  - iii. Which is better? Depends!
- d. Have additional information about online filing ready in the event of further questions.
  - i. Pros to Online Filing
    - 1. Process:
      - a. Receive receipt notice quicker.
      - b. May receive interview notice quicker (but note this is currently just anecdotal).
      - c. Applicant can draft the forms, log out, and come back to a "draft in process" later. However, the system will delete any form older than 30 days, so the draft must be completed before then.
      - d. Easy to track case status.
      - e. Able to send secure messages to USCIS through inbox (as opposed to calling the USCIS Customer Service Hotline).
    - 2. Information Input:

- a. Offers spell check.
    - b. Character limits are significantly larger than on the PDF version of the form; most explanation boxes allow for up to 4000 characters.
    - c. Likely do not need to use addendum sheets because the system allows for the addition of many more siblings, addresses, education, and employment history entries than the paper form does.
  - 3. Submission:
    - a. No need to submit extra copies for applicant and derivative beneficiaries.
    - b. Avoid needing to print out and put together paper version of the submission.
    - c. Receive receipt notice much quicker.
- ii. Cons to Online Filing
  - 1. Process:
    - a. May be difficult for participants to navigate.
    - b. Not all participants have access to necessary technology to facilitate online filing.
    - c. \*May still need to file an application on paper: As noted above, a derivative beneficiary is also filing as a principal applicant (e.g., where both spouses are applying for asylum and including each other as derivatives), only one may be filed online; the other must file their application on paper at the Asylum Vetting Center (see the “Special Instructions” dropdown on the USCIS, I-589 webpage).
  - 2. Information Input:
    - a. When attaching evidence submissions, participant must upload each document individually, and in order, which can be cumbersome.
    - b. Evidence submissions must conform to size and format restrictions.
    - c. Duplicating efforts if I-589 previously drafted on PDF version of the form.
    - d. Questions on the online form do not appear in the same order as on the PDF version of the form.
    - e. Small glitches throughout the form.
  - 3. Submission:
    - a. Does not generate a completed I-589 form to save (must download it separately).
- 3. Assign homework (5 minutes).
  - a. Applicants should draft their cover letters.
  - b. Volunteers should provide the [template](#) and [sample](#) cover letters.

## Template Slides

Template PowerPoint slides are available [here](#).

## Workshop

For Week Six, the workshop will focus on reviewing the evidence and Index of Exhibits and discussing filling in-person or online applications for each particular applicant's case.

## Week Seven: Post-Filing and the Asylum Interview

### Lecture

The Week Seven lecture overviews what happens after an applicant files and the interview process.

1. Start by explaining what happens after the case is properly filed (estimated 20 minutes).
  - a. Applicants will receive the following notices, typically in the following order.
    - i. Receipt Notice
      1. This document acknowledges that an applicant's case was properly filed with USCIS.
      2. The document will contain the date that USCIS received the applicant's asylum application ("Received Date") and the number provided for the applicant's case ("Receipt Number"). Keep this notice somewhere safe.
    - ii. Biometrics Appointment Notice
      1. A biometrics appointment is a meeting at a field office (a separate office from the local asylum office) where a USCIS official confirms the applicant's identity by taking their fingerprints and photograph.
      2. After a case is receipted, USCIS will determine whether the applicant and derivatives will need to have biometrics appointments.
        - a. If USCIS decides that an applicant does need an appointment, there will be information on the Notice about the date, time, and location of the appointment. The location will be the closest USCIS field office to the address listed on the application.
        - b. If USCIS decides that an applicant does not need an appointment, there will be an explanation on the Notice stating USCIS can reuse fingerprints.
    - iii. Interview Notice
      1. The interview notice will contain the date, time, and location of the asylum interview. There will also be information on what to bring.
        - a. If an applicant is not able to attend the asylum interview due to an unavoidable conflict, contact the asylum office

immediately. However, delays caused by the applicant may impact when the applicant can apply for a work permit.

- b. Stress that applicants must attend their asylum interviews. Failing to do so may result in denial of their cases.

iv. Notice of Decision

- 1. Two common outcomes:
  - a. Grant of Asylum: congratulations!
  - b. Notice of Intent to Deny (NOID): suggest they contact a local immigration attorney immediately. The organization should consider providing an email address for applicants to contact in the event of a NOID, even if the email address will only provide reputable, private referrals.
- 2. Answer common questions about what happens after the case is filed (estimated 15 minutes).
  - a. What happens if the applicant moves while waiting for the interview?
    - i. The applicant must update their address with USCIS within 10 days.
      - 1. If filing online: use myUSCIS to update the address.
      - 2. If filing by mail: fill out form AR-11 [online](#), print it, and follow the instructions for where to send it.
    - ii. If the applicant moves outside of the jurisdiction of the local Asylum Office, there may be a delay in the case as it gets transferred.
  - b. Is there anything the applicant should be doing while waiting for an interview?
    - i. The applicant does not need to memorize their asylum claim. The applicant can practice the interview, create timelines or other documents to help organize their thoughts, and continue collecting evidence (the applicant can submit any additional evidence to the asylum office up until 14 days before the interview).
  - c. How does the applicant check the status of their asylum case?
    - i. Once the applicant receives a receipt notice, they can use that to check the status of the case. If filed online, the applicant can check myUSCIS for updates.
    - ii. Remember, Afghan asylum applicants have a faster timeline than most.
      - 1. Applicants should be interviewed within 45 days of USCIS receiving the asylum application.
      - 2. Applicants should receive a decision on their case within 150 days of USCIS receiving the asylum application.
- 3. Describe the day of the asylum interview (estimated 10 minutes).
  - a. Remember, the applicant and all the derivatives included on the applicant's application must attend the interview.
  - b. Bring the interview notice and all identity documents (including expired passports).
  - c. Leave early for the interview in case parking is difficult to find or security has long queues.

- d. The applicant will have to pass through security to enter the USCIS asylum office. Generally, food and beverages are not allowed but exceptions may be made for small children.
  - e. Check-in will require some time – everyone 14 years old and over must have their photos and fingerprints taken and their identification copied. Most asylum offices schedule all applicants at the same two appointment times (9am and 1pm), so there may be a queue.
  - f. Additionally, explain that applicants may wait to be called for the interview for a long time, so they should be sure to eat before entering the building.
4. Explain the interview process (estimated 10 minutes).
- a. The interpreter, if applicable, will likely be appearing by telephone. The asylum officer should confirm that the applicant and the interpreter understand each other.
    - i. Explain that at any moment there is confusion or the applicants feel there is something not being interpreted correctly, the applicant should tell the asylum officer immediately.
  - b. Applicant and derivatives will be placed under oath (swear to tell the truth).
  - c. The asylum officer may ask additional questions to the derivatives about the principal’s case. The officer may also ask the mandatory questions to the derivatives (related to criminal and terrorism grounds).
  - d. The asylum officer may excuse the derivatives.
  - e. The asylum officer reviews the information on the Form I-589 with the applicant.
  - f. The asylum officer asks questions to the applicant about the case, such as:
    - i. Why did you leave Afghanistan?
    - ii. Has anyone ever harmed you?
    - iii. Has anyone ever threatened you?
    - iv. What would happen if you returned?
    - v. How do you know it was the Taliban that threatened you?
    - vi. Why do you think the government will not help you?
  - g. Some of the questions the asylum officer asks may be difficult or upsetting. Applicants can ask for a break or to take a moment to take some deep breaths or calm themselves at any point.
  - h. The organization’s staff attorneys will share (or send to the volunteer attorneys to share) any additional insights to the local USCIS interview practice for Afghan asylum applicants.
    - i. Is the USCIS office easy to find?
    - ii. Is the USCIS office accessible via public transit? What is the parking situation?
    - iii. Does the office tend to interview derivatives first?
    - iv. What is the current guidance on bringing an interpreter to the interview?
    - v. Any quirks applicants should know about?
5. The volunteers will share some tips and strategies (estimated 5 minutes).
- a. The applicants should eat before they arrive.
  - b. The applicants should listen carefully to each question before responding.

- c. The applicants should never guess the answer. It is okay to say “I do not know” or “I do not remember.”
  - d. The applicant should answer only the question asked.
  - e. The applicant should ask for a break if they would like one.
  - f. The applicant should try to remain calm and collected, even if the questions are repetitive.
6. Assign homework (estimated 5 minutes).
- a. Finish final drafts of cover letter, index of exhibits, and declaration.
  - b. Finish gathering evidence and collecting Certificates of Translation.
  - c. File asylum application packet.
  - d. Volunteers should highlight the filing steps on the PowerPoint slides for applicants in the [post-Module email](#). They should also include the list of [common asylum interview questions](#) and any upcoming asylum interview workshops, such as those provided on a national level by VECINA.

### Template Slides

Template PowerPoint slides are available [here](#).

### Workshop

The Week Seven workshop offers applicants the chance to watch miniature mock interviews based on a [fake fact pattern](#) as portrayed by the volunteers. Unlike the previous workshops, everyone will be watching the mock interviews together. The volunteers and pro bono attorneys will act out [different scenarios](#) for 2-5 minutes. Then, the applicants will critique and offer suggestions. **Reminder: no facts from any of the applicant’s cases should be referenced.**

## Week Eight: Final Review and Status Check

### Lecture

Week Eight is intended to allow time for a final review and check on each applicant’s status in the process.

1. Provide a quick closing to the Module Series (estimated 5 minutes).
  - a. Thank applicants and volunteers for their time and dedication to this series.
  - b. Wish applicants and their families luck in the process.
  - c. Ask applicants to stay in touch with the results of their cases. Explain that this is not mandatory, but it helps allow the organization to guide folks on what services may be available in the future and the information is great for future applicants to know.
    - i. Organization staff may create google forms for the applicants to update the organization on the status of their cases.
    - ii. Organization staff or volunteers may ask them to informally send updates to a point person (e.g., quick email saying, “my interview is next month,” “I attended my interview and I think it went well,” “my case was granted!”).

2. Assign homework (5 minutes).
  - a. Applicants should file their asylum applications.
  - b. Applicants should update organization staff on the progress of their cases.

### **Template Slides**

There are no template slides for Week Eight.

### **Workshop**

The majority of Week Eight is focused on the workshop, where final reviews will occur for anyone who needs it and where applicants can update the volunteers on the current status of their asylum case (e.g., ready to file, already filed, waiting on Certificates of Translation).

## Condensing the Module Series and Other Workshop Models to Consider

Given the complexities of asylum law, ABA COI and WLA strongly recommends a structured classroom-style approach as set forth above. While the Module Series is laid out in eight parts, to be done one week apart for eight weeks, Modules could be condensed.

Sample consolidated Module Series:

- Modules 1 and 2: Introduction, Form I-589 Part A, and Crafting Your Personal Narrative
- Modules 3 and 4: Finishing the Application, Common Issues and Form Review
- Modules 5 and 6: Evidence, Cover Letters, and Filing Form I-589
- Modules 7 and 8: Interview Preparation, Final Review, and Status Check

Additionally, organizations across the country have provided the pro se I-589 service in a variety of ways.

Single-day Clinics

- Before the Clinic:
  - Applicants are screened for viable cases.
  - Non-attorney volunteers (including interpreters, if applicable) work with the applicants to prepare the first part of the I-589 (Part A, biographical and family information).
  - Attorneys are provided training on asylum and I-589.
- Day of the Clinic:
  - Volunteer attorneys (and interpreters, if applicable) work with the applicants one-on-one to fill out the second part of the I-589 (Part B, claim and eligibility information).
  - Staff attorneys review the I-589s and volunteer attorneys close out with the applicants.

### Week-long Clinics

- Before the Clinic: Applicants are screened for viable cases.
- Week of the Clinic: Volunteer attorneys (and interpreters, if applicable) work with the applicants one-on-one to fill out the I-589 over the course of a week.
- After the Clinic: Staff attorneys review the I-589 and follow up with the applicants.



## Sample Recruitment Emails for Volunteers

### For Pro Bono Attorneys

Subject Line: New limited scope pro bono clinic opportunity!

Dear NAME,

I hope you are doing well and are enjoying your summer. I am writing because Immigration Program is excited to offer a new service called the Pro Se Asylum Module Series for Afghans and we are looking for volunteer attorneys to lead the charge!

**The Need:** In August 2021, the U.S. military left Afghanistan and the Taliban assumed control of the country. Hundreds of thousands of U.S. allies were left in peril. Many of the Afghans who made it to the U.S. may qualify for asylum but there are simply not enough immigration attorneys to serve them.

**The Model:** The Pro Se Asylum Module Series offers eligible Afghans limited scope legal assistance and education on the U.S. immigration system. The pro bono attorneys are NOT taking on the asylum cases in their entirety. Instead, the attorneys lead an eight-week Series where the asylum process is explained and where preparers and reviewers help participants with the Form I-589, Application for Asylum, evidence gathering, and interview preparation and practice.

**The Medium:** The Pro Se Asylum Module Series will be held virtually. The Series will run from DATE to DATE, with the 90-minute modules happening every DAY OF THE WEEK, from TIME to TIME.

**Training and Support:** Pro bono attorneys will be provided substantive training on asylum law and process and common considerations in Afghan cases. Pro bono attorneys will be provided PowerPoint slides to be used in the lectures. Immigration Program will have at least one staff attorney on call for each module and there will also be non-attorney volunteers in attendance to help ensure things run smoothly and assist where needed.

**Requirements:** There is no need for a background in immigration or teaching. There are no language requirements either as applicants must be highly proficient in English to be eligible for the Series.

**Time Commitment:** Estimated 25-30 hours over the course of about 10 weeks.

**Skillsets to be Developed or Honed:** Pro bono attorneys can expect to gain teaching experience, direct client experience, and immigration experience while participating in this Series.

We look forward to working with you on this and please let me know if you need any additional information.

Best,

Anne Attorney  
Immigration Program  
123-456-7890

## For Non-Attorney Volunteers

Subject Line: ISO Volunteers to Help with Afghan Asylum Cases!

Dear NAME,

I hope you are doing well and are enjoying your summer. I am writing because Immigration Program is excited to offer a new service called the Pro Se Asylum Module Series for Afghans and we are looking for volunteers to help make this vision a reality!

**The Need:** In August 2021, the U.S. military left Afghanistan and the Taliban assumed control of the country. Hundreds of thousands of U.S. allies were left in peril. Many of the Afghans who made it to the U.S. may qualify for asylum but there are simply not enough immigration attorneys to serve them.

**The Model:** The Pro Se Asylum Module Series offers eligible Afghans limited scope legal assistance and education on the U.S. immigration system. Volunteer attorneys lead an eight-week Series where the asylum process is explained and where preparers and reviewers help participants with the Form I-589, Application for Asylum, evidence gathering, and interview preparation and practice.

**The Medium:** The Pro Se Asylum Module Series will be held virtually. The Series will run from DATE to DATE, with the 90-minute modules happening every DAY OF THE WEEK, from TIME to TIME.

**Training and Support:** Volunteers will be provided substantive training and PowerPoint slides to be used in the lectures. Immigration Program will have at least one staff attorney on call for each module and there will also be non-attorney volunteers in attendance to help ensure things run smoothly and assist where needed.

**Requirements:** There is no need for a background in immigration, but technology skills are important for this volunteer role. There are no language requirements either as applicants must be highly proficient in English to be eligible for the Series.

**Time Commitment:** Estimated 25-30 hours over the course of about 10 weeks.

**Skillsets to be Developed or Honed:** Non-attorney volunteers can expect to gain direct client experience, and immigration experience while participating in this Series.

We look forward to working with you on this and please let me know if you need any additional information.

Best,

Anne Attorney  
Immigration Program  
123-456-7890

## Sample Promotional Materials for Applicants

### Email

Subject Line: Free Help for Afghan Asylum Cases in Eight-Week Series Supported by Attorneys and Volunteers

Dear NAME,

We are hoping to get the word out about our new **Pro Se Asylum Module Series designed specifically for Afghans**. The Series is an eight-week “course” for Afghan asylum-seekers supported by attorneys and volunteers. Each week, participants will learn about asylum law and the asylum process as they prepare their applications and supporting evidence. The Series will be led by trained volunteer attorneys with ORGANIZATION staff available to assist.

A strong ability of speaking, reading, and writing in English are required to participate in this Series. Unfortunately, no interpreters or translators will be provided. Please direct participants to this link to register: LINK. All registrants will be duly screened to see if their case is a good fit for this Series.

The Series will take place in CITY (or VIRTUALLY). Detailed information will be sent to participants directly.

- Week One: DATE AND TIME
- Week Two: DATE AND TIME
- Week Three: DATE AND TIME
- Week Four: DATE AND TIME
- Week Five: DATE AND TIME
- Week Six: DATE AND TIME
- Week Seven: DATE AND TIME
- Week Eight: DATE AND TIME

Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions!

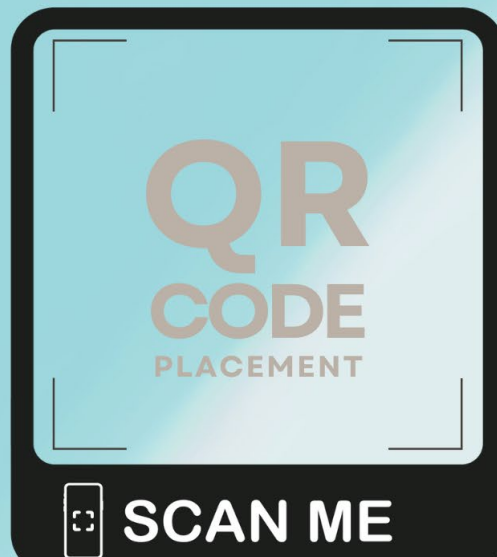
Best,

Anne Attorney  
Immigration Program  
123-456-7890

Flyer

To use and modify this design, click [here](#).

# FREE AFGHAN PRO SE ASYLUM MODULE SERIES



Eight-week course to help you  
prepare and build your asylum  
application with volunteers,  
supported by attorneys

DATE to DATE

# Sample Module Series Agreements

## Pro Se Asylum Module Series Applicant Agreement

I, \_\_\_\_\_, enter into this agreement with ORGANIZATION (hereinafter "Organization") to participate in the Pro Se Asylum Module Series.

### Scope of Module Series

- I understand that the purpose of the clinic is to help me learn about asylum and provide me tools to prepare and file my own asylum application.
- I understand that HOSTING ORGANIZATION is not representing me in my asylum case.
- I understand that the instructors, assistants, and other volunteers are not representing me in my asylum case.
- I understand that I am free to speak with an immigration attorney outside of this Module Series for specific questions related to my case. If I obtain representation, I will alert the Organization.

### Participant Obligations

- I will always be truthful and not knowingly withhold information about my case.
- I will always treat the Module and Organization staff with respect, dignity, and courtesy.
- I agree to actively participate in the eight-week Module Series provided.
- I agree not to share any personal or identifying information with other participants.

### Module Dates and Times

- I understand the Module Series is scheduled for the following dates and times at LOCATION [or held virtually via PLATFORM]:
  - Week One: DATE AND TIME
  - Week Two: DATE AND TIME
  - Week Three: DATE AND TIME
  - Week Four: DATE AND TIME
  - Week Five: DATE AND TIME
  - Week Six: DATE AND TIME
  - Week Seven: DATE AND TIME
  - Week Eight: DATE AND TIME
- Both participants and volunteers agree that to will attend every Module. If an emergency arises, participants or volunteers must alert Organization staff as soon as possible.

### Volunteer Obligations

- Volunteer will treat participants with respect, dignity, and courtesy.
- Any information divulged will be confidential and private, except where such information conflicts with ethical rules or obligations in the applicable jurisdiction.
- If the workshop portion is not finished during a particular Module, the volunteers will work to review and return the document as soon as possible, usually within two business days.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

## Pro Se Asylum Module Series Volunteer Agreement

I, \_\_\_\_\_, enter into this agreement with ORGANIZATION (hereinafter "Organization") to participate in the Pro Se Asylum Module Series as a volunteer in the following capacity: \_\_\_\_\_.

### Scope of Module Series

- I understand that the purpose of the clinic is to help participants learn about asylum and provide them tools to prepare and file their own asylum applications.
- I understand that participants are not represented by any volunteers or Organization staff.
- I understand that I am not authorized to provide direct legal advice and if asked for legal advice I shall refer participants to local immigration attorneys.

### Volunteer Obligations

- I will treat participants with respect, dignity, and courtesy.
- Any information divulged will be confidential and private, except where such information conflicts with ethical rules or obligations in the applicable jurisdiction.
- If the workshop portion is not finished during a particular Module, I will work to review and return the document as soon as possible, usually within two business days.

### Module Dates and Times

- I understand the Module Series is scheduled for the following dates and times at LOCATION [or held virtually via PLATFORM]:
  - Week One: DATE AND TIME
  - Week Two: DATE AND TIME
  - Week Three: DATE AND TIME
  - Week Four: DATE AND TIME
  - Week Five: DATE AND TIME
  - Week Six: DATE AND TIME
  - Week Seven: DATE AND TIME
  - Week Eight: DATE AND TIME
- Both participants and volunteers agree that to will attend every Module. If an emergency arises, participants or volunteers must alert Organization staff as soon as possible.

### Participant Obligations

- Participants will always be truthful and not knowingly withhold information about their cases.
- Participants will always treat the Module and Organization staff with respect, dignity, and courtesy.
- Participants agree to actively participate in the eight-week Module Series provided.
- Participants agree not to share any personal or identifying information with other participants.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

## Sample Potential Applicant Intake Sheet

*Please note this intake is not intended to replace a thorough initial legal screening and is only designed to screen for Afghan asylum cases that would make a certain individual an improper fit for the Series.*

Intake Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Screener: \_\_\_\_\_

Biographical and Contact Information		
Name and Aliases	A Number	Country of Birth/Nationality
Date of Birth	Religion	Languages (* Preferred)
Race/Ethnicity	Gender/Pronouns	Marital Status
Home Address	Phone Number	Email

Are you married? Y/N

If yes, date of marriage: \_\_\_\_\_

Derivative Information				
Spouse's Name and Aliases	Spouse's A Number	Spouse's Date of Birth	Spouse's COB/ Nationality	Spouse's Location
Children's Name and Aliases	Children's A Numbers	Children's Dates of Birth	Children's COB/ Nationalities	Children's Locations

### Immigration Relief

Do you fear returning to your country? Y/N

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Who do you fear? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been harmed or threatened? \_\_\_\_\_

Did you ever ask law enforcement for help? Y/N

If no, why not? \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, what happened? \_\_\_\_\_

Did you follow up on the case? Y/N

Have you ever supported or been a part of any other organization or group? Y/N

If yes, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

### Pro Se Asylum Module Series Screening

#### *TRIG*

Have you ever had direct contact with the Taliban? Y/N

If yes, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever had to pay the Taliban? Y/N

If yes, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever had to provide services for the Taliban? Y/N

If yes, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

Did you have to pay a "fee" or "taxes" to the Taliban at any time? Y/N

If yes, please describe:

Have you ever supported any other terrorist organization with money or services? Y/N

If yes, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

#### *Military/Persecutor Bar*

Have you ever been in the military? Y/N

Dates of service: \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever harmed another person? Y/N

If yes, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

#### *Firm Resettlement*

Have you ever held legal status in another country? Y/N

What status? \_\_\_\_\_

#### *Removal Proceedings*

Are you currently in removal proceedings? Y/N

If yes, next court date: \_\_\_\_\_ Court location: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been in removal proceedings before? Y/N

If yes, what happened? \_\_\_\_\_



*Language and Literacy*

Do you feel comfortable receiving information in English? Y/N

Do you feel comfortable conversing in English? Y/N

Do you feel comfortable writing in English? Y/N

Do you feel comfortable reading in English? Y/N

## Template Welcome Email for Applicants

Hello,

Thank you for your interest in participating in the upcoming Asylum Pro Se Module Series! We received your information from ORGANIZATION and look forward to working with you.

As a reminder, this Series is an eight week “course” for Afghan asylum-seekers without attorneys. Each week, attorneys and volunteers will cover different topics in asylum law and process as we work with you on your asylum case.

Please review and sign the attached Applicant Agreement Form.

The Series will begin on DATE and take place [virtually over PLATFORM or in-person at LOCATION]. For [instructions on Zoom or directions to the in-person location], please see the end of this email.

- DATE, from TIME - Week One: Introduction
- DATE, from TIME - Week Two: Crafting Your Personal Narrative
- DATE, from TIME - Week Three: Finishing the Application
- DATE, from TIME - Week Four: Special Considerations and Form Review
- DATE, from TIME - Week Five: Evidence
- DATE, from TIME - Week Six: Cover Letter and Filing
- DATE, from TIME - Week Seven: Interview Prep
- DATE, from TIME - Week Eight: Optional Drop-In

[IF VIRTUAL] PLATFORM link: LINK

*Please use the same link for all eight dates listed above.*

You may join the Zoom meeting from your phone or computer but please ensure you are joining from a private and quiet space. **We recommend joining from a computer.**

Zoom instructions:

- Sign up for your own free account at <https://zoom.us/signup> with your email address. You will receive an email from Zoom. In the email, select Activate Account. Once you have an account you can click on the Zoom link above to join the meeting.
- For Zoom How-To videos, please see <https://learn-zoom.us/show-me>.

[IF IN-PERSON] ADDRESS OF MODULE SERIES LOCATION

Directions:

- Using public transit: Take BUS/METRO to CLOSEST BUS/METRO STOP. Walk down STREET to ADDRESS. Please take the elevators to FLOOR.
- [PHOTO OF OUTSIDE BUILDING]

We look forward to meeting you!

Sincerely,

[VOLUNTEER INFORMATION]

## Template Reminder Email for Applicants

Good morning, everyone,

Thanks again for your participation last week in **Week 4** of the Asylum Pro Se Module Series!

This is a reminder that our next session will be held **tomorrow, [DATE], from [TIME to TIME] for Week Five: *Evidence***.

[IF VIRTUAL] [PLATFORM] link: [LINK]

You may join the Zoom meeting from your phone or computer but please ensure you are joining from a private and quiet space. **We recommend joining from a computer.**

Zoom instructions:

- Sign up for your own free account at <https://zoom.us/signup> with your email address. You will receive an email from Zoom. In the email, select Activate Account. Once you have an account you can click on the Zoom link above to join the meeting.
- For Zoom How-To videos, please see <https://learn-zoom.us/show-me>.

[IF IN-PERSON] [ADDRESS OF MODULE SERIES LOCATION]

Directions:

- Using public transit: Take BUS/METRO to CLOSEST BUS/METRO STOP. Walk down STREET to ADDRESS. Please take the elevators to FLOOR.
- [PHOTO OF OUTSIDE BUILDING]

If you have any questions or concerns, please let us know! See you all next week.

Best regards,

[VOLUNTEER INFORMATION]

## Template Post-Module Email for Applicants

Good afternoon, everyone,

Thanks again for your participation in **Week 4 of the Asylum Pro Se Module Series!** I have attached the power point presentation for this week's training. Our next session will be held next DATE, from TIME - Week Five: Evidence.

[IF VIRTUAL] [PLATFORM] link: [LINK]

*Please use the same link for all eight dates listed above.*

You may join the Zoom meeting from your phone or computer but please ensure you are joining from a private and quiet space. **We recommend joining from a computer.**

Zoom instructions:

- Sign up for your own free account at <https://zoom.us/signup> with your email address. You will receive an email from Zoom. In the email, select Activate Account. Once you have an account you can click on the Zoom link above to join the meeting.
- For Zoom How-To videos, please see <https://learn-zoom.us/show-me>.

[IF IN-PERSON] [ADDRESS OF MODULE SERIES LOCATION]

Directions:

- Using public transit: Take BUS/METRO to CLOSEST BUS/METRO STOP. Walk down STREET to ADDRESS. Please take the elevators to FLOOR.
- [PHOTO OF OUTSIDE BUILDING]

### **Homework Assignments:**

- Finish your declaration (we will review it next week).
- Complete the I-589 application.
- Begin writing your Index of Exhibits.
- Continue gathering evidence.

Please review the attached template and sample declaration. This will be helpful in crafting your declaration.

- Template: attached here and located at page 26 of Toolkit
- Sample Declaration: located at page 20 of Toolkit

### **Toolkit**

[Asylum Toolkit for Pro Se Afghan Applicants](#) (HIAS and ABA COI Mar. 2022)

- Toolkit in [Dari](#)
- Toolkit in [Pashto](#)

If you have any questions or concerns, please let us know! See you all next week.

Best regards,  
Volunteer

## Sample Cover Letter

### **AFGHAN PAROLEE OPERATION ALLIES WELCOME (OAW)**

United States Citizenship and Immigration Services  
Downtown Asylum Office  
123 Main Street  
Washington, DC

October 5, 2022

#### **Re: I-589 Application for Asylum**

**APPLICANT: DOE, Jane Elyse, A# 000000001**

**DERIVATIVES: DOE, Adam Joseph, A# 000000002, Spouse**

**DOE, John, A# 000000003, Minor Child**

**DOE, Alison, DOB: 8/30/2020 [No A#], Minor Child**

Dear USCIS Officer:

Please accept my enclosed asylum application for protection in the United States based on my fear of persecution in Afghanistan.

I am afraid to return to Afghanistan because of my devout Buddhist beliefs, which are prohibited by the Taliban. I faced harm in the past by the Taliban and now that they control Afghanistan, I believe I will be in grave danger if I return because the Taliban have been known to kill people for not following their radical Muslim beliefs.

Enclosed please find the following Forms:

#### **Form(s)**

1. Completed and signed Original Form I-589, with one recent passport-style color photograph attached to page 9, plus one copy
2. Copy of Completed and signed Form I-589 for Adam Doe, with their passport-style color photograph attached on page 9
3. Copy of Completed and signed Form I-589 for John Doe, with their passport-style color photograph attached on page 9
4. Copy of Completed and signed Form I-589 for Alison Doe, with their passport-style color photograph attached on page 9

Please note that I received assistance in preparing this application through the Afghan Asylum Pro Se Module Series, organized by ORGANIZATION.

Thank you for your kind consideration in processing my application. Please do not hesitate to contact me at 000-000-0000 should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

*Jane E. Doe*

[INSERT FULL NAME]

Oct. 5, 2022

Date

[WRITE NAME IN NATIVE ALPHABET]

Name in Native Alphabet

## Template Cover Letter

### **AFGHAN PAROLEE OPERATION ALLIES WELCOME (OAW)**

United States Citizenship and Immigration Services  
[ADDRESS]

[DATE]

**Re: I-589 Application for Asylum**

**APPLICANT: [INSERT FULL NAME, A# OR DATE OF BIRTH IF NO A#]**

**DERIVATIVES: [INSERT NAMES OF FAMILY MEMBERS INCLUDED IN APPLICATION, A# OR DATE OF BIRTH IF NO A#, RELATIONSHIP]**

Dear USCIS Officer:

Please accept my enclosed asylum application for protection in the United States based on my fear of persecution in Afghanistan.

I am afraid to return to Afghanistan because [quick summary of why you will be targeted]. I [have experienced harm in the past and/or I fear harm in the future] because [explanation of why you cannot safely return to Afghanistan].

Enclosed please find the following Forms:

1. Completed and signed Original Form I-589, with one recent passport-style color photograph attached to page 9, plus one copy
2. Copy of Completed and signed Form I-589 for [DERIVATIVE], with their passport-style color photograph attached on page 9

Please note that I received assistance in preparing this application through the Afghan Asylum Pro Se Module Series, organized by ORGANIZATION.

Thank you for your kind consideration in processing my application. Please do not hesitate to contact me at [PHONE NUMBER] should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

[SIGNATURE]  
[APPLICANT FULL NAME]

[DATE]  
Date

[WRITE NAME IN NATIVE ALPHABET]  
Name in Native Alphabet

## Sample Index of Exhibits

### **Index of Exhibits**

Jane Elyse DOE, A# 000000001

Please find enclosed the following documentation, plus one full copy for each derivative:

#### **Identity Documentation**

1. Applicant's Passport
2. Applicant's Expired Passport
3. Applicant's I-94
4. Marriage Certificate
5. Adam Doe's Passport
6. Adam Doe's I-94
7. John Doe's Passport
8. John Doe's I-94
9. Alison Doe's Passport
10. Alison Doe's I-94

#### **Supporting Documentation**

11. Police Report from Kabul Police
12. Medical Report from Kabul Hospital
13. Photos of Injury, taken in August 2021
14. Letter from Bob Smith, Applicant's brother, with certified translation
15. Letter from Ruth Ware, Applicant's colleague at Hospital, with certified translation

#### **Country Conditions**

Select country conditions documentation regarding my fear of returning to Afghanistan.

16. United States Department of State's Human Rights Report: Afghanistan 2021
17. United States Department of State Travel Advisory for Afghanistan
18. United Nations Report on Afghanistan
19. CNN News Article



## Template Index of Exhibits

### **Index of Exhibits**

[NAME], A#

Please find enclosed the following documentation, plus one full copy for each derivative:

#### **Identity Documentation**

1. [APPLICANT'S IDENTITY DOCUMENT]
2. [DERIVATIVE 1'S IDENTITY DOCUMENT]
3. [DERIVATIVE 2'S IDENTITY DOCUMENT]

#### **Supporting Documentation**

4. [DOCUMENT]
5. [DOCUMENT]
6. [DOCUMENT]
7. [DOCUMENT]

#### **Country Conditions**

Select country conditions documentation regarding my fear of returning to Afghanistan.

8. [REPORT]
9. [REPORT]
10. [NEWS ARTICLE]

# Template Sworn Declaration in Support of Asylum

## **SWORN DECLARATION IN SUPPORT OF ASYLUM**

I, [INSERT FULL NAME], swear under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States that the following is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I file this statement in support of my application for asylum.

1. My name is [name] and I am [age] years old. I am a citizen of Afghanistan. I arrived in the U.S. at [location] on [date of arrival]. I make this declaration in support of my application for asylum.
2. I am married to [name]. We married in [location] on [date]. I have [number] children. We currently live at [address].

### **My Background**

3. [Provide information on your background/schooling, and your work experience, especially if relevant to why you are afraid to return].
4. [If you are/were politically active in Afghanistan, discuss your political beliefs and activities.]

### **What Happened to Me**

5. [Consider what it is about you that makes you fear that you would be harmed if you returned to Afghanistan. Use this space to give some detail of what your life was like before you fled Afghanistan. It's useful to write this section in chronological order, if possible.]
6. [If you were harmed or threatened, detail that in this section. Be sure to include the first incident that occurred, the worst incident that occurred, and the last incident that occurred before you decided to leave.]
7. [Be sure to include some details about any times that your family members, your co-workers, or your friends were either harmed or threatened, if it was a similar reason to why you fear returning to Afghanistan.]

### **Why I Cannot Return to Afghanistan**

8. [Describe why you believe you (or your family members/colleagues/friends) were harmed or threatened. Explain why you think you would be in danger if you had to return to Afghanistan now. Include what you believe would happen if you had to return.]

[SIGNATURE]  
[APPLICANT FULL NAME]

[DATE]  
Date

[WRITE NAME IN NATIVE ALPHABET]  
Name in Native Alphabet

## Template Certificate of Translation

I, [FULL NAME], am competent to translate from [ORIGINAL LANGUAGE] into English, and certify that the translation of [NAME/TYPE OF DOCUMENT] is true and accurate to the best of my abilities.

[SIGNATURE]  
Signature of Translator

[DATE]  
Date of Signature

[NAME]  
Name of Translator

[ADDRESS]  
Address of Translator

[PHONE NUMBER]  
Telephone Number of Translator

## Sample Certificate of Translation

I, Pablo Picasso, am competent to translate from Spanish into English, and certify that the translation of Birth Certificate/Acta de Nacimiento is true and accurate to the best of my abilities.

*Pablo Picasso*  
Signature of Translator

Oct. 5, 2022  
Date of Signature

Pablo Picasso  
Name of Translator

80 Blue Period Way, New York, New York, 10012  
Address of Translator

123-456-7890  
Telephone Number of Translator

## Template Explanation of Unavailability of Documents

### EXPLANATION OF UNAVAILABILITY OF DOCUMENTS

I, [NAME], a citizen of [COUNTRY] and currently residing in [CITY, COUNTRY] do hereby state that the following is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge:

1. I am the [APPLICANT FULL NAME], the principal applicant on the [FORM NUMBER].
2. I was born on [APPLICANT'S BIRTH DATE] in [CITY, COUNTRY] on [DAY, MONTH, YEAR] to [FATHER'S FULL NAME] and [MOTHER'S FULL NAME].
3. My father, [FATHER'S NAME], was born on [DAY, MONTH, YEAR] in [CITY, COUNTRY]. My mother, [MOTHER], was born on [DAY, MONTH, YEAR] in [CITY, COUNTRY].
4. I am unable to provide the following documents in support of my [FORM NUMBER]
  - a. [DOCUMENT 1]
  - b. [DOCUMENT 2]
  - c. [DOCUMENT 3]
5. I am unable to provide these documents because [BRIEF EXPLANATION, for example "I was forced to destroy documents to protect myself and my family from the Taliban and subsequently fled Afghanistan as quickly as possible."]
6. I am unable to obtain replacements of these documents because of [BRIEF EXPLANATION, for example "ongoing conflict and government instability] in my home country of Afghanistan"].

[SIGNATURE]  
[APPLICANT FULL NAME]

[DATE]  
Date

## Template Missed Asylum Interview and Reschedule Request

USCIS [LOCATION] Asylum Office  
[ADDRESS]

[DATE]

RE: REQUEST TO RESCHEDULE ASYLUM INTERVIEW  
Applicant Name: [APPLICANT NAME]  
Alien Number (A#): [A#]  
Receipt Number: [RECEIPT NUMBER]  
Original Interview Date: [DATE]

Dear USCIS Officer:

Please accept this letter as a humble apology that I missed my asylum interview as scheduled. For the reasons below, I respectfully request that USCIS find good cause to reschedule my asylum interview, because:

- I never received the USCIS notice scheduling me for an asylum interview.
- I received the USCIS interview notice, but was unable to attend on the scheduled date and submitted a request to reschedule but did not hear back.
- I received the USCIS interview notice, and had planned to attend, but had to cancel at the last minute because:
  - I was sick.
  - My spouse or child was sick.
  - My interpreter was sick, or was otherwise unable to appear with me.
  - Logistical problems, including transportation or lodging issues.
  - Other reason: [FILL IN]

I am submitting this request as soon as possible after receiving the USCIS warning notice regarding my failure to appear for my asylum interview.

If my interview is rescheduled, I respectfully request that you send notice of my new interview date and time to me at the following address: [ADDRESS].

And/or email me at: [EMAIL ADDRESS].

- I speak/understand English and was able to complete this letter on my own.
- I do not speak/understand English, and this letter was read back to me in [LANGUAGE], a language I do speak/understand.

Thank you for considering my request.

[SIGNATURE]  
[APPLICANT FULL NAME]

[DATE]  
Date

## Common Questions Asked in Asylum Interviews – English and Farsi

Sample Questions	سوال مسطورہ
What is your full name?	نام و تخلص مکمل شما چه است؟
What do you like to be called?	با چه نام ها دیگر شما را صدا میکنند؟
How old are you?	چند سالتان است؟
When is your birthday?	تاریخ تولد شما چه تاریخی است؟
Where were you born?	در کجا تولد پیدا کردید؟
Where do you live now?	در حال حاضر نشانی شما چه است؟
Who do you live with currently?	در حال حاضر با چه کسانی زندگی می کنید؟
Do you work? Where?	وظیفه دارید؟ در کجا است؟
Are you in school?	در حال حاضر به مکتب یا دانشگاه میروید؟
Who did you live with in your home country?	در کشور خود با چه کسانی زندگی می کردید؟
Did you return to your home country after suffering persecution there?	پس از آزار و اذیت در کشور خود به آن کشور برگشتید؟
Do you have any family in your home country?	اعضای خانواده خود در کشور خود هنوز زندگی میکنند؟
Has anyone in your family ever applied for asylum before?	اعضای خانواده شما تا حالا درخواست پناهندگی در آمریکا ارسال کردن؟
What are your children's names?	نام اطفال شما چه هستند؟
What is your spouse's name?	نام همسر شما چه است؟

Do you fear going back to your home country?	از برگشتن به کشور خود ترس دارید ؟
If you fear going back to your home country, why?	اگر همچین ترس را دارید به چه دلیل است ؟
Have you ever been harmed or threatened in your home country?	آیا تا به حال در کشور خود تهدید شدید یا صدمه خوردید ؟
If you were harmed or threatened in your home country, what happened? When?	اگر در کشور خود تهدید شدید یا صدمه خوردید چه اتفاق افتاده؟ در چه تاریخ؟
Have your friends and family ever been harmed or threatened in your home country?	آیا اعضای خانواده شما و یا دستهای شما در کشور خود تهدید شدند یا صدمه خوردن؟
If your friends or family were ever harmed or threatened, what happened? When?	در صورت جواب بلی چه اتفاق افتاده؟ در چه تاریخ؟
Why were you harmed? Why do you think, or how do you know that is the reason?	به چه دلیل صدمه خوردی؟ چه طور به این نتیجه رسیدید؟
Have you ever committed acts of terrorism?	آیا تا به حال کار تروریستی انجام دادید ؟
Have you ever committed acts that harm others purposefully?	آیا تا به حال کاری کردید که به دیگران آسیب رساندید؟
Have you ever been a member of a group that used weapons?	آیا تا به حال شما جزو گروه بودید که سلاح استفاده میکردن؟
Have you ever resided in a part of Afghanistan that was under Taliban control?	در افغانستان در مناطقی زندگی می کردید که زیر کنترل طالبان بود؟
Have you ever had any interactions with the Taliban? Did you ever have to go through a Taliban checkpoint?	آیا تا به حال تعامل با طالبان داشتید؟ آیا تا به حال از یک بازرسی طالبان عبور کردید؟
Were you ever forced to provide Taliban members with money or supplies?	اگر هم ناخواسته آیا تا به حال مجبور بودید که به اعضای طالبان یا پول یا تدارکات بدهید؟

Have you ever attended a Taliban run school?	آیا تا به حال در مکتب طالبان درس خندید؟
Have you ever had any interactions with any group that used weapons or violence?	آیا تا به حال تعاملات با گروه ها که سلاح یا خشونت استفاده کردن داشتید؟
Do you have family members in Afghanistan who are working, or previously worked for, the Taliban-run government?	در خانواده شما کسی دارید که یا در دوره حکومت قبلی طالبان با دولت کار می کردن یا در حال حاضر برای حکومت طالبان کار میکنند؟
Have you ever been arrested, in the U.S. or anywhere in the world?	آیا تا به حال شما را دستگیر کردن, چه در آمریکا چه کار کشور دیگر؟
Have you ever committed any crimes while in the United States?	آیا تا به حال در ایالات متحده مرتکب جنایت شده اید؟
Have you ever committed any crime in your home country?	آیا تا به حال در کشور خود مرتکب جنایت شده اید؟
Have you ever lied to the United States government?	آیا تا به حال به دولت ایالات متحده دروغ گفتید؟
Have you or your family members ever been accused of, charged, detained, interrogated, convicted, sentenced, or imprisoned in any country?	آیا شما یا اعضای خانواده تان تاکنون در هر کشوری متهم، بازداشت، بازجویی، محکومیت، یا زندانی شده اید؟
Where did you work in Afghanistan?	در افغانستان کجا وظیفه داشتید؟
What was the nature of your work?	ماهیت کار شما چه بود؟
How long did you work there?	چند وقت در آن جا وظیفه داشتید؟
Did you ever receive threats from anyone?	آیا تا به حال کسی شما را تهدید کردن؟
Who threatened you? Why do you think they threatened you?	چه کسی شما را تهدید کردن؟ به چه دلیل؟



After that incident, did they ever bother you again? When? Where were you? Who were you with? was it the same people? How many?	پس از آن اتفاق, همان کسانی شما را اذیت کردن؟ در چه تاریخ؟ در کجا قرار گرفته بودید؟ با چه کسانی بودید؟ همان شخص قبلی بود؟ چند نفر بودن؟
About how many times did they threaten you in that way?	تقریبا چند بار شما را این جورى تهدید کردن ؟
Were you always in the same place? If not, where else?	همش در یک جا قرار گرفته بودید؟ اگر خیر, در کجا؟
What did you do after they threatened you?	پس از این که شما را تهدید کردن چه کار کردید؟
Do you know if they threatened any other people in the same way? How do you know? What do you know about those people?	می دانید که دیگران را به همان صورت تهدید کردن؟ از کجا فهمیدید؟ درباره دیگران چه میدانید؟
When you received these threats, how did you feel?	وقتی که شما را تهدید کردن, چه احساساتی داشتید؟
Why were you afraid?	به چه دلیل ترس داشتید ؟
What did you think that they would do?	فکر میکردی که چه کار میکنند؟
Why did you think that they would do that?	چرا همچین فکری را دارید؟
What if anything did you do to try to protect yourself, to try to prevent that from happening	چه عملیات کردید که خودتان را محافظت کنید که این اتفاق نیوفته؟
Do you know anyone that was ever hurt or killed by the Taliban? Who? How do you know him or her? What happened to that person? How do you know?	شما با کسی آشنا هستید که از دست طالبان یا صدمه خورده یا کشته شده؟ چه نام دارد؟ چه تر با هم آشنا شدید؟ بر سر او چه افتاد؟ از کجا خبر در شدید؟
Ask additional questions specific to PSG, for example: Do you belong to a minority ethnic group?	جزء یک اقلیت قومی یا دینی هستید؟

Are you religious?	مذهبی هستید؟
Were you outspoken against the Taliban or any terrorist group?	آیا علیه طالبان یا هر گروه تروریستی صریح صحبت می کردید؟
Are there any other reasons you were targeted?	آیا دلایل دیگری وجود دارد که شما یک هدف بودید؟
What made you decide to leave your home country?	چه اتفاقاتی افتادند که تصمیم گرفتید از کشور خود فرار کنید؟
What is your life like in the U.S.?	زندگی خود در امریکا چگونه است؟
What do you think would happen if you returned to home country?	اگر به کشور خود برگردید چه اتفاقی می افتد؟
Is there anything else you want me to know and have not had a chance to tell me?	آیا چیز دیگری هست که بخواهید بدانم و فرصتی برای گفتن نداشته باشید؟
Is it possible that you could have moved to another part of home country in order to protect yourself? Why not?	برای محافظت خود می توانستی به یک منطقه دیگر کشور کوچ کنید؟ چرا نه؟
Do you think that the police in home country could have protected you? Why not? Is there anyone else in home country that could protect you? Why not?	فکر میکنید که پلیس در کشور خود میتوانند شما را محافظت کنند؟ چرا نه؟ کسی دیگر می توانند شما را محافظت کند؟ چرا نه؟
Since you've been in the United States, do you still have contact with family in home country? How often?	در حال حاضر شما با خانواده خود در کشور خود در تماس هستید؟ چند وقت؟
To your knowledge, has [persecutor] looked for you since you left? How do you know that?	تا آنجا که میفهمید پس از این که به امریکا رسیدید طالبان برای شما گشتن؟ از کجا میفهمید؟
Are you afraid to return to home country? Why?	از برگشتن به کشور خود ترس دارید؟ چرا؟

What do you think will happen to you if you are forced to return to home country?

اگر مجبور بودید که به کشور خود برگردید، بر سر شما چه می افتاد؟

## Addendum A: Checklist for Best Practices for Remote Series via Zoom

For various Zoom how-to videos see <https://learn-zoom.us/show-me>.

Double check your Zoom settings are appropriate:

- Use a Zoom for Business Account.
- Enable waiting room so participants can sign in and you can let the lecturers and volunteers sign in a few minutes early to discuss any last-minute things.
- Enable meeting polls/quizzes.
- Enable screen sharing.
- Enable remote control.
- Enable breakout rooms.
- Enable cohosts.
- Enable language interpretation, if applicable.
- Disable livestreaming of meetings.

Scheduling the Series:

- Set the Series as “reoccurring” weekly so the link remains the same.
- Be sure that your time zone is correct.

Before the Series:

- If using polls, the host must set them up before the Series begins.
  - Log into the Zoom account that is hosting the Series and select “start this meeting” and select “polls” and “create” (this will bring the host back to the zoom browser).
  - Select “poll” for a single-choice or multiple-choice questions.
  - Select “advanced polls and quizzing” for single-choice, multiple-choice, matching, rank order, short answer, long answer, or fill in the blank questions.
  - We recommend that you set up each question as separately and in the order you want them to appear (i.e., create three separate questions as opposed to one question with three parts).
- Set up a WhatsApp or other desktop messenger for volunteers, lecturers, and staff attorneys to communicate during the Modules and ask questions (do NOT use Zoom, where the questions are viewable to everyone).

During the Series:

- Each week, designate a volunteer to send [reminder emails](#) to the applicants.
- Each week, designate a volunteer to send [post-module emails](#) with the PowerPoint, homework, and any resources to share with the applicants.
- Each week, be sure to select “leave meeting” and not “end meeting” until all teams are finished.

## Days of the Series:

- Before the Module starts:
  - Have lecturers and volunteers sign on 5-10 minutes early to troubleshoot technical issues, while keeping all applicants in the waiting room
  - Designate someone to use the chat function to send a message to the applicants in the waiting room such as “Hello everyone, we will be starting shortly.”
  - The host should make at least one volunteer and/or lecturer a cohost.
- During the lecture:
  - Designate someone to share their screen to move along the PowerPoint
  - Designate someone (must be the host or a cohost) to set up the breakout rooms.
    - Select “breakout rooms.”
    - Update the number for “create X breakout rooms” to the number of applicants and two additional rooms (e.g., for, 15 applicants, there should be 17 rooms).
    - Click “assign manually.”
    - Assign each applicant to a room.
    - Then, assign a volunteer to each applicant.
    - Click “options” to confirm that “Allow participants to return to the main room at any time” is toggled.
    - When the lecture is complete, select “Open All Rooms”
  - If using polls, designate someone (must be the host or cohost) to manage the polls (importantly, the host or cohost can close this tab at any time and reopen “polls” later)
    - Select “polls” and click “launch” when ready
    - Click “end poll” at any time and “share results”
    - Select “stop sharing results” when finished

## Addendum B: Fake Fact Pattern and Dialogue Suggestions

### Winnie the Pooh Declaration in Support of Asylum

- I. My name is Winnie the Pooh. I grew up in the One Hundred Acre Wood in Bearland.
- II. I fear returning to Bearland because I was persecuted by the Woozles on account of my political opinion: supporting and advocating for bear rights.
- III. I am a well-known activist in Bearland – I have been featured on Bear News several times and am very active on Facebook supporting bear rights.
- IV. The Woozles are a powerful political group and do not believe in bear rights. They think only Woozles should have rights.
- V. Members from the Woozles have threatened me multiple times for voicing my opinion, including threats I understood to be death threats like “if you write another post on Facebook about bear rights, it might be your last post.” These threats were all received online, through Facebook and typically happened after I made a pro-Bear post or had appeared in a television segment on Bear News.
- VI. In January 2022, I was attending a bear rights rally in the city center. The rally was peaceful. I went up to the podium to make a speech and as I left the stage, I was grabbed by two men in police uniforms who had Woozles tattoos (big bold Ws) on their arms. The two men took me to a warehouse and hit me multiple times with their hands and fists. They said, “bears don’t deserve rights” and “we’ll show you what happens when a bear doesn’t listen to us.” Luckily, someone from the rally saw the two men grab me and came to the warehouse with several others to rescue me. The men ran away when they saw the people enter the warehouse.
- VII. A few days later, I received a phone call from an unknown number where the caller said, “next time your friends won’t be there to save you.”
- VIII. A week or two later, I started getting anonymous emails and Facebook messages threatening me to stop talking about bears’ rights.
- IX. I didn’t know what to do, I was so scared. I came to the United States in March 2022.
- X. Since I came to the United States, several of my friends who are also active in pro-bear rights groups have been kidnapped or harmed by the Woozles. Some of them went to the police but were told there was nothing they could do to help them.
- XI. I am afraid that if I return, the Woozles will find me, harm me, and possibly kill me.

## Mock Interview One

### Mean Asylum Officer

#### Actors:

- Applicant: NAME
- Asylum Officer: NAME

#### Suggestions for Asylum Officer:

- Cut off the applicant while they are talking (even when they are answering your question).
- Make some exaggerated sighs.
- Roll your eyes, tap impatiently, click your tongue.
- Re-ask questions that have been answered.

#### Suggestions for Applicant:

- Slowly become more visibly upset or frustrated.

#### Potential Script:

- Asylum Officer: So, Winnie the Pooh, can you tell me why you left your country - Bearland?
- Applicant: Yes, I left Bearland because I was afraid.
- Asylum Officer: (big sigh) Afraid of what?
- Applicant: Um, well, I was afraid of the Woozles.
- Asylum Officer: I asked you what you were afraid of, not who you were afraid of. Please listen to the question I am asking before you reply. What were you afraid of?
- Applicant: Uh, um, I was afraid that they would harm me...again.
- Asylum Officer: Afraid who would harm you again?
- Applicant: The Woozles.
- Asylum Officer: (shakes head) What is a Woozle?
- Applicant: The Woozles are a political group and they –
- Asylum Officer: Okay, so you were politically active?
- Applicant: Well, yes, I was –
- Asylum Officer: What do you mean they would harm you again?

## **Mock Interview Two**

### Verbose/Incomplete Answers

#### Actors:

- Applicant: NAME
- Asylum Officer: NAME

#### Suggestions for Asylum Officer:

- Ask open-ended questions and follow-up questions.
- Offer opportunities for the applicant to clarify answers.

#### Suggestions for Applicant:

- Go into detail about trivial things (e.g., it was a Tuesday, no Monday morning because I was on my way to work after a long weekend).
- Answer questions you think the AO is going to ask and not what they are asking (i.e., do not listen carefully).

#### Potential Script:

- Asylum Officer: Did anyone in Bearland ever harm you or threaten to harm you?
- Applicant: I have always been an activist. I believe in bear's rights and I want to create a world where bears and all creatures can live in peace and harmony. It all started when -
- Asylum Officer: I asked if anyone has ever harmed or threatened you. Could you please tell me if anything like that happened to you?
- Applicant: Well, I did get a few threats.
- Asylum Officer: What happened?
- Applicant: There were threats before and after the protest.
- Asylum Officer: Okay, we can talk about the protest later. First, can you tell me about the threats?
- Applicant: I used to get threats on Facebook and later I got a phone call. Then, I got more threats over email and Facebook.



## **Mock Interview Three**

### Confused Asylum Officer

#### Actors:

- Applicant: NAME
- Asylum Officer: NAME

#### Suggestions for Asylum Officer:

- Get visibly frustrated trying to understand the dates or sequence of events.
- Repeat things back in the wrong order.
- Accuse the applicant of not knowing the dates.
- Offer the applicant a break to gather their thoughts.

#### Suggestions for Applicant:

- At first, try to help the AO understand.
- Eventually, get upset as the AO keeps getting it wrong.
- Angrily refuse the break and continue through (having the same issues).

#### Potential Script:

- Asylum Officer: Winnie, could you tell me about your work with Bear News?
- Applicant: Yes, I appeared on the television channel, Bear News, several times as a guest and activist. I advocated for bears' rights and shared my vision with the world.
- Asylum Officer: When did you first appear on Bear News?
- Applicant: Around September 2021, I think. I was on Bear News several times until the protest. I stayed active on Facebook until I left Bearland. I had gotten threats, too.
- Asylum Officer: Please tell me about the protest.
- Applicant: The protest was in January 2022. It was for bears' rights. I gave a speech for the crowd and then I was taken by two Wozzles in police uniforms and beaten.
- Asylum Officer: The protest was in September and Bear News was in January?
- Applicant: No, I was on Bear News multiple times starting around September 2021 and the protest happened in January 2022.
- Asylum Officer: But the threats started in January 2022?
- Applicant: No, the threats started before I was on Bear News.
- Asylum Officer: But in your declaration you say the threats started when you were on Bear News.
- Applicant: I believe I said the threats started around the time I was on Bear News and before the protest.
- Asylum Officer: This doesn't make sense. Do you know the dates that these things happened?
- Applicant: Yes, I do. If I could just –
- Asylum: Let's take a break so you can gather your thoughts.
- Applicant: (getting angry) No. I do not need a break. I know what happened.

## Mock Interview Four

### Bad Interpretation

#### Actors:

- Applicant: NAME
- Interpreter: NAME
- Asylum Officer: NAME

#### Suggestions for Interpreter:

- Paraphrase the applicant's words.
- Misinterpret words but act like it was clear.
- Do not translate some things at all.

#### Suggestions for Applicant:

- Do not notice the bad interpretation at first, maybe a look of confusion.

#### Suggestions for Asylum Officer:

- Eventually, notice the bad interpretation and check in with the applicant.

#### Potential Script: (provided in Spanish, but the skit can be done in any language other than English)

- Asylum Officer: Winnie, tell me what happened at the protest.
- Interpreter: Winnie, dígame que paso en la manifestación.
- Applicant: Bueno, estaba discursando y todo iba bien y entonces salí del tablado. De repente, dos hombres en uniformes de policía me agarraron con fuerza.  
*Actual translation: Well, I was giving a speech, and everything was going well and then I left the stage. Suddenly, two men in police uniforms forcefully grabbed me.*
- Interpreter: Well, I was talking and then two guys grabbed me.
- Asylum Officer: Did you know who those guys were?
- Interpreter: ¿Sabias quiénes eran esos tipos?
- Applicant: No exactamente, pero tenían tatuajes de "W" en los brazos y todo el mundo sabe que el W significa los Wozles.  
*Actual translation: Not exactly, but they had "W" tattoos on their arms and everyone knows that the W means the Wozles.*
- Interpreter: No.
- Asylum Officer: Winnie, is the interpretation okay?
- Interpreter: ¿Winnie, está bien –  
*Actual translation: Winnie, is it okay - ?*
- Applicant: Perdon, pero no. Yo creo que hay un problema con la interpretación.
- Interpreter: Excuse me, but no. I think there is a problem with the interpretation.

## Addendum C: Frequently Asked Questions

### Working with Clients

#### Vetting Applicants (for Legal Service Providers)

##### **What are the best strategies for vetting potential applicants?**

- As a legal service provider, you may have ample experience screening clients for relief.
  - In the event that you do not, it is important to employ trauma-informed care and demonstrate cultural humility in order to make the client feel as comfortable as possible and to encourage honest information sharing.
- The Toolkit contains comprehensive [sample screening questions](#) for potential applicants.
- If your organization already has a comprehensive intake form, we recommend addressing the following topics to confirm a potential applicant is the right fit:
  - Asylum bars/inadmissibility (persecutor bar, TRIG, and firm resettlement)
    - Persecutor bar: have you ever harmed someone because of their race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group? Have you ever worked in or with the military? Do you have any military or weapons training?
    - TRIG: have you ever given money or goods to any extremist group, such as the Taliban or ISIS? Have you ever made public statements in support of any extremist groups, such as the Taliban or ISIS?
    - Firm resettlement: after you left Afghanistan, did you travel to another country? If yes, for how long, and in what status? Did you ever apply for a long-term status? What was your purpose in that country?

#### Cultural Humility and Trauma-Informed Care

##### **I have never represented an Afghan or asylum client before. What should I keep in mind?**

- We would encourage you to watch the webinar on [Cultural Humility and Working with Afghan Clients](#).
- Due to the nature of asylum work, many clients have experienced trauma. Thus, we also recommend that you learn about [trauma-informed lawyering](#).

### Preparing the Application for Asylum

#### Completing the Form I-589

##### **Not all of the applicant's information or details about their case will fit on the I-589 Form. What should the applicant do?**

- Use the supplemental pages on Form I-589 if you need more space to provide additional information or explanation.

**The applicant was not or will not be able to file their Application for Asylum within one year of their entry to the U.S. (one year filing deadline). Are they disqualified from asylum now?**

- No. The regulations provide that an asylum applicant may qualify for an exception to the “one year filing deadline” based on “extraordinary circumstances” where she “maintained Temporary Protected Status, lawful immigrant or nonimmigrant status, or *was given parole*, until a reasonable period before the filing of the asylum application.” 8 CFR 208.4(a)(5)(iv). USCIS has also clarified that “[g]enerally, maintaining parole until a reasonable period before the filing of the asylum application will be considered an extraordinary circumstance under the regulations.” See Information for Afghans > Asylum, available at <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/information-for-afghans> (last accessed March 23, 2022).
- Page 8, Part C, Question 5 on form I-589 specifically asks whether the applicant is filing their asylum application more than 1 year after their last arrival in the United States. We suggest the following language in response to this question:
  - Although I am filing this application more than 1 year after my last arrival in the United States, I am currently in parole status, valid until DATE. My parole status should be accepted as an extraordinary circumstance, tolling the one year filing deadline in my case.

**Is there anything specific I should instruct the applicant to write on the application or envelope so USCIS knows that the application should be expedited?**

- USCIS has advised that Afghan parolees applying for asylum should write “OAW-Parolee” on the outside of the envelope that they send their application in. Writing this information on the outside of the envelope will help USCIS fast-track the application.
- We also recommend writing “Afghan Parolee – OAW” on the cover letter.

**Can the applicant file the I-589 form online?**

- Yes. See [Week Six](#) for more information.

**The applicant came to the United States with a P status, how will that impact their case?**

- Many Afghan parolees entered on P-2 (or Priority 2), a special designation created by the Department of State that grants U.S. Refugee Admissions program (USRAP) for certain Afghan nationals and their eligible family members. There is no renewal or long-term benefits as this is not an immigration status.
- This is separate from the P visa, which is typically reserved for exceptional athletes and entertainers, and is an immigration status.

**The applicant’s I-94 says “OAR,” and not “OAW,” is that a problem?**

- No, both are Afghan parole notations. Whichever notation is indicated in on the I-94 should be used on the I-589.

## Preparing the Declaration in Support of Asylum

**What considerations should I keep in mind when working with the applicant on drafting their Declaration in Support of Asylum?**

- Ask specific, targeted questions when discussing the details surrounding an event. For example, if the applicant tells you they were threatened, ask whether the threat was in person, by telephone or in writing. Open questions may lead to vague responses.

- Be sure to explain to the applicant why you are asking the questions you are asking. This may make them feel more comfortable in divulging details that may be traumatic.
- If the applicant is struggling to remember details surrounding dates or times a particular event took place, ask questions about the context of the scenario. For example, “What was the weather like outside?” or “Do you remember if it was light or dark outside?”. Please keep in mind, it is important that you do not include details that your client may struggle to remember at a later date so as not to impeach your client’s credibility. If you’re client is struggling to remember whether something they experienced took place in June or July of a particular year, for example, it may be best to rely on the season instead (in this case, summer).
- Lastly, it is important to remember that trauma effects every individual differently and it is not uncommon for asylum seekers to have a difficult time remembering exactly what happened to them and when it happened. Exercising patience with the applicant will likely lead to a better rapport and may make it easier for the applicant to discuss their experience.
- Consider reviewing the following resources:
  - [Cultural humility](#)
  - Declaration drafting
    - [Written Statements as Evidence](#)
    - [Making a Virtual Connection: Ensuring an Open and Productive Attorney/Client Relationship](#)

**What techniques should I keep in mind when trying to elicit detailed information from the applicant when helping draft their Affidavit in Support of Asylum?**

- Ask specific, targeted questions when discussing the details surrounding an event. For example, if your client tells you they were threatened, ask whether the threat was in person, by telephone or in writing. Open questions may lead to vague responses.
- If a client is struggling to remember details surrounding dates or times a particular event took place, ask questions about the context of the scenario. For example, “What was the weather like outside?” or “Do you remember if it was light or dark outside?”. Please keep in mind, it is important that you do not include details that your client may struggle to remember at a later date so as not to impeach your client’s credibility. If you’re client is struggling to remember whether something they experienced took place in June or July of a particular year, for example, it may be best to rely on the season instead (in this case, summer).
- Lastly, it is important to remember that trauma effects every individual differently and it is not uncommon for asylum seekers to have a difficult time remembering exactly what happened to them and when it happened. Exercising patience with your client will likely lead to a better rapport and may make it easier for your client to discuss their experience.

**What are best practices when attempting to elicit statements or corroborating evidence for the applicant’s case from individuals still located in Afghanistan**

- This will vary from case to case, however, it is imperative to keep in mind the safety of the individuals still located in Afghanistan when attempting to gather evidence for your applicant’s asylum case.
- Explore with the applicant whether retrieving a notarized statement from the individual is possible given their current location and safety considerations. If this is not possible you may consider alternative options such as screenshots of important documents or statements sent electronically if the individual has the capacity to do so.

## Legal Theories

### **Which protected ground should the applicant choose if they appear eligible on several bases?**

- Generally, it is best practice to include all potential bases / legal theories for asylum eligibility that apply to an applicant (*i.e.*, arguing as many protected grounds as applicable). This helps to ensure that if the asylum officer determines that the applicant is ineligible for asylum on one particular basis, the applicant can still establish eligibility through another basis. For example, if the applicant is an Afghan woman from the Hazara ethnic minority, is a practicing Shia Muslim, and worked outside the home, you might argue that she qualifies for asylum based on her well-founded fear of future persecution on account of: (1) her religion (Shia); (2) her race, as an ethnic Hazara; (3) her feminist political opinion; and (4) her membership in the particular social groups of (A) Afghan women; (B) Shia women; (C) members of the Hazara ethnic group, or Hazara women; and (D) Afghan women who refuse to conform to the Taliban’s gender-specific laws.

### **What if the applicant has never suffered persecution in the past?**

- In cases where the applicant has not suffered past persecution, they must establish that they hold a well-founded fear of future persecution. Keep in mind that the asylum office uses the four-part test outlined in [Matter of Mogharrabi](#), 19 I&N Dec. 439 (BIA 1987), also known as the “PACI” factors, to analyze whether a future fear of persecution is objectively reasonable:
  - Possession (or imputed possession of a protected characteristic)
  - Awareness (the persecutor is aware or could become aware the applicant possesses the characteristic)
  - Capability (the persecutor has the capability of punishing the applicant)
  - Inclination (the persecutor has the inclination to punish the applicant)
- Alternatively, an asylum applicant can show that their country’s government engages in a “pattern or practice” of persecution of people who hold those particular characteristics. To sustain a claim based on a “pattern or practice” of persecution, the persecution must be systemic, pervasive, or organized. We recommend reviewing the [USCIS Officer Training Module on “Well Founded Fear”](#) for more guidance on this issue.

## Other Evidence

### **How should the applicant prepare the country conditions evidence to file with their I-589?**

- Generally, it is recommended that relevant portions of country conditions documents submitted with your client’s I589 be underlined for easy review by the asylum officer handling your client’s case.

### **Is it better to have more evidence?**

- Similar to the declaration, quality is more important than quantity.
- Try not to be duplicative in the evidence.

### **Can the applicant include links instead of printing out the documents or uploading the documents?**

- We strongly recommend that the applicant provide the documents to build the record.

### **What original documents and what copies of documents need to be sent to USCIS?**

- The only original documents sent to USCIS are the following:

- Original, signed I-589
- Original, signed declaration(s)
- Original, signed Certificates of Translation
- Original passport-style photo(s) stapled to page 9 of the I-589(s)
- All identity documents should be sent as **copies** to USCIS:
  - Copy of each passport page, cover to cover
  - Copy of I-94 (electronic versions can be found [here](#) under “Get Most Recent I-94”)
  - Copy of birth record
  - Copy of marriage certificate
  - Copy of divorce certificate
- Advise applicants to not send original documents to USCIS, they may not get them back.
- However, applicants should bring any original documents they have to the interview.

**Where can I find more support and resources for country conditions in Afghanistan?**

- [HIAS Afghanistan Country Conditions Research](#)
- [HIAS Country Conditions Toolkit](#)
- [SIGAR Report - Afghanistan Police \(June 2022\) | Afghan Report \(afghan-report.com\)](#)
- [VECINA Afghan Country Conditions Library](#)

**Can the applicant submit video evidence to the asylum office?**

- Generally, USCIS cannot process video/audio evidence. What we have found to be a successful alternative in the past is to provide screenshots from a video file along with transcripts of any audio evidence you may wish to submit. Be sure, however, to advise the applicant to bring the original recording with them to their interview should the asylum officer wish to review the video/audio. It should be saved in a format that is accessible by computer, such as a thumb drive or compact disc. We recommend the applicant have the information readily available on their phone for the interview as well.

**Does the applicant need all documents not in English to be translated by a professional translator?**

- No. However, all documents not in English must be accompanied with an English translation and a Certificate of Translation. Sample [here](#). The translator must be competent in English and the original language of the document. The translation does not need to be notarized.
- The applicant cannot translate the document themselves.

**The applicant does not have a birth certificate. What can they use to show they are Afghan?**

- Birth certificates are rare in Afghanistan. Many people have a taskera, which is a birth record, and other individuals’ birth records are found in their parents’ marriage certificate. A passport or national identification card can also be used.

**Incorrect, Missing, or Confusing Information**

**The applicant’s Employment Authorization Document (EAD), I-94 (Entry Record), or other document has their name misspelled, or has an incorrect date of birth. What should they do?**

- Even though it may not be the applicant’s fault that their name was misspelled on their EAD, I-94, or other document, it is still best practice to include the misspelled name in response to the “Other Names Used” question on the Form I-589.

- For errors on EADs, USCIS has provided details about how an Afghan Parolee can correct such errors on the “Information for Afghan Nationals” page, here: <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/information-for-afghan-nationals> - Click the second drop down, “Afghan National Parolees – Information about Employment Authorization” for details on how to correct these errors on an EAD.

**The applicant does not know the exact dates of birth for their family members. Will this be a problem?**

- The applicant may not know the dates of birth for family members (many rural parts of Afghanistan do not issue traditional birth certificates). If it is unknown, write in the year of birth (or as much information is known) and provide an explanation on Supplement B.

**The applicant’s I-94 is incorrect with respect to their date of entry, or passport information. Will this be a problem?**

- No. The applicant should list their date of entry to the best of their recollection, and note any discrepancy between the I-94 and their recollection in the addendum.

**The applicant spells their surname in English differently than how some of their family members spell their surnames. What should the applicant do?**

- This is not uncommon. The applicant should use Supplement B on the I-589 to explain the situation. Generally, the asylum officer will know that the applicant’s native language uses a non-Roman alphabet and thus translating names often results in slightly different spellings. The applicant should be prepared to answer any clarifying questions at their asylum interview.

**The applicant is sharing information that should have screened them out from this clinic format. What do I do?**

- No intake is perfect. Individuals, who are often trauma survivors and nervous, are sharing detailed, private information with strangers. Sometimes, language is an added boundary. It is not uncommon for circumstances to change or pertinent facts come out after building rapport with the applicant. Speak with the organization staff about whether this person should continue with the clinic or consider other options.

## Unavailability of Documents

**The applicant is unable to produce certain, official documents such as a marriage certificate. What should they do?**

- This is a common issue amongst individuals who have been displaced from their home country and have no way of obtaining certain, official documents.
- To remedy this issue, we recommend submitting a [statement explaining the unavailability of the documents](#).
- We also recommend including additional secondary evidence, such as affidavits from close family members or friends or photographs from the event you are trying to memorialize along with an identification document from the individuals submitting an affidavit.

## Terrorism Related Inadmissibility Grounds (TRIG) Concerns

**The applicant served in the Afghan Military or worked for the U.S. Military. Will this be an issue?**



- If the applicant served in the U.S. or Afghan military, please flag for the organization staff as additional conversations will be necessary with the applicant.

#### **Are there any general exemptions to the TRIG bars that could apply to the applicant?**

- Yes! On June 14, 2022, the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of State announced certain exemptions to protect Afghan allies by alleviating certain obstacles to immigration benefits such as asylum. Review the full announcement [here](#).

## Post-Filing Issues

#### **What if the applicant misses their interview?**

- The applicant should immediately fill out and submit the [Request for Reschedule](#), explaining why they missed their interview and asking for a new interview.

## Preparing for the Asylum Interview

#### **How long will it take for the applicant to be scheduled for an interview? How long will it take for them to receive a decision on their case?**

- USCIS is expediting affirmative asylum applications filed by certain Afghan applicants. Under the [Extending Government Funding and Delivering Emergency Assistance Act](#), USCIS is prioritizing asylum applications filed by certain Afghan citizens and nationals as defined in Section 2502(a) of the Act (see section Operation Allies Welcome – Expeditious Processing for Asylum Applications below for further information). Under Section 2502(c) of the Act, *USCIS will conduct the initial interview for an asylum application within 45 days of filing and, if there are no exceptional circumstances, complete adjudication within 150 days of filing.*

#### **What if the applicant wants more help with their interview preparation?**

- For now, VECINA offers a [recording](#) of what to expect and how to prepare for an asylum interview. Recordings in Dari and Pashto will be available later this year. Additionally, in the near-future, VECINA hopes to offer a comprehensive Asylum Interview Preparation Clinic where you can refer applicants.

#### **Should the applicant bring an Interpreter? Who should the Interpreter be?**

- USCIS recently advised that asylum applicants *may* bring an interpreter with them to the interview, in light of the fact that they've had difficulty obtaining appropriate interpretation services. The interpreter does not need to be a professional interpreter but should be fluent in English and the applicant's native language. The interpreter must be 18 years or older, and cannot be a witness, your legal representative, or a representative or employee of the government of your country of nationality (or, if you are stateless, your country of last habitual residence).
- **The interpreter should not be a family member of the applicant or a representative of the government they are fleeing. Our understanding is that USCIS is also not allowing Afghans with pending asylum cases to act as interpreters during the interview.**

#### **What is the current policy for interpreters?**

- As of July 21, 2022: USCIS has extended its COVID regulations through March 2023, requiring most applicants to use USCIS contracted interpreters. However, see above. There is a *limited exception* for OAW cases due to lack of availability of interpreters who speak languages such as Dari and Pashto. Applicants are asked to provide their own interpreters if possible (must not be another asylum seeker). However, please note the asylum office retains the right to reschedule the interview.
- If the applicant speaks a rare language, you can bring an interpreter with you. It is at the discretion of the Asylum Officer as to whether a client's interpreter will be used during the interview or whether the interview will be rescheduled.

## Post-Interview

### **How long is too long to wait for a decision on the asylum application after the applicant's interview?**

- Per Congressional instruction, USCIS is required to adjudicate Afghan asylum cases within 150 days of filing an asylum application (if there are no "exceptional circumstances").
- If the applicant is experiencing a delay in receipt of a decision on their asylum case (beyond 150 days of when the application was filed), USCIS advises contacting the asylum office where case was interviewed.

## Miscellaneous

### Family-Related Issues

#### **The applicant has a child who was born in the U.S. Does the child need an application for asylum?**

- A child born in the U.S. is a U.S. citizen by birth, and does not need an application for asylum to enjoy legal status and protection in the U.S.
- The parent(s) should still plan to list the child as their child on the I589 Application for Asylum, however. If the child was born *after* filing the application for asylum but *before* the asylum interview, the client will want to update the I589 by advising the USCIS Asylum Officer at the interview. It may be useful to bring a copy of the child's birth certificate to the interview, to ensure that the Asylum Officer has the correct information and spelling of the child's name.

#### **The applicant has family still in Afghanistan that they want to bring to the U.S. How can the asylum process benefit them?**

- After being granted asylum, an asylee in the U.S. can petition to confer derivative asylum status on certain family members through the [I-730, Refugee/Asylee Relative Petition](#) process. Keep in mind, an individual can only pursue this process *after* winning asylum, and within two years of being granted asylum. The I-730 process will enable the asylee to petition for derivative benefits for their legal spouse (and as noted below, only the first spouse if the individual has multiple spouses), and unmarried children who were under 21 years of age at the time the asylum application was filed.
- Once an I-730 petition is approved, the asylee's family member will be able to process their status and obtain permission to travel to the U.S. from a U.S. Embassy abroad. However, the U.S. no longer has diplomatic relations (or an embassy) in Afghanistan, so that process will need

to occur in another country. Having an approved I-730 will not necessarily make the process of leaving Afghanistan and entering a third country easier or safer. An asylee and their I-730 beneficiary family members should take great care in how the family member(s) abroad pursue this avenue for coming to the United States.

**The applicant has multiple wives in Afghanistan, and children from these multiple marriages. Will this be an issue?**

- Even though polygamy is lawful in Afghanistan, because polygamy is outlawed in the U.S., **U.S. immigration law only recognizes the spouse from the first marriage.** See *Matter of H-*, 9 I&N Dec 640 (BIA 1962).
  - If the applicant wins asylum, as noted above, they should be able to file a petition to confer derivative benefits on their first spouse abroad via Form I-730.
  - Unfortunately, subsequent spouses (where the marriages were entered into while the first marriage was still legally valid) will not be recognized or accorded any derivative immigration benefit.
- Note that any/all *biological* children, regardless of whether they were conceived in the first marriage or a subsequent marriage, should be considered the client's children for purposes of deriving immigration benefits like asylum. Unmarried children who were under the age of 21 at the time the parent filed for asylum should be eligible for derivative benefits, as noted above.
- Any *stepchildren* from a client's second or subsequent marriages (entered into while the client's first marriage was still legally valid) will not be considered the client's children for U.S. immigration purposes because, as noted above, the second and subsequent marriages are not considered valid under U.S. immigration law.

**I am concerned about the validity of the applicant's marriage. The applicant and/or the applicant's spouse were underage (under 18) at the time they married. Or the applicant and their spouse are family members (cousins, or uncle/niece, or aunt/nephew, etc.). Will this be an issue?**

- The validity of a marriage should not bear on whether the person is eligible for asylum, but it may bear on whether the person can confer immigration benefits to their spouse.
- Generally, U.S. immigration law will recognize a marriage if it is valid in the place where it was celebrated. See e.g., *Matter of Lovo-Lara*, 23 I&N Dec. 746 (BIA 2005); *Matter of Da Silva*, 15 I&N Dec. 778 (BIA 1976); *Matter of H-*, 9 I&N Dec 640 (BIA 1962). However, certain marriages, even if valid in the place of celebration, will not be recognized under U.S. immigration law. Certain marriages that are considered to violate the "strong public policy of the state of residence" of the couple will not be recognized under U.S. immigration law. Generally, a marriage that is barred or otherwise not recognized in that state would not necessarily be considered to violate the public policy of the state; in contrast, where a particular marriage is considered criminal, that marriage would be considered to violate public policy and would not be recognized under U.S. immigration law.
- **Practice Tip:** If a individual's marriage would have been considered unlawful previously, but would be considered lawful now (for example, due to the age of the spouses at the time of the marriage) they may want to consider re-marrying in the U.S. to preserve the ability of their spouse to derive benefits. They should still disclose the first wedding to USCIS, possibly on an addendum sheet to the form, to be honest and candid with the immigration officer.
- **Practice Tip:** Marriage between cousins is legal in about half of U.S. states. Marriage between uncles/nieces or aunts/nephews, where there is a blood relation, appears to be illegal in all or

most states. The age of consent to marry is eighteen in most states, although some states allow people as young as fifteen to marry with parental consent.

## Other Immigration Statuses / Relief

### **The applicant is asking questions about other forms of relief not related to asylum. What should I do?**

- Direct the applicant to local immigration services or immigration attorneys to discuss other options. Kindly explain that this clinic is designed specifically for asylum and that all applicants are welcome to speak with local immigration attorneys for detailed information on what they may qualify for. Additionally, the partnering organization may have additional programs (TPS Clinics, SIV Clinics) so be sure to speak with them.

## Other Miscellaneous Issues

### **The applicant is interested in applying to go back to school. Are they eligible for financial aid?**

- According to the [Federal Financial Aid website](#), parolees who are paroled for at least one year are eligible to apply for federal financial aid. Individuals who win asylum are also eligible for federal financial aid.

### **The applicant is worried about healthcare services in the US. Are they eligible for health insurance?**

- According to the [HealthCare.gov](#) website, parolees qualify to use the Marketplace.

## Addendum D: Template Slides

The Template Slides are also available in editable Microsoft PowerPoint at the links below.  
here.

- [Week One](#)
- [Week Two](#)
- [Week Three](#)
- [Week Four](#)
- [Week Five](#)
- [Week Six](#)
- [Week Seven](#)

Asylum Pro Se Module  
Series  
**Week One (DATE)**  
Introduction to the Module Series  
Immigration Benefits  
Asylum 101  
Homework

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Welcome!

- **Thank you spending the next eight weeks with us!**
  - If you have not already signed and provided your Participant Commitment Agreement, please do so today before the end of our time together today.
- **Introductions**
  - Lecturer(s): NAME, FIRM
  - Teacher's Assistant(s): NAME, BACKGROUND (paralegal, community member)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Choose a Name

- Please pick one of the following names. In group settings, we will use this name for you for privacy and confidentiality.

Celebrity/Silly Names	Traditional Names
• Claude Monet	• Jacques Pierre
• Mickey Mouse	• Milo Evans
• Donald Duck	• Benito Martinez
• Whitney Houston	• Maria Aguilar
• Minnie Mouse	• Sophie Monet
• Nancy Drew	• Maya Turner

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Goals of the Series**

- **This Series is designed to help you request asylum in the United States.**
- **Our goals are to help you:**
  - Learn about asylum law in the United States
  - Prepare your I-589, Application for Asylum
  - Gather evidence for your case
  - Properly submit your I-589 and supporting documents
  - Prepare for the asylum interview
- **It is important to understand that we are not your lawyers.**
  - We cannot advise you on specifics in your case
  - We are here to help explain and guide you through the process

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Know Your Rights**

- There are several forms of immigration benefits (sometimes called immigration relief) that you may qualify for, and most allow you to hold more than one status at the same time
- Note: the Afghan Adjustment Act is not an immigration benefit unless and until it becomes law (passes the U.S. House and U.S. Senate) and is signed by the President of the U.S.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Operation Allies Welcome Parole**

- Parole offers a foreign national with a "compelling emergency" to enter the U.S.
- Usually, parole is very difficult to obtain
- Operation Allies Welcome created a special parole for certain Afghans that is valid for two years

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Operation Allies Welcome Parole**

- **Benefits of Parole**
  - Parolees are eligible for work permits (Employment Authorization Document)
  - Parolees are in a valid immigration status
- **Limitations of Parole**
  - Short duration (two years)
  - No pathway to permanent residency or citizenship
  - No ability to travel outside of the U.S.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Temporary Protected Status (TPS)**

- TPS provides a temporary legal status for foreign nationals who are unable to safely return to their home country due to conditions or circumstances preventing the home country from adequately handling the noncitizen's return
  - For example, ongoing armed conflict, environmental disaster, or other extraordinary temporary circumstances
- A country is designated for TPS by the U.S. government and Afghanistan was designated in March 2022
  - To be eligible, applicants must have been in the U.S. since March 15, 2022
- Interested applicants must apply for TPS during the initial registration period (which ends on November 20, 2023)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Special Immigrant Visa (SIV)**

- Special immigrant program allows certain Afghans to apply for permanent residency
  - Individuals must have been employed by or on behalf of the U.S. government, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) or a successor mission in Afghanistan between Oct. 7, 2001, and Dec. 31, 2023 for a minimum of one year and have
    - Provided faithful and valuable service to the U.S. government, ISAF, or successor mission as documented in a positive letter of recommendation, AND
    - Experienced or are experiencing an ongoing serious threat as a consequence of employment
- Forms are now filed directly with the Department of State

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



**Family-Based Immigration**

- Do you have any immediate family members who are Legal Permanent Residents (LPRs or Green Card Holders) or U.S. Citizens?
  - U.S. citizens and Lawful Permanent Residents (LPRs or green card holders) in the U.S. may file petitions for certain family members
- If siblings are USCs, sibling may petition for you, but this category is subject to annual quotas, and people eligible for green cards now on this basis *have already been waiting for 15 years*
- Your family member must petition for you

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Crime Victims**

- Have you or your child been the victim of a crime in the U.S.?
- Have you or your family member been forced to work for no pay or to pay off a debt from your journey to the U.S.?
- Have you or your family member been coerced to engage in commercial sex in the U.S.?
- If yes to any of the above questions:
  - Report the crime to law enforcement
  - Speak with an immigration attorney

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Additional Types of Immigration Benefits**

- Are you or your family member in the U.S. under the age of 21?
  - If so, have you/they been abused, abandoned, or neglected by one or both of their parents?
- Do you have an immediate family member who was recently granted asylum?
- If yes, you should speak with an immigration attorney who can determine if you may be eligible for other immigration benefits

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Asylum: Eligibility**

- **Asylum is a legal immigration status for a person who has a well-founded fear of harm**, either because they have already experienced harm, or because it is likely they will be harmed in the future
- **Harm feared must be severe**
- **Reason for harm must be connected to something the person cannot change or should not have to change, specifically the person's:**
  - Race
  - Nationality
  - Political opinion
  - Religion, OR
  - Membership in a particular social group
- **Harm must be committed either by the government of the country the person fled or by some that the government is "unable or unwilling to control"**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Asylum: Eligibility**

- **An asylum-seeker must file their application within one year of their entry into the U.S., with two important exceptions:**
  - A person who is in **another valid immigration status**, like Parole, is able to apply within a "reasonable time period" after the valid status expires
  - A person who can show **changed circumstances** in themselves or their country or **exceptional circumstances** prevented them from applying previously
- **There are several reasons a person is not eligible for asylum, including:**
  - Applied for asylum before
  - Can safely relocate to another country
  - Harmed others
  - Terrorism-related immigration grounds

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Asylum: Filing**

- **Filing**
  - Form I-589, Application for Asylum
  - Applicant's affidavit
  - Supporting evidence
- **Who can be included on the application?**
  - Applicant is the principal
  - Spouse and children are the derivatives in the United States
  - Spouse and children outside of the United States can be applied for later, after asylum is granted

---

---

---

---

---

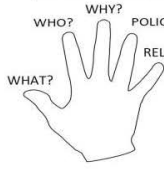
---

---

---

Asylum: Elements

**YOUR CASE IS IN YOUR HANDS**



**WHO?**  
What happened or do you fear will happen if you are ever back in your country?

**WHY?**  
Who harmed you or do you fear will harm you? Are they part of a group? How do you know them?

**POLICE?**  
Why did they specifically harm or threaten you? Why would they harm you instead of another person?

**RELOCATE?**  
Did you go to the police? If you did, what happened? If not, why not? Is it possible to be safe in another part of your country? Why or why not?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Asylum: Evidence Gathering

- Start collecting documents now!
- All evidence not in English must be translated into English and include a Certificate of Translation
- Think about what evidence will show the Asylum Officer that you should be allowed to stay in the U.S., examples include:
  - Police reports
  - Medical reports/exams
  - Photographs
  - Letters from family friends, colleagues
  - Newspaper articles

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Roadmap of Modules

- Week Two: Crafting Your Personal Story
- Week Three: Finishing the Application
- Week Four: Terrorism-Related Inadmissibility Grounds and Form Review
- Week Five: Evidence
- Week Six: Cover Letter and Filing
- Week Seven: Interview Preparation
- Week Eight: Optional Drop-In for Additional Issues

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Homework for Next Week**

- Begin gathering evidence
- Fill out Part A of the I-589, Application for Asylum (up to Page 4, and Supplement B, if necessary)
  - Form: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-589>
  - Always use the I-589 provided on the USCIS website

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Questions and Breakout Room**

- Breakout room goals
  - Volunteers will help show you Part A and give you feedback.
  - If you are waiting for assistance, please be patient and start on your homework. We will be with you as soon as we can!
  - Lecturers will be in the lobby in case any questions or issues arise.

---

---

---

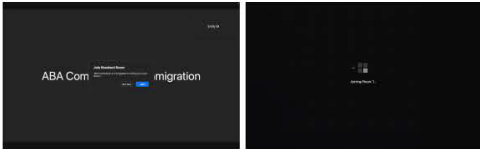
---

---

---

---

**Breakout Rooms Tutorial**



---

---

---

---


---

---

---

Breakout Rooms Instructions

- Please wait in your breakout room and someone will be with you as soon as they are able
- While you wait, we suggest starting on your homework

A screenshot of a Zoom breakout room interface. The screen is dark with white text. At the top, it says "Press ESC to quickly exit to your main meeting." Below that, the word "Waiting" is displayed in a large, bold font. Underneath "Waiting", it says "Waiting for your breakout room." At the bottom of the screen, there is a standard Zoom control bar with icons for mute, video, chat, and other functions.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Asylum Pro Se Module Series**  
**Week Two (DATE)**  
Family Member Information on the I-589, Application for Asylum  
Crafting Your Personal Narrative

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Family Member Information on the I-589**

- Part A has some basic questions about family members.
  - Marriages that are legally valid in Afghanistan should be legally valid in the United States, but we will review
- Part B and C have several questions about family members
  - Sometimes USCIS list who they mean by family members and sometimes they do not
  - If the specific relation is listed on the form, use that as your guide
    - Part C, Question 1: have you, your spouse, your child(ren), your parents or your siblings ever applied to the U. S. government for refugee status, asylum, or withholding of removal?

---

---

---

---

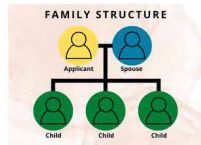
---

---

---

**Family Member Information**

- What does family mean?
- What if my family members spell their names differently than I do?
  - No problem, just note it on the I-589 in the additional information section
- What if I do not know the answer to a question about a certain (or multiple) family members?
  - No problem, just admit that you do not know
    - Do not guess
    - If the reason you do not know is related to the case, note that information



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Family Member Information

- Part B and C have several questions about family members
  - Sometimes USCIS list who they mean by family members and sometimes they do not
  - If the specific relation is listed on the form, use that as your guide
    - Part C, Question 1: have you, your spouse, your children, your parents or your siblings ever applied to the U.S. government for refugee status, asylum, or withholding of removal?

---

---

---

---

---


---

---

---

### Declaration Drafting

- Declarations are one of the most important pieces of evidence in asylum cases
- Declarations should be
  - Persuasive
  - Easy to read
  - Truthful




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Declaration Drafting: Tips

- Only include information you know is true or that you honestly believe is true
  - For example: I believe my attackers were police officers because I recognized their voices.
  - If you cannot remember exact dates, you can describe the time of year or other events that happened around the time of an event. For example, "I do not remember the month, but it was spring."
- All information provided should be relevant to the case
  - Provide some background
  - Be honest
  - Be specific
    - For example: "I think the mayor will find me and hurt me like he did to my brother" is much more powerful than "I am afraid of the mayor"
  - Remember anything in the application, declaration, and interview is confidential.
    - The asylum office will not share the information with any foreign government.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Declaration Drafting: Drafts

- It is common to write several drafts before the declaration is ready for submission. Take as much time as you need, we are here to support you.
- First draft may be therapeutic and information flows naturally.
- First draft may be very difficult to start or finish.
- It is likely that certain information will be relevant to the case and must be explored further.
- For example: I have always supported the Bird Watcher party.
- There will probably be some information that is not relevant to the asylum case and should be removed from the declaration
- This does NOT reflect that the information is unimportant just that the asylum declaration is not the place for the information

---

---

---

---

---


---

---

---

### Declaration Drafting: Guidance

**YOUR CASE IS IN YOUR HANDS**



**WHO?**  
What happened in the year that will happen if you are sent back to your country?

**WHY?**  
Who harmed you or do you fear will harm you? Don't they pose a general threat to you because of your religion?

**WHAT?**  
Why did they specifically harm or threaten you? Why would they harm you instead of another person?

**POLICE?**  
Did you go to the police? If so, what happened? If not, why?

**RELOCATE?**  
Is it possible to be safe in another part of your country? Where or why not?

---

---

---

---

---


---

---

---

### Breakout Rooms Instructions

- Please wait in your breakout room and someone will be with you as soon as they are able
- While you wait, we suggest starting on your homework



---

---

---

---

---

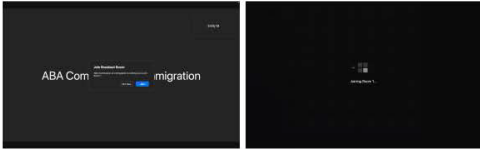
---

---

---



Breakout Rooms Tutorial



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Homework for Next Week

- **Begin drafting your declaration.**
- **Review the template declaration to help guide you.**
  - However, this is simply to give you an example of how to organize your narrative and what kind of information to provide.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Questions and Breakout Rooms

- **Breakout room goals**
  - Volunteers will review Part A and give you feedback.
    - If you are waiting for assistance, please be patient and start on your homework. We will be with you as soon as we can!
    - Start your declaration.
  - Lecturers will be in the lobby in case any questions or issues arise.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Asylum Pro Se Module Series**  
**Week Three (DATE)**  
Finishing the I-589, Application for Asylum Declaration Review

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Recap of Last Week**

- **Week Two**
  - Family member information on the I-589
    - Answer the questions honestly or "I don't know" as relevant.
  - Declaration drafting
    - Writing your declaration may be very difficult and that is okay! Take the time and space you need.
    - Declarations should be:
      - Persuasive,
      - Easy to read, and
      - Truthful.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

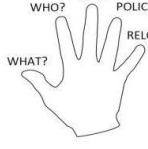
**Remember!**

**YOUR CASE IS IN YOUR HANDS**

WHO?

WHY?

POLICE?



WHAT?

RELOCATE?

**WHAT?**  
What happened or do you fear will happen if you are sent back to your country?  
**WHY?**  
Why have you or do you fear will happen if you are sent back to your country?  
**RELOCATE?**  
Why did they specifically harm or threaten you? Why would they harm you instead of another person?  
**POLICE?**  
Did you go to the police? If so, what happened? If not, why?  
**RELOCATE?**  
Is it possible to be safe in another part of your country? Why or why not?

---

---

---

---

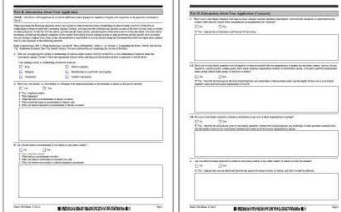
---

---

---

**Finishing the Application**

- **Part B**
  - Use your declaration to help fill out this part of the application



---

---

---

---

---

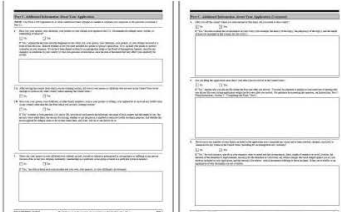
---

---

---

**Finishing the Application**

- **Part C**
  - Use your declaration to help fill out this part of the application



---

---

---

---

---

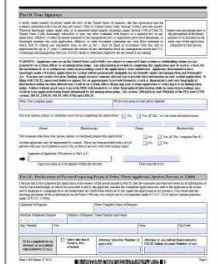
---

---

---

**Finishing the Application**

- **Part D**
  - Do not sign – we will be providing you with a preparer page to use and sign
  - Obtain one passport-style photograph
- **Part E**
  - Leave blank – we will be providing you with a preparer page to use and sign



---

---

---

---

---

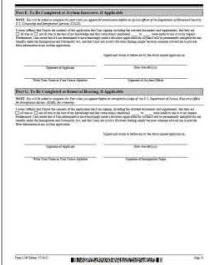
---

---

---

**Finishing the Application**

- **Part F**
  - Leave blank
- **Part G**
  - Leave blank



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Homework for Next Week**

- **Finish your declaration (or complete as much as you can).**
- **Finish the I-589, Application for Asylum, and use your declaration to help!**
  - Complete Parts B and C.
  - Leave Parts D, E, F, and G blank.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Questions and Breakout Rooms**

- **Breakout room goals:**
  - Volunteers will review your declarations and give you feedback.
    - Do not worry if you are not finished with your declaration! You can use the feedback on what you have drafted for today to help with the rest of your declaration.
  - If you are waiting for assistance, please be patient and start on your homework. We will be with you as soon as we can!
    - Finish your declaration (or complete as much as you can) and finish the I-589 Application for Asylum (Parts B and C, leave the rest blank).
  - Lecturers will be in the lobby in case any questions or issues arise.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Asylum Pro Se Module Series**  
**Week Four (DATE)**  
Inadmissibility/Asylum Bars  
Preparing the Index of Exhibits

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Recap of Last Week

- **Week Three**
  - Finishing the I-589, Application for Asylum
  - Reviewing declarations

---

---

---

---

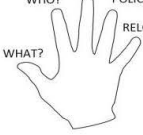
---

---

---

Remember!

**YOUR CASE IS IN YOUR HANDS**



**WHAT?**  
What happened or do you fear will happen if you are sent back to your country?

**WHO?**  
Who harmed you or do you fear will harm you? Are they part of a group? How do you know that?

**WHY?**  
Why did they specifically harm or threaten you? Why would they harm you instead of another person?

**POLICE?**  
Did you go to the police? If yes, what happened? If no, why?

**RELOCATE?**  
Is it possible to be safe in another part of your country? Why or why not?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Common Inadmissibility Issues/Asylum Bars**

- **Inadmissibility is when there is something in an applicant's history that USCIS may dislike or need more details on in order to decide the case. There are several types of inadmissibility factors.**
  - For example: criminal convictions, unlawful entry into the United States.
- **We have seen three inadmissibility issues/asylum bars common in Afghan cases that we will focus on today:**
  - Firm resettlement,
  - Persecutor bar, and
  - Terrorism-related inadmissibility grounds (TRIG).

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Firm Resettlement**

- **Firm Resettlement**
  - Generally, a person is not able to receive asylum if they traveled to a third country (not the home country and not the United States) where the person holds lawful/permanent status or applied for lawful/permanent status.
  - Layovers/stops between evacuation and arrival to the United States are generally not an issue.
    - For example: an asylum applicant who spent eight months in Portugal while waiting to be evacuated to the United States will probably not have an issue.
    - For example: an asylum applicant who lived in France for six months and obtained residency status will likely have an issue.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Persecutor Bar**

- **Generally, a person is barred from receiving asylum if the person has participated in harming others on account of their race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group.**
  - For example: someone who organized a group of friends and neighbors to target all the blue-eyed people in town will likely have an issue.
- **Individuals who served in the military will be subject to additional questioning at their interviews.**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**TRIG**

- Generally, someone who has participated in terrorist activities or supports terrorist groups or activities is not eligible to receive asylum.
  - Support is used broadly: includes giving money, providing goods and services, and public displays of support.
    - For example: posting a photo on Facebook celebrating a terrorist group.
- There are three situational exemptions for certain Afghans:
  - Afghan civil servants,
  - Afghan allies, and
  - Insignificant or limited support.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**TRIG Exemptions**

- There are three situational exemptions available for certain Afghans. There is no additional form to fill out for people eligible for an exemption. The three exemptions are:
  - Afghan civil servants:
    - Certain individuals such as teachers, postal workers, doctors that continued to work during either Taliban occupation.
  - Afghan allies:
    - Certain individuals who fought or supported those who fought in the resistance movement against the Taliban and/or in conflict against the Soviet Union.
    - The exemption does not include those who targeted non-combatants or U.S. interests committed certain types of humanrights violations or abuses, or acted on behalf of a designated terrorist organization.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**TRIG Exemptions**

- There are three situational exemptions available for certain Afghans.
  - Insignificant or limited support:
    - Individuals who provided support to a designated terrorist organization, but the support was
      - incidental to receiving humanitarian help,
      - incidental to routine social or commercial transactions,
      - provided in response to a perceived physical or economic threat, or
      - otherwise considered minimal and inconsequential.
  - Examples include:
    - Paying a small amount to pass through a Taliban checkpoint to flee Afghanistan.
    - Paying the Taliban for utilities such as electricity or the telephone.
    - Serving the Taliban at one's place of business when to refuse would jeopardize one's livelihood.
    - Paying a fee to obtain a passport or other identity documents necessary to flee Afghanistan.
  - This exemption does not include individuals who share the goals or ideology of the Taliban, provided preferential treatment to them, or who intended to support the Taliban through their activities.

---

---

---

---

---


---

---

---

**Index Preparation**

- As part of your homework this week, you will prepare an Index of Exhibits.
- The goal of the Index is to list your evidence clearly.
- Remember, the goal of the Declaration is to tell your story.



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Homework for This Week**

- Finish your Declaration (or complete as much as you can).
  - We will review your declaration next week.
- Begin writing your Index of Exhibits.
- Continue gathering evidence for your case.
  - We will talk about this more next week.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Questions and Breakout Rooms**

- Breakout room goals:
  - Volunteers will review your I-589s and give you feedback.
    - Next week we will be reviewing your declarations.
  - Lecturers will be in the lobby in case any questions or issues arise.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



**Asylum Pro Se Module  
Series**  
**Week Five (DATE)**  
Evidence  
Declaration Review

1

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Evidence in Asylum Cases**

- Evidence is any document or information that indicates something is valid or true.
  - For example: Minnie Mouse is married to Mickey Mouse.
    - Evidence: Minnie and Mickey's marriage certificate, photographs of Minnie and Mickey's wedding, and Minnie and Mickey's declarations saying they are married.
- The legal standard is fundamental fairness.
- Evidence should be authentic (unchanged and unedited) and relevant.
- There are two main types of evidence used in asylum cases:
  - Identity evidence
  - Supporting evidence

2

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Identity Evidence**

- Goal: to prove the identity of the applicant and derivatives (family members who are on the applicant's application and who can gain status if the applicant's case is approved).
- For identity evidence, only send copies. Do not send original documents to USCIS.
- Examples include:
  - Birth record
  - Passport (include each page)
  - I-94, print or electronic copy (electronic ones are available [here](#) under "Get Most Recent I-94")
  - Marriage certificate (and proof of termination of prior marriages)
  - Work permit

3

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Supporting Evidence**

- Goal: to show that the claim is true and a basis for asylum.
- Examples include:
  - Medical records
  - Police reports
  - Photographs
  - Affidavits from witnesses
  - Affidavits from family members, friends, or colleagues
  - U.S. government and international reports
  - News reports

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

4

**Do You Have Evidence to Support Each of The Five Elements to Your Case?**

**YOUR CASE IS IN YOUR HANDS**

**WHO?** What happened or do you fear will happen if you return to your country?

**WHY?** Why do you fear or do you have well-founded fear? (The part of a person's life that is most feared)

**WHAT?** Why do they specifically harm or threaten you? Why would they harm you if you were a normal person?

**POLICE?** Did you go to the police? If so, what happened? If not, why not?

**RELOCATE?** Is it possible to relocate to another part of your country? Why or why not?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

5

**Question**

- What is the one piece of evidence that should address all five elements of your case?
- Answer: declaration!

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

6

**Example One: Pedro**

- Pedro's case is based on his religion.
- What types of evidence can help prove his religion?
- And what elements might each piece of evidence prove?

**YOUR CASE IS IN YOUR HANDS**

**WHO?** Who is persecuting or discriminating against you? Who is persecuting or discriminating against others in similar situations? May support the "why" element by confirming Pedro's religion and explaining that they have seen a pattern or practice of people of his religion being targeted. May support the "what" element if they experience or have heard of others experiencing similar harms. May support the "why" element by confirming Pedro's religion and explaining that they have seen a pattern or practice of people of this religion being targeted by the same people targeting Pedro.

**WHY?** Why are you being persecuted or discriminated against? Why are others in similar situations being persecuted or discriminated against? May support the "what" element with recent articles/reports of people in similar situations being harmed. May support the "why" element by providing information that the government is the perpetrator or is unable or unwilling to control the perpetrator (e.g., government supports the perpetrator or doesn't). May support the "what" element with recent articles/reports of people in similar situations being harmed. May support the "why" element by providing information that the government is the perpetrator or is unable or unwilling to control the perpetrator (e.g., government supports the perpetrator or doesn't). May support the "what" element with recent articles/reports of people in similar situations being harmed.

**POLICE?** How do you know the police are not protecting you? How do you know the police are not protecting others in similar situations? May support the "what" element by providing information that the government is the perpetrator or is unable or unwilling to control the perpetrator (e.g., government supports the perpetrator or doesn't). May support the "what" element with recent articles/reports of people in similar situations being harmed.

**RELOCATE?** How do you know you are not safe in your current location? How do you know you are not safe in your current location? May support the "what" element by providing information that the government is the perpetrator or is unable or unwilling to control the perpetrator (e.g., government supports the perpetrator or doesn't). May support the "what" element with recent articles/reports of people in similar situations being harmed.

**WHAT?** What are you experiencing or have heard of others experiencing? What are you experiencing or have heard of others experiencing? May support the "what" element by providing information that the government is the perpetrator or is unable or unwilling to control the perpetrator (e.g., government supports the perpetrator or doesn't). May support the "what" element with recent articles/reports of people in similar situations being harmed.

7

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Answers for Pedro**

- Letters from friends and family
- Letters from religious leaders (e.g., Imam, rabbi, priest)
- News articles and reports

8

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Example Two: Helga**

- Helga's case is based on her relationship to her mother.
- What types of evidence can help prove her relationship?
- And what elements might each piece of evidence prove?

**YOUR CASE IS IN YOUR HANDS**

**WHO?** Who is persecuting or discriminating against you? Who is persecuting or discriminating against others in similar situations? May support the "why" element by confirming Pedro's religion and explaining that they have seen a pattern or practice of people of his religion being targeted. May support the "what" element if they experience or have heard of others experiencing similar harms. May support the "why" element by confirming Pedro's religion and explaining that they have seen a pattern or practice of people of this religion being targeted by the same people targeting Pedro.

**WHY?** Why are you being persecuted or discriminated against? Why are others in similar situations being persecuted or discriminated against? May support the "what" element with recent articles/reports of people in similar situations being harmed. May support the "why" element by providing information that the government is the perpetrator or is unable or unwilling to control the perpetrator (e.g., government supports the perpetrator or doesn't). May support the "what" element with recent articles/reports of people in similar situations being harmed. May support the "why" element by providing information that the government is the perpetrator or is unable or unwilling to control the perpetrator (e.g., government supports the perpetrator or doesn't). May support the "what" element with recent articles/reports of people in similar situations being harmed.

**POLICE?** How do you know the police are not protecting you? How do you know the police are not protecting others in similar situations? May support the "what" element by providing information that the government is the perpetrator or is unable or unwilling to control the perpetrator (e.g., government supports the perpetrator or doesn't). May support the "what" element with recent articles/reports of people in similar situations being harmed.

**RELOCATE?** How do you know you are not safe in your current location? How do you know you are not safe in your current location? May support the "what" element by providing information that the government is the perpetrator or is unable or unwilling to control the perpetrator (e.g., government supports the perpetrator or doesn't). May support the "what" element with recent articles/reports of people in similar situations being harmed.

**WHAT?** What are you experiencing or have heard of others experiencing? What are you experiencing or have heard of others experiencing? May support the "what" element by providing information that the government is the perpetrator or is unable or unwilling to control the perpetrator (e.g., government supports the perpetrator or doesn't). May support the "what" element with recent articles/reports of people in similar situations being harmed.

9

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Answers for Helga**

- Birth certificate
  - May support the "why" element demonstrating that Helga's mother is legally recognized as her mother
- Family photos
  - May support the "why" element showing that Helga and her mother have a close relationship and others in the community saw them together at various functions.
- Letters from friends and family
  - May support the "what" element if they witnessed harm against Helga, if they experienced harm themselves, or if they knew Helga or others experiencing similar harm. May support the "why" element by confirming Helga's relationship to her mother and explaining that their lives were a pattern or practice of family members being targeted. May support the "impact" element if they accompanied Helga to the police or help explain why she did not or could not go to the police. May support the "response" element by explaining why Helga needed not to seek out another part of the country.
- News articles and reports
  - May support the "what" element with recent articles/reports of people in similar situations being harmed. May support the "why" element with recent articles/reports referencing the known perpetrators of this harm. May support the "what" element by showing a pattern and practice of harm against family members through reports on the "why" element by providing information that the government is the perpetrator or is unable or unwilling to control the perpetrators (e.g., government supports the perpetrators; corruption). May support the "response" element with recent articles/reports showing that no part of the country is safe from the perpetrator, or they have an intricate network of information (e.g., social communication channels, check points).

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

10

**Homework for Next Week**

- Identify and collect any additional evidence.
- Get evidence translated into English (use Certificate of Translation provided)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

11

**Questions and Breakout Rooms**

- Breakout room goals:
  - Volunteers will review your declarations and indexes and provide feedback.
  - Lecturers will be in the lobby in case any questions or issues arise.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

12

**Asylum Pro Se Module Series**  
**Week Six (DATE)**  
Cover Letters  
Filling the Application

1

---

---

---

---


---

---

---

**Cover Letters for Asylum Cases**

- Read the guide the asylum officer brought with the documents and if for protection purposes go to Embassy pages for details.
- Length cover letters should be short for the subject you are applying for asylum. Please note quality not quantity.
- Cover letters should include the following information:
  - Principal applicant's full name and A number.
  - Name of the A number of any dependents, and
  - Date of the assembly of your case in LA numbers.
  - Reason for the FARC model.



2

---

---

---

---

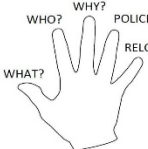
---

---

---

**Your Quick Summary Should Cover All Five Elements**

**YOUR CASE IS IN YOUR HANDS**



- WHO?** What happened to you and where? How are you now?
- WHY?** What happened to you that you are applying for asylum? How long have you been in the US?
- POLICE?** Why did they specifically harm or threaten you? Why would they harm you? How do you feel about it?
- RELOCATE?** Did you go to the police? If yes, what happened? If not, why not?
- WHAT?** How would the police or another part of your country harm you if they caught you?

3

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Filing Options**

- There are two ways to file your asylum application:
  - Online, or
  - By mail.
- Each option require different steps.
- There are benefits and drawbacks to each option.

4

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Steps to Filing Online**

1. Create a [myUSCIS](#) account.
2. Click "add form" and select "I-589."
  - You will have 30 days to complete the form before USCIS deletes it for privacy reasons.
3. Complete the online form.
  - The system will ask if you are filing more than one year after you came to the United States. Even if the answer is yes, you are still eligible to file online, use the same explanation you used on the I-589 (Part C, Question 5).
  - There is no way to upload or import a completed I-589, instead you must enter in the information for each question.
  - The form structure is slightly different for the online form and there are some technology issues.

5

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Steps to Filing Online**

4. Review and upload the evidence.
  - Before you upload each piece of evidence, make sure each signature page is signed and dated, including:
    - Cover letter,
    - Declaration(s), and
    - Certificates of Translation.
  - You are not able to upload one PDF with all the evidence – each piece of evidence must be uploaded individually.
5. Download the form before you submit it to USCIS and download the form after you submit it to USCIS for your records.
  - The two forms will look very different from each other. Keep both for your records.
6. Be sure you are signed up to receive notifications (by email and/or text message) for updates on your case. You should also check your myUSCIS account regularly (in case there is an update, but you did not receive a notification).

6

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Steps to Filing By Mail

- 1. Finalize, print, and sign the I-589.
- 2. Prepare the filing packet.
  - Attach the passport-style to page 9 of the I-589.
  - Organize the filing in the following order:
    - Cover letter,
    - Index of exhibits,
    - Form I-589,
    - Principal applicant's declaration,
    - Identity enclosures, and
    - Supporting documents.
- 3. Double check that that each signature page is signed and dated, including:
  - Cover letter,
  - Declaration(s),
  - Form I-589 (page 9, and any addendum pages used), and
  - Certificates of Translation.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

7

### Steps to Filing By Mail

- 4. Once the filing packet is complete, make the following copies of the original filing packet:
  - One copy that will be sent to USCIS (in addition to the original);
  - One additional copy of the entire packet for each family member that is included on the application and qualifies as a derivative; and
  - One copy of the entire packet for your records.
- 5. When ready to file, include the following in the packet:
  - The original filing packet,
  - One full copy of the entire packet for USCIS, and
  - One additional copy for each family member included on the application.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

8

### Steps to Filing By Mail

- 6. Write OAW on the envelope in big, bold print.
- 7. Mail the packet to USCIS. Find the address [here](#).
  - Note: use a mail service with tracking (such as the U.S. Postal Service's Flat Rate Priority Mail, UPS, or FedEx mailers).



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

9

**Filing Online vs. Filing by Paper**

- **Which is faster?**
  - With online filing, you get your receipt notice almost automatically.
  - With paper filing, you wait at least three weeks to get the receipt notice.
- **Which process is easier?**
  - With online filing, you have to enter the information one question/answer at a time, which takes a long time, even when you are simply copying the information over from the completed IS95. For evidence, you must upload each piece individually and label it correctly.
  - With paper filing, you must make several copies.
- **Which process is better?**
  - Depends on your resources and timeline. We will discuss further in the breakout rooms.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

10

**Homework for Next Week**

- **Draft your cover letter.**
  - We will send you a sample and template to use as guides.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

11

**Questions and Breakout Rooms**

- **Breakout room goals:**
  - Volunteers will review your indexes and discuss your filing options.
    - We can also do additional reviews of your declaration.
  - Lecturers will be in the lobby in case any questions or issues arise.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

12



**Asylum Pro Se Module Series**  
**Week Seven (DATE)**  
After You File  
The Asylum Interview

1

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**What Happens After I File My Case?**

- You will receive the following notices, typically in this order but some items may arrive at the same time:
  - Receipt Notice
  - Biometrics Appointment Notice
  - Interview Notice
  - Maybe Request for Evidence
  - Notice of Decision
- Note: keep all these notices somewhere safe.
  - If you have not already, we suggest you purchase a folder or binder to keep your case documents (e.g., copy of your filing, notices) secure and in one place.

2

---

---

---

---

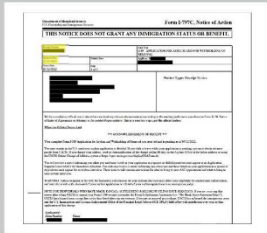
---

---

---

**Receipt Notice**

- This document acknowledges that your case was properly filed with USCIS.
- The document will contain the date that USCIS received your asylum application ("Received Date") and the number provided for your case ("Receipt Number").



3

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Biometrics Appointment Notice

- Biometrics appointment: a meeting where USCIS confirms your identity by taking your fingerprints and taking your photograph.
- After your case is receipted, USCIS will determine whether you and your derivatives will need to have biometrics appointments.
  - If USCIS decides you need an appointment, there will be information on the Notice of the date, time, and location of the appointment. The location will be the closest USCIS field office to the address you used when you filed the asylum application.
  - If USCIS decides you do not need an appointment, the information on the Notice will say there is no appointment necessary.

---

---

---

---

---

---


---

---


4

### Biometrics Appointment Notice Samples

1. USCIS deems an appointment is necessary.



2. USCIS deems an appointment is NOT necessary.




---

---

---

---

---

---

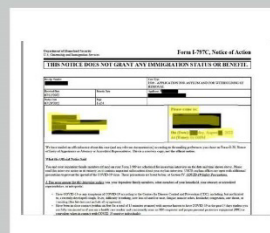
---

---

5

### Interview Notice

- This document will contain the date, time, and location of your asylum interview. There will also be date and information on what to bring to the interview.
- If you are not able to attend your asylum interview due to an unavoidable conflict, contact the asylum office immediately.
  - Delays caused by the applicant may impact when you can sign for a visa port of entry.
- You must attend your asylum interview **in person** to attend may result in denial of your case.
- Interpreters: If you need one, you should bring one for either what the notice says.
  - Cannot be someone with a pending asylum case.
  - Cannot be an immediate family member (or derivative).




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

6

**Request for Evidence (RFE)**

- Sometimes, an issue will arise during the interview that will require more information before the asylum officer can decide the case.
- The RFE should contain exactly what information you need to provide. There is also an option to explain why you cannot provide the information.
- If you get an RFE, we strongly encourage you to speak with a local immigration attorney as soon as possible.

7

---

---

---

---

---

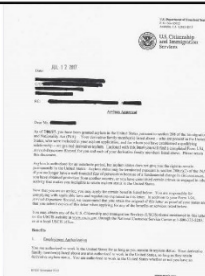
---

---

---

**Notice of Decision**

- This document contains USCIS's decision on your asylum claim.
- There are two common outcomes:
  - Grant of Asylum
    - Congratulations!
  - Notice of Intent to Deny (NOID)
    - If you receive this, we recommend you speak with a local immigration attorney as soon as you receive this notice because you are only given 16 days to respond.



8

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**How Do I Check the Status of My Case?**

- Once you receive your receipt notice, you can use that to [check the status](#) of your case. If you filed online, you can check myUSCIS for updates.
- Remember, Afghan asylum applicants have a faster timeline than most asylum-seekers.
  - You should be interviewed within 45 days of USCIS receiving your asylum application (use the "receipt date" indicated on your Receipt Notice).
  - You should receive a decision on your case within 150 days of USCIS receiving your asylum application (use the "receipt date" indicated on your Receipt Notice).

9

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Should I Do Anything While I Wait for My Asylum Interview?

- You do not need to memorize your claim.
- You can practice interviewing skills.
- You can create documents that help you organize your thoughts.
- You can continue collecting evidence.
- You can submit any additional evidence up until 14 days before the interview.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

10

The Asylum Interview

- The asylum interview is intended to be a non-adversarial process, meaning that it should be a conversation as opposed to a formal court hearing.
- Goal: the asylum interview should provide the asylum officer with enough information to determine whether the individual qualifies for asylum.
- The length of interview depends on the asylum officer and information provided (at the interview and in the filing) but **expect the interview to be at least two hours long**. If you are using an interpreter, expect a longer interview.
  - Note: there are reports of some interviews lasting six hours or longer.
- Many asylum offices only have two "slots" each day: 9am and 1pm so lines may be long.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

11

The Day of the Asylum Interview

- You, as the applicant, and all derivatives **MUST** attend the asylum interview.
- Bring the interview notice, all identity documents (including expired passports) you have, and originals of all evidence you submitted.
  - Remember: if you do not have the original of a document that is okay, just bring what you have.
- Leave early in case parking is difficult, the building is hard to find, or security has long queues.
- You will pass through security at USCIS. Generally, no food or beverages are permitted. Be sure to eat before your interview.
- Check-in with the clerk (this may take a while). You and any derivatives aged 14 years or older will have their photos and fingerprints taken.
- Once you have checked-in, wait to be called. This may take a while.
  - Note: typically, the asylum officer will call an applicant by the last three digits of their A number (the nine-digit code on your work permit and all USDS notices that starts A 266-XXXX-XXXX).

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

12

The Asylum Interview Process

- Asylum interviews will generally occur as follows:
  - You and the asylum officer exchange introductions.
    - The asylum officer will ask if you require the use of an interpreter.
  - The asylum officer explains the purpose of the interview.
  - The asylum officer administers the oath (a promise that you will be truthful).
  - The asylum officer swears in the interpreter.
  - The asylum officer reviews the I-589 with you.
  - The asylum officer asks several questions.
  - The asylum officer explains that there will be no decision provided today.

13

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

The Asylum Interview Questions

- Preliminary questions include the following:
  - The asylum officer will ask if you had help in preparing your I-589, you should say yes and explain that you worked with a lawyer to prepare the application.
  - The asylum officer will ask if there are any substantive changes or additions to the application (e.g., if you moved, changed jobs, had a child).
- Background questions include the following:
  - Your full name, your immigration history, travel outside of the United States and Afghanistan, your social media accounts, whether you are currently working, etc.

14

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

The Asylum Interview Questions

- Substantive questions:
  - There may be broad questions, such as:
    - Why are you afraid to go back to Afghanistan?
    - Have you ever been part of an organization or group like a political party?
    - Did others in the community know your beliefs? How?
    - Do you know anyone who was harmed or threatened to be harmed?
  - There may be targeted or follow-up questions, such as:
    - Where did you work in Afghanistan? What was the nature of your work? How long did you work there? From what date did you start working at that job? What date did you leave that job?
- Remember to listen to each question before responding.
- Answer only the question the asylum officer is asking. If the asylum officer wants more information, they will ask for more information.

15

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Tips and Strategies for the Asylum Interview

- Eat before you arrive.
- Listen carefully to each question before responding.
- Never guess the answer. It is okay to say "I do not know" or "I do not remember."
- Answer only the question asked.
- Ask for a break if you would like one.
- Try to remain calm and collected, even if the questions are repetitive.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

16

Specific Information for the LOCAL Asylum Office

- Getting there:
  - To be provided.
- During the interview:
  - To be provided.




Photo of Asylum Office Building

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

17

Homework for Next Week

- Organize and finalize your asylum application and bring next week.
  - Should include
    - Form I-589
    - Declaration in Support of Asylum
    - Index of Exhibits, and
    - Cover Letter.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

18

Questions

19

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Mock Interview One

20

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Mock Interview Two

21

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Mock Interview Three

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

22

Mock Interview Four

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

23