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NEWS RELEASE

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Recent Initiatives for EOIR's Legal Orientation and Pro Bono Program

FALLS CHURCH, Va. – The Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) today announced three significant achievements in expanding and improving its [Legal Orientation and Pro Bono Program](#) (LOP). EOIR is extending the LOP to serve Department of Homeland Security (DHS) detainees who are in immigration proceedings before the Varick Street Immigration Court in New York City. In addition, EOIR is currently piloting an LOP program at the Miami Immigration Court for non-detained respondents who are unable to find legal assistance and may be mentally incompetent. EOIR also has created a LOP for custodians of unaccompanied alien children (UAC).

EOIR's LOP is an effective public-private partnership that helps educate respondents so that they may make more informed decisions about their cases said EOIR's Acting Director Thomas Snow.

Earlier this month, EOIR launched a program to provide legal orientation presentations to custodians of UACs. The purpose of this program is to inform UAC custodians of their responsibilities in ensuring the child's appearance at all immigration proceedings, as well as protecting the child from mistreatment, exploitation, and trafficking, as provided under the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2009.

EOIR is working with the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Refugee Resettlement, and non-government partners to implement this program nationally. Program implementation has begun in four of the largest program sites: Los Angeles, New York City, Houston, and the South Texas Rio Grande Valley. By the end of the first year, the program will have a total of 13 sites that will serve roughly 75 percent of all UAC custodians.

In July 2010, EOIR initiated an LOP pilot program at the Miami Immigration Court for non-detained respondents who have been unable to secure counsel and who do not appear to understand the nature or purpose of the proceedings, such as those who may be mentally incompetent. Through the local LOP provider, EOIR provides such respondents access to individual orientations and pro bono referral services.

In April 2010, EOIR provided for LOP services to all detained respondents before the Varick Street Immigration Court, which was located in lower Manhattan. After DHS closed the Varick Street Detention Facility, DHS has primarily housed New York City detainees in four sites: Monmouth, Hudson, and Bergen county jails in New Jersey, and Orange County Jail in New York State. EOIR is extending LOP services to DHS detainees in all of these facilities.

EOIR currently funds LOP programs at 27 detention sites nationwide, and has provided services to more than 60,000 DHS detainees in the past year.

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The Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) is an agency within the Department of Justice. Under delegated authority from the Attorney General, immigration judges and the Board of Immigration Appeals interpret and adjudicate immigration cases according to United States immigration laws. EOIR's immigration judges conduct administrative court proceedings in immigration courts located throughout the nation. They determine whether foreign-born individuals—who are charged by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) with violating immigration law—should be ordered removed from the United States or should be granted relief from removal and be permitted to remain in this country. The Board of Immigration Appeals primarily reviews appeals of decisions by immigration judges. EOIR's Office of the Chief Administrative Hearing Officer adjudicates immigration-related employment cases. EOIR is committed to ensuring fairness in all of the cases it adjudicates.