



ASISTA Virtual Practical Skills Course
May, 2024
Survivor-Based Relief Practical Skills Course

Dates: May 14, May 16, May 21 & May 23, 2024 ~ 2-4pm ET
(1-3pm CT/12-2pm MT/11am-1pm PT/8-10am HT)

AGENDA

2-4pm ET **Day ONE: Tuesday, May 14, 2024**

Intake and Initial Meetings

We start the course at the start of the case. Presented with a fact pattern, we discuss intake techniques to identify the primary strengths, weaknesses, and strategy decisions arising in a fictitious client's cases. We identify critical facts that remain unknown and discuss how to learn them. Throughout, we remember the impacts of trauma on how the client presents in initial meetings, and how we can help minimize retraumatization.

Speakers:

- Astrid Munn, *Lead U/T/VAWA Attorney, Immigrant Legal Center*
- Lia Ocasio, *Staff Attorney, ASISTA*
- Kristen Stanley, *Assistant Clinical Professor, Lawyering Program, Cornell Law School.*

2-4pm ET **Day TWO: Thursday, May 16, 2024**

Declaration Drafting and Preparation of Other Evidence

In our second session, we focus on mid-case skills surrounding the gathering and preparation of strong evidence. We start by modeling client interview techniques that are effective and trauma-informed. From there, we take on the task of distilling, re-ordering, and framing what our client told us into a readable, relevant, and credible declaration. Along the way, we identify places where external corroborating evidence will be important and suggest tips for obtaining it,

incorporating it into our brief, and ensuring USCIS takes what we want from its content.

Speakers:

- Rebecca Eissenova, *Senior Staff Attorney, ASISTA*
- Tim Paikopoulos, *Senior Attorney, South Coastal Counties Legal Services*
- Trisha Teofilo Olave, *National Immigrant Justice Center (NIJC)*

2-4pm ET

Day THREE: Tuesday, May 21, 2024

Evaluating Admissibility and Preparing a Waiver Application

For our third session, we reconnect with our fictitious client as she prepares to file for adjustment of status (based on her VAWA self-petition). We thoroughly evaluate what we now know of her case for any inadmissibility grounds, and assess possible legal arguments surrounding them. For grounds that must be waived, we discuss how to present the strongest possible application for a waiver. Because it's possible she may be interviewed for adjustment, we also address best practices to be trauma-informed while preparing her for that setting.

Speakers:

- Kelly Byrne, *Staff Attorney, ASISTA*
- Nicole Weitnauer, *Senior Attorney, Antonini & Cohen Immigration Law Group*
- Victoria Maqueda Feldman, *Ayuda*

2-4pm ET

Day FOUR: Thursday, May 23, 2024

Responding to RFEs and Problematic Decisions

We end with techniques for responding when USCIS does not agree our filings have presented a winning case. First, our client receives a difficult RFE, to which we must respond on time. Then, to our frustration, she receives a denial that is also problematic. Our experts walk through tips on making arguments about the premises of USCIS's demands and determinations, selecting evidence to supply in response, and choosing when it is appropriate to move to reopen, reconsider, appeal, or do something else.

Speakers:

- Evangeline Chan, *Director of the Immigration Law Project, Safe Horizon*
- Payal Sinha, *Managing Attorney, Tahirih San Francisco Office*
- Cristina Velez, *Legal & Policy Director, ASISTA*