



VECINA



Welcome Legal Alliance

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# Asylum Interview Orientation Session

(for Attorneys and Accredited Representatives)

— January 26, 2023 —

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# What is the Purpose of the Asylum Interview?

Does your client meet U.S. legal requirements for asylum?

Your client's chance to tell their story to the Asylum Officer

Helps Asylum Officer make a decision on your client's case

# What is the Asylum Office? Who is the Asylum Officer?



U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services

# What should my client and I bring to the interview?

Your client should bring:

- Original identification documents (e.g., tazkira, passport, EAD)
- Water

You should bring:

- ID and bar license
- G-28
- Laptop or notepad
- Copy of I-589 form, declaration, exhibit list (all exhibits on laptop if possible)
- Water

# Getting to the Asylum Office

Metal detector and bag scan

Fingerprints and photo taken

Waiting in waiting room

Asylum Officer will call your client by the last three digits of their “A number”



# Who Must Come to the Interview?

## “Principal applicant”

Person whose name and information is at the top of I-589 asylum application

## Spouse and children who are in the United States

Marked as INCLUDED on form I-589

Legally married for spouse

Children - unmarried and under 21

# Interpreters

**UPDATE:** As of September 13, 2023, the Asylum Office requires **ALL** applicants to **bring their own interpreters**

Your interpreter **MUST** attend the interview **IN PERSON**

**NO** interpreters by telephone are allowed!

# Who Can Be an Interpreter?

## **MUST BE:**

Fluent in Dari/Pashto and English  
18 or older

## **MAKE SURE:**

Your client and the interpreter understand each other!

## **MAY NOT BE:**

Family member who is a derivative on the case or a witness in the case

Someone with an asylum application who did not yet attend their own interview

A representative or employee of the Afghan government

The attorney or accredited representative



# How to Work with an Interpreter

Speak 2 or 3 sentences and then let interpreter translate

REMEMBER: The interpreter is a human - not a computer

**Asylum Officer will ONLY HEAR WHAT THE INTERPRETER SAYS IN ENGLISH**

# What Questions Will the Officer Ask Your Client?

Questions from form I-589

Questions about why your client is afraid to return to Afghanistan

Questions about things that could bar your client from asylum

# What Questions Will the Officer Ask the Derivatives?

Your client's spouse and children will be asked about their identifying information and asylum bars

Example: Have you ever offered any money to a terrorist organization?

Your client's children will be asked asylum bar questions even if they are young

Your client as principal applicant cannot act as the interpreter for their spouse and children

# How to Instruct Your Client to Respond to the Officer

## Tell the truth!

If you don't know something, tell the officer you don't know

If you don't remember something, tell the officer you don't remember

If you are not sure, tell the officer you are not sure

If you don't understand the interpreter, tell the officer!

Your client can ask for a break

# What is my role during the interview?

**Taking notes**

**Clarify any misunderstandings**

**Making sure all questions are relevant and appropriate**

# How to Prepare Your Client for the Asylum Interview

Review the application

Review the declaration

Make a list of any changes

Set a meeting time and place

Department of Homeland Security  
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

U.S. Department of Justice  
Executive Office for Immigration Review

OMB No. 1615-0067; Expires 01/31/2023

**I-589, Application for Asylum  
and for Withholding of Removal**

**START HERE - Type or print in black ink. See the instructions for information about eligibility and how to complete and file this application. There is no filing fee for this application.**

**NOTE:**  Check this box if you also want to apply for withholding of removal under the Convention Against Torture.

Part A.I. Information About You			
1. Alien Registration Number(s) (A-Number) (if any)	2. U.S. Social Security Number (if any)	3. USCIS Online Account Number (if any)	
4. Complete Last Name		5. First Name	6. Middle Name
7. What other names have you used (include maiden name and aliases)?			
8. Residence in the U.S. (where you physically reside)			
Street Number and Name			Apt. Number
City	State	Zip Code	Telephone Number (     )
9. Mailing Address in the U.S. (if different than the address in Item Number 8)			
In Care Of (if applicable):			Telephone Number



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# Conduct a Mock Interview for Your Client

Ask questions expected at the interview

Use an interpreter

Focus on principal applicant's testimony

# What Happens After the Interview?

Wait for decision

USCIS has 150 days from day your client's I-589 is submitted

Different possibilities:

Asylum granted

Notice of Intent to Deny

Denial



# What Happens If Your Client Receives a Denial?

No automatic deportation!

What is your client's parole status?

Must be placed into removal proceedings (Immigration Court) before possible deportation

A second opportunity to request asylum

Discuss with your client whether you will be able to represent them in proceedings

# Additional Free Resources

## VECINA's Teachable Course on Afghan Affirmative Asylum

- Mock Asylum Interview - <https://vecina.teachable.com/p/afghan-asylum>
- Recent Asylum Interview Questions - <https://vecina.teachable.com/p/afghan-asylum>

## VECINA's Asylum Interview Prep Orientation LOPs

- Recordings - <https://vecina.org/afghan-interview-prep/>

## VECINA's Teachable Course on Asylum Interview Prep - NEW!

- <https://vecina.teachable.com/p/asylum-interview-preparation-for-afghan-parolees>

# Questions?

This recording and the slides will be made available at the following link: <https://vecina.org/afghan-interview-prep/>