



Human Rights Defender Project – *Pro Bono* Representation

People detained by federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) have the right to legal counsel in immigration proceedings, but they do not have the right to a government-appointed attorney. **Many people, regardless of age, or ability, must rely on representing themselves in immigration court.**

While federal immigration law mandates detention of certain categories of people throughout their removal proceedings, many people are eligible for release on bond. High bond amounts, however, effectively prohibit many people from being released from custody. **New federal policies on detention mean that more people without any criminal history and with strong ties to the US are being detained.**

Legal representation makes a significant difference. Represented immigrants are four times more likely to be released from detention than those without counsel.

Volunteer today to represent people in custody re-determination proceedings. No prior immigration experience is required. Attorneys must have a valid license to practice law in a U.S. jurisdiction. This opportunity is currently available at the Fort Snelling Immigration Court.

How to do this:

Step 1. Watch the training. The Human Rights Defender Bond Training, a two-hour online program presented by the Detainee Rights Clinic of the University of Minnesota Law School's James H. Binger Center for New Americans and Robins Kaplan LLP, provides a comprehensive overview of the process.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=owCMR_RHi1k

Step 2: Sign up to shadow an attorney from the Minnesota Detention Project. Observe detained immigration court proceedings and see how representation in custody redetermination proceedings makes a difference. **Shadow as often as needed to feel ready to volunteer.**

<http://bingercenterfornewamericans.volunteerlocal.com/volunteer/?id=21864>

Two-hour shifts are available on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Step 3: Join the Pro Bono Bond Representation Panel. Attorneys who have completed the online training and shadowed a Minnesota Detention Project attorney can be added to the pro bono panel. Attorneys have access to malpractice insurance coverage, ongoing training, and expert mentorship.

Step 4: Take a case. Once ready, volunteer attorneys can take a case distributed to the Pro Bono Bond Representation Panel via e-mail. Each bond case has been vetted by an experienced immigration

attorney. The volunteer attorney will receive information about the person's bond hearing date, family or other contact information, where they are detained, a summary of relevant evidence and documentation, and legal arguments to develop. Volunteers will also be paired with an experienced immigration attorney mentor. Volunteers typically will have 1-3 weeks to prepare for the custody redetermination hearing in front of an immigration judge.

This project is a collaboration of The Advocates for Human Rights, the University of Minnesota Law School's James H. Binger Center for New Americans and Robins Kaplan LLP.

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