



Roundtable: Maximizing the Value of Legal Internships in Immigration Services

January 22, 2025, 1:00 – 2:00 PM ET

Transcript

Introduction

Chelsea Mack: Hello, everyone. Thank you so much for attending today's session. We are really excited to have a rich discussion with other practitioners regarding creating and implementing and valuing legal internship programs in immigration service provider offices and spaces.

CM: My name is Chelsea Mack. I am going to be facilitating today's conversation. I am managing attorney at VECINA. We help with lots of things in the immigration space, especially the nonprofit space. One of the things that we are actively working on is developing a community of different immigration service providers to provide insight and connection to help continue to expand their programs and best support their programs. Today's session is one of those opportunities to provide some of that information and support to the different providers.

Today's Speakers

CM: Again, I am just a facilitator, so I want to get started with introducing our panelists. Today, first we are having Ashley Sanchez joining us. She is the supervising attorney at Catholic Charities, Diocese of Cleveland, Immigration Legal Services. She and her team assist immigrants in a wide variety of humanitarian-based immigration cases. Ashley also oversees her office's legal internship program.

CM: Next, we have Tori—sorry—Victoria Hamilton. My apologies. [laughs] My apologies. Victoria is a staff attorney at Catholic Charities, Diocese of Cleveland, Immigration Legal Services. She represents clients in humanitarian family-based immigration matters. She also hosts a local pro se asylum and work permit clinics out of Cleveland.

CM: Then finally we have Ted Oswald. Ted is the Immigration Legal Services Manager at World Relief Sacramento, which is a position he has held since 2017. His management of his office's legal services also includes overseeing the legal internship program. We have really wonderful panelists who do have some experience in handling these different types of programs for legal interns. They're definitely going to give insight.

CM: Please know, everything is always a work in progress when it comes to learning and developing skills as you go and as you practice. Whatever we say today is not necessarily anything set in stone. It's just being shared from our own experiences. With that, I want to just give one quick note about the term "legal." I know that that was a question that came up during our Q—or not Q&A, but the registration questions that we had for this webinar. We just want to make sure we define legal. When we're talking about legal interns, a legal intern



is someone who is currently a law student, so in an accredited law school here in the United States. We just want to make sure we share that. Now, of course, there may be some details and notes that we discuss that may be applicable to other internship programs, but the focus of today's discussion will be for legal programs.

Learning Objectives

CM: Great. As we move forward, we want to just go over what we are sharing as far as our learning objectives that you'll be able to achieve by the end of this roundtable. First, we believe you'll be able to identify reasonable recruitment strategies for an immigration legal internship program. Then, second, you will also be able to identify appropriate immigration law projects to delegate to legal interns. Third, you'll be able to apply three strategies to effectively operate an immigration legal internship program.

1. Developing and Recruiting for Immigration Legal Internship Programs

CM: With that, as we are moving on, we want to open up the discussion to our panelists. I'll just popcorn and pick Ashley to get us started and ask,

Can you describe your experience with immigration legal internship programs?

Ashley Sanchez: Hi, everyone. Thank you so much for joining in on the panel. My experience with immigration legal internship programs is twofold. In my current role as the supervising attorney, I handle the recruitment and supervision of all of our legal interns. I'm very involved in that whole process. Also, I did a lot of legal internships when I was still in law school. I have experience from that end too. I did multiple internships and clinics, including here at Catholic Charities while I was still in law school.

CM: Great. Next, we'll go with Victoria.

Victoria Hamilton: Awesome. Hi again. I'm Victoria. She/her pronouns. I previously also interned at Catholic Charities after my first year of law school, and I work with law students a lot in our clinics. They're often the majority of our staff at pro se clinics.

CM: Thank you, Victoria. Ted, please share your experience.

Ted Oswald: Sure. As a law student, I was able to intern at an organization that had a number of staff attorneys and larger capacity and a pretty well-developed intern program. I also got to intern another summer at a small resettlement agency under the supervision of just a single accredited representative. Two very different experiences. Carried that experience forward into my own time here at World Relief in trying to formulate what we want to do, how we want to treat our interns, how we want to develop our program here.

TO: I'll just note, to give a little bit of context, we're on the smaller side. We have one other attorney on staff, three accredited representatives, and we only do affirmative applications. That informs, to a large extent, some of the types of intern tasks and things that we often assign. We'll obviously be getting into the nitty-gritty of that a little bit later, but I'll leave that there.

CM: Thank you for sharing. Can either Victoria or Ashley, just for context, be able to share the size of your office for our participants?



AS: We have a pretty big team in comparison. I think we have eight attorneys at the moment, three accredited representatives. Then we also have a team of paralegals and intake staff.

CM: Thank you. We just want to set the stage saying that you don't have to have a huge, fully developed office or tons of attorneys or accredited representatives running around. I think the point of today is to discuss how accessible these programs can be for your office.

Discussion Question

CM: With that, we want to move forward with an interactive activity, starting with a Slido. If you are familiar with Slido, you know how this works, but if you're not, you can use the QR code or go to slido.com and enter the number here and answer for us,

What concerns or fears do you have about developing a legal internship program?

CM: You can do that now. We're curious to hear from you since we're not able to have you come off of mute or on video today. We are curious to hear what some of the concerns are, the fears that are represented by our participants, because we know that there are probably many.

CM: We are already having some people sharing. Not having enough time to teach or give legal interns work. The sustainability of the program. Do you believe that that is a pretty important concern and very valid? You give probably another few seconds to see if any other ones.

CM: Funding. I'm not sure we directly have a question about that, but if you all at some point in your conversation could address that, that would be awesome. Ensuring adequate training for essential tasks. Lack of interest by law students or inability to match interests with the needs. Supervision time. Again, looking at that overseeing aspect of it. Time availability for training and supervision. That is a really big concern that participants have. Appropriate mentorship with no attorneys on staff. That's actually an interesting point. Internships are short-term. Part of our discussion today will be trying to figure out what types of projects would be probably most suitable for these types of programs.

CM: Thank you for giving us input. Sustainability, we do see that. We will move forward with our next question with our panelists.

CM: I'm curious, because we're hearing a lot of these concerns, a lot of fears, so it probably means that people are either borderline considering taking on and creating a program, or maybe they just are completely backed off from it because of these fears and concerns.

Can you all speak to the value that you believe a legal intern contributes to an immigration legal services provider?

CM: Ted, I would love for you to start us off.

TO: They're the obvious, that it's extra staff support and capacity. Often, I've found a lot of our interns, when we have a good crop, that there's often extra language capacity that's being contributed to our team. Often law students compared to a different type of volunteer or intern, they may have already taken an immigration law course, and so there's at least a little bit of an undergirding framework for their understanding of immigration



law, but they're coming to you for that very specific on-the-ground practical training about how these systems, these bureaucracies, processes work. Maybe a little less often, our team's often really been enriched by different stories or backgrounds that interns are bringing to the team.

TO: I would say another thing that occurred to me was that the best interns we've had really enliven things and bring a positivity. I thought a go-get-them attitude, a real enthusiasm for what they're doing and what they're tackling. That can be really energizing for the team. Those would be my responses.

CM: Either Ashley or Victoria, would one of you like to also respond?

AS: I can go. I really echo everything that you just said. I really like the energy that interns bring to the office. It's a lot of fun. It's fun also getting to teach them about the law, and they help. Sometimes it's a lot of work on the front end where you have to train them at the beginning, but then you get the next three or four months of assistance where they're really able to help you get a lot more work done.

AS: I would also note, and I have to say this because both me and Victoria are in the same boat, it's a great source for hiring in the future. You've trained the students, you know how they work, you know that they do a good job, and then whenever you're hiring and looking for that attorney in a couple years, you can go back to those students that you worked with before. That's how me and Victoria were both hired.

CM: That is great. Victoria?

VH: Just to piggyback off of it, not only a good future hiring pool, but also even a possible funding pool. In our office, we have two folks. I was a fellow through the Ohio Access to Justice Foundation for two years after I graduated law school here. Then we just had another fellow start. Those were big grants that we were able to get to help us do new programs.

VH: The other thing I would say is it's cool to have fresh eyes in the office to, I don't know, get a sense of where you're at. In our clinic programs, I've had students provide me feedback that have allowed me to restructure our clinics in a way that totally changed the game. Sometimes it's cool to get new eyes on what your office is doing.

CM: Did you have anything else you wanted to add? Sorry. For some reason, I think I saw you come off mute. Thank you for that insight. I'm actually jotting down some notes because even that idea of possible funding pool as well as the enthusiasm, the nice drop of enthusiasm. I know, especially in light of us working in a very volatile system, that's definitely needed. Thank you for sharing those notes.

CM: As we move forward, I want to ask you all,

What are some of the important factors that you consider, or what you think service providers should consider, when determining whether to host a legal intern?

CM: This may be the type of work or supervision. I know that was a big concern and fear addressed. I'll just start with Ashley, if you have thoughts.

AS: I do think a big thing to think about is students are coming to us for a learning experience. We do have an obligation to make sure that we are supervising them adequately, that we're able to give them the feedback



that they deserve and a good experience. I guess we do have to think realistically, are we going to be able to meet with these students every week? Are we going to be able to give them tasks? I understand sometimes we're just at max capacity and it's not possible, but I really think that that should be a thought before agreeing to bring on a bunch of people that we don't have time to supervise.

CM: Ted, would you have any thoughts?

TO: Yes, a variety of things. When I started in this role, I was relatively new to immigration practice. I had a lot of apprehensions about taking on interns. Was I experienced enough? As my confidence in practice has grown over time, I think—I've had interns convey that they really appreciated and enjoyed their experience. It's really warmed me to continuing to offer these opportunities.

TO: Just to give a sense of the scale, during an academic term, a normal fall or spring semester, we might have one intern at a time, giving us 10 to 12 hours per week. We've had legal externs, people who are actually getting academic credit for participating in our program, and they often give a little bit more time. We can maybe speak about that further when we're answering questions about recruitment.

TO: The place where we've seen the most value, and if you're on the fence about engaging with interns for the first time, we'd possibly be saying maybe in the summer months, because there's more of this expectation that you might be able to get 40 hours per week for 10 weeks, versus the margins of the individual's time, the intern's time during an academic term. We've had a lot more success. There's a lot more relationship building. You feel a lot more inclined to give consistent, strong supervision if they're giving you 40 hours a week. Then the depth of the assignments increased too, as they get over that hump of the initial training, that you're really able to employ them, assign them in different ways. You don't have to start year-round having interns. We did just start with summer positions, and we've grown into having interns during the fall and spring months.

TO: I want to acknowledge too that it hasn't always panned out perfectly. We might move forward with a law student who looks great on paper, but they're so overburdened with extracurriculars and other commitments that when it actually comes time to volunteering consistently—these have been volunteer positions, we've really not had the funding in order to actually pay our interns, I would just note that as well—that sometimes it just may not go well. Maybe don't be too daunted by that because you might turn around and, as was shared, find a future colleague who's going to be joining your team. Try to take that long view, is maybe another recommendation.

AS: Can I just add, I also much prefer taking on interns in the summer months. We'll usually up our capacity. We'll take on maybe four or five interns over the summer, and maybe one or two during the semesters. I think it is because it's full-time, they learn a lot more, we have more time for supervision, they're able to do more tasks. It's really fun, and they also learn from each other. It's not always them coming to us immediately with questions. They can ask each other questions. I really like it. I like it better than taking students during the semester.

CM: Victoria, do you have anything you want to add?

VH: I think the only other thing is just making sure you're ready with a diverse range of tasks too. I know that I've gotten this email from Ashley where it's like we can't just have them writing briefs. We need to do other things so that they can learn about other areas of the law. Being ready with ideas of what kinds of things will be



helpful to them, whether they start doing intakes with you or going with you to court, all those kinds of things are really important too.

CM: Thank you all for that input. I guess to piggyback off of something that Ashley just mentioned a minute ago, as far as the time of the year that she prefers to have interns, that can move us forward to our next question, which is,

What strategies does your office implement to recruit legal interns? Just considering maybe when you like to recruit or how you like to recruit.

CM: I will go back to Ashley starting this because it was fresh from your last comment. Then obviously others can join.

AS: We are always recruiting legal interns. It feels like it never stops because everything is basically on a semester-by-semester and then summer basis. We have different postings. We have really close relationships with the law schools in the area, so they all know—they email me when it's January. Okay, it's time to update our post. We just keep in regular contact with them. They have networking events that they'll invite us to.

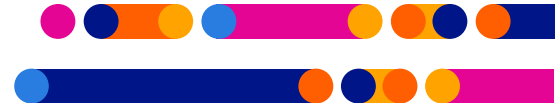
AS: One of the things that I'm working for is to try to recruit at other law schools as well. I did not go to law school in the Cleveland area. I went out of state. I think there's a whole pool of people that we could be tapping potentially. How to recruit, I think I've already answered that. We'll do the recruiting events with the schools. We'll do online postings. Then sometimes we'll just get people emailing out of nowhere who just have an interest. Those are sometimes our best interns.

CM: Ted, would you like to share some of your office's strategies?

TO: I'll share that we've used—again, beyond the scope of legal, but I think it's helpful to explain this a little bit because we've had undergraduate interns. We've had professionals who want to change careers and give us a significant amount of time volunteering. We've had, through a faith-based international volunteer exchange program, a team member come in and work with us full-time for a year. I think for me it's often been looking at capacity and cobbling together what's the best way that we can engage volunteers of a variety of types. We love legal interns, law student interns when we have them.

TO: I would say a lot of the same things, like some of the law schools that have immigration clinics, getting close to those professors or those facilitators, that's led to a lot of warm referrals from potential candidates. On-campus interviewing for summer positions has been really productive. Like I said, one local law school has an externship program, or at least that's the label that they use for it. Just being a part of their directory and having a good relationship with that coordinator so that she has fed students our information when she gets a hint that there might be interest in that student working at an immigration legal service provider.

TO: I'll mention too, one of our local law schools—we have three in the Sacramento area—has an LLM program for international lawyers to get their graduate law degree in the United States. We've had a lot of great interns come through that program. Often, they're more mature, they're further on in their careers. Yes, they might be mastering English, but occasionally we get someone who's a polyglot, speaks four languages, is really passionate about the work because they're either an immigrant themselves or they're coming from abroad. That's been a really fertile source of a lot of recruiting. Those students have told other students in the LLM program that they had a good experience at our office.



TO: I don't want to speak too long, but the pandemic forced us to pivot in a lot of ways to remote practice. That actually included taking on remote interns for the first time. Something that's been really intriguing with that but maybe not necessarily ideal, that we've continued to have entirely remote interns. I'd actually say that that's served us somewhat well during those fall or spring semesters where you're only getting 10 to 12 hours per week. It's a scenario where it's like, do I want that student to commute half an hour or 40 minutes to our office to work? Could they work from home and actually add another hour and a half to what they can offer each week because they're working from home or a space that's more convenient for them?

TO: This goes back to the last question, but I felt that it was really important, because we have a fluid working arrangement, because of limited space in our office, some staff work from home some days, they're in other days. Our interns, it's often a hybrid arrangement for them as well.

TO: Just thinking ahead, a real practical consideration that I wanted to raise was how to engage interns remotely. We have our interns issued computers because we don't want sensitive client data on their personal devices. We've actually issued interns virtual phone numbers or actually given them a dedicated cell phone that they're able to use over the duration of the summer. We actually pass that physical phone on to different interns after one session ends and we start another. That's been really fruitful.

TO: The reason I wanted to bring that up with respect to recruitment was if you're actually willing and can find a way to recruit well beyond your area by having an entirely remote intern where we've actually mailed equipment to them and they mail it back to us at the end of the session, is you can potentially reach a much larger pool of law students from well beyond your immediate geographic region. It's always our preference to give those opportunities to those local students. Sometimes you might actually get a really great candidate.

TO: For the type of work that we're doing, that again, it's affirmative applications, we're able to hold—we hold most of our client meetings virtually or remotely. It's not too difficult to patch in that intern remotely as well, using a team tool like Microsoft Teams or Slack, or something that gives them continuous access to the rest of the team. Being fully remote comes with a lot of drawbacks. I just wanted to mention how that's part of our, the mix when we're talking about recruitment strategies. We've found some success with that in the past.

CM: Thank you for that. Victoria, did you have anything you wanted to add to this question?

VH: Sure. For me, so I'm a staff attorney, I'm not supervising or really recruiting that much. What I like to try and do is have law students, especially 1Ls, volunteer at our asylum clinics and our work permit clinics, because then they get a sense of what it is to do a little bit of immigration law. At least for me in my law school, I felt like nobody was really talking about immigration. We had a class about it but it didn't feel like the environment was super interested in it. I feel like giving a little opportunity to have just a little bit of an experience is really helpful to open people's eyes to it who might not have considered it before.

CM: That's actually a really good note. I'm personally taking down notes because you never know when you'll need this information. That was actually a good note. Thank you for sharing that.

Discussion Question

CM: As we move forward, we want to engage our participants again with Slido. Again, you can use the QR code or go to slido.com and enter this ID number here. We want to hear from you,



After hearing from our panelists, what strategies might your office implement to recruit legal interns?

CM: We're curious, or maybe you already do if you do have a program, but I know that probably many of our participants today are not currently hosting programs. We're just curious to hear what strategies that you've pulled from them, or maybe another creative strategy. Maybe someone said something and then you thought, actually, this might be more conducive to our office in our area. Just curious to hear from you. We'll just give that a few moments.

CM: We have someone saying, "Good ideas today. Reaching out to the partner with the paralegal training program." That is actually a really good idea and hopefully really helpful. Post-graduate fellowships. Definitely doing that. I know hearing from even some of our discussion today, that is a really great strategy.

2. Identifying Projects to Delegate to Legal Interns

CM: We can move forward and talk now about getting to the nitty-gritty of all of these things. We've set up, we've understood why these projects or why these programs are important, the value of them. We've discussed important factors you want to consider, and then strategies to help recruit. Now that we have these interns in place, we now want to look forward and move forward to the types of projects that would be well suited to our legal interns. Curious to hear from our panelists. I can just start with Victoria,

What types of projects do you think would be well suited to legal interns?

CM: I know that you started touching on this a little bit as far as saying that programs should have a diverse range of tasks. Just curious on what you mean by that and maybe some examples of what you think are helpful.

VH: As I mentioned earlier, brief writing for an asylum application in removal proceedings is great because they get to do legal research and learn to apply facts to the law as a lawyer would. Motion writing. We've been doing a lot of motions to terminate the last couple months. Those were really great assignments for law students, I think, as well as form prep and trying to get interview experience.

VH: For me, when I was a law student, I got to do some of our intakes. I was asking the questions that our intake staff would normally take. That was extremely valuable to me to get to learn how to interview somebody and talk to somebody and start getting that experience, because it's definitely one of those things that you don't get in the classroom. I felt like I got to come back in my 2L year and brag that I was actually doing client work, because nobody else was. I think those are some of the big ones.

CM: That's really funny. I understand that, where you're just like, "Yes, I have more than just the textbook experience. I have some hands-on." It's really helpful. Ted, would love to hear from you with your program what projects you all use.

TO: Because we don't do removal defense in our program, I often try to make that known or draw attention to that with interns when interviewing just to make sure that their expectations are lining up with the type of opportunity that we can give them. I would just say because of grants, we're a high-volume provider of naturalization services and DACA renewals and adjustment of status applications, especially for refugees because we're at a refugee resettlement agency.



TO: I really like these discrete types of cases because after the screening stage, it can basically, and with sufficient training, it can be handed to an intern and they have that responsibility to work with the client on preparing their forms and then conducting follow-up appointments, reviewing the forms with the clients. It's all under supervision and providing answers along the way. I similarly have found a lot of positive feedback that people are surprised at how much they get to work with clients and meet people from all different walks of life through their internships because they're able to get familiarized with these specific processes.

TO: We often go deep on a few things and give a lot of responsibility to the interns to push those forward. We've done a lot with asylum workshops, as has already been noted, or one-off TPS workshops, if that's a priority for a certain client population at a particular time. Those have been other ways that we've been able to fold interns in as form preparers.

TO: One other thing, I think the administrative support side of things, case management side of things, that's a big piece of practice, especially in a nonprofit context, sometimes doing things related to grant management or record keeping. That's not how I would ever want to use a legal intern fully, but I don't think that there's a downside entirely to them getting to see that aspect of real-world practice that comes with the territory. I'd maybe just mention that too, that that's not something that I necessarily shy away from.

CM: Thank you for that. Ashley, do you have anything that you wanted to add to this part?

AS: Just quickly, from an educational standpoint, I always really like to give the students at least one big writing project. It usually ends up being an asylum brief, and we'll do trainings on what should be in an asylum brief and teaching them all of that from the get-go. It's also just really great having students doing legal research, period. Maybe there's a weird issue that comes up in a citizenship case or something like that. The students usually have free access to Westlaw or Lexis, and they're still very familiar with how to use it. I've forgotten over the years. They're really good at that and finding great case law, and they have the time to dig into it. That's just another way to use them.

CM: Thank you. Thank you all for your input.

Discussion Question

CM: We want to move forward to another Slido. Again, you can use the QR code or go to slido.com, enter the ID number. We just want to hear from you as far as in your experience,

What types of projects either does your office currently delegate to legal interns [or], hearing our panelists today, what you think would actually be beneficial based on your own practice?

CM: We all know, as Ted shared, they don't do any type of removal defense work, whereas Cleveland does, and just moving forward, trying to figure out what actually makes sense for the type of work that we do. If you want to add in any of your thoughts as far as this experience, we'd love to hear from you. We'll just give it a moment to see if anyone wants to share.

[silence]



I think everyone is a little scared. It's okay, though. It's okay. Don't worry. We still have other opportunities for you to engage, as well as the Q&A at the end. We'll move forward to our last question for our panelists before we open up to more engagement with our participants.

3. Operating an Immigration Legal Internship Program

CM: Can each of our panelists share a little bit about their experience with our participants?

Can each of you share one to two strategies, if not more—if you have more, that's fine too—for an immigration legal services provider who wants to operate an effective legal internship program? What do you think would be helpful for them to know?

CM: I know we've talked a little bit about recruitment. We've talked about projects. Just overall, whether it's supervision or other details, what do you think would be helpful? We can start with you, Ashley, and just go from there.

AS: One of the things I think really works well in our office is we have weekly check-ins with all of the students. Over the summer, it'll be a group check-in. Then we also do occasional one-on-one check-ins. I'll meet with the students, see how things are going, check in on their assignments, trying to ask them questions before they get stuck. What happens with a lot of the students is they don't know how to do something. Then they'll just sit on it and try to figure it out on their own. They won't ask because they're embarrassed. It's giving them that safe space where it's, "Ask me the silly questions. I'm not here to embarrass you. I'm here to help you." We'll work through some of those issues and monitor the progress of all their tasks.

AS: We also filter all projects through me as the supervisor for the interns. I want to make sure that they're getting a good variety of cases, that there isn't one attorney that's dominating them for the entire summer and they don't get to work with anyone else. Or that they haven't gotten 20 of the exact same assignments, but they never got a chance to work on SIV or VAWA, and they were really interested in that. It's like a top-down approach where we're monitoring everything and making sure that they're getting the experience that they want. I think those are the two big things that are really crucial for our program.

CM: Victoria, do you have anything you want to add to that?

VH: Sure. I really like what Ashley just said. I think that it's valuable in the sense of creating a pool for you in the future for volunteers. We have law students come back to volunteer all the time for our clinics. Also establishing relationships for those fellowships. Speaking from my experience, because I had such a good internship experience here and I got to know people and trust them, and they got to trust me, it made for a really good opportunity to write a grant together and make a proposal and then run a project. It's just great to take efforts to make people feel comfortable and safe to learn in the environment, because then they know they can do it when they're a new attorney learning too.

CM: Thank you for that. Ted, we'd love to also hear from you.

TO: Some practical tips that have saved me a lot of time and energy with onboarding and offboarding is just with a new staff member, having a detailed checklist of what are the things that I need to be thinking through before the internship starts, before their initial day, the day of, setting time aside, especially in the early days to do a lot of one-to-one training if there's one intern, or several blocks of time with several interns of going over



systems, just to make sure that you're not missing some of that basic stuff. I've done that before. Then you get in two weeks and they're like, "Oh, what's that? How do I do that?" I'm like, "Oh, I should have explained that from the get-go."

TO: I think something that I use for staff as well is a training log. There are so many great recorded trainings on substantive processes, areas of the law. VECINA, a real wealth of resources on asylum or TPS. It's often that I have the training log with those links and I can say, now intern, go watch that training because I want to have you work on this type of case. There are certain other go-to resources. I think they're a little stale now, but the Pro Bono Training Institute is a website that has a lot of naturalization and DACA trainings that I use as prerequisites before we would do any one-to-one walk-through.

TO: Our case management system has about six hours of training videos. Those are links that are always shared early on. What I've also found over time is that I've built my own library of training videos using a tool called Loom where you're basically able to record tutorials, but you can use—if your office uses Microsoft Teams, I know that there are record features there that you could use similarly. Just building up that library of things on how to carry out this one niche function.

TO: It can be very specific, like a three-minute targeted video or maybe a 10-minute video on case noting fundamentals, things like that that a law student maybe is never engaged with. You can give that to them rather than having to share that information every time a new person is starting. That holds across any type of volunteer that you're working with. Also those Loom videos can be sometimes much larger tutorials where you're doing a full walk-through of how to fill out an N-400.

TO: Right then, sometimes it gets stale if the forms are updated or changed over, but I find that that saves really significant amounts of time and saves me headaches of going over basic things when I can just do it once well with an intern, actually record that presentation and then just use it in the future. Then, like I said, I have an off-boarding checklist too, just so you make sure you're not forgetting to close down their user accounts and all that sort of stuff that you would do with a staff member. Make sure the equipment's returned at the end of the internships and that basic stuff, just doing your due diligence.

CM: That is a good note, because we don't want people walking away with computers that do not belong to them, especially in the nonprofit space. Thank you all for your input.

Discussion Question

CM: We're going to move forward to our final Slido activity. Hopefully we get some more participants with this. We're just curious to hear from you and your experience.

What strategies has your office implemented or would consider implementing to operate an effective legal internship program?

CM: It could be similar to what we heard from the presenters or panelists, I should say, today, or it can be something else maybe that has, again, sparked your interest from what has already been shared. We'll give it just a moment. I know we're also getting some input from the Q&A. Someone in the Q&A said, "Really like the training library." Cool. Say, "I'm learning more and more working from an organization that provides training how incredibly valuable it is." We see here, designated supervision. That is actually a really good idea. I see a



question. We'll definitely get to that in the Q&A in just a moment. Just giving it another moment, if anyone else wants to add anything.

Q&A Panel

CM: We're going to be transitioning now to our questions and with the panelists, as you can see their lovely pictures. We want to answer, there's been quite a few questions that have come in during the session. Please continue to send in questions through the Q&A tab, and we'll get to them. Some of them we've already been able to answer, but we also want to address some of them live, as well as I know that there's one or two questions I wanted to point out from earlier discussions. We are definitely dedicating this time to questions.

CM: First, just going off of the last thing that came in, whether I'm going to direct this to Ted, but if there's anyone else who wants to respond, someone asked,

If you could share any helpful trainings on top of VECINA, that would be great. Anything you do for your office?

TO: Let's see. I mentioned Pro Bono Training Institute, which has a number of trainings across immigration matters and in other areas too. I think they have a U visa training. Let's see. I'm a bit at a loss. Maybe one other thing that I would add here about our office, we've had to go both ways where sometimes an intern is basically assigned to another staff member for the duration of the summer. That's the main point person. Sometimes these different case processes in the pipelines are supervised by different staff in our office.

TO: We have one staff who oversees the DACA renewal process. We have one staff who oversees the naturalization process. Sometimes other people are getting pulled in or other people are providing final reviews upon forms. It's probably, depending on what the demands are, we've had a lot of Afghan clients in recent years, and we have a supervising attorney who's overseeing all that Afghan work. We might have an intern who's dedicated to doing that viewing a lot more trainings that might be specific to Afghan legal needs.

TO: If I think of any other resources—Rona, I see your question that you asked—I'll put them in the chat specifically. There are other things that we sometimes have access to. Not so much for interns though, now that I think of it. I was going to say the Practicing Law Institute, PLI. I think we have access to some ASISTA recorded trainings. I forget what ASISTA stands for, but they do a lot of work with survivors on U visas, VAWA, those types of cases.

CM: Thank you. Does anyone else have any other type of training things [to share]?

AS: I just have a couple things. One, so we usually do live trainings. Every intern who comes through our office will usually do a live training on how to work with victims of domestic violence and child abuse, and trauma-informed care training. We try to fit that in during their time because we do those regularly here in the office. I think it's good for them to have. Another thing that we have here in our office is something called a brief bank. We have an organized list of sample documents and motions for the students to pull from themselves. It's organized by topic and country. If they're never starting from scratch, they're always Frankensteining some type of document. This is really helpful for our removal work especially.

CM: I know another question came in, which is one that I actually did want to address. At the beginning, we saw a lot of the concerns or fears around funding. I know we just received a question specifically asking,



Do any of you all know any grant resources to provide funding for interns or post-grad fellows?

CM: I'm just curious either from your office's experience or maybe your own personal experience.

We know that funding, obviously this nonprofit space is a very special topic, one that can be very volatile. With that, just considering whether, and if you all are able to share, in your offices, if you do provide funding for your interns or if you do not, what does that look like? Maybe if you don't, are there other types of, I don't know, benefits that someone may be able to receive in place of funding? Just curious if you all get creative at all with anything. Anyone who wants to answer the question or has thoughts?

AS: I am very sympathetic to students. We do not pay our interns and I feel really bad about it. Actually, I ended up doing a full-time semester externship at Catholic Charities, but I had interviewed to do a summer internship here and I had to turn it down because I just couldn't afford to survive without pay. I had to turn it down and do a job at a private firm so I could get paid. Very sympathetic. I don't really have any resources. I know a lot of law schools will have fellowships or something, but it's only a few thousand dollars and it's just not enough to survive. I'm open to suggestions if anyone else has any resources because I know it was really hard.

CM: Anyone else?

TO: The only time we offered any funding to interns, it was basically providing minimum wage for the course of the summer. It was only because we were in one of those seasons where we were flushed with cash because of a big federal grant to serve Afghans. We had money to spare across our office, and so we could offer money, which was really great for those interns. I will note that it just came along with other headaches because they're actually like employees at that point, temporary employees. Internally within the organization, there were more hoops to jump through with onboarding, offboarding, interviewing. Obviously great that the intern was able to get paid, but from a supervisor's perspective, it felt a little onerous with some of those extra things that came with it.

TO: That was just for the summer months. We haven't had cash to do that again. I think in general across our office, we're pretty upfront that all—across different departments that all internships are now just unpaid. Oh, I'm sorry. I will note one thing. There was a season when I first started, even before I had an intern, where our office would pay to reimburse interns for mileage as an incentive.

TO: I think it backfired when somebody was commuting 50 miles each way a few days a week. Just to say that that ultimately got phased out, but it might be something that—a creative way to help incentivize them coming in where that, honestly, it could be a financial burden depending on how far they're having to drive. Again, maybe doing a remote position or being more accommodating, come in one day a week or something and work remotely the other four over a summer internship. That might be another way that they aren't having to have a significant outlay of cash just to be able to serve with you.

VH: I'll add, I try to connect students that I've been connecting with to other students that have gotten funding. I know one of our local law schools, Case Western, they have a bunch of different scholarships available and it's confusing to me. I keep trying to connect them with other folks in our office who have gone through that same program. I would also recommend looking local, at least just from my experience needing money to like help do our clinic programs, looking at bar foundations, your local or state bar foundation.

VH: We have an organization called the Ohio Access to Justice Foundation. They're the ones that get all the money from the interest collected on IOLTA accounts. I'm guessing a lot of other states have those. They fund



legal interns and then they also do post-grad fellows too. Then I see a question about post-grad fellows. That could be one of those organizations. Then there's Equal Justice Works and Skadden Fellowships as well, but those are national and I know they can be really competitive.

CM: Thank you for that. If anything, I think it's actually helpful because I'm assuming the funding is probably a barrier or is what seems to be most daunting probably for creating the program, the fact that you all are basically running programs that you're not funding. Of course, all of us would love to be able to fund and support someone financially because we do know it's a burden, but I think if anything, that helps someone hop over the potential obstacle that they had in front of them about that. Thank you for that input.

CM: I do want to also address, I know we had a couple of questions that came in. Actually, I think Ted may have answered a couple of them, but it may be something if you're comfortable just sharing, discussing it just live for a few moments,

There's some questions about programs that may be run by DOJ-accredited representatives and what they may look like. Or maybe having a DOJ-accredited representative supervising a legal intern. Is that possible legally? Is that an option someone can consider, because we may have some offices right now that may not have a full-time attorney in the office with them.

CM: I'm curious what your thoughts are. Ted, I'm going to go to you first because I know you were sharing a little bit.

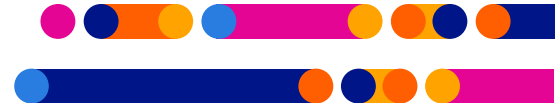
TO: I'll try to keep it short since I responded in the chat. I think it's possible. One of my internships, it was through this really unique program that was focused on public health. I was working at a refugee resettlement agency under an accredited rep who had 20 years of experience. She was really knowledgeable. It was a small program, but still a very meaningful summer in terms of what I was able to do. It wasn't quite limited because of what the accredited rep was taking on, but it was still dynamic and interesting, and useful in my development as an attorney.

TO: What I did say is, I don't know if a law school is going to be as interested in inviting an accredited rep to do on-campus interviewing, or if it's a program that's run by an accredited representative, but I'd put the feelers out there. I think that you'd find students who might still be eager, especially if you're in an area where there aren't many legal service providers and they may not be able to have another opportunity to get plugged into this work.

TO: I think some students might look askance at an opportunity that's not supervised by a lawyer. Just being upfront with them and them understanding what the program can offer, how it can still be beneficial, what the type of work is, so that they can see that there's that direct relationship between what they're studying or learning as a law student in the program, that it's still viable.

CM: Thank you. I'm sure that we probably have many participants who are in that boat and really need the help but just don't know if they're allowed to do it. Thank you for sharing that. I know we're coming towards the end of our time.

I want to ask the panelists if you all have any final thoughts or encouragement, or maybe words of wisdom or warning when it comes to starting and implementing an internship program.



AS: If I can just start, I would say I love working with the students. It's one of the best parts of my job. They bring such an enthusiasm and they're eager to learn. They really take all of your advice into account. It's really such a pleasure to work with them. I really encourage all of you to do it. Just try it out. See if you like it. I'm sure you will. Even if it gets tough, it's worth it.

CM: Any other final thoughts?

TO: Similar, I'm here because of internships in this field of law. I'm extremely grateful to the organizations who took a chance and gave me opportunities years ago. I'll leave it with that.

CM: Victoria, any thoughts?

VH: Sorry, I don't know why it's doing that. Do it. Host students; they are so fun to work with. It's cool to get to see people grow.

CM: Thank you all. We very much—I know I personally appreciate your input, but I'm sure I speak on behalf of our participants—very much appreciate all of the wonderful resources and thoughts that you all shared today and from your experiences.

Conclusion

Reviewing Learning Objectives

CM: Just to close out, we want to make sure again that you know the objectives. We believe that after listening to today's session, you are now able to identify reasonable recruitment strategies for an immigration legal internship program. You're also able to identify appropriate immigration legal law projects to delegate to legal interns and apply three strategies, at least three, probably more, to the legal internship program.

Feedback Survey

CM: We also want to ask if you can help us. We're dropping the link in the chat, if you can complete this very brief survey. It's only five questions. If you can give us input as far as if this is helpful for you, or if there's something else you would have liked to see. It just helps us. I know us at VECINA as well as Switchboard just continue to improve our training and technical assistance resources to the field. If you have a moment, we would really appreciate you completing that on our behalf.

Recommended Resources

CM: I know our final couple of notes are, for any additional recommended resources, we do have a blog that actually is based on a podcast that Ashley and I did a few months ago under the same title, Maximizing the Value of Legal Internships in Immigration Services. We definitely encourage you to read that. This recording will be provided. If you're going back and trying to figure out, "What was it that they said?" most likely there are probably a few similar notes in that blog.

CM: Additional resource if you don't have time to listen or re-watch the recording. Also, we have a community of practice at VECINA we're hosting in partnership with Switchboard. We discuss topics, not only this, but many



other things connected currently to immigration legal service providers. If you want to be part of that community, it's free to join. It's usually a monthly meeting. We definitely encourage you to join that.

Stay Connected

CM: With that said, we are closing out. Again, we thank you so much for your time and hope that you have a really great rest of your day.

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