

## **Small Group Sessions**

*This year's Annual Conference will offer several small sessions for attendees who would like a more advanced, discussion-style experience. Attendance at these sessions will be on a first-come, first-served basis. Pre-registration is not required. These sessions **will not be recorded** and are **not CLE-eligible**.*

### **THURSDAY, JUNE 19, 2025**

7:25 am–8:25 am

#### **'Hitched' to the Right Visa: K-1 or Immigrant Visa?**

*This workshop will discuss how to navigate the K-1 and IV fiancé visa options. Experts will clarify the differences between these visas, address key questions for clients, and uncover potential red flags. Come to discuss how to set clear expectations and manage the “90 Day Fiancé effect” to ensure a smooth journey for your clients.*

- Differences between a K-1 and IV: Which one should my client pick and why?
  - What should you be asking your prospective client?
    - Potential client red flags
    - Setting Client Expectations

*Ginger (Bernadette) McGuire (DL), Englewood, CO  
Maria C. Chavez, Distance Learning Committee Chair, San Diego, CA*

8:25 am–8:45 am

#### **Networking Break**

8:45 am–9:45 am

#### **Special Employment Visa Considerations for Physicians**

*This workshop will cover statutory and regulatory challenges and opportunities that are unique to physicians. Speakers will discuss educational equivalency verification, licensure, and timing considerations that are outside of the typical work visa considerations. Experts will not only discuss a “how to” on the educational pathways for physicians, but also nonimmigrant visa categories that might allow work in the U.S., Lawful Permanent Residency options, and what to consider when advising clients.*

- What makes doctors different (ECFMG, USMLE, & licensure requirements)
- Immigration Training Options for Physicians (J-1 vs. H-1B)
- J-1 Waivers post training and timing concerns
- Green card options and timing (PERM vs. Physician NIW vs. EB-2 NIW)
- Options when not yet licensed

*David W. Leopold (DL), AILA Past President, Cleveland, OH*

*(DL) = Discussion Leader*

*\* = invited, not confirmed*

*Note: All sessions and events are subject to change without notice. First-come, first-served. Once the room reaches maximum capacity, entry will be denied.*

*Anamar Naish, Cincinnati, OH*  
*Elissa J. Taub, Memphis, TN*

9:45 am–1:30 pm

**President’s Installation Break**

1:30 pm–2:30 pm

**Nonprofit Management Question and Answer Session**

*Nonprofit organizations come with their own challenges in management. High caseloads and less experienced attorneys can be a recipe for hardship. Clients can be in dire circumstances, creating communication barriers and case management challenges. Technology investment is sometimes lacking. Grant writing and reporting requirements can create tension. Secondary trauma is also a serious concern. But there are solutions. This will be a real conversation, guided by you, but we expect to cover such things as:*

- Make technology and staffing a priority
- Manage and lead newer and volunteer lawyers
- Solve reporting requirement inefficiencies
- Offer light in hard times without being pulled under

*Caroline van der Harten (DL), Portland, OR*  
*Lauren Fisher Flores, Harlingen, TX*  
*Adonia R. Simpson, Washington, D.C.*

2:30 pm–3:00 pm

**Networking Break**

3:00 pm–4:00 pm

**Securing Release from Mandatory Detention**

*Mandatory detention is one of the harshest aspects of immigration law and can severely affect a client’s mental and physical well-being, as well as our ability to zealously represent them in immigration court. Speakers will hold a discussion of different strategies for securing a client’s release from mandatory detention, from Matter of Joseph hearings (to challenge DHS’s mandatory detention allegation in the first place), to ICE parole requests and post-custody reviews, to habeas petitions in federal court.*

- *Matter of Joseph* hearings
- Overview of 1226(c) habeas case law
- Post-order custody reviews – 90, 180, and litigation
- ICE parole and PD requests (including helpful ICE directives)

*Glykeria Teji (DL), Newark, NJ*  
*Simon Y. Sandoval-Moshenberg, Fairfax, VA*

*(DL) = Discussion Leader*  
*\* = invited, not confirmed*

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4:00 pm–4:30 pm  
**Networking Break**

4:30 pm–5:30 pm

**Back to Basics: Burdens of Proof, Shifting Burdens, and Magic Words**

*Regardless of how long you have been practicing, we can overlook basic areas of the law that can be the key to your client's success. One of those can be burdens of proof. What does your client have to prove? What does the government have to weigh? When do the burdens shift? How do you remind the government of these in a way that achieves your client's goals?*

- Standards of Proof with USCIS and EOIR
- When do Burdens shift?
- What evidence has to be considered and given full weight?
- How do you corroborate circumstantial evidence?
- What magic language can you include to make sure that your case is reviewed properly?

*Raymond R. Bolourtchi (DL), St. Louis, MO*

*Ral E.N. Obioha, Houston, TX*

*Grace Okorie-Eric, Chicago, IL*

**FRIDAY, JUNE 20, 2025**

9:30 am–10:30 am

**District Court Litigation I: Settlement Negotiations and Motion Practice**

*Most immigration cases in federal district court tend to settle soon after filing. This discussion will focus on practical tips for working effectively with government attorneys to increase the chances of a quick and favorable settlement for your client. It will also cover strategies for handling motions to dismiss and motions for summary judgment.*

- Types of cases filed in federal district court
- Settlement negotiations
- Responding to Motions to Dismiss
- Summary Judgment Motions

*Rex Chen (DL), New York, NY*

*Maka Hutson, Dallas, TX*

10:30 am–11:00 am

**Networking Break**

11:00 am–12:00 pm

**PERM Practicum: From Start to Finish**

*Experts will take a PERM hypothetical and work through it from case initiation to ETA-9089 filing.*

*(DL) = Discussion Leader*

*\* = invited, not confirmed*

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- Case initiation: Drafting the PERM job description and minimum requirements for the role
- Tips for documenting that the sponsored employee meets PERM requirements
- ETA-9141 best practices
- Tips for drafting recruitment and the attorney's role
- Preparing the ETA-9089 and PERM audit file

*Kevin W. Miner (DL), USCIS HQ (Benefits Policy) Liaison Committee Chair, Atlanta, GA*  
*Roujin Mozaffarimehr, Business Section Steering Committee Chair, San Jose, CA*  
*Bennet Savitz, Boston, MA*

12:00 pm–1:00 pm

**Lunch Break**

1:00 pm–2:00 pm

**Ask Anything About Artificial Intelligence**

*No question is too dumb for our discussion on what artificial intelligence (AI) is, what it means to immigration lawyers, and how to use it proficiently and ethically. Our speakers know how to implement AI in their office safely, how to talk with their clients about it, what courts want to know about your AI use, and how to get various machines to give you results that make a difference. This is going to be a fun conversation, and we promise not to scare your pants off...or, at least, not much.*

*Charity Anastasio (DL), Practice and Ethics Counsel, AILA Practice and Professionalism Center, Washington, D.C.*

*Elina Magaly Santana, Annual Conference Committee, Miami, FL*

*Amelie S. Vavrovsky, Founder, Formally, Stanford, CA*

2:00 pm–2:30 pm

**Networking Break**

2:30 pm–3:30 pm

**Taxigation: What Immigration Practitioners Should Know**

*This session provides an essential overview of the key tax issues that impact immigration cases. Designed specifically for immigration attorneys, the program focuses on issue spotting. Attendees will learn about tax filing requirements, implications of non-resident versus resident tax status, obtaining and using ITINs, and how tax issues can impact citizenship.*

- Tax issues for unauthorized employment
- ITIN/SS-Tax issues for LPRs: substantial presence test
- Tax issues for students
- Non-compliance impact on immigration benefits, including citizenship
- Tax obligations for “digital nomad” entrants

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*\* = invited, not confirmed*

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*Edward R. White (DL), AILA DOL Liaison Committee Vice Chair/Annual Conference Committee, Boston, MA*

*Jordan Elmore, Denver, CO*

*Roland A. Sabates, Managing Member, Expat Legal Services Group, Kansas City, MO*

3:30 pm–4:00 pm

### **Networking Break**

4:00 pm–5:00 pm

### **Challenging a “Reason to Believe” Finding**

*A “Reason to Believe” finding requires neither a conviction, nor an arrest, nor due process but it can be a ground of inadmissibility that is nearly impossible to challenge. Speakers will discuss both in-country and consular findings of “Reason to Believe” and tips on how to challenge the government’s determinations.*

- Burden of Proof
- Common scenarios- drugs, security issues
- Immigrants affected- SIJS, AOSes, Immigrant Visas

*Ross A. Miller (DL), Houston, TX*

*Pamela Dones, Houston, TX*

## **SATURDAY, JUNE 21, 2025**

8:00 am–9:00 am

### **Northern Border Practice Updates**

*Practice along the northern border requires attorneys to keep abreast of adjudication trends and procedures at various ports of entry, each with their own practices and procedures. Experts will highlight the latest trends in both adjudications and admissions at these ports in a discussion with attendees.*

- Updates on logistics (appointments, airport wait-times, copies)
- Recent adjudication and admission issues:
  - L-1 adjudications: Blind testing on duties, degree issues for blanket L-1B (evaluation, original, etc.); missing I-129S or refusal to stamp
  - TN adjudications: Original degrees, letter details (specific dates, specific location), disregard of USCIS approvals
  - E-1/E-2 admissions: Confusion over E employees, admission with changes to the position
  - Waivers: Timelines and trends
  - Fees: Only credit card?
- Trends at specific ports

*Jessica D. Jensen (DL), AILA Board of Governors, Winnipeg, MB, Canada*

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*Charles E. Gillman, Houston, TX*

9:00 am–9:30 am

**Networking Break**

9:30 am–10:30 am

**District Court Litigation II: Trial Practice**

*This small group session will focus on Federal Court Practice post-motion practice. This session will focus on tips and strategies pertaining to discovery, depositions, and immigration federal court trials.*

- Discovery
- Deposition skills
- Pre-trial hearings
- Federal trials

*Anthony Drago Jr. (DL), Boston, MA*

*Enes Hajdarpasic, Elmwood Park, NJ*

10:30 am–11:00 am

**Networking Break**

11:00 am–12:00 pm

**Q&A with Former Immigration Judges and Board of Immigration Appeals Members**

*Ask former immigration judges and Board of Immigration Appeals members your pressing questions! Want advice on brief-writing, motions practice, corroborating your client's claim, making legal arguments, putting witnesses on the stand, or handling challenging trial attorneys? During this discussion, you can learn how to best present your removal case from the experts.*

*Susan Girardo Roy (DL), AILA Removal Defense Section Steering Committee Vice Chair/Annual Conference Committee, Princeton Junction, NJ*

*Lory Diana Rosenberg, Annual Conference Committee, Asheville, NC*

*Maria T. Baldini-Potermin, Glenview, IL*

12:00 pm–1:15 pm

**Lunch Break**

1:15 pm–2:15 pm

**Practicing at the Edge: Lessons from Guantánamo and Immigration Law Under Pressure**

*Join us for a timely and reflective discussion exploring the unprecedented legal, logistical, and ethical challenges faced by immigration attorneys representing noncitizens detained at Guantánamo Bay. This conversation features the firsthand experiences of three leading advocates—who organized and provided pro bono legal services to immigrants caught at the intersection of punitive immigration enforcement and national security policy. The session will not only unpack the legal complexities encountered in these cases but will also offer an open*

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*space for dialogue about broader systemic trends, including how to sustain collective response efforts in the face of rapidly shifting policy landscapes.*

- Organizing pro bono representation in high-stakes, high-barrier environments
- Legal and procedural obstacles when representing noncitizens detained at Guantánamo Bay
- Building community and resilience among advocates during periods of extreme policy pressure

*Alla K. Holmes (DL), Tallahassee, FL  
Helen Parsonage, Winston-Salem, NC  
Adonia Simpson, Washington, D.C.  
Alma L. David, Kent, WA*

2:15 pm–2:45 pm  
**Networking Break**

2:45 pm–3:45 pm  
**How Storytelling Can Make for Winning Immigration Petitions and Applications**  
*Because we are lawyers, we think and write like lawyers. But sometimes we need to be storytellers, especially when our audience is not other lawyers. Learn how to frame petitions and responses in ways that resonate with officers and adjudicators, even if they are not adoring fans.*

- Persuasion techniques
- How to incorporate things like videos
- Expert witness testimony
- How to adapt these techniques to various types of immigration cases
- Knowing your audience

*Erich C. Straub (DL), Milwaukee, WI  
Lynn M. O'Brien, Washington, D.C.  
Ivan Yacub, Woodbridge, VA*

3:45 pm–4:15 pm  
**Networking Break**

4:15 pm–5:15 pm  
**Well-Being Gameshow**  
*Join us for a delightful Well-Being quiz show, where we tell you the answer and you tell us the question. This will be fast-paced, fun, friendly, and will result in prizes. We may even have healthy treats. Sponsored by the AILA Well-Being Committee.*

*Lambert Dunn Jr. (DL), Oklahoma City, OK  
Jennifer M. Howard, AILA Well-Being Committee Vice Chair, Aurora, CO  
Jennifer Lynn Walker Gates, Austin TX*

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