

SOP – Asylum Workshop Volunteer Roles

Purpose:

Provide a clear, repeatable process for volunteers assisting at Novo Legal Group’s asylum workshops to ensure applications are accurate, complete, and ready for same-day submission. Use this [checklist](#) to avoid missing any steps.

1. Overview of the Workshop Flow

Applicants move through **four stations in order**:

1. **Arrival & Check-In**
2. **Form Filling (Pages 1–4 of Form I-589)**
3. **Attorney Meeting & Claim Writing (Pages 5–12 of Form I-589)**
4. **Packet Assembly & Mailing**

Volunteers are assigned to specific stations and should remain at their station for the duration of the workshop.

2. Station 1 – Arrival & Check-In

Objective: Confirm applicant eligibility, attendance, and preparedness before moving them forward.

Steps:

1. **Verify Registration**

- a. Check applicant’s name against the pre-registration list.
- b. Confirm their assigned arrival time to avoid overcrowding.

2. **Confirm Required Documents**

Applicants **must** have:

- a. Proof of identity & nationality (passport or national ID).
- b. Proof of family relationships (marriage/birth certificates) if including family members.
- c. Completed *Novo Legal Question & Answer (Q&A) document*.
- d. Payment method for filing fee:

- i. **Preferred:** Money order payable to “U.S. Department of Homeland Security” (\$100 per applicant as of July 2025).
 - ii. **Alternative:** Credit/debit card (use only if money order unavailable; risk of processing errors).
- e. (If applicable) Prior work permit for applicants filing after 1 year in the U.S. with prior legal status.
- 3. Direct to Next Station**
 - a. Provide applicant with their USB/thumb drive (if not already given).
 - b. Send them to **Station 2**.

3. Station 2 – Form Filling

Objective: Complete **Pages 1–4** of Form I-589 using applicant’s Q&A document.

Steps:

- 1. Obtain Most Current Form**
 - a. Download latest edition from USCIS.gov.
 - b. Never use outdated versions.
- 2. Transfer Information**
 - a. Use applicant’s completed Q&A document to fill in all fields.
 - b. Cross-check spelling and details against official documents.
 - c. Confirm entries verbally with the applicant (via interpreter if necessary).
- 3. Document Verification**
 - a. Default to official document spelling for names/places.
 - b. Note discrepancies in “Other Names Used” section.
- 4. Save Progress**
 - a. Save completed pages to applicant’s thumb drive.
 - b. Pass applicant to **Station 3**.

4. Station 3 – Attorney Meeting & Claim Writing

Objective: Complete **Pages 5–12** of Form I-589, detailing applicant’s asylum claim.

Steps:

- 1. Attorney–Interpreter Pairing**

- a. Each attorney works with a dedicated interpreter for assigned language group.
- 2. Detailed Claim Writing**
 - a. Gather full narrative of applicant's persecution or fear of future persecution.
 - b. Ensure all answers are accurate, detailed, and complete.
- 3. Save & Pass On**
 - a. Save completed form to thumb drive.
 - b. Send applicant to **Station 4**.

5. Station 4 – Packet Assembly & Mailing

Objective: Assemble, copy, and send complete application package to the correct agency.

Steps:

- 1. Determine Filing Destination**
 - a. **USCIS:** More comprehensive packet, includes all supporting evidence.
 - b. **Immigration Court:** Slim packet—form only, with cover page & certificate of service.
- 2. USCIS Packet Contents**
 - a. Cover sheet with table of contents.
 - b. Completed Form I-589.
 - c. Copies of all identity, relationship, and supporting evidence.
 - d. Country conditions evidence from reliable sources (e.g., U.S. Dept. of State, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, UN reports).
- 3. Immigration Court Packet Contents**
 - a. Cover page addressed to court.
 - b. Completed Form I-589.
 - c. Certificate of Service (showing a copy sent to ICE/OPLA).
- 4. Final Steps**
 - a. Make applicant copy of entire packet.
 - b. Save copy to thumb drive.
 - c. Confirm money order or payment method is correct.
 - d. Mail packet to correct address (Novo staff will confirm mailing details).
 - e. Explain next steps to applicant (receipt notice, biometrics, interview/court timeline).

6. Key Volunteer Guidelines

- **Accuracy is top priority** – double-check all spellings, dates, and details.
- Always refer to **official documents** when in doubt.
- Direct all legal/eligibility questions to Novo Legal staff.
- Maintain confidentiality of all applicant information.
- Treat every applicant with patience and respect; this process is stressful for them.