

## What does an immigration lawyer do? Where can I practice immigration law?

Immigration laws regulate who can enter the country and how long they can stay, in addition to determining what legal rights and responsibilities noncitizens have while they are here.

The Bureau of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is a branch of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). USCIS is in charge of all immigration-related applications and authorizations for foreign individuals who are inside the borders of the U.S. USCIS processes all immigrant and non-immigrant benefits provided to visitors of the United States, including family-based petitions, employment-based petitions, asylum and refugee processing, and naturalization. The U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is the law enforcement agency that has authority over illegal immigrant detention and removal. Other federal agencies that employ immigration attorneys include the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) (e.g., Civil Rights Division, Office of Special Counsel for Immigration; Criminal Division, Domestic Security Section; Criminal Division, Office of Special Investigations; and the Office of Immigration Litigation). The Immigration Courts and the Board of Immigration Appeals are responsible for independently adjudicating cases under the immigration laws. The Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) is charged with administering the Immigration Courts nationwide.

Immigration lawyers represent individual and business clients before the USCIS, the Board of Immigration Appeals, and in Immigration Courts and the federal circuit courts on issues dealing with immigration, emigration, visas, green cards, adjustment of status, political asylum, and other important immigration and naturalization issues. Business immigration lawyers assist domestic and international corporations in transferring noncitizen employees from foreign offices to the U.S. and hiring noncitizens as employees in domestic offices.

A public interest immigration lawyer's practice could include asylum law, protection for victims of human trafficking, protection for battered immigrants, protection for victims of certain types of crimes, cancellation of removal, and family reunification. Some nonprofits also provide a range of other legal services to immigrant communities and/or advocate for immigrants' rights.

## How can I get a job as an immigration lawyer?

Take all the courses offered on immigration law. Participate in the Immigrants Rights Clinic. Intern with USCIS, ICE or one of the DOJ divisions that addresses immigration issues. Another option is to work as a law clerk or intern with the Immigration Court or Board of Immigration Appeals. Develop your litigation and advocacy skills by participating in Moot Court. Volunteer with a nonprofit that provides immigration law-related legal services, that provides services to immigrant communities, or that advocates for immigrants' rights. Work as a law clerk at a law firm that specializes in immigration law. (You can find immigration law firms, as well as UB alumni who practice immigration law, by doing a search on [www.martindale.com](http://www.martindale.com).) Consider taking classes to improve or develop your foreign language skills.

## Where can I learn more?

American Immigration Lawyers Association – <http://www.aila.org/>

Baltimore Immigration Court – <http://www.justice.gov/eoir/sibpages/bal/balmain.htm>

Board of Immigration Appeals – <http://www.justice.gov/eoir/biainfo.htm>

Bureau of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services – <http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis>

Catholic Charities' Immigration Legal Services of Baltimore – <http://www.catholiccharities-md.org/immigrants/immigration-legal-services/immigration-legal-services.html>

Executive Office for Immigration Review – <http://www.justice.gov/eoir/index.html>

Immigration Advocates Network – <http://www.immigrationadvocates.org/nonprofit/jobs/>

Maryland State Bar Association, Immigration Division – [http://www.msba.org/sec\\_comm/sections/immigration/](http://www.msba.org/sec_comm/sections/immigration/)

National Immigration Law Center – <http://www.nilc.org/>

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement – <http://www.ice.gov/>

## Who teaches immigration law at UB?

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