

LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO SCHOOL OF LAW
IMMIGRATION PRACTICUM
APPLICATION FOR 4-CREDIT PERMISSION, SPRING 2022

Background

For decades, political stagnation around comprehensive immigration reform, combined with increased enforcement measures, has limited access to lawful migration, compromised the rights of immigrants in the United States, and steadily increased detention of immigrants within the United States. Because deportation is classified as a civil rather than a criminal sanction, immigrants facing removal are not afforded the constitutional rights that are provided to criminal defendants. Immigrants facing deportation, including children, often do not have an opportunity to be represented. Detained immigrants, particularly those held in remote locations, face the additional obstacle of accessing counsel from behind bars. Yet, in every immigration case, a trained attorney who can argue for deportation, regardless of whether the immigrant is represented, represents the government.

Ensnared in one of the most complex areas of federal law, the stakes for immigrants are high, including prolonged detention, deportation, and family separation. Recent changes to immigration policy have resulted in over 30,000 migrants, including asylum seekers, to wait in Mexico border towns until their case can be processed. This can take several months, if not longer, putting children and families at risk of further harm while they wait. Given the lack of due process for immigrants in legal proceedings and documented human and civil rights abuses of immigrant detainees, there is a critical need for legal representation of immigrants. *Immigrants who have access to an attorney are ten times more likely to receive immigration protection.* For many, especially those seeking asylum, working with an attorney can mean life or death.

Extra 2-Credits for Immigration Practicum via Spring Break Immersion Trip

Due to COVID-19, travel to the Southern border will be dependent on timely CDC and Loyola guidance and policies. In the event that travel will be prohibited, all work will be completed, both synchronously and asynchronously, with supervision.

The Immigration Detention Project provides an opportunity for School of Law students, faculty, and alumni to provide direct representation to detained immigrants where the need is greatest. Faculty and practitioners will supervise students, with one practitioner per two-four students. Selected participants will collaborate with local and/or national immigrant legal service provider organizations to advance their work. The Legal Services Providers may change due to COVID-related travel restrictions. At this time, travel is scheduled during spring break to work alongside the immigration defenders at ProBAR in South Texas. Some complex cases may require ongoing representation, which will be coordinated via the Immigration Practicum.

Up to 10 student participants will be selected for this experience via an application process.¹ Selected students will participate in both the Immigration Practicum as well as spring break immersion travel to Harlingen, Texas (if possible).

During the week of spring break, whether or not travel is required, student participants should expect to commit their entire business day to legal service work. Optional luncheon and evening programs will be provided to learn more about the work of community-based organizations collaborating with each legal service partner. Participants may be required to submit personal information to access confidential databases, detention facilities, and servers of partner organizations.

Selected participants will be invited to share their experience and reflections via a public presentation, and to identify opportunities for other students and practitioners to engage in social justice advocacy on behalf of immigrants both in Chicago and nationwide.

Please complete and submit advanced permission [application](#).

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: If I am a 1L, can I participate in this experiential opportunity?

A: Unfortunately, 1Ls are unable to participate in the 4-credit option for the Immigration Practicum. We welcome 1Ls to apply their second year of law school, and we suggest reaching out the Immigrant Rights Coalition (student group) for non-credit bearing immigration related volunteer opportunities.

Q: If I am a Weekend JD student, can I participate in this experiential opportunity?

A: Yes. The expectations for all students participating are the same. Scheduling and travel is designed to accommodate (to the greatest extent possible) students in the WJD program.

¹ The number of participants may vary depending on travel and types of projects available for student engagement.

Q: How are participants selected?

A: Participants will be selected by faculty members Prof. Sarah J. Diaz & Prof. Claudia Valenzuela based on demonstrated commitment to advocacy on behalf of the immigrant population.

Q: What kind of work will I be assigned?

A: This will vary by session and the current needs of the partner organizations, which may change weekly or even daily. Immigration law and policy changes quickly. Generally, students can expect at least one or a combination of the following types of hands-on experience: 1) Direct client experience – client intake (telephonic or Zoom) for children and adults, asylum (children and adults) and possibly bond cases 2) Policy work, with emphasis on issues affecting children and families, 3) Appellate work, 4) Legal research and writing, including country condition reports, “cimmigration” research related to individual clients, and motion drafting. Student participants will need to be flexible and professional in managing their expectations.

Q: Do I need to know immigration law/have experience with immigration law to participate?

A: No. Training and supervision will be provided by experts in immigration law.

Q: Do I need to speak Spanish to participate?

A: No. But certain projects may require Spanish proficiency, or proficiency in another language. Students will be assigned to projects based on language proficiency requirements related to that project.

Q: Are there any costs associated with this experiential opportunity?

A: No. Travel expenses are generously provided by the John & Kathleen Schreiber Family Foundation.

Q: If I am a DACA student, can I participate in IDP?

A: Yes.

Please contact IDP Faculty Supervisors, [Sarah Diaz](#) and Claudia Valenzuela for any additional questions.