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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **EOIR to Expand and Improve Pro Bono Programs**

FALLS CHURCH, Va. – The Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) is committed to promoting pro bono representation in the immigration courts. In 2006, EOIR created a committee — composed of immigration judges, court administrators, representatives of the Board of Immigration Appeals and the Office of the Chief Immigration Judge, and various EOIR legal staff — to oversee the expansion and improvement of pro bono programs.

The former Attorney General mandated an expansion of pro bono efforts at EOIR. Accordingly, in 2007, the committee developed a number of recommendations to further pro bono representation in the immigration courts, after input from nonprofit organizations, bar associations, private practitioners, the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Refugee Resettlement, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Recommendations that EOIR intends to implement include:

- Providing “best practices” and clear guidance to immigration judges and court staff on how to promote and facilitate pro bono representation;
- Expanding the [Legal Orientation Program](#) and encouraging development of similar programs;
- Expanding the [BIA Pro Bono Project](#) to serve greater numbers of unrepresented individuals;
- Designating local pro bono liaison judges to facilitate pro bono representation;
- Identifying pro bono cases and offering pro bono representatives priority scheduling as appropriate;
- Encouraging pre-trial conferences in pro bono cases;
- Examining additional ways to address the special needs of children;

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- Increasing the availability of self-help materials prepared or authorized by the Legal Orientation Program at local immigration courts and online; and
- Ensuring the integrity and promoting the availability of free or low cost legal services by publishing regulations to strengthen the [BIA recognition and accreditation](#) process and the requirements for providers who wish to be listed in [EOIR's List of Free Legal Service Providers](#).

In the past year, EOIR has doubled the size of the Legal Orientation Program for unrepresented detained aliens, expanded pro bono programs for unaccompanied alien children, and increased the number of court-sponsored pro bono attorney training programs. Together with the support of the legal community, federal judiciary, and fellow government agencies, EOIR looks forward to carrying out these recommendations, and welcomes additional ideas for expanding and improving pro bono representation before the agency.

— EOIR —

*EOIR, an office within the Department of Justice, is responsible for adjudicating immigration cases. Specifically, under delegated authority from the Attorney General, EOIR interprets and administers federal immigration laws by conducting immigration court proceedings, appellate reviews, and administrative hearings. EOIR consists of three components: the Office of the Chief Immigration Judge, which is responsible for managing the numerous immigration courts located throughout the United States where immigration judges adjudicate individual cases; the Board of Immigration Appeals, which primarily conducts appellate reviews of immigration judge decisions; and the Office of the Chief Administrative Hearing Officer, which adjudicates immigration-related employment cases. EOIR is committed to providing fair, expeditious, and uniform application of the nation's immigration laws in all cases.*