



AMERICAN
IMMIGRATION
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ASSOCIATION

2024 AILA Paralegals Conference and Webcast

At the heart of a successful immigration firm are highly effective and skilled paralegals and support staff. This August, AILA is hosting a two-day, in-person conference and simultaneous webcast that will provide paralegals and support staff with insights into the complexities and practicalities of immigration law, preparing them to effectively assist their supervising attorneys and clients. Designed by AILA members (including former paralegals) with experience training support staff, the program will feature expert faculty covering all aspects of what an immigration paralegal encounters in day-to-day practice. Faculty will begin by providing a foundational overview of the paralegal's role before expanding into subject-matter-specific information on a range of topics. Sessions will delve into issues relevant to employment-based immigration, removal and relief, adjustment of status, immigrant visa processing, family-based immigration, and much more. Each session will culminate with a question-and-answer period, allowing attendees to interact directly with faculty and gain further insights. Don't miss this exciting opportunity to hone your paralegal skills and network with your colleagues from across the country!

August 5–6, 2024

**The Venetian Convention & Expo Center
Las Vegas, NV**

Times listed on the program are Pacific Time (PT)

Note: All sessions and events are subject to change without notice.

Monday, August 5, 2024

7:30 am – 6:30 pm **Registration and Exhibits**

8:00 am – 8:10 am **Welcome and Remarks**

8:10 am – 9:40 am **Role of a Paralegal**

Paralegals are indispensable assets in the operation of law firms, nonprofits, and in-house legal teams, playing a multifaceted role by supporting attorneys, assisting clients, and ensuring that all necessary steps are taken to advance cases efficiently. Our panelists will discuss the qualities, skills, and crucial measures it takes to be a successful immigration paralegal.

- Ethical requirements: unauthorized practice of law, dual representation, conflicts, and confidentiality

(DL) = Discussion Leader

* = invited, not confirmed

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- Financial responsibilities: accurate billing, timely handling of funds, and upholding professional standards
- Client service: client communication, managing deadlines, and collaboration with key players
- Case management: accurate and timely completion of case work, research, and writing
- Reporting and technology: client data management, reporting, and systems
- Professional development: staying informed and advancement

9:40 am – 10:10 am **Networking Break**

10:10 am – 11:10 am **Using Artificial Intelligence Responsibly: A Powerful Ally for Paralegals**
 Artificial intelligence (AI) is a valuable tool that has the potential to empower paralegals to work smarter, not harder. By responsibly embracing AI, paralegals can enhance their skills, improve their efficiency, and deliver better service to clients. But keeping up with the latest trends can be tough. Panelists will give you crucial updates and practical resources to stay abreast of the latest changes in AI, which will help you advance your career as an immigration paralegal.

- Leveraging AI to improve work product while avoiding pitfalls of this cutting-edge technology
- Streamlining case processing and improving client communication: important case management platform features to identify and learn
- Researching and implementing AI: tips from the experts
- Ethical considerations of AI in the legal field: confidentiality, bias, transparency, and accountability
- Avoiding cybersecurity incidents: key information, factors, and red flags

11:10 am – 12:00 pm **Lunch Break**

12:00 pm – 1:00 pm **Practice Management and the Paralegal**
 The paralegal’s role assisting with practice management is evolving and becoming more demanding. Attorneys and clients are increasingly relying on paralegals for updates and assistance with cases. Panelists will provide helpful tips and tricks for dealing with practice management issues and difficult clients.

- Email management
- Database management, including daily tasks and reporting
- Recording case notes and actions on important items
- Client service and management, including de-escalation and flagging issues to the supervising attorney
 - Ethical considerations
- Setting reminders and deadlines
- Productivity tips and tricks

1:00 pm – 1:30 pm **Networking Break**

1:30 pm – 2:30 pm **Employment-Based Immigration 101**

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Panelists will provide an overview of employer-sponsored immigration, “from soup to nuts.” They will review the basics of both nonimmigrant visas (NIVs) and immigrant visas (IVs). Finally, they will discuss basic (but important) concepts that are inherent in employment-based (EB) immigration.

- Which agencies are involved in the employment-based immigration process?
- Employment documentation: I-94, I-797, visa
- Work visa vs. business visa
- Permanent residency: the IV (i.e., green card)
- The Visa Bulletin and EB preference categories
- The ethics of dual representation: Who is the petitioner? Who can pay for services?

2:30 pm – 3:00 pm

Networking Break

3:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Hot Topics in Employment-Based Cases

Panelists will discuss the latest developments and hot topics in employment-based immigration. They will synthesize what they have learned in 2024, and what may be in store for 2025.

- H-1B updates, including the cap process
- PERM hot topics: The latest updates on Form ETA 9089 in the Foreign Labor Application Gateway (FLAG) system
- L-1 updates
- E-1/E-2 updates
- U.S. Department of State (DOS) and consular updates
- Backlog and retrogression issues

4:00 pm – 4:30 pm

Networking Break

4:30 pm – 5:30 pm

NIV and IV Options for Extraordinary/Exceptional Individuals: Creative Approaches for the Exceedingly Talented

Expert panelists will provide an overview of NIV and IV options for those who possess extraordinary or exceptional abilities. From unusual cases to practical tips, the discussion will cover creative approaches and utilizing the evidence available for cases that don’t fit the typical H, L, or PERM mold.

- O and P NIVs: screening the case, collecting evidence, and potential issues
- EB-1A and EB-2 National Interest Waivers: self-sponsored IV petitions
- Common fields, approaches, and pitfalls
- How to build a case: evidence, forms, and cover letter
- Tips for submission
- Ethical issues

5:30 pm – 6:30 pm

Networking Reception

Tuesday, August 6, 2024

8:00 am – 5:30 pm

Registration and Exhibits

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- 8:30 am – 9:30 am **Adjustment of Status vs. Consular Processing: “To Go, or Not to Go, That Is the Question”**
 Expert panelists will discuss the two different routes to permanent residency. They will provide a broad overview of the factors to consider when choosing between adjustment of status (AOS) and consular processing for employment– and family-based green cards. Next, they will carefully examine issues ranging from maintaining and changing existing status, through the practical consideration of processing an immigrant petition abroad versus filing with USCIS. The possible positive and negative effects of each of these issues will be discussed.
- Current status: determining the best pathway to becoming a lawful permanent resident (LPR)
 - Employment– and family-based routes
 - Ripe for adjudication: monitoring Visa Bulletin priority dates and priority categories
 - Travel restrictions and inadmissibility issues
 - Other quirky considerations
 - Government agency pro and cons
- 9:30 am – 10:00 am **Networking Break**
- 10:00 am – 11:00 am **Family-Based Immigration 101: “It’s All Relative”**
 Our panelists will lay the groundwork for the essential knowledge paralegals need to work on a family-based immigration case (from beginning to end). Most family cases follow a similar process. Speakers will discuss (in detail) common issues paralegals encounter throughout the process of working on a family-based case, including who can be sponsored, documentary challenges, and ethical issues.
- Definitions: Who is a family member (for immigration purposes)?
 - Spouse-based immigration issues: a bona fide relationship and conditional permanent residency
 - The different processes to sponsor a foreign national relative
 - Dual representation (including ethical) issues and how to identify them
 - Documenting the case, including when to advise the client about necessary paperwork
 - The basics of affidavit of support requirements and ethical issues arising around co-sponsors (such as dual representation)
- 11:00 am – 12:00 pm **Lunch Break**
- 11:30 am – 11:45 am **AILA Affiliated Paralegals (AAP) Presentation**
Reid Trautz, Senior Director, AILA Practice & Professionalism Center, Washington, D.C.
Ian Longmire, AILA Governance Associate, Washington, D.C.
- 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm **Removal 101: The “Who, What, Where, When, and How” of Removal Proceedings**

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The results of removal proceedings almost always have significant (and sometimes dire) consequences for noncitizen clients. Our panel of experts will provide an overview of removal proceedings, including who is placed in removal, how to locate them, significant milestones, common applications for relief from removal, and how to assist clients after proceedings have concluded.

- Credible and reasonable fear processes, enforcement actions inside the United States that lead to removal proceedings
- How to locate detained noncitizens, identify the type of proceedings, and initiate representation
- The Notice to Appear (NTA), pleadings, and proper filing and feeing in applications for relief
- Applications for relief, evidentiary requirements, and ethical considerations: LPR-cancellation, 10-year-bar cancellation, VAWA cancellation, and asylum
- Looking towards the future: receiving the benefits won in court, preserving appellate rights

1:00 pm – 1:30 pm

Networking Break

1:30 pm – 2:30 pm

Humanitarian Cases: “Give Me Your Tired, Your Poor, Your Huddled Masses Yearning to Breathe Free”

Our panelists will provide a broad overview of the relief available to the most vulnerable immigration populations by discussing the “nuts and bolts” of humanitarian cases. The session will include how to screen and identify prospective clients, applying the facts of a case to potential protections, and what to do when the individual’s story does not add up.

- Temporary Protected Status (TPS)
- Victims of criminal activity (U visa)
- Victims of human trafficking (T visa)
- Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS)
- Domestic violence protections through the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)

2:30 pm – 3:00 pm

Networking Break

3:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Removal, Family, and Humanitarian Hot Topics in an Election Year: New Trends, New Issues

The U.S. immigration system is subject to constant changes. Expert panelists will provide an overview of the current state of play in removal, family, and humanitarian cases. They will review the latest trends and important updates in immigration court. Finally, they will offer insights about what may unfold in this election year and beyond.

- Removal defense
- Family
- Humanitarian relief

4:00 pm – 4:30 pm

Networking Break

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4:30 pm – 5:30 pm

Communicating with Vulnerable Migrants: Removing Barriers and Building Bridges

Effective communication with vulnerable migrants is crucial for ensuring equal access to rights and services in the immigration field. Our panel of experts will cover pressing issues—e.g., language barriers, cultural sensitivities, and accessibility concerns—offering practical and thoughtful solutions to help improve engagement and empower marginalized communities. Finally, they will provide suggestions and tips for paralegals to facilitate building more inclusive and equitable pathways for clients.

- Overcoming language barriers: strategies for effective multilingual communication
- Cultural sensitivity: understanding and addressing diverse cultural perspectives
- Accessibility concerns: Ensuring information and services are accessible to all individuals, including those with disabilities
- Empowerment through community engagement: fostering trust and collaboration within vulnerable communities
 - Harnessing technology: leveraging digital tools to reach (and engage with) diverse immigrant populations
- Navigating legal complexities: simplifying immigration processes and legal jargon

5:30 pm

Conference Concludes

Program Committee

Flavia Santos Lloyd, Conference Program Committee Chair, Newport Beach, CA

Tammy Lin, Conference Program Committee Vice Chair, San Diego, CA

Brian J. Ramsey, AILA Board of Governors, Las Vegas, NV

Janice A. Flynn, AILA CBP Liaison Committee, London, UK

Ganesh Kalyanaraman, AILA DOS Liaison Committee, Sacramento, CA

Brenda Oliver, AILA Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, Reston, VA

Bademba Barry, Bethesda, MD

Mandi B. Bucceroni, Philadelphia, PA

Flomy J. "FJ" Diza, San Francisco, CA

Samira Ghaderi, Mclean, VA

Jesse Evans-Schroeder, Tucson, AZ

Charlotte Slocombe, London, UK

Jeff Joseph, AILA First Vice President, Denver, CO

JJ Area, AILA Education Program Manager, Washington, D.C.

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