

PREFACE

Welcome to AILA's new resource for paralegals working in the field of immigration law: *AILA's Toolbox for Immigration Paralegals*. This *Toolbox* covers fundamental immigration law and procedure and is intended to serve as a daily reference tool to help immigration paralegals provide more effective assistance to their supervising attorneys. For the paralegal who wishes to gain more than a superficial understanding of the law governing the various cases the firm or organization is handling, the articles in this *Toolbox* serve as an excellent primer. The focus, however, is on providing paralegals with the practical knowledge essential for success in their day-to-day tasks.

Caveat: To avoid engaging in the unauthorized practice of law, this *Toolbox* should be used only by a paralegal who is working under the supervision of an attorney.

The authors who graciously contributed to this project have provided step-by-step instructions, together with sample forms and supporting materials that guide the paralegal in preparing the various applications and petitions most often encountered in a general immigration law practice. These are arranged by type of case. Be sure to see the Overview section as well. There you will find a discussion of the paralegal's role in an immigration law firm or organization, key definitions and concepts in immigration law, and an introduction to the various agencies that affect immigration law. For your convenience, we have also reproduced helpful tip information and guides straight from the immigration agencies on matters such as filing forms (both by mail and online) and paying fees.

Caveat: Always check the agency website to ensure that you are using the most up-to-date edition of the forms discussed in this *Guide*, and to confirm current filing fees and filing location.

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