



CASA CORNELIA
LAW CENTER

FAQs for Volunteer Attorneys

1. How do I get started as a Volunteer Attorney?

Complete the [Volunteer Interest Form](#) or email Devra Davis, Managing Attorney for the Pro Bono Program, at ddavis@casacornelia.org.

2. What level of experience/knowledge of immigration law is necessary?

None! Most of our volunteers are not immigration practitioners. Our program is designed so that no experience is necessary and we support you throughout your case with free substantive and procedural training (MCLE credit available), access to templates, and one-on-one mentorship with Casa Cornelia attorneys.

3. What kind of pro bono cases do you have available for Volunteer Attorneys?

Affirmative and defensive (detained and non-detained) asylum cases, unaccompanied children's asylum cases, Special Immigrant Juvenile Status, and U Visa/T Visa/ Violence against Women Act (VAWA) applications.

4. What is the time commitment for each type of pro bono case?

It depends on the form of relief, the complexity of the case and, in some cases, the immigration court's docket. Here are estimated time commitments by matter type:

- **Detained asylum cases:** 75-125 hours, over 3-6 months
- **Defensive asylum cases:** 120-150 (individual)/150-200 (families) hours over 12-24 months
- **Affirmative asylum applications (not in court) or Children's Asylum Cases:** 80 hours
- **Victims of Crime - T, U Visa or VAWA Applications (not in court):** 50 hours
- **Guardianship (state court appearances for SIJS cases):** 35-50 hours, plus SIJS applications: 20 hours



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5. Are the matters litigation or transactional?

Both. Our asylum cases (except for affirmative) are in court. Our Victims of Crime and affirmative asylum cases take place outside of the courts and involve preparation of forms.

6. Do I need an active law license in California to volunteer?

All Volunteer Attorneys must have an active law license and be in good standing in at least one U.S. jurisdiction – it does not need to be California (unless you want to take on an SIJS case in California State Court. In addition, we encourage any potential volunteers who have inactive California licenses to take advantage of the California State Bar’s Pro Bono Practice Program. You can reactivate your license to do exclusively pro bono work without the requirement to pay annual bar dues.

7. Do you provide interpreters and translators to Volunteer Attorneys?

Yes, we have an in-house Volunteer Interpreter and Translator (VIT) Program where we match Volunteer Attorneys with interpreters and translators.

8. Does Casa Cornelia have professional liability insurance that will cover Volunteer Attorneys?

Yes, Casa Cornelia’s Lawyers Professional Liability Policy has a primary pro bono endorsement to cover Volunteer Attorneys.

9. Do Casa Cornelia client’s pay for legal services?

No, as a public interest law firm we provide quality legal services *pro bono* or free.



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10. I do not have time to take a full representation case right now. How can I help?

Periodically, we have short-term volunteer opportunities like helping at a legal clinic or giving a community presentation. Please complete the Volunteer Interest Form or email us to help us find the right opportunity. You can also sign up for our bi-monthly email to stay updated on available cases and trainings when your schedule allows. If you are able, please also consider making a [contribution](#) to Casa Cornelia.

11. Can I pair up with another attorney I know from my firm, or the legal community.

Absolutely. Volunteer Attorneys often team up to work on cases together.

13. What kind of recognition does Casa Cornelia give its Volunteer Attorneys?

Casa Cornelia holds its annual La Mancha Awards in October, attended by hundreds, where we honor our volunteers who have provided outstanding pro bono service. We also nominate attorneys who have devoted 50 or more pro bono hours within a calendar year to receive the California State Bar's Wiley W. Manuel Award. Additionally, we organize events to honor, re-engage and re-connect with our valued Volunteer Attorneys.

14. I still have questions and wish to connect with someone.

Please contact Casa Cornelia's Pro Bono Program Director Devra Davis, at ddavis@casacornelia.org, or 619-231-7788 x304.