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Executive Office for Immigration Review Immigration Judge Training

The Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) maintains a robust training plan for immigration judges. The plan includes six weeks of initial training for new immigration judges, and the agency provides continued education for all sitting immigration judges throughout their tenure. The agency invites subject matter experts from many fields – from experts in child development to mental health – to speak to immigration judges through a variety of means, including live training, digitally recorded training for repeat use, and training provided through video teleconference, allowing more immigration judges to receive training in an interactive environment. The Office of the Chief Immigration Judge (OCIJ) employs an assistant chief immigration judge (ACIJ) who is responsible for the coordination of these trainings. Such coordination starts with identification of dates for training and includes identifying appropriate trainers and managing logistics.

Training for new immigration judges is in two main parts. There is an intensive classroom component that covers law and procedures, including asylum and other forms of humanitarian protection. There is also an on-the-job training component that includes a structured mentoring program where new immigration judges observe and are observed by mentor immigration judges who work with them in the new immigration judges' home court and in a field training court.

The first five weeks of training are consecutive and begin when the immigration judge enters on duty with EOIR. The sixth week of training is conducted after the immigration judge has been hearing cases for between six months and one year. The six week training plan is:

Week One – Training in the new immigration judge's home court with the assigned "home court" mentor. The "home court" mentor will continue to work with the new immigration judge for one year and, during that time, will provide monthly progress reports to OCIJ.

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Week Two – Formal, intensive classroom training on law and procedure at EOIR Headquarters. During this week, the new immigration judge must pass an immigration law examination. Those who pass the examination are sworn in as immigration judges during an investiture ceremony, which EOIR typically holds on the Friday of that week.

Weeks Three and Four – Training in a “field court” with a “field court” mentor. The “field court” is an immigration court that is not the immigration judge’s “home court” but that has similar characteristics to it. The new immigration judge begins hearing cases with supervision by an experienced immigration judge during these weeks.

Week Five – Training in the home court. The new immigration judge, working with the “home court” mentor, works to develop a legal resource guide specific to the types of cases heard at that court (e.g., bond, asylum).

Week Six – Advanced Training at the National Judicial College. This sixth week of training is conducted after the new immigration judge has been hearing cases for six months to one year.

Ongoing training for all immigration judges includes the following:

- A mentor directory so immigration judges can reach out to mentors who are considered experts in certain areas of immigration law or process;
- Periodic training on legal and procedural issues (e.g., asylum law, juveniles in proceedings, professional responsibility); and
- A week-long training conference on immigration law for immigration judges and Board of Immigration Appeals members and staff attorneys.

In consultation with the ACIJ for ethics and professionalism, the agency offers continuous remedial training for immigration judges who need additional assistance in a particular subject area.

EOIR also seeks regular feedback from the immigration judge corps regarding topics of training they would find most helpful in performing their duties. Also available to all immigration judges are expanded and continuously developed and updated training and reference materials, including:

- Decision templates, model decisions, and circuit-specific legal outlines;

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EOIR's Immigration Judge Training

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- An *Immigration Judge Benchbook* <https://www.justice.gov/eoir/immigration-judge-benchbook>, which contains a growing library of reference materials on immigration law topics;
- The *Immigration Court Practice Manual* http://www.justice.gov/eoir/vll/OCIJPracManual/ocij_page1.html, which incorporates “best practices” nationwide in establishing uniform procedures, requirements, and recommendations for practice before the immigration courts;
- The “Immigration Law Advisor” <https://www.justice.gov/eoir/immigration-law-advisor>, a monthly newsletter on regulatory, judicial, and legislative developments in immigration law;
- Reference materials from external sources, such as circuit court summaries from the Office of Immigration Litigation; and
- An expanded EOIR Virtual Law Library <http://www.justice.gov/eoir/vll/libindex.html> that includes up-to-date case decisions, immigration law resources, and guidance.

— EOIR —

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 – whom the Department of Homeland Security charges 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.