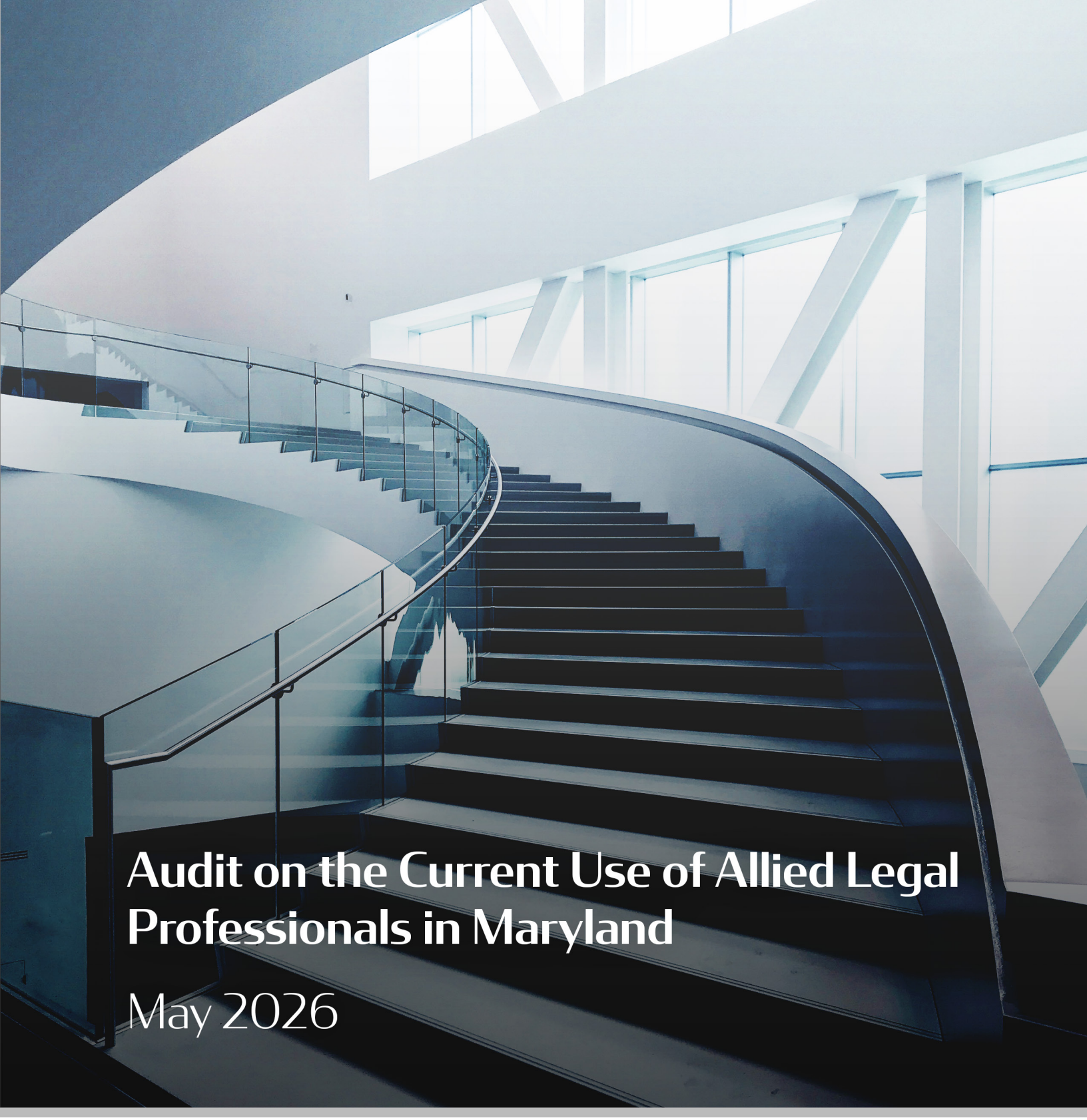


Audit on the Current Use of Allied Legal Professionals in Maryland

May 2026

Innovations in Tiered Legal Services Task Force

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Letter from the Co-Chairs

Currently in the United States, in roughly 75% of the 20 million civil cases filed in state courts each year, one side lacks a lawyer. For Maryland, this translates to approximately 571,343 civil cases, annually, where at least one party goes without legal representation in a civil legal matter. Navigating complex legal systems without legal representation means that Marylanders may lose their homes, custody of their children, or access to life-saving public benefits, simply because they cannot afford a lawyer.

The Innovations in Tiered Legal Services Task Force ("Innovations Task Force") is a collaborative initiative between the Maryland Judiciary, the Maryland State Bar Association (MSBA), and the Maryland Access to Justice Commission (A2JC). The purpose of the Innovations Task Force is to address the unmet civil legal needs of hundreds of thousands of Marylanders who are not currently being served by attorneys.

Launched in September, 2024, the Innovations Task Force builds on the work of the earlier Affordable Law Task Force, a joint effort of the MSBA and A2JC, which found that approximately 40% of all Marylanders cannot afford basic necessities, let alone a lawyer at market rate. To meet the civil legal needs of these Marylanders, the Affordable Law Task Force urged continued exploration of innovations, including reform that enables allied legal professionals[1] (ALP) and legal technologies to provide civil legal help to unrepresented Marylanders. This audit report on how, and in what types of cases, allied legal professionals are already permitted to provide legal advice and representation in Maryland will help the Task Force reach its recommendations while ensuring that there is no disturbance to existing efforts.



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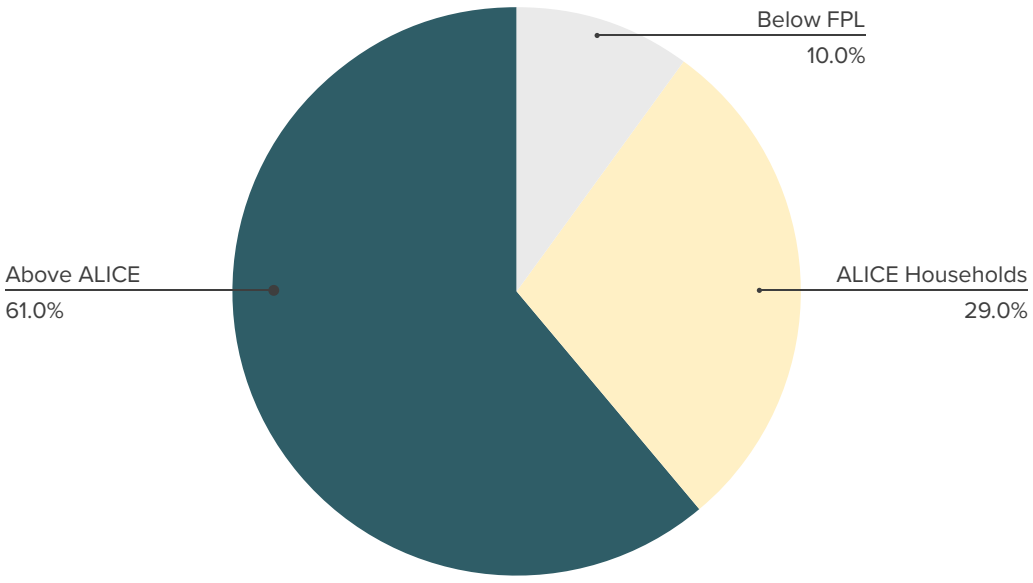
I. The Problem

Maryland currently falls far short of national standards of practice on civil access to justice. The American Bar Association (ABA) asserts that all individuals should be *guaranteed* a right to legal counsel in civil matters (sometimes called "Civil Gideon") where physical liberty is at stake and in matters related to "basic human need," including shelter, sustenance, safety, health, and child custody. While defendants facing charges in Maryland's criminal courts are entitled to an attorney, Maryland has recognized the need for counsel in a very limited number of civil proceedings involving the potential for deprivation of housing (eviction defense cases), deprivation of parental rights (Children in Need of Assistance ("CINA") and Termination of Parental Rights ("TPR") cases[3]), deprivation of liberty (civil contempt and involuntary commitment cases[4]), and in special education cases.[5]

According to the United Way, 10% of Maryland households fall below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL)[6], and another 29% fall below the ALICE threshold (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed).[7] Combining FPL and ALICE, 934,715 Maryland households fall below the ALICE Threshold.[8] This means that nearly 40% of Marylanders cannot afford to meet their household's basic needs, much less hire an attorney at market rate. According to CLIO, the average hourly rate charged by Maryland lawyers was $344 in 2024, and it increased by nearly 10% to $361 in 2025.[9] Among the population of Marylanders who meet the financial eligibility criteria to qualify for free legal services (household income below 125% of FPL[10]), some fail to meet additional *non*-financial eligibility criteria or have case types not funded or supported by legal aid programs. A dearth of legal aid attorneys, particularly in remote and rural areas, further increases the number of Marylanders who need and qualify for, but cannot access, free legal aid.

> "Households below the [ALICE] Threshold are forced to make impossible choices—like deciding whether to pay for utilities or a car repair, whether to buy food or fill a prescription."
>
> United Way

Maryland Households (2023)



Extrapolating from national data on self-represented litigants in state civil courts, suggests that, in 75% (approximately 571,343 in Maryland in FY2024) or more of state civil cases, at least one party goes without legal representation.[11] Hundreds of thousands more cases never get filed because people who cannot access legal assistance choose not to engage with the legal system to solve their legal problems.[12] Many Marylanders face similar challenges when appearing in administrative proceedings[13] before government agencies without the benefit of counsel. Navigating complex laws and systems without legal representation can result in Marylanders losing their homes, custody of their children, or access to life-saving public benefits, simply because they cannot afford an attorney.

Deprivation of a meaningful day in court or access to vital government programs and services can have devastating consequences for unrepresented parties, their families, and their communities. It can lead to poor case outcomes. It can deprive people of their fundamental human rights to food, housing, employment, education, health, freedom from violence, and much more. It can exacerbate disparities and inequities for people of color, undocumented immigrants, limited- and non-English speakers, people with disabilities, LGBTQ+ persons, and other members of historically marginalized and underserved communities.[14] These harms, disparities, and inequities undermine public trust in Maryland's civil justice system and respect for the rule of law.

Studies consistently show that legal assistance improves outcomes, helps ensure fairness in the justice system, and yields a high return on investment (ROI).[15] As Maryland strives to expand the right to counsel in civil proceedings to align with national standards, the state's dearth of income-appropriate legal services is laid bare.

Extrapolating from national data (75% of civil cases involve at least one self-represented litigant), an estimated more than 296,026 self-represented litigants (SRLs) faced failure-to-pay-rent cases without representation in Maryland in State Fiscal Year 2024; 94,290 SRLs faced small claims cases alone; and another 22,407 SRLs faced domestic violence protective order proceedings alone.[16]

States' unauthorized practice of law (UPL) regulations restrict who can help people with legal matters. Maryland's dearth of affordable licensed attorneys combined with Maryland's UPL rule,[17] which limits law practice to licensed attorneys (with the narrowly-tailored exceptions set forth in Section II of this Audit Report), prevent the supply of persons authorized to practice law from meeting Maryland's demand for legal assistance. To increase the available supply of legal assistance, Maryland is exploring innovative solutions, including the modernization of UPL rules to expand and regulate the use of legal technologies and ALP legal assistance.

II. Current Use of Allied Legal Professional Assistance/ Representation in Maryland

ALPs are proving to be an efficient, effective, and affordable tool in states' access-to-justice tool kits. Even in states with active ALP programs that do not require attorney supervision, there has been little to no consumer harm reported from ALP-provided services.[18] According to the Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System (IAALS), data from ALP programs show that ALPs are making a positive impact in people's lives.[19] A representative from the nation's largest direct lawyers' malpractice insurance underwriter deemed the overall risk among paraprofessional communities to be low and ALPs more readily positioned to engage

in professional services than graduating law students.[20] ALP assistance and ALP representation[21] are already authorized and being utilized in a limited set of state and federal civil legal proceedings in Maryland.

> "Well trained ALPs are competent, their clients are satisfied with their work product, and they can reach a portion of the population that attorneys are not reaching. ALPs are providing high quality legal services at around half the cost of attorneys."
>
> Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System

Currently in Maryland, State and Federal ALP requirements vary widely in terms of qualifications, scope of services, and remuneration. While some agencies set forth educational, experiential, training, and/or testing prerequisites for ALPs, many agencies' rules require little preparation and some even permit parties to be represented by a friend or family member with no qualifications. Many ALPs are permitted to practice independently within a specified practice area before a particular agency, and are not required to be under attorney supervision. Some ALPs are authorized to perform in-court representation, while others are not. Most ALPs are not bound by the various rules and regulations applicable to attorneys, nor are they subject to discipline (only to revocation of permission to assist or represent individuals). Some ALPs are permitted to charge clients a fee for legal services, whereas other ALPs are explicitly prohibited from requesting or accepting remuneration.

A. State Matters and Proceedings in Maryland

Maryland has already carved out some limited exceptions to its Unauthorized Practice of Law (UPL) statutes[22] to authorize ALPs to represent and/or assist individuals in certain legal matters or proceedings. Public-facing information and data about Maryland's full spectrum of current UPL exceptions is not readily available or consolidated, indicating a need for the Innovations Task Force to issue recommendations concerning robust ALP data collection, analysis, and reporting to promote a full, centralized view of the legal system and available resources. The following are examples of Maryland state agencies and courts that currently permit ALP legal assistance and/or representation.

Law Students. The State has, since 2016, granted Maryland law students special authorization to appear before any state Trial Court, the Court of Special Appeals, any state administrative agency, or otherwise engage in the practice of law in Maryland, so long as the law student's practice is connected with a clinical law program or legal externship, or the student is certified.[23] In order for a law student to practice law, the student's supervising attorney must be satisfied that the student is competent to perform the assigned duties; assume responsibility for the quality of the student's work; direct and assist the student to the extent necessary to ensure that the student effectively assists or represents the client; and accompany the student to court or before any administrative agency.[24] Law students are prohibited from requesting or receiving compensation of any kind under this Rule, but may receive academic credit.[25]

Maryland District Courts. Maryland's Business Occupations and Professions Code enumerates the following six exceptions whereby an ALP may represent a party in certain civil actions before the District Court of Maryland[26]:

> Business - Small Business Claims. With some limitations, certain ALP officers, employees, partners, and members may appear on behalf of their corporation, partnership, limited

liability company, or business in a civil action that is based on a claim that does not exceed the amount set under §4-405 of the Courts Article for a small claim action and is not based on an assignment, to the corporation, partnership, or business, of the claim of another.

County Employees - County Grievance Procedures. An ALP may represent a county employee at any step of the county's grievance procedure if authorized to do so by that county employee.

Community - Common Ownership Community Disputes. A director or officer of a common ownership community may represent the community in disputes, hearings, or other matters before a board or commission established to oversee a development subject to a declaration enforced by a homeowner's association, a residential condominium, or a cooperative housing corporation.[27]

Insured - Insurance Defense. An insurance company may defend an insured through staff counsel.[28]

Landlords - Summary Ejection. An ALP may represent a landlord in a summary ejectment (eviction) proceeding.

Tenants - Summary Ejection/Rent Escrow Proceedings. An ALP may represent a tenant in summary ejectment or rent escrow proceeding if the person is a law student practicing in a clinical law program at an American Bar Association-accredited law school with in-court supervision of a faculty member, or the person is employed by a nonprofit organization receiving grants from the Maryland Legal Services Corporation, has training and experience, is supervised by a lawyer, and the supervising lawyer's appearance is entered in the proceeding.

Housing Case

In August 2025, a Maryland Legal Aid (MLA) Senior Case-Handling Paralegal represented a woman facing a notice to vacate. She had lived in her unit for seven years, had four children and one on the way, and was a domestic violence survivor with a pending Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) case. She had been bullied at her complex by other tenants, who filed numerous complaints against her with little to no corroboration. She had called the police multiple times, secured peace orders against them, and repeatedly reported them to her landlord. Rather than assist her with these issues, her landlord served her with a notice to vacate. Additionally, her abusive ex-partner moved in with a neighbor just a couple of units over from hers, despite a valid protective order against him and his prior arrest on the property for abusing her. At her formal hearing before the city Housing Authority, MLA's case-handling paralegal succeeded in getting the notice to vacate rescinded and various protective conditions put in place. MLA is helping draft a safety plan that both she and her landlord will follow to keep her safe, and the residency of the woman's violent ex-partner is now being investigated.

Case-Handling Paralegal, Phillip Middleton, represents Maryland Legal Aid (MLA) clients in housing cases involving failure to pay rent, rent escrow, voucher terminations, subsidized housing cases, and more. He also represents his agency at Access to Counsel in Evictions ("ACE") Task Force[29] meetings. Middleton completed rigorous training before providing ALP assistance and representation to clients. He worked directly under his agency's attorneys for months and observed them in court, meeting with clients on intake and then discussing their case strategies with the attorneys. He completed his agency's new lawyer training alongside newly-barred attorneys to gain a solid understanding of court procedure, representation, and working with opposing counsel. That training concluded in a mock trial. Middleton began handling cases approximately a year and a half after he started, and then became a "case-handling paralegal." Middleton, who represents tenants, says the landlords are usually represented. Complex cases with extensive trials are rare (he has completed 6 or 7 rent trials), according to Middleton, who says that most cases are resolved via negotiation. Middleton says a supervising attorney is always present with him when he represents clients in court, but that he now has sufficient experience to do it without in-court supervision.

An independent evaluation of Maryland's Access to Counsel in Evictions (ACE) program found that 88% of tenants who expressed a desire to remain in their homes were able to do so with ACE representation.[30] The ACE evaluation also found that, "for every dollar invested in the ACE program, Maryland realized an estimated $3.04 in fiscal and economic benefits, translating to a total impact of $46.7 million in just one year."[31]

Maryland Tax Court. A partner for the partnership or a corporate officer for the corporation may represent a party before Maryland's Tax Court.[32]

Maryland Department of Labor. In proceedings before a special examiner or the Board of Appeals related to labor and employment, a claimant or an employer may be represented by an ALP agent authorized by the claimant or employer.[33] However, ALP agents representing claimants cannot charge or accept compensation for their services.[34]

Unemployment Benefits Case

A Maryland Legal Aid (MLA) Senior Case-Handling Paralegal represented a man in his unemployment insurance benefits (UIB) claim against the State's Labor Department. The man had worked at the same job for years, and really enjoyed his work. Unfortunately, he was diagnosed with a chronic condition that became progressively worse. He and his employer worked together to do all they could to keep him with the company, until he reached a point where he could no longer perform his work, and there were no other positions with the company that would allow him to continue to work there. His UIB claim was denied as a "voluntary quit." The MLA paralegal represented the man in his lower appeal, arguing that he left his employment for a valid circumstance, but that he was able and available to work in a different type of labor. The lower appeals hearing examiner granted the man's "able and available" claim, but denied his "valid circumstance" claim, which meant that the client's benefits were still barred. The MLA paralegal appealed the man's denied "valid circumstance" case to the Board of Appeals. That claim was granted and the man was awarded all his backpay, as well as his remaining weeks' pay.

Maryland Department of Budget and Management. Maryland state employees filing a grievance or disciplinary appeal may choose to have an ALP represent them in those proceedings.[35] According to Rick Losemann, Director of the Employee and Labor Relations Division at the Maryland Department of Budget and Management, most personnel are represented by an ALP union representative, or an attorney, or represent themselves.[36] Director Losemann runs more than 1,200 settlement conferences annually.[37]

> "It is helpful to have a union representative involved, because they generally know the process...and how the law works. The union representatives help the parties understand the [settlement] offers they get from management. It's helpful for the employees just to have someone on their side who knows the process. If you file your appeal wrong, it gets sent back to you and you never get to the merits of the case. From an efficiency standpoint, it's certainly more efficient to have a union representative involved."
>
> Rick Losemann

Maryland Department of the Environment. For environmental regulations hearings, parties have a right to appear with or without counsel, and may choose to be represented by ALPs in quasi-legislative hearings.[38]

Maryland Insurance Administration. Corporations, partnerships, limited liability companies, and sole proprietorships that are small employers are permitted to be represented by authorized (ALP) individuals rather than by an attorney in certain hearings held by the Commissioner (before the Maryland Insurance Administration or before the Office of Administrative Hearings).[39]

Maryland Office of the Attorney General's Securities Division. In administrative hearings before the Maryland Securities Commissioner, individuals may choose to appear through a non-attorney.[40] The purpose of the Securities Division is to protect Maryland investors from investment fraud and misrepresentation, investigate complaints about potential violations of the investor protection laws it administers, file civil enforcement actions in state circuit court or refer cases for criminal prosecution to state, local or federal authorities.[41] The Securities Commissioner may issue administrative stop orders and cease and desist orders to immediately halt violations of applicable laws.

Maryland Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH). The OAH is an independent office established by the State Legislature to provide due process for any person or business affected by the action or proposed action of a Maryland state or government agency. OAH's centralized panel of approximately fifty-five Administrative Law Judges (ALJ) review and decide appeals of administrative agency decisions. The purpose of this approach is to increase the fairness of administrative hearings by ensuring that the presiding decision-maker is not an employee of the State agency that made the decision that is under appeal. ALPs are authorized to represent parties before OAH in a broad array of matters and proceedings.[42]

Special Education Advocacy. In Maryland, both federal and state laws permit ALPs to represent individuals in certain disability and special education matters. In April 2024, Maryland passed a law establishing the Access to Attorneys, Advocates, and Consultants for Special Education Program, and a Fund by the same name.[43] The program, housed at Maryland Volunteer Lawyer Service (MVLS) in partnership with Disability Rights Maryland, Project HEAL, The Parents' Place of Maryland, and other disability-focused organizations, allows eligible families to connect with experienced consultants, advocates, and attorneys to help with Individualized Education Plans (IEP) and school discipline issues.[44] Managing Attorney and Policy Counsel for Disability Rights

Maryland, Leslie Seid Margolis, says that, in Maryland, "special education is an area where the need far outstrips the supply of free or affordable attorneys."[45]

Case Handling Paralegal for Maryland Legal Aid's (MLA's) Allegany/Garrett Office, Sarah Parsons, provides such education advocacy for families of children enrolled in Maryland schools who need IEPs. "I realized there is nobody here to help these parents," says Parsons, "Occasionally, they receive assistance from kind, caring people who have no training in education advocacy."[46] Parsons is unaware of any private attorneys that offer clients IEP advocacy in the region of Maryland that she serves and, even if they did, she says that the people she serves would be unable to afford to hire private counsel.[47]

> "It's so important to allow people without a law license to do this work, because, in rural areas like the one where I work, there just aren't sufficient resources."
>
> Sarah Parsons

Despite its relatively limited use, ALP assistance and representation are already proving a vital access-to-justice tool for Marylanders with civil legal cases and matters. Parsons notes that, in practice areas that currently permit ALPs to assist unrepresented parties, this model "takes the burden off the court and off the legal services providers."[48] Parsons believes there should be requirements and scope limitations for case-handling paralegals and other ALP advocates, but she does not believe they need a law degree to be effective:

> The specific areas in which I practice as a senior case-handling paralegal aren't even tested on the bar exam, nor are they required courses in law school. So, licensed attorneys may not necessarily be any more prepared to do this work. Much of what's on the bar exam is black letter law, and not state-specific. Some law schools may offer legal clinics in one or two of these topics, but those clinics are not mandatory. I think that the stuff that I translate into my practice can also be taught [outside of law school]. Ninety percent of what I actually do in my practice I learned at MLA. And the people who taught me a lot of it were case-handling paralegals, not lawyers. Law school and the bar exam are not the best measures of whether someone is capable and competent to do this work for this population.[49]

Parsons believes that UPL modernization that authorizes expanded use of community justice workers and legal practitioners (who typically charge flat fees or reasonable hourly rates, with no retainer) would open the field and help many ALICE population Marylanders who would otherwise go unrepresented.[50]

Adjudicators. In addition to ALPs authorized to provide legal assistance or representation to individuals in Maryland, there are also non-lawyers in adjudicative roles who make important decisions that impact Marylanders. Two examples are Orphans' Court Judges and District Court Commissioners/Magistrates. In most counties, Orphans' Court Judges are not required to be lawyers.[51] The Orphans' Court is Maryland's probate court and presides over the administration of estates and wills, and in some counties, appoints guardians of minors. Commissioners or Magistrates appointed by the administrative judge of a District Court district – who perform functions such as probable-cause hearings, bond settings, and committing persons when authorized – also are not required to be lawyers.[52] Some Maryland agency boards or hearing panels include non-lawyer public members. Examples include state licensing board hearings with panel members (such as the medical and nursing boards) and some county or city hearing boards (such as zoning, police disciplinary boards, and civil service commissions).

B. Federal Matters and Proceedings in Maryland.

ALPs are also currently authorized to aid individuals in certain legal and administrative matters and proceedings before federal agencies and courts. The Administrative Procedure Act of 1946 (APA) contains general language recognizing the right of parties compelled to appear before an agency to be "accompanied, represented, and advised by counsel or, if permitted by the agency, by other qualified representative[s]."[53] At least fifteen federal agencies have created ALP advocacy programs to assist individuals in certain administrative filings, proceedings, and hearings.[54] While ALP assistance varies by federal agency, non-representational assistance (such as helping a party fill out forms) is permitted more broadly than direct representation (such as speaking for a party in a hearing), and some agencies prohibit ALP representatives from soliciting or accepting direct or indirect remuneration. Examples of the types of federal legal assistance and/or representation that Maryland ALPs can perform follow.

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Non-government parties appearing before the USDA's Office of Administrative Law Judges (OALJ) are permitted to be represented by an ALP as determined by the assigned Judge on a case-by-case basis.[55] A party can request that relevant correspondence be directed to their ALP representative, but the party will still be considered as appearing pro se in the official record of the case.[56] Parties with administrative appeals before USDA's National Appeals Division (NAD) may also be represented by ALP "authorized representatives."[57] Approximately 75% of litigants appearing before NAD are either self-represented or represented by a non-attorney.[58] ALP representatives can be family members and friends, paralegals, accountants, professional farm advocates, union representatives, or other licensed professionals.

U.S. Department of Education. The federal Implementing Regulations for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) ensures that children with disabilities have access to a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in every state. IDEA authorizes parents to be advised and accompanied to Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team meetings by individuals with special knowledge or expertise (with respect to children with disabilities), including ALP advocates.[59] In the area of special education, which involves Department of Education regulations, ALPs with specialized knowledge of children with disabilities are permitted to represent parents or children in administrative hearings under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).[60]

ALPs referred to as specialized non-attorney practitioners may be authorized, with special permission of the tribunal, to represent parties before the Department of Education's Office of Hearings and Appeals (OHA). OHA handles disputes involving federal education funds, including enforcement actions against states, schools, and individuals.[61] OHA also hears higher education appeals cases arising under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA).[62] Examples include actions initiated by the Department of Education to terminate the eligibility of institutions to participate in Title IV HEA programs; actions to fine institutions; audit and program review actions to recover allegedly misspent funds; emergency actions to immediately suspend funding of such institutions; and actions to debar certain individuals from participating in various programs government-wide. OAH also hears cases involving civil rights and other matters delegated by the Secretary of Education.[63] These actions are instituted by State agencies, educational institutions, or other recipients seeking to contest an adverse preliminary finding by the U.S. Department of Education, such as an appeal by a State agency of a preliminary departmental decision proposing the recovery of federal funds for failure to administer a State grant in a manner consistent with governing law.

An individual who is not an attorney can request permission from the Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) hearing a case to represent themself, a member of their family, a partnership of which they are a member, or a corporation of which they are an officer or full-time employee. The ALJ may permit an applicant (ALP) to participate if the ALJ determines that the applicant's participation will aid in the disposition of the case; will not unduly delay the proceedings; and will not prejudice the adjudication of the parties' rights.[64] However, because the Department does recognize individual non-attorney representatives as "agents" within the meaning of the Act, a party cannot seek fees for them in a proceeding before OHA.[65]

U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). ALP representatives are authorized to represent parties before DOE's Office of Hearings and Appeals in personnel security and whistleblower cases. The Department is represented by a lawyer at initial hearings, whereas only about half of respondents are represented, some by attorneys and others by ALP representatives.[66]

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). In EPA administrative adjudications, which are non-judicial enforcement actions, ALPs, such as family members or friends, can assist or represent individuals.[67] Alps may represent individuals before the Office of Administrative Law Judges (OALJ) which handles enforcement adjudications, such as civil penalties, compliance orders, and permit revocations, under many of the statutes enforced by the EPA. ALPs may also represent individuals before the Environmental Appeals Board (EAB), the final administrative appeals body within EPA for many enforcement and permit-related matters. ALPs may assist complainants in navigating procedures before the EPA's Civil Rights Compliance Office, which handles discrimination complaints. Non-EPA employees who report violations are sometimes assisted by ALPs. ALPs must conform to the standards of conduct and ethics required of practitioners before the courts of the United States.[68]

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). ALPs are authorized to represent individuals in many proceedings before the HHS, depending on the individual's case type and which HHS office is handling the case. The HHS Departmental Appeals Board (DAB) hears appeals for many different issues, and the rules for non-attorney representation vary by case type.[69] ALPs may appear in most cases before an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ). ALP representation is not authorized in appeals related to civil monetary penalties or exclusions handled by the Office of the Inspector General (OIG). In HIPAA cases, a personal representative – such as a parent, guardian, or someone with a durable power of attorney – may be authorized to act on an individual's behalf.[70] An ALP can be appointed to represent an individual in Medicare appeals handled by the Office of Medicare Hearings and Appeals (OMHA).

Under the Affordable Care Act, a Navigator program expands assistance for people navigating the health insurance marketplace.[71] ALPs called "Navigators" and "Certified Application Counselors" help clients navigate health benefits processes, including establishing eligibility for and enrolling in health benefits coverage in federally facilitated exchanges (FFE).[72] The HHS Navigator Program is overseen by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Eligible nonprofit groups and small business resource partners become Navigators by applying for funding and providing oversight.[73] Individual Navigators are required to complete HHS-approved training, pass a federally-certified exam, and abide by all relevant regulations (such as conflict-of-interest, privacy, and security standards).[74] Navigators, who may serve in multiple states once certified, are required to serve underserved or vulnerable populations.[75]

U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). DHS' regulations permit persons entitled to representation to be represented by any of a wide range of ALPs, including law students and law school graduates who are not yet admitted to a state bar, but only on a pro bono basis; reputable individuals with a pre-existing relationship or connection to the person they represent, but only on a pro bono basis; BIA-accredited representatives; and accredited officials of the government to which the person they represent owes allegiance, if that official appears solely in their official capacity and with the represented person's consent.[76] DHS' Citizenship and Integration Grant Program funds organizational service providers, including nonlawyer accredited representatives, to assist with naturalization applications and other needs. Through legal and other assistance at the application phase of the process, the program has helped more than 300,000 lawful permanent residents prepare to apply for U.S. citizenship.

The purpose of DHS' Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is to distribute financial assistance after disasters.[77] Debt recoupments are an example of case types at FEMA. When the validity of a payment is questioned, a debt recoupment procedure is instituted. Most recoupment procedures proceed on the papers, though a small subset of debt recoupment decisions is appealed in oral hearings.[78] Although ALPs (typically legal aid staff or friends and family members of the claimant), with no qualification or training requirements, are permitted to assist persons in FEMA debt recoupment claims, very few people are represented before the agency (and the FEMA side is not represented by lawyers, either).[79]

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). HUD certifies ALPs called "Housing Counselors" to assist individuals with housing law issues, including applications for housing assistance, disputes with landlords, and navigating housing regulations including foreclosure.[80] To become HUD-certified, individuals must demonstrate relevant experience, complete HUD-approved training, and pass a certification exam. Once certified, Housing Counselors must comply with HUD regulations, ethical standards, code of conduct. HUDcertified counselors are collocated at HUD-approved housing counseling agencies (HCAs), overseen by HUD's Office of Housing Counseling, and supported by HUD's Housing Counseling Program. HUD investigates complaints against certified Housing Counselors, and can discipline or de-certify a Housing Counselor for noncompliance, inactivity, or performance issues.

U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI). ALPs, called duly authorized representatives, can represent individuals in certain matters before DOI's Office of Hearings and Appeals (OHA), which hears a mix of adjudications governed by both the APA and particular statutes.[81] OHA reviews agency decisions, including decisions about leases, tribal government disputes, probate matters, and land trusts.[82] For example, duly authorized representatives can appear before the Interior Board of Indian Appeals. An individual can represent a family member. Corporate officers or agents can be authorized to represent a corporation or unincorporated association. In matters related to Indian Affairs, ALP tribal advocates may be authorized to serve as representatives. ALPs may even represent individuals in formal adjudications in probate matters before DOI's Board of Indian Appeals.[83] And, accountants and paralegals who meet certain agency criteria may be authorized to practice before OHA in specific circumstances. The scope of what duly authorized representatives can do is defined in the regulations as not including "the preparation or filing of an application, the filing without comment of documents prepared by one other than the individual making the filing, obtaining from the Department information that is available to the public generally, or the making of inquiries respecting the status of a matter pending before the Department."[84] Duly authorized representatives may be disciplined for unethical or unauthorized behavior.[85]

U.S. Department of Treasury (Treasury). Treasury's Internal Revenue Service (IRS) permits nonlawyer Enrolled Agents and Certified Public Accountants (CPAs) to represent taxpayers before the IRS in audits, appeals, tax collection matters, and other tax disputes.[86] To become an Enrolled Agent, a person must either pass a comprehensive IRS test (covering individual and business tax returns) or demonstrate relevant experience as a former IRS employee.[87] Enrolled Agents are required to complete 72 hours of continuing education coursework every three years.[88] Like attorneys, Enrolled Agents and CPAs are unrestricted as to which taxpayers they can represent, what types of tax matters they can handle, and before which IRS offices they can represent clients.[89] As of August 1, 2025, there were 63,399 active IRS Enrolled Agents and 207,090 CPAs in the United States.[90] In 2024, Treasury's Low Income Taxpayer Clinics (LITC) - which provide pro bono representation before the IRS by attorneys, CPAs, and Enrolled Agents to low-income persons with tax disputes - helped correct more than $40 million in taxpayer liabilities and secured more than $11 million in tax refunds for taxpayers, nationwide.[91] In 2024, there were three IRS-funded LITCs in Maryland.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The VA accredits ALP Representatives working for VA-recognized veterans service organizations (VSOs) and Claims Agents.[92] VSO Representatives provide representation to veterans free of charge on their VA benefits claims involving healthcare, pension, compensation, and education.[93] As of August 2025, the VA had 86 accredited VSO Representatives and 11 Claims Agents in Maryland, alone.[94]

U.S. Commerce Department's Patent and Trade Office (USPTO). Authorized patent practitioners include both attorneys and Patent Agents. Patent Agents - ALPs who pass the patent bar examination, demonstrate the necessary legal, scientific, and technical qualifications, and meet good moral character and reputation requirements - are authorized to file and prosecute patent applications on behalf of applicants before the USPTO.[95] As of August 2025, there were 14,137 enrolled (ALP) Patent Agents in the U.S. with 459 of those in Maryland.[96]

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). ALPs may represent individuals in EEOC administrative evidentiary hearings. EEOC investigates and adjudicates claims of employment discrimination (based on race, color, religion, and sex, national origin, disability, age, or genetic information) by employees of and applicants for employment at certain federal agencies.[97] The procedures allow a complainant "the right to be accompanied, represented, and advised by a representative of the complainant's choice."[98] There is no regulation governing certification or qualifications, and EEOC has procedures to remove or restrict ALP representatives participating in the process.[99] ALP representatives in these hearings have included paralegals, union representatives, former employees from the same agency, and family members of the complainant.[100]

U.S. Social Security Administration (SSA). ALP representatives called Eligible for Direct Pay Non-Attorneys (EDPNAs) are authorized to advise and assist claimants throughout SSA's administrative processes, and are eligible to have authorized fees paid directly to them by SSA out of claimant past-due benefits.[101] To qualify, EDPNAs must hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution of higher education or have been determined by the SSA Commissioner to have equivalent qualifications derived from training and work experience; they must pass an examination, administered by the Commissioner, which tests their knowledge of the relevant provisions of the Professional Representation Act (PRA) and the most recent developments in agency and relevant court decisions; they must secure professional liability insurance or equivalent to protect claimants in the event of malpractice; they must successfully complete

a criminal background check to ensure fitness to practice before the Commissioner; and they must demonstrate ongoing completion of qualified courses of continuing education, including on ethics and professional conduct.[102] EDPNAs are subject to the same Rules of Conduct and Standards of Responsibility for Representatives as lawyer representatives. As of October 2023, SSA had 843 active non-attorney representatives, nation-wide.[103]

Disability Benefits Case

A Maryland Legal Aid Senior Case-Handling Paralegal represented a woman who had been living with various mental health diagnoses for nineteen years. The woman's mental health conditions were making her life extremely difficult, and she had reached a point where she was struggling to take care of herself. She had previously been denied disability benefits, in large part because she had never had representation before and found herself unable to navigate the complexity of the SSA system, alone. She became Maryland Legal Aid's client while she was awaiting her hearing before an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ). The Legal Aid paralegal helped the woman gather all the documentation she needed to corroborate her case, and represented her at her ALJ hearing, resulting in a fully favorable decision whereby the woman was awarded her SSI disability benefits.

Disability Benefits Case

A Maryland Legal Aid Senior Case-Handling Paralegal represented a woman who had a heart condition that triggered a stroke, leaving her with some minor deficits and mental health diagnoses. The client's previous disability claim had been denied while she was unrepresented, and she was awaiting her ALJ hearing. Early in Legal Aid's representation, the woman suffered a second stroke that left her with more serious deficits. Legal Aid was able to file all the updated medical documentation, and work out a settlement with opposing counsel. The woman's disability status was approved on the record with an amended onset date, and she was able to forego her hearing, altogether. She was awarded her SSI benefits, which also secured her housing because she was able to use the backpay to catch up on her rent. The woman and her partner had fallen behind on their rent because he had lost his job as the result of taking time off to provide her care. The client's SSI benefits, going forward, were enough to fully cover her portion of the rent.

U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). Claimants and subpoenaed witnesses may designate ALPs (referred to as non-attorney representatives) to represent them before the DOL's Office of Administrative Law Judges (OALJ) and assist claimants with filing claims in administrative programs.[104] An example of non-attorney representative assistance is filing benefits claims in the Energy Workers Program, which protects the interests of workers who were injured or became ill on the job, or their families. The judge may, at any time, require that the representative establish that s/he is subject to the laws of the United States and possesses the communication skills, knowledge, character, thoroughness, and preparation reasonably necessary to render appropriate assistance.[105] The judge may also elect to deny a request to serve as non-attorney representative after providing the requesting party or subpoenaed witness with notice and an opportunity to be heard.[106]

U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ). Established in 1958, the Department of Justice's BIA Recognition and Accreditation Program authorizes certain ALPs, including BIA-accredited representatives, to represent people in immigration proceedings before DOJ's Immigration Courts and Board of Immigration Appeals, and before DHS.[109] Title 8 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) details the requirements for an organization to become formally "recognized" by the Department of Justice's (DOJ) Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) and for individual persons to become partially or fully "accredited representatives."[110]

To become recognized, an organization must be a non-profit religious, charitable, social service, or similar organization that provides immigration legal services primarily to low-income and indigent clients within the United States. The organization must also have federal tax-exempt status. The organization must be able to establish that it has access to adequate knowledge, information, and experience in all aspects of immigration law and procedure. If the organization charges fees, it must have a written policy for accommodating clients unable to pay fees for immigration legal services. Only formally-recognized organizations, or organizations simultaneously applying for recognition, may request accreditation of individuals.[111]

To become partially-accredited, individuals must be employed by or volunteer for a recognized organization, meet character and fitness requirements, and establish that they possess broad knowledge and adequate experience in immigration law and procedure. To become fully accredited, individuals must also establish that they possess skills essential for effective litigation. An individual who receives full accreditation may represent clients before the Immigration Courts, the Board of Immigration Appeals, and DHS. An individual who receives partial accreditation may represent clients only before DHS. The DOJ is required to maintain a roster of accredited individuals and the recognized organizations they are affiliated with (the words "DHS only" beside the name of an accredited representative signifies that that individual has only partial accreditation; all others are fully accredited). There are currently 2,765 BIA-accredited representatives in the United States and 949 BIA-recognized organizations; 34 of the BIA-recognized organizations have headquarters or offices in Maryland.[112]

Yareli J. Urbina is the Managing Paralegal for Amica Center for Immigrant Rights' Detained Adult Program. Amica is a recently-BIA-recognized organization with accredited representatives that represent immigrants in Maryland; Urbina serves as Amica's BIA authorized officer. Amica currently has three partially-accredited representatives and three fully-accredited representatives on staff. Amica's BIA-accredited representatives receive robust training (inhouse, and through NILPG and CLINIC), observe numerous court proceedings and detention center interviews, and produce an extensive number of motions while assisting immigration staff attorneys. "The work that our fully-accredited representatives do and their responsibilities are the same as that of our attorneys," says Urbina, "For us, BIA representatives are extremely important because staff attorneys cannot keep up with the volume of cases we have."[113]

Immigration Case

Client, "VCC" was detained from his workplace, a local pizza shop in Baltimore, during an ICE raid. He was transferred to a detention center in Georgia, far away from his family and community. VCC had come to the U.S. nearly 20 years prior as an unaccompanied minor and built a life for himself and his family in Baltimore. His fiancée, a U.S. citizen, was eight months pregnant with their third child at the time. Fully-accredited BIA Representative, Yareli J. Urbina, was assigned to VCC's case for bond representation. Urbina compiled evidence and drafted a written motion to support VCC's request for bond. At the bond hearing, the judge granted VCC's motion and set a low bond amount. VCC was released and able to reunite with his fiancée—now wife—and his two daughters and newborn son.

Notario fraud is another driver behind immigrant-serving organizations' extensive participation in EOIR's BIA Recognition and Accreditation Program. The ABA defines "notarios" as "individuals who represent themselves as qualified to offer legal advice or services concerning immigration or other matters of law, who have no such qualification, and routinely victimize members of immigrant communities."[114] "The vast majority of our clients come from Latin American countries where notarios are able to practice law," says Morgan Weibel, Director of Advocacy and Client Services, who oversees the Tahirih Justice Center's BIA-accreditation program and supervises both immigration attorneys and BIA-accredited representatives.[115] The word "notario publico" translates in English to "notary public." In many Latinos' countries of origin, "a notario refers to an individual who has received the equivalent of a law license and who is authorized to represent others before the government."[116] Whereas, in the United States, a notary is only authorized to officially witness the signing of forms.

"Immigration attorneys are rare where I live, and notario fraud is heavy. Without access to BIA-accredited representatives and unable to hire an attorney, many immigrants will end up falling prey to notarios."

Kenson Raymond

"Immigration attorneys are rare where I live, and notario fraud is heavy" says Kenson Raymond, a BIA fully-accredited representative through Word of Life Center Immigration Services in Salisbury, Maryland.[117] Raymond says it took him fourteen years to obtain legal permanent resident status after migrating to the U.S. from Haiti; he attributes some of the errors that caused delays to his own family's reliance on a notario.[118] He recalls crying, alone in his car, on his way home from an immigration hearing after learning that one of his forms was rejected on account of being prepared incorrectly; he vowed that, if he ultimately made it through the U.S. immigration process, he would help other people do the same.[119] "Some notarios may have good intentions, but they can hurt people's cases in the long run," says Raymond, "Notarios can't call Immigration if a case goes wrong."[120] Raymond points out that immigrants without a "work permit" (form I-766, an official employment authorization document from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services) typically cannot afford to hire an immigration attorney.[121] "Without access to BIA-accredited representatives and unable to hire an attorney, many immigrants will end up falling prey to notarios."[122]

Urbina says Amica's clients show no preference for receiving assistance from attorneys over BIA-accredited representatives, "Clients just want to feel that we are communicative and responsive."[123] This observation is echoed by Weibel.[124] "It's crucial, as an immigrant," says

Raymond, who speaks Haitian Creole, "that the people who help you can connect with you, speak your language."[125]

Both Urbina and Weibel tout BIA accreditation as a sophisticated professional development opportunity and career path that opens the field allowing more people to help. Urbina says:

> We envision this as a great way to empower paralegals to take on an independent caseload. This frees up time for our attorneys to take on full merit cases. Eventually, our BIA representatives will be prepared to take on full merits hearings, too. Law school is very cost-prohibitive for a lot of people. To be more diverse and inclusive, and address the barriers that prevent people from going to law school, this BIA-accreditation pathway helps.[126]

> "If asked if they'd prefer [an]...attorney or someone who speaks their language and has shared experience, nine out of ten of our clients would choose the latter. Clients just want someone dependable, reliable, and trustworthy."
>
> Morgan Weibel

"Law school has little to do with the day-to-day practice," says attorney Weibel, "and the bar exam didn't align with my actual legal work."[127] Weibel adds:

> I have witnessed the accredited representatives learn the relevant law skills. It tends to be folks who start as paralegals or legal advocates...native Spanish-speakers who did not have the opportunity in life to go to law school.[128]

Raymond's first merits hearing as a BIA fully-accredited representative is fast approaching. "Is it scary?" he asks, then answers, "Yes, a bit. But, the more I do it, the easier it gets."[129] With six years under his belt as a BIA-accredited representative, Raymond is considering enrolling in law school.[130] "I love what I do," says Raymond, "That person really depends on you, their future is in your hands and you want to do right by them."[131]

Both the White House Legal Aid Interagency Roundtable (LAIR) and the Administrative Conference of the United States (ACUS) have vigorously recommended that federal agencies further expand the use of ALP assistance and/or representation to improve access to justice in federal cases and matters.[132]

III. Expanding Civil Access to Justice Through Tiered Legal Services

Despite Maryland's expanding civil right to counsel and current limited use of ALP civil legal assistance and representation, a vast unmet civil legal need persists among Maryland's ALICE and FPL populations. An emerging national movement, led by state supreme courts, is creating new tiers within the legal profession that enable allied legal professionals and legal technologies to help people who do not qualify for civil legal aid, but also cannot afford an attorney. Tiered legal services refer to a system where legal services are made available at different levels of experience, cost, and complexity based on factors like the nature of the legal issue or the type of assistance needed. There are ample research and empirical evidence that ALP providers, trained in specific areas of law and legal process, are competent, effective, and can help people solve their legal problems.[133] The Innovations Task Force is exploring three distinct tiers of legal assistance that can be performed by ALPs: legal practitioners, community

justice workers, and legal technologies.

A. Legal Practitioners (LPs). LPs are conceptually akin to Nurse Practitioners in the medical profession. LPs are trained, licensed, and regulated ALP legal service providers who are authorized to offer limited-scope legal services in designated areas of civil law under a jurisdiction's regulatory framework.[134] They are required to meet formal educational and/or experiential and training standards, pass examinations, and comply with ethical and regulatory obligations.[135] Their role is designed to increase access to justice by offering affordable, competent legal assistance to individuals who may not otherwise be able to afford a lawyer. Depending on the state, LPs may work independently or under the supervision of a licensed attorney. LPs typically charge modest fees (far below attorneys' market rates) making legal services accessible to the ALICE population, who are ineligible for legal aid but cannot afford to hire an attorney. According to Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System (IAALS), data from LP programs show that LPs are making a positive impact in people's lives: "Well trained ALPs are competent, their clients are satisfied with their work product, and they can reach a portion of the population that attorneys are not reaching. ALPs are providing high quality legal services at around half the cost of attorneys."[136]

B. Community Justice Workers (CJWs). Frontline Justice, a national, non-partisan organization with a mission to ensure that all Americans have access to justice, describes CJWs as "frontline helpers like shelter volunteers, faith leaders, community health aides…and others who are cross-trained to give their community essential legal help that lawyers aren't providing."[137] In some jurisdictions, CJWs are ALP staff of community-based organizations or community members, who, with training and attorney supervision, are authorized to independently perform discrete legal procedures for which there is a deep, unmet need. CJWs typically do not charge any fee, and may be able to assist individuals from households that meet legal aid income eligibility guidelines but who are nonetheless unrepresented due to other ineligibility factors or live in an area suffering a dearth of legal service attorneys. Frontline Justice describes CJW programs as "innovative, community-based models designed to expand access to affordable, quality civil legal services for individuals who cannot afford an attorney."[138] On August 12, 2025, the American Bar Association's (ABA) House of delegates adopted Resolution 605, calling on states to implement CJW programs:

"[T]he American Bar Association urges each state, territorial, and tribal highest court to study community justice worker programs…and to adopt such programs appropriate for their jurisdiction to expand the accessibility, affordability, and quality of civil legal services provided to those who cannot afford an attorney, while continuing to protect clients and the public."

ABA Resolution 605

> [T]he American Bar Association urges each state, territorial, and tribal highest court to study community justice worker programs implemented in several U.S. jurisdictions, under which community justice workers are supervised by lawyers and do not charge fees to clients, and to adopt such programs appropriate for their jurisdiction to expand the accessibility, affordability, and quality of civil legal services provided to those who cannot afford an attorney, while continuing to protect clients and the public.[139]

"There will never be enough lawyers to resolve all the legal problems that the community faces," says Frontline Justice CEO, Nikole Nelson (former Executive Director of the Alaska Legal Services Corporation), "Sometimes, community justice workers are more suitable to address cases than

lawyers are. They are connected in ways that lawyers may not be as they are often close to or are members of the community. They are helping lawyers expand their reach and amplify the services."[140]

C. Legal Technologies. Artificial intelligence (AI) is enabling the development of legal tools and platforms to support the courts and all tiers of the legal profession, including legal aid organizations, LPs, and CJWs. Courts are experimenting with website chatbots, and legal aid organizations are using AI tools to automate client intake and communication. The availability of direct-to-consumer (DTC) AI-powered tools – a model whereby technology companies sell or give their products or services directly to end-users – is rapidly expanding. Self-represented litigants are turning to publicly-available tools to help them understand their rights, obtain answers to legal questions, fill and file forms, generate case-specific court filings, and navigate an unfamiliar system of laws and courts. Technologies have the potential to enhance efficiency, increase affordability, and are available to users around the clock. UPL rules - which may apply when a technology is deemed to cross traditional lines between "legal information" and "legal advice," can have a chilling effect on legal tech investment and innovation. The National Center for State Courts (NCSC) recently observed that, "The growing access-to-justice crisis coupled with the rapid pace of AI innovation creates a unique opportunity for state courts and bar associations to meet the moment by adopting regulatory reforms that support AI-fueled legal service delivery tools to responsibly assist with legal needs."[141]

D. UPL Modernization. Each of these proposed new legal service tiers is likely to require legal or regulatory changes to create waivers from the unauthorized practice of law (UPL), and to establish appropriate benchmarks or standards of practice for consumers' protection. According to IAALS:

> For too long, state unauthorized practice of law (UPL) rules have for the most part limited the practice of law to attorneys. This has added to the current access to justice crisis, where millions of people up and down the income scale are unable to obtain legal help. There have been concerted efforts to improve access through increased pro bono and legal aid services, along with unbundled legal services, but far too many people are still left to handle their legal matters on their own. States are beginning to recognize that the legal profession needs to be opened to increase access.[142]

UPL modernization is emerging, both in the U.S. and abroad, as an integral component of contemporary access-to-justice strategy. Intentionally designed to serve specific populations that would otherwise go unserved or underserved, rather than detracting from licensed attorneys' work, LPs and CJWs expand the reach of traditional legal aid organizations.

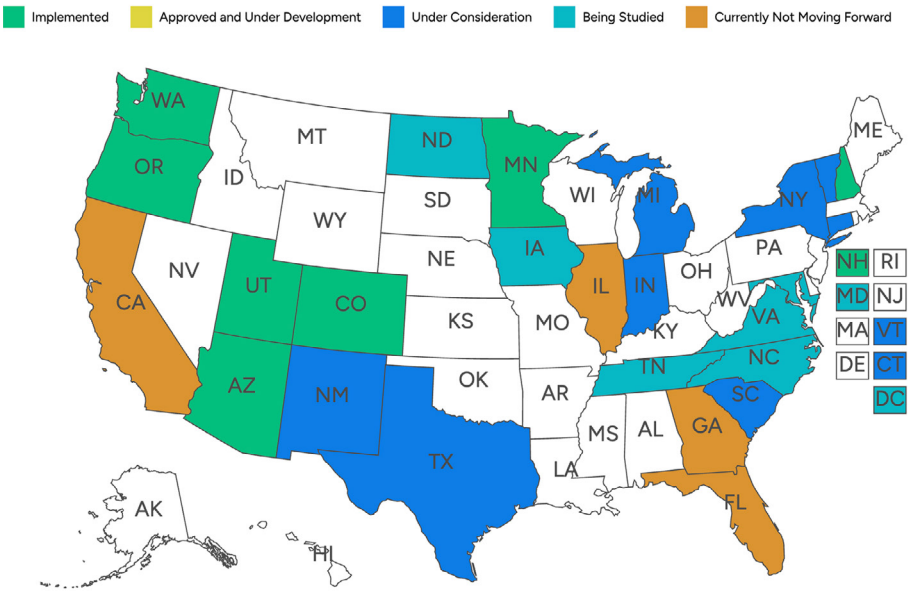
"The growing access-to-justice crisis coupled with the rapid pace of AI innovation creates a unique opportunity for state courts and bar associations to meet the moment by adopting regulatory reforms that support AI-fueled legal service delivery tools to responsibly assist with legal needs."

National Center for State Courts

Private Firms/ Attorneys	Legal Services Staff Attorneys	Legal Practitioners	Community Justice Workers
Above ALICE	<125% of FPL	ALICE	<125% of FPL
Can afford to hire an attorney at market rate	Legal-aid eligible, have access to free legal representation	Cannot afford to hire an attorney at market rate but are income-ineligible for legal aid	Income-eligible, but SRL due to non-financial ineligibility factors or dearth of available legal aid attorneys
Legal Technology can both serve low and moderate income consumers directly at scale and support all other tiers to have broader reach, with greater efficiency.			

ALP assistance is not a novel concept. Federal agencies have a well-established practice of permitting ALP representation in administrative proceedings and, to a lesser extent, in court.[143] According to the White House Legal Aid Interagency Roundtable's (LAIR) 2023 Report, "nonlawyers assist in all substantive areas, including housing, public benefits, immigration, civil rights, tax, food security, and worker protection."[144] This assistance is varied, and can include representation in immigration court removal procedures or helping someone file the correct form, with the correct date, and the correct boxes checked.

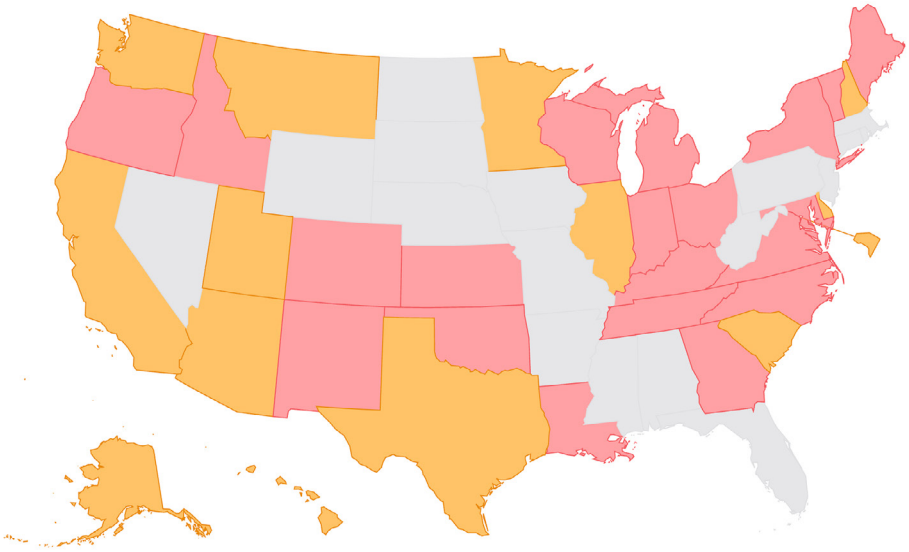
Since 2015, states, too, are increasingly incorporating tiered legal services into their access-to-justice strategies. Seven states have issued court orders/rules or passed legislation authorizing LPs (Arizona, Colorado, Minnesota, New Hampshire, Oregon, Utah, and Washington).[145] Thirteen states - Alaska, Arizona, California, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Minnesota, Montana, New Hampshire, South Carolina, Texas, Utah, and Washington - and the District of Columbia have approved CJW enabling forms.[146] And, numerous other states, including Maryland, are currently exploring implementing or expanding ALP assistance frameworks.[147]



Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System[148]

PROGRESS TO DATE

As of March 27, 2026, 14 states and D.C have passed or proposed rules for authorizing justice worker programs and 20 are actively developing them.



Frontline Justice[149]

According to IAALS, "Appropriate and affordable legal help is out of reach for many people in the United States. It is clear that attorneys alone are not the answer, and further that subsidized legal services cannot come close to meeting the present need. An ecosystem of legal professionals is necessary to close this justice gap."[150] "Expanding the supply of legal helpers beyond attorneys is critical," says Jim Sandman, President Emeritus of Legal Services Corporation, "Providing access to justice for people who can't afford lawyers requires new kinds of service providers, innovative delivery models, and the courage to pilot change."[151] On July 30, 2025, the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) released the Committee on Legal Education and Admissions Reform (CLEAR) Report urging state supreme courts to lead collaborative efforts to foster innovation and reform, with an emphasis on promoting practice-readiness.[152]

> "Expanding the supply of legal helpers beyond attorneys is critical. Providing access to justice for people who can't afford lawyers requires new kinds of service providers, innovative delivery models, and the courage to pilot change."
>
> Jim Sandman

IV. Next Steps

The Innovations Task Force has designated five standing Committees to conduct extensive research, study other states' tiered legal service programs, consult relevant experts, and elicit input from key Maryland stakeholder groups and experts.

The Outreach Committee will ensure that the Innovations Task Force hears the voices and perspectives of the many stakeholders affected by its work, including Marylanders seeking

civil legal aid, attorneys, paralegals, judges, educators and examiners, civil legal aid, workforce development and community based organizations, state agencies, bar counsel, the State Board of Law Examiners, potential future LP and CJW candidates, and more. This committee will employ focus groups, listening sessions, surveys, and workshops to collect feedback.

The Allied Legal Professionals Scope, Roles, and Responsibility Committee is studying the parameters that other states have used to create a tier within the legal profession akin to a Nurse Practitioner, called a Legal Practitioner, who is licensed to provide civil legal aid in specific case types that are underserved, but in high demand.

The Allied Legal Professionals Education, Experience, and Examination Committee is formulating an LP eligibility framework, including education and experiential prerequisites, a robust training curriculum, and testing for licensing/certification.

The Community Justice Worker Committee is developing all aspects of a legal service tier akin to Community Health Workers, called Community Justice Workers, who are members of the community or professionals in other industries who are upskilled to provide civil legal aid and bring law to where the people are.

The Legal Technology Committee is studying how other jurisdictions are modernizing UPL to facilitate the scaling, benchmarking, and implementation of legal technology solutions to help unrepresented people who cannot afford a lawyer to address their civil legal problems.

The Committees will examine the costs and benefits of proposed legal service tiers and develop recommendations for how to fund/appropriate for each. They will ensure robust input from community stakeholders in the program design and implementation plan. And they will make recommendations regarding data collection/reporting, program evaluation, and continuous quality improvement.

These five standing committees are working tirelessly to reach consensus and deliver their findings and recommendations to the full Innovations Task Force in the Fall of 2025. The Outreach Committee, in conjunction with the Judiciary's Research and Analysis team, will continue conducting and analyzing results from focus groups and discussion forums throughout the Fall to inform the Task Force's final recommendations. The Innovations Task Force will meet regularly through the Fall to discuss and evaluate Committees' recommendations, request additional information as needed, incorporate feedback from the Outreach Committee's efforts, and formulate a detailed design of the role, purpose, scope, and preparation required for each tier of legal services it recommends for Maryland. The Innovations Task Force aspires to reach consensus on recommendations by May 2026 and anticipates publishing the final report during summer, 2026.

Appendix

Acknowledgements

This Audit Report, developed with funding from the Abell Foundation, is a product of collaboration in vision, efforts, and resources among Members of the Innovations Task Force and its standing Committees, with input from the greater access to justice community stakeholders who submitted to interviews, participated in Committee meetings, and facilitated outreach. This appendix lists those contributors in grateful acknowledgement.

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Endnotes

1. The term Allied Legal Professionals (ALP) encompasses a tier of legal service providers who are not lawyers, but who are authorized by law to provide legal services and/or legal representation to individuals in specifically enumerated legal matters or practice areas without violating states' unauthorized practice of law (UPL) rules.

2. Civil legal problems are common. They include matters such as domestic violence cases, family law (divorce, paternity, child custody and support), wills and trusts, power of attorney, labor and employment matters, record sealing and expungement, housing (foreclosure and eviction), consumer and finance (consumer or medical debt and bankruptcy), immigration law, civil rights, and much more. But, because there is no right to an attorney in most civil cases, people who cannot afford to hire an attorney are forced to navigate complex laws and systems by themselves. See American Bar Association, How Courts Work (2019), available at https://www.americanbar.org/groups/public_education/resources/law_related_education_network/how_courts_work /cases/#:~:text=A%20civil%20case%20usually%20begins,court%20that%20begins%20a%20lawsuit (last visited on December 17, 2025).

3. The Parental Defense Division of the Maryland Office of the Public Defender (OPD) represents parents in cases involving potential removal of children from their home (CINA) or termination of parental rights (TPR). Available at https://opd.state.md.us/parental-defense (last visited on December 17, 2025).

4. MD. Code Crim. Proc. § 16-204 (b)(1)(iv) states that an indigent person shall be provided representation by the Public Defender in "any proceeding in which confinement under a judicial commitment of an individual in a public or private institution may result." Available at https://codes.findlaw.com/md/criminal-procedure/md-code-crimproc-sect-16-204/ (last visited on December 17, 2025).

5. MD Code, Education, § 8-413.1, available at https://govt.westlaw.com/mdc/Document/N88AC6780539411EFA7888EA7098D6CB9?viewType=FullText&originationContext=documenttoc&transitionType=CategoryPageItem&contextData=(sc.Default)#:~:text=(3)(i)%20Progra m%20funds,services%20provided%20under%20the%20Program (last visited on December 17, 2025).

6. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) establishes annual federal poverty guidelines for the United States. The 2025 guidelines are available here, https://aspe.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/dd73d4f00d8a819d10b2fdb70d254f7b/detailed-guidelines2025.pdf (last visited on December 17, 2025).

7. United Way, The State of A.L.I.C.E. in Maryland (2025 report covers data from 2023), available at https://unitedforalice.org/introducing-ALICE/Maryland (last visited on December 17, 2025). "ALICE" stands for "Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed." The United Way defines ALICE households as "households with income above the FPL, but below the basic cost of living." United Way, About Us - Meet ALICE, available at https://unitedforalice.org/meetalice?gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=17215472393&gbraid=0AAAADwfo_UyPSjADWrdNTcZ8myh5ZR3A&gclid=Cj0KCQjwklLEBhDeARIsAL--pjznh8rFp6NUz0N9vsi66s6MUcduviCd_A_mM6rZgk7kKiiRlLwonIaAmwOEALw_wcB (last visited on December 17, 2025).

8. United Way, The State of A.L.I.C.E. in Maryland, available at https://www.unitedforalice.org/keyfindings/maryland (last visited on July 23, 2025). "Of Maryland's 2,376,785 households in 2023, 10% earned below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), and 29% were ALICE — households that earned above the FPL, but not enough to afford the ALICE Household Survival Budget for their household composition and location. Combining these two groups, 39% of households in Maryland were below the ALICE Threshold."

9. Your Guide to Law Firm Pricing: How to Price Legal Services: Hourly Rates in Maryland, CLIO, available at https://www.clio.com/resources/legal-trends/compare-lawyer-rates/md/ (last visited on December 11, 2025).

10. Maryland Legal Aid Income Guidelines, available here https://www.mdlab.org/get-help-services/incomeguidelines/ (last visited on December 17, 2025).

11. Self-Represented Litigation Network, SRLN Brief: How Many SRLs? (2019) (estimating that 75% or more of state civil cases involve at least one self-represented litigant), available at https://www.srln.org/node/548/srln-brief-howmany-srls-srln-2015 (last visited on December 17, 2025). See, also, National Center for State Courts, Landscape of Civil Litigation in State Courts 2015, at "At least one party was self-represented (usually the defendant) in more than three-quarters of the cases" (reporting data on ~900,000 cases). Maryland civil filings data provided by the Judiciary indicated 761,791 total civil case filings in the District and Circuit Courts, alone, in FY2024 (excluding moving violations and juvenile cases). 761,791 (Maryland civil case filings) x .75 (national data percentage of cases with at least one unrepresented party) = 571,343 (approximate number of cases with at least one unrepresented litigant in FY2024). See Maryland Judiciary's FY2024 Statistical Abstract, available at https://online.flippingbook.com/view/485870064/ (last visited on December 17, 2025).

12. Legal Services Corporation, The 2022 Justice Gap Executive Summary (Legal Services Corporation, 2022), available at https://justicegap.lsc.gov/resource/executive-summary/ (last visited on December 17, 2025). "74% of low-income households experienced at least one legal issue, and most of them did not seek legal help.".

13. LSD.Law defines administrative proceedings as follows: "An administrative proceeding is a type of legal process that takes place before a government agency. It can involve a hearing, investigation, or trial, and is usually focused on making a decision about a specific issue or dispute. Sometimes, the process is more like a trial, with evidence presented and a decision made by the agency. Other times, it is more like a discussion or inquiry, with the agency gathering information and making recommendations." Available at https://lsd.law/define/administrative-proceeding (last visited on December 17, 2025).

14. Civil Justice for All: A Report and Recommendations from the Making Justice Accessible Initiative (American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2020).

15. 9 Emily S. Taylor Poppe & Jeffrey J. Rachlinski, Do Lawyers Matter? The Effect of Legal Representation in Civil Disputes, 43 Pepp. L. Rev. 881, 910-19 (2016), https://digitalcommons.pepperdine.edu/plr/vol43/iss4/1/; Hilary W. Hoynes, Nicole Maestas & Alexander Strand, Legal Representation in Disability Claims (Nat'l Bureau of Econ. Rsch., Working Paper No. 29871, 2020); Rebecca L. Sandefur, The Impact of Counsel: An Analysis of Empirical Evidence, 9 Seattle Journal for Social Justice 51, 52 (2010). See, also, MLSC, What is Civil legal Aid, available at https://www.mlsc.org/about-us/what-is-civil-legal-aid/ (last visited on December 17, 2025). See, also, The Economic Case for Civil Legal Aid, Legal Services Corporation, available at https://www.lsc.gov/ourimpact/economicimpact#:~:text=Every%20study%20has%20found%20that,effects%20that%20support%20local%20communities (last visited on December 17, 2025).

16. Self-Represented Litigation Network, SRLN Brief: How Many SRLs? (2019) (estimating that 75% or more of state civil cases involve at least one self-represented litigant). According to the Maryland Judiciary's FY2024 report, the total number of failure-to-pay-rent cases filed in MD in SFY2024 was 394,702 [394,702 x .75 = 296,026]; the total small claims filings in MD in SFY2024 was 125,720 [125,720 x .75 = 94,290]; and the total number of domestic violence protective order cases filed in MD in SFY2024 was 29,877 [29,877 x .75 = 22,407]. See Maryland Judiciary's FY2024 Statistical Abstract, p. 35 (Table DC-2) and 18 (Table CC-1.2), available at https://online.flippingbook.com/view/485870064/ (last visited December 17, 2025).

17. Md. R. 19-305.5 (2025).

18. Allied Legal Professionals: A National Framework for program Growth, Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System (2023) at p.28, available at https://iaals.du.edu/sites/default/files/documents/publications/alp_national_framework.pdf (last visited on December 17, 2025).

19. Allied Legal Professionals: A National Framework for program Growth, Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System (2023) at p.28, available at https://iaals.du.edu/sites/default/files/documents/publications/alp_national_framework.pdf (last visited on December 17, 2025). "Well trained ALPs are competent, their clients are satisfied with their work product, and they can reach a portion of the population that attorneys are not reaching. ALPs are providing high-quality legal services at around half the cost of attorneys."

20. Paraprof'l Licensing Implementation Comm., Or. State Bar, Final Report 18 (2022), at p.162, https://paraprofessional.osbar.org/files/2021_PPLIC_BOGReport.pdf (last visited on December 17, 2025).

21. Admin. Conf. of the U.S., Recommendation 2024-7, Nonlawyer Assistance and Representation in Agency Adjudications (Dec. 12, 2024) p.1 also citing Admin. Conf. of the U.S., Recommendation 86-1, Nonlawyer Assistance and Representation, 51 Fed. Reg. 25,641, 25,642 n.2 (July 16, 1986), https://www.acus.gov/sites/default/files/documents/86-1.pdf (last visited on December 17, 2025). The Administrative Conference of the United States (ACUS) defines and distinguishes between "nonlawyer representation" and "nonlawyer assistance" as follows: "Representation is used to denote that the individual is "standing in the shoes" of the participant and can speak for that individual even when they are not present. Other activities that likely indicate representation include counseling on eligibility for an agency program or signing official records. "Assistance" is broader and used to indicate many other forms of help that may be beneficial to a person in dealing with an agency; this may include educating someone on process, counseling someone about rights and remedies generally, and, in some cases, helping someone navigate a form or benefits application. In most cases, representation will include various forms of assistance, but assistance does not include representation."

22. Md. R. Prof'l Conduct 19-305.5. This Rule prohibits the unauthorized practice of law and addresses multijurisdictional practice of law by lawyers licensed in other states. See, also, Md. R. Prof'l Conduct 19-305.3 (2024). This Rule sets forth attorneys' obligations and liabilities with respect to non-attorneys (e.g., secretaries, investigators, law student interns, and paraprofessionals) employed or retained by or associated with them.

23. Md. Rule 19-217(d) (2025), available at https://www.mdcourts.gov/sites/default/files/rules/supporting/178title19chapters100x300.pdf (derived from Rule 16 of the Rules Governing Admission to the Bar of Maryland (2016)) (last visited on December 17, 2025).

24. Md. Rule 19-217(d) (2025), available at https://www.mdcourts.gov/sites/default/files/rules/supporting/178title19chapters100x300.pdf (derived from Rule 16 of the Rules Governing Admission to the Bar of Maryland (2016)) (last visited on December 17, 2025).

25. Md. Rule 19-217(d) (2025), available at https://www.mdcourts.gov/sites/default/files/rules/supporting/178title19chapters100x300.pdf (derived from Rule 16 of the Rules Governing Admission to the Bar of Maryland (2016)) (last visited on December 17, 2025).

26. MD Bus Occ & Prof Code § 10-206 (2013), available at https://law.justia.com/codes/maryland/2013/articlegbo/section-10-206?utm_source=chatgpt.com (last visited on December 17, 2025).

27. Md. Code Ann., Bus. Occ. & Prof. § 10-206.

28. Although staff counsel is a Maryland-licensed attorney (not an ALP), a formal UPL exception is required for insurance company corporate counsel defending an insured (which is the obligation of an insurance company) because the employer is a corporation, and Maryland's UPL rules prohibit corporations from practicing law or furnishing legal services to third parties.

29. ACE Task Force, available at https://msa.maryland.gov/msa/mdmanual/26excom/html/01access.html (last visited on December 17, 2025).

30. See MLSC Annual Report for July 2023 through June 2024, at p.8, available at https://www.mlsc.org/wpcontent/uploads/MLSC_AR24.pdf (last visited on December 17, 2025). "Maryland became the second state in the nation to establish a statewide right to counsel for tenants facing eviction or subsidy termination during the 2021 legislative session. MLSC was designated as the administrator of the Access to Counsel in Evictions (ACE) program."

31. See MLSC Annual Report for July 2023 through June2024, at p.8, available at https://www.mlsc.org/wpcontent/uploads/MLSC_AR24.pdf (last visited on December 17, 2025).

32. MD Tax-General Code §13-515 (2024), available at https://law.justia.com/codes/maryland/tax-general/title13/subtitle-5/part-iv/section-13-515/?utm_source=chatgpt.com (last visited on December 17, 2025).

33. Md. Code Ann., Lab. & Empl. §8-5A08; Md. Code Ann., Lab. & Empl. §8-507; Md. Code Regs. 09.32.06.02.

34. Md. Code Ann., Lab. & Empl. §8-5A08; Md. Code Ann., Lab. & Empl. §8-507; Md. Code Regs. 09.32.06.02.

35. Md. Code Ann., State Pers. & Pensions § 11-103(d) (2025), addressing representation in grievance proceedings, available at https://law.justia.com/codes/maryland/state-personnel-and-pensions/division-i/title-11/subtitle-1/section11-103/ (last visited on December 17, 2025). Md. Code Ann., State Pers. & Pensions § 12-105(a) (2025), addressing representation in disciplinary appeals, available at https://law.justia.com/codes/maryland/state-personnel-andpensions/division-i/title-12/subtitle-1/section-12-105/ (last visited on December 17, 2025).

36. Phone interview with Director Losemann conducted on August 6, 2025.

37. Phone interview with Director Losemann conducted on August 6, 2025.

38. Md. Code Regs. 26.01.01.04, available at https://dsd.maryland.gov/regulations/Pages/26.01.01.04.aspx (last visited on December 17, 2025).

39. Md. Code Ann., Ins. § 2-213 (LexisNexis 2024). See, also H.B. 90, 2024 Gen. Assemb., Reg. Sess. (Md. 2024) (enacted Oct. 1, 2024) and S.B. 230, 2024 Gen. Assemb., Reg. Sess. (Md. 2024) (approved May 16, 2024).

40. See Md. Code Regs. 02.02.06.09, available at https://dsd.maryland.gov/regulations/Pages/02.02.06.09.aspx (last visited on December 17, 2025): “A party may…when authorized by law, appear through a representative who is not an attorney. An attorney who is not a member of the Maryland Bar, but is a member in good standing of the Bar of another state, may represent a party if the attorney is specially admitted in accordance with Rule 14 of the Rules Governing Admission to the Bar of Maryland (on special admission of out-of-state attorneys pro hac vice). See, also, Md. Code Regs. 28.02.01.08. See, also, Md. Code Regs. 09.32.06.02.

41. See Maryland Securities Division - What We Do, OAG, available at https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/Pages/Securities/default.aspx (last visited August 28, 2025).

42. See OAH Rules of Procedure 28.02.01.08, Md. Code Regs. tit. 28, subtit. 02, ch. 28.02.01 - Rules of Procedure, and Md. Code Ann., State Govt. § 9-1607.1.

43. Md. S.B. 797, 2024 Leg., ch. 170 (enacted) (Md.), available at https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/SB0797?ys=2024rs (last visited on December 17, 2025). See, also, Maryland HB 903, 2024 Leg., Reg. Sess. (Md. 2024), available at https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/HB0903?ys=2024RS (last visited on December 17, 2025).

44. Daily Record Staff, MD Volunteer Lawyers Service Launches Free Special ED Project, The Daily Record (Aug. 18, 2025), available at https://thedailyrecord.com/2025/08/18/md-volunteer-lawyers-service-launches-free-specialed-project/ (last visited on December 17, 2025). The free services are available to Marylanders with a household income up to 150% of the Maryland Legal Services Corporation limits.

45. Interview with Leslie Seid Margolis conducted by phone on October 8, 2025.

46. Interview with Sarah Parsons conducted on July 29, 2025 via telephone.

47. Interview with Sarah Parsons conducted on July 29, 2025 via telephone.

48. Interview with Sarah Parsons conducted on July 29, 2025 via telephone.

49. Interview with Sarah Parsons conducted on July 29, 2025 via telephone.

50. Interview with Sarah Parsons conducted on July 29, 2025 via telephone.

51. See Maryland Orphans' Court website, Orphans' Court Judges, at https://www.mdcourts.gov/orphanscourt (last visited on December 17, 2025). Only Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Prince George's County do require Orphans' Court Judges to be lawyers. Three jurisdictions - Harford, Howard, and Montgomery counties – have eliminated the position of Orphans' Court Judge; in those counties, these cases are heard by Circuit Court judges.

52. Md. Code Ann., Cts. & Jud. Proc. § 2-607.

53. 5 U.S.C. § 555(b).

54. Amy Widman, Nonlawyer Assistance and Representation, Report to the Administrative Conference of the United States (Rutgers Law School, 2024), https://www.acus.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Nonlawyer%20Assistance%20and%20Representation%20- %20Final%20Report%202024.12.09_0.pdf (last visited on December 17, 2025).

55. USDA FAQ, available at https://www.usda.gov/about-usda/general-information/staff-offices/office-hearings-andappeals/office-administrative-law-judges/frequently-asked-questions (last visited on December 17, 2025).

56. USDA FAQ, available at https://www.usda.gov/about-usda/general-information/staff-offices/office-hearings-andappeals/office-administrative-law-judges/frequently-asked-questions (last visited on December 17, 2025).

57. 7 C.F.R. § 11.6.

58. About 75 percent of litigants before the USDA National Appeals Division represent themselves or are assisted by a family member or friend. Connie Vogelmann, Self-Represented Parties in Administrative Hearings 46 (Oct. 28, 2016) (report to the Admin. Conf. of the U.S.).

59. 20 U.S.C. § 1414(d)(1)(B)(vi) (2018) (permitting parents to invite individuals with knowledge or special expertise, including advocates or attorneys, to IEP meetings). See, also, 34 C.F.R. § 300.512(a)(1): "(a) Any party to a hearing conducted pursuant to §§ 300.507 through 300.513 has the right to— (1) Be accompanied and advised by counsel and by individuals with special knowledge or training with respect to the problems of children with disabilities, except that whether parties have the right to be represented by non-attorneys at due process hearings is determined under State law." See also IDEA, 20 U.S.C. § 1414(d)(1)(B)(vi) (2018). Available at https://sites.ed.gov/idea/statuteregulations/ (last visited on December 17, 2025).

60. 34 C.F.R. pt. 99 (2024), available at https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/ferpa (last visited on December 17, 2025).

61. About Office of Hearings and Appeals (OHA), U.S. department of Education website, available at https://www.ed.gov/about/ed-offices/ofo/oha (last visited on December 17, 2025).

62. About OHA, U.S. Department of Education website, available at https://www.ed.gov/about/ed-offices/ofo/oha (last visited December 17, 2025).

63. About OHA, U.S. Department of Education website, available at https://www.ed.gov/about/ed-offices/ofo/oha (last visited December 17, 2025).

64. 34 CFR § 81.7, available at https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-A/part-81/subpart-A/section-81.7 (last visited November 4, 2025).

65. See 43 C.F.R. 1.3 (2004), available at https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-43/subtitle-A/part-1/section-1.3 (last visited December 17, 2025). See, also, Fanning, Phillips and Molnar v. West, 160 F.3d 717 (Fed. Cir. 1998); Cook v. Brown, 68 F.3d 447 (Fed. Cir. 1995).

66. Amy Widman, Nonlawyer Assistance and Representation, Report to the Administrative Conference of the United States (Rutgers Law School, 2024), note 9 at p.4. https://www.acus.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Nonlawyer%20Assistance%20and%20Representation%20- %20Final%20Report%202024.12.09_0.pdf (last visited December 17, 2025). Citing Michael Asimow, Federal Administrative Adjudication Outside the Administrative Procedure Act 127–28 (Sept. 11, 2019) (report to the Admin. Conf. of the U.S.).

67. 40 C.F.R. § 22.10 (addressing who may enter an appearance on behalf of a party), available at (last visited on November 5, 2025). See, also, EPA Office of Administrative Law Judges Practice Manual, available at https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2013-09/documents/alj-practice-manual_0.pdf (last visited December 17, 2025).

68. 40 C.F.R. § 22.10, available at https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-40/chapter-I/subchapter-A/part-22 (last visited December 17, 2025). See, also,

69. HHS Departmental Appeals Board, Representation, available at https://www.hhs.gov/about/agencies/dab/different-appeals-at-dab/appeals-toalj/procedures/representation/index.html#:~:text=Non%2Dattorney%20representation%20is%20not,address%20wit h%20the%20hearing%20request (last visited December 17, 2025).

70. See 45 CFR 164.502(g), Personal Representatives, Available at https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-45/subtitleA/subchapter-C/part-164/subpart-E/section-164.502 (last visited December 17, 2025).

71. See 42 U.S.C. §§ 18031(c) and (i). See, also, Amy Widman, Nonlawyer Assistance and Representation, Report to the Administrative Conference of the United States (Rutgers Law School, 2024), at pp. 57-58.

72. See 45 C.F.R. § 155.210(e).

73. See 45 C.F.R. § 155.210(c).

74. See 45 C.F.R. § 155.215(b)(iii).

75. See 45 C.F.R. § 155.210(e)(8)(i).

76. 8 C.F.R. § 292.1 (2024), available at https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/8/292.1 (last visited December 17, 2025).

77. See 6 U.S.C. § 313, available at https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/6/313 (last visited December 17, 2025).

78. Amy Widman, Nonlawyer Assistance and Representation, Report to the Administrative Conference of the United States (Rutgers Law School, 2024), at p. 59.

79. Amy Widman, Nonlawyer Assistance and Representation, Report to the Administrative Conference of the United States (Rutgers Law School, 2024), at p.22.

80. See HUD Housing Counseling Program Regulations, 24 CFR Part 214; HUD Housing Counseling Handbook (2004), available at https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/OCHCO/documents/76101HSGHBK.pdf (last visited October 8, 2025) and HUD Housing Counseling Handbook Guide, available at https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/housing-counseling/handbook-guide/overview/ (last visited December 17, 2025); and HUD Housing Counselors, General Information page, available at https://hudhousingcounselors.hud.gov/support (last visited December 17, 2025).

81. See 10 C.F.R. § 1003.3 (2024), available at https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-10/chapter-X/part-1003 (last visited December 17, 2025).

82. 43 C.F.R. § 4.1. Available at https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-43/subtitle-A/part-4/subpart-A/section-4.1 (last visited December 17, 2025).

83. Amy Widman, Nonlawyer Assistance and Representation, Report to the Administrative Conference of the United States (Rutgers Law School, 2024) at pp. 15-16, https://www.acus.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Nonlawyer%20Assistance%20and%20Representation%20- %20Final%20Report%202024.12.09_0.pdf (last visited December 17, 2025).

84. 43 C.F.R. § 1.3(c). Available at https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-43/subtitle-A/part-1/section-1.3 (last visited December 17, 2025).

85. See 43 C.F.R. § 1.6. Available at https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-43/subtitle-A/part-1/section-1.6 (last visited December 17, 2025).

86. Enrolled Agent Information, Internal Revenue Service, https://www.irs.gov/tax-professionals/enrolledagents/enrolled-agent-information (last visited December 17, 2025) The practice before IRS is governed by Title 31 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Subtitle A, Part 10. See, also, Treasury Department Circular No. 230 (Rev. 6- 2014), Regulations Governing Practice before the Internal Revenue Service, available at https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/pcir230.pdf (last visited December 17, 2025).

87. Enrolled Agent Information, Internal Revenue Service, https://www.irs.gov/tax-professionals/enrolledagents/enrolled-agent-information (last visited December 17, 2025) The practice before IRS is governed by Title 31 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Subtitle A, Part 10. See, also, Treasury Department Circular No. 230 (Rev. 6- 2014), Regulations Governing Practice before the Internal Revenue Service, available at https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/pcir230.pdf (last visited December 17, 2025).

88. Enrolled Agent Information, Internal Revenue Service, https://www.irs.gov/tax-professionals/enrolledagents/enrolled-agent-information (last visited December 17, 2025) The practice before IRS is governed by Title 31 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Subtitle A, Part 10. See, also, Treasury Department Circular No. 230 (Rev. 6-2014), Regulations Governing Practice before the Internal Revenue Service, available at https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/pcir230.pdf (last visited December 17, 2025).

89. Enrolled Agent Information, Internal Revenue Service, https://www.irs.gov/tax-professionals/enrolledagents/enrolled-agent-information (last visited December 17, 2025) The practice before IRS is governed by Title 31 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Subtitle A, Part 10. See, also, Treasury Department Circular No. 230 (Rev. 6- 2014), Regulations Governing Practice before the Internal Revenue Service, available at https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/pcir230.pdf (last visited December 17, 2025).

90. See Return Preparer Office federal tax return preparer statistics, Internal revenue Service, Internal Revenue Service, available at https://www.irs.gov/tax-professionals/return-preparer-office-federal-tax-return-preparerstatistics (last visited December 17, 2025).

91. See, The Draft TAS Act Would Unlock Low Income Taxpayer Clinics' Potential, National Taxpayer Advocate Blog, available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RyCqk01lY6E (last visited December 17, 2025).

92. Representation of VA claimants is governed under 38 U.S.C. §§ 5901-5905, Representation of Department of Veterans Affairs Claimants; Recognition of Organizations, Accredited Representatives, Attorneys, Agents; Rules of Practice and Information Concerning Fees. Nonlawyer representatives include agents, representatives of veterans' service organizations (VSOs), and specially authorized persons. Agents, like attorneys, are permitted to charge fees. Representatives of VSOs and specially authorized persons are not permitted to charge fees. VA-accredited attorneys or agents may only charge reasonable fees for services provided after a notice of disagreement has been filed with respect to a decision on a claim, or, for claims under the modernized review system, after issuance of notice of an initial decision on the claim. 38 U.S.C. § 5904(c)(1); 38 C.F.R. § 14.636(c) and (e).

93. Representation of VA claimants is governed under 38 U.S.C. §§ 5901-5905, Representation of Department of Veterans Affairs Claimants; Recognition of Organizations, Accredited Representatives, Attorneys, Agents; Rules of Practice and Information Concerning Fees. Nonlawyer representatives include agents, representatives of veterans' service organizations (VSOs), and specially authorized persons. Agents, like attorneys, are permitted to charge fees. Representatives of VSOs and specially authorized persons are not permitted to charge fees. VA-accredited attorneys or agents may only charge reasonable fees for services provided after a notice of disagreement has been filed with respect to a decision on a claim, or, for claims under the modernized review system, after issuance of notice of an initial decision on the claim. 38 U.S.C. § 5904(c)(1); 38 C.F.R. § 14.636(c) and (e).

94. The VA maintains a public list of attorneys, claim agents, VSO (Veterans Service Organizations) Representatives on its website. Accreditation Search, U.S. Dep't of Veterans Affs., https://www.va.gov/ogc/apps/accreditation/index.asp (last visited December 17, 2025).

95. 37 CFR § 11.7. See, also, Becoming a Patent Practitioner, U.S. patent and Trademark Office, available at https://

www.uspto.gov/learning-and-resources/patent-and-trademark-practitioners/becoming-patent-practitioner (last visited December 17, 2025).

96. See, USPTO Practitioner roster, available at https://oedci.uspto.gov/OEDCI/practitionerSearchEntry#roster (last visited December 17, 2025).

97. About the EEOC, https://www.eeoc.gov/youth/about-eeoc-2#:~:text=about%20the%20EEOC?- ,What%20does%20the%20EEOC%20do?,Our%20services%20are%20free (last visited December 17, 2025).

98. See 29 C.F.R. § 1614.605. Available at https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-29/subtitle-B/chapter-XIV/part1614/subpart-F/section-1614.605 (last visited December 17, 2025).

99. Amy Widman, Nonlawyer Assistance and Representation, Report to the Administrative Conference of the United States (Rutgers Law School, 2024) at pp. 66-67, https://www.acus.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Nonlawyer%20Assistance%20and%20Representation%20- %20Final%20Report%202024.12.09_0.pdf (last visited December 17, 2025).

100. Amy Widman, Nonlawyer Assistance and Representation, Report to the Administrative Conference of the United States (Rutgers Law School, 2024) at pp. 66-67, https://www.acus.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Nonlawyer%20Assistance%20and%20Representation%20- %20Final%20Report%202024.12.09_0.pdf (last visited December 17, 2025).

101. Professional Representation Act of 2010, Pub. L. No. 111-142, § 3, 124 Stat. 39 (2010) (amending Section 206 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 406)), available at https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/PLAW111publ142/pdf/PLAW-111publ142.pdf (last visited December 17, 2025). See, also, Direct Payment to Eligible Non-Attorney Representatives, Social Security Administration, available at https://www.ssa.gov/representation/nonattyrep.htm (last visited on August 28, 2025).

102. Professional Representation Act of 2010, Pub. L. No. 111-142, § 3, 124 Stat. 39 (2010) (amending Section 206 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 406)), available at https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/PLAW-111publ142/pdf/PLAW-111publ142.pdf (last visited December 17, 2025). See also 20 C.F.R. § 404.1717 (2024) and 20 C.F.R. § 416.1517 (2024).

103. 2023 Report: Access to Justice in Federal Administrative Proceedings, Legal Aid Interagency Roundtable at p.28 (2023).

104. 29 C.F.R. § 18.22(b)(2), available at https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-29/subtitle-A/part-18/subpart-A/subjectgroup-ECFRc786c0ab79e6707/section-18.22 (last visited December 17, 2025). Non-attorney representatives who appear before the DOL's Office of Administrative Law Judges are subject to the standards of conduct and rules governing qualifications of representatives found in the OALJ Rules of Practice and Procedure at 29 C.F.R. § 18.22.

105. 29 C.F.R. § 18.22(b)(2), available at https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-29/subtitle-A/part-18/subpart-A/subjectgroup-ECFRc786c0ab79e6707/section-18.22 (last visited December 17, 2025). Non-attorney representatives who appear before the DOL's Office of Administrative Law Judges are subject to the standards of conduct and rules governing qualifications of representatives found in the OALJ Rules of Practice and Procedure at 29 C.F.R. § 18.22.

106. 29 C.F.R. § 18.22(b)(2), available at https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-29/subtitle-A/part-18/subpart-A/subjectgroup-ECFRc786c0ab79e6707/section-18.22 (last visited December 17, 2025). Non-attorney representatives who appear before the DOL's Office of Administrative Law Judges are subject to the standards of conduct and rules governing qualifications of representatives found in the OALJ Rules of Practice and Procedure at 29 C.F.R. § 18.22.

107. 8 CFR § 292.1 - Representation of others.

108. U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Access to Justice, Access to Justice in Federal Administrative Proceedings: Nonlawyer Assistance and Other Strategies (Legal Aid Interagency Roundtable 2023) at 29. Available at https://www.justice.gov/atj/media/1327481/dl (last visited December 17, 2025).

109. BIA Recognition and Accreditation Program, U.S. Department of Justice, available at https://www.justice.gov/eoir/recognition-and-accreditation-program (last visited December 17, 2025).

110. 8 U.S.C. 1103, 1362. Available at https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/USCODE-2023-title8/pdf/USCODE2023-title8-chap12-subchapI-sec1103.pdf (last visited December 17, 2025) and https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/USCODE-2023-title8/pdf/USCODE-2023-title8-chap12-subchapII-partIXsec1362.pdf (last visited December 17, 2025).

111. The coursework and application process for BIA accreditation can be costly, but applicants have the BIArecognized organization behind them footing the bill. One drawback of the model is that a BIA-accredited representative is tied to the BIA-recognized organization that sponsored them for accreditation. If they move to a new organization, that new organization must be BIA-recognized and must apply for accreditation on the representative's behalf.

112. Recognition and Accreditation Program, Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR), U.S. Department of Justice, available at https://www.justice.gov/eoir/recognition-accreditation-roster-reports (last visited on Aug. 14, 2025). Note that, EOIR's list of BIA-accredited representatives does not include the representatives' location and, while EOIR also lists the number of accredited representatives at each BIA- recognized agency, but because some agencies have locations in more than one state, it is not possible to discern exactly how many representatives are in Maryland.

113. Interview of Yareli J. Urbina conducted via phone by Julia Alanen on August 7, 2025.

114. About Notario Fraud, American Bar Association, available at https://www.americanbar.org/groups/public_interest/immigration/projects_initiatives/fightnotariofraud/about_notari o_fraud/ (last visited December 17, 2025).

115. Interview with Morgan Weibel conducted by Julia Alanen via Google Meet on August 13, 2025. Tahirih has a total of six BIA-accredited representatives, nationwide, and an office in Baltimore, Maryland, see https://www.tahirih.org/about-us/ (last visited December 17, 2025).

116. About Notario Fraud, American Bar Association, available at https://www.americanbar.org/groups/public_interest/immigration/projects_initiatives/fightnotariofraud/about_notari o_fraud/ (last visited December 17, 2025).

117. Interview with Kenson Raymond conducted by Julia Alanen via phone on August 7, 2025.

118. Interview with Kenson Raymond conducted by Julia Alanen via phone on August 7, 2025.

119. Interview with Kenson Raymond conducted by Julia Alanen via phone on August 7, 2025.

120. Interview with Kenson Raymond conducted by Julia Alanen via phone on August 7, 2025.

121. Interview with Kenson Raymond conducted by Julia Alanen via phone on August 7, 2025.

122. Interview with Kenson Raymond conducted by Julia Alanen via phone on August 7, 2025.

123. Interview of Yareli Urbina conducted via phone by Julia Alanen on August 7, 2025.

124. Interview with Morgan Weibel conducted via Google Meet by Julia Alanen on August 13, 2025. "If asked if they'd prefer [an]...attorney or someone who speaks their language and has shared experience, nine out of ten of our clients would choose the latter. Clients just want someone dependable, reliable, and trustworthy, and that's more about the person than where they got their education. And anyone coming into the practice via the BIA-accreditation pathway is hyper-focused on immigration work."

125. Interview with Kenson Raymond conducted by Julia Alanen via phone on August 7, 2025.

126. Interview of Yareli Urbina conducted via phone by Julia Alanen on August 7, 2025.

127. Interview with Morgan Weibel conducted via Google Meet on August 13, 2025.

128. Interview with Morgan Weibel conducted via Google Meet on August 13, 2025.

129. Interview with Kenson Raymond conducted by Julia Alanen via phone on August 7, 2025.

130. Interview with Kenson Raymond conducted by Julia Alanen via phone on August 7, 2025.

131. Interview with Kenson Raymond conducted by Julia Alanen via phone on August 7, 2025.

132. Admin. Conf. of the U.S., Recommendation 2024-7, Nonlawyer Assistance and Representation in Agency Adjudications (Dec. 12, 2024), https://www.acus.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Nonlawyer-Assistance-andRepresentation-Adopted-Recommendation-2024.12.16.pdf (last visited December 17, 2025). And, Legal Aid Interagency Roundtable, Access to Justice in Federal Administrative Proceedings: Nonlawyer Assistance and Other Strategies (2023), https://www.justice.gov/atj/media/1327481/dl?inline (last visited December 17, 2025).

133. Sandefur, "Legal Advice from Nonlawyers: Consumer Demand Provider Quality, and Public Harms."

134. Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System, Allied Legal Professionals: A National Framework for Program Growth (May 2024), available at https://iaals.du.edu/projects/allied-legal-professionals (last visited on Aug. 14, 2025).

135. Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System, Allied Legal Professionals: A National Framework for Program Growth (May 2024), available at https://iaals.du.edu/projects/allied-legal-professionals (last visited on Aug. 14, 2025).

136. Allied Legal Professionals: A National Framework for program Growth, Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System (2023) at p.28, available at https://iaals.du.edu/sites/default/files/documents/publications/alp_national_framework.pdf (last visited December 17, 2025).

137. Frontline Justice FAQs, available at https://www.frontlinejustice.org/faqs (last visited December 17, 2025).

138. "American Bar Association Urges Jurisdictions to Explore Community Justice Worker Programs to Close the Justice Gap," Frontline Justice e-newsletter (August 14, 2025). See also Resolution 605 at https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/house_of_delegates/2025-annual-supplementalmaterials/605-rev-v3.pdf (last visited December 17, 2025) and ABA News https://www.americanbar.org/news/abanews/aba-news-archives/2025/08/annual-meeting-house-of-delegatesactions/ (last visited December 17, 2025).

139. See ABA News and Insights (August 12, 2025), available at https://www.americanbar.org/news/abanews/abanews-archives/2025/08/annual-meeting-house-of-delegates-actions/ (last visited December 17, 2025). See, also, Resolution 605 at https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/house_of_delegates/2025-annualsupplemental-materials/605-rev-v3.pdf (last visited on November 5, 2025)

140. 2023 Report: Access to Justice in Federal Administrative Proceedings, Legal Aid Interagency Roundtable, at 25 (2023), available at https://www.justice.gov/atj/media/1327481/dl (last visited December 17, 2025).

141. National Center for State Courts, Key Considerations for the Use of Generative AI Tools in Legal Practice and Courts (Aug. 2025), https://www.ncsc.org/sites/default/files/media/document/KeyConsiderations.pdf (last visited December 17, 2025).

142. Allied Legal Professionals: A National Framework for program Growth, Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System (2023) at p.1, available at https://iaals.du.edu/sites/default/files/documents/publications/alp_national_framework.pdf (last visited December 17, 2025).

143. See 5 U.S.C. § 555(b) ("A person compelled to appear in person before an agency . . . is entitled to be accompanied, represented, and advised by counsel or, if permitted by the agency, by other qualified representative."). See, also, White House Legal Aid Interagency Roundtable, Access to Justice in Federal Administrative Proceedings: Nonlawyer Assistance and Other Strategies 1 (2023), available at https://www.justice.gov/atj/media/1327481/dl (last

visited December 17, 2025). Examples of ALPs who represent or assist parties in agency proceedings include other licensed professionals such as accountants, social workers, and paralegals; law students; union representatives; human resources professionals; corporate officers; tribal advocates; agency employees; community members; and family members. Federal law may specify criteria or processes that an agency must use in determining whether a nonlawyer representative is qualified to represent participants in proceedings before it. See, e.g., 5 U.S.C. § 500(c) (providing that individuals duly qualified to practice as a certified public accountant in a state may represent participants in Internal Revenue Service proceedings upon filing with the agency a written declaration as specified by law).

144. 2023 Report: Access to Justice in Federal Administrative Proceedings, Legal Aid Interagency Roundtable 25 (2023). For more information about ALPs assisting in federal administrative proceedings, see pages 25–35.

145. See, Allied Legal Professionals Knowledge Center, Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System, available at https://iaals.du.edu/projects/allied-legal-professionals/knowledge-center (last visited on August 28, 2025).

146. See, Progress to Date, Frontline Justice, available at https://www.frontlinejustice.org/about#progress (last visited on December 17, 2025).

147. See, See, Progress to Date, Frontline Justice, available at https://www.frontlinejustice.org/about#progress (last visited on August 26, 2025) and Allied Legal Professionals Knowledge Center, Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System, available at https://iaals.du.edu/projects/allied-legal-professionals/knowledge-center (last visited December 17, 2025).

148. Map reprinted with permission of the Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System, for most current version see Allied Legal Professionals Knowledge Center available at https://iaals.du.edu/projects/alliedlegal-professionals/knowledge-center (last visited October 2, 2025).

149. Map and permission to reprint provided by Frontline Justice (December 19, 2025). Most current version of map is available at https://www.frontlinejustice.org/about#progress.

150. Allied Legal Professionals: A National Framework for program Growth, Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System (2023) at p.28, available at https://iaals.du.edu/sites/default/files/documents/publications/alp_national_framework.pdf (last visited on Aug. 14, 2025).

151. “American Bar Association Urges Jurisdictions to Explore Community Justice Worker Programs to Close the Justice Gap,” Frontline Justice e-newsletter (August 14, 2025).

152. NCSC July 30, 2025 CLEAR Report Press Release, available at https://www.ncsc.org/news/top-judicial-officialsstate-supreme-courts-must-lead-innovation-and-reform-legal-education (last visited December 17, 2025).