

Week 1 Study Guide

1.1 The NOMAS Mission

- The mission of the No More A Stranger Foundation is to “advocate together with and on behalf of individuals from immigrant, migrant, and refugee backgrounds to strengthen our communities.”
- “No More a Stranger” is a reference to the Bible (Matthew 25:35-36).
- NOMAS needs volunteers because they need people to form human connections with clients so that the clients feel comfortable. NOMAS has software that can perform much of the administrative work of the organization.

Resources and References

- [I Was a Stranger Initiative Website](#)

1.2 The Scope of NOMAS

- NOMAS is restricted in the types of cases that the foundation can and does take on.
- Volunteers are also limited in the amount of representation they can give based on their level of accreditation
 - Non-accredited representations can perform all of the NOMAS roles and responsibilities
 - Partially accredited representatives can do everything a non-accredited volunteer can do, and represent an individual before the Department of Homeland Security
 - Fully accredited representatives can do everything a partially accredited volunteer can do, and represent an individual before the Executive Office for Immigration Review (immigration court).

Resources and References

- [Department of Justice's Recognition & Accreditation Program](#): Information, FAQs, Regulations, and Forms

1.3 Basic Accreditation Eligibility

- The basic requirements for partial accreditation are
 - Character and Fitness
 - Not having a history of criminal or other dishonest or fraudulent acts.
 - Verified through a background check, letters of recommendation, and resumes or proof of work experience
 - Have legal immigration status

- All partially accredited representatives must have legal status to avoid conflicts of interest
- Receive a completion certificate for this Fundamentals of Immigration Law course and complete two additional training courses
 - Evidence of all three course completions can take the form of formal certificates, class notes, syllabi, and quiz scores.
- Be a volunteer or employee of a certified nonprofit organization
 - NOMAS is certified as an organization you can volunteer with to fulfill this requirement.
- Not currently an attorney
 - Licensed attorneys cannot become partially accredited

1.4 Boundaries

- General Guidelines
 - Appropriate boundaries and expectations need to be set with the prospective client during an intake interview.
 - Boundaries will help keep a professional relationship between you and the client.
- Personal Boundaries
 - Use the following questions to think about your personal boundaries:
 - When are you available to communicate with prospective clients and clients?
 - Where are you comfortable meeting with prospective clients and clients?
 - Are you comfortable giving out your personal phone number?
 - Here are some additional pointers on personal boundaries:
 - Appropriate meeting locations with clients include the NOMAS office, over video calls, or in public places; not in your own or your clients' homes.
 - Setting up a Google Voice account that forwards to your phone is a great option if you're uncomfortable giving out your personal phone number.
- Boundaries of the Client or Prospective Client
 - In order to respect the boundaries of the client or prospective client, you will need to know how to:
 - Recognize when to stop asking questions.
 - Phrase questions appropriately.
 - Recognize social cues.
 - Act professionally and build professional relationships.
- Professionalism
 - Trustworthiness
 - Follow all the ethical guidelines, including being honest.
 - Use body language that shows you are trustworthy and competent.
 - When meeting clients for the first time, present yourself confidently and introduce yourself with your name and position (volunteer legal representative).
 - Responsibility

- Follow through with commitments or notify people if you cannot.
- Respond in a timely manner (2-3 business days) to communications from clients and NOMAS staff.
- Communication
 - Use formal language in emails, not shorthand or slang.
- Appearance
 - Dress professionally (business casual) to attend in-person clinics and when meeting with clients in person.
 - For virtual clinics, be seated at a desk/table, not lying down or in a recliner. Make sure you are alone in a quiet room with your camera on.

1.5 Ethical Guidelines

- Volunteers (as well as attorneys) must adhere to ethical guidelines in working with clients.
 - Any legal representatives, including NOMAS attorneys and volunteers, cannot communicate with individuals who are represented by another attorney unless the individual is seeking a second opinion or their attorney is present.
 - If a potential client says they have already spoken with an attorney, stop the appointment and seek advice from the clinic attorney.
 - Assure prospective clients and clients that anything they share will be confidential.
 - Advocate on behalf of the client.
 - Advocacy is not the same thing as agreement.
 - Help prospective clients and clients understand that the reason you ask detailed questions, repeatedly clarify, and ask for permission is that they are the ultimate decision-makers.
 - Conflicts of interest include anything that hinders representation.
 - Personal beliefs, personal or professional relationships, life experiences, or anything else that would decrease an individual's ability to represent a client without bias.

Resources and References

- [Model Rules of Professional Conduct from the American Bar Association](#)
- [Model Rules of Professional Conduct Rule 1.7 Conflict of Interest, Current Clients](#)

1.6 The NOMAS Clinic

- NOMAS clinics have a variety of roles that are important for a volunteer to know:
 - Prospective Clients: People coming to the clinic for the first time, looking for help with an immigration case.
 - Clients: People who have formally been notified that NOMAS can take their immigration case.

- Volunteers: You! People who provide the human connection that all clients need to some degree. Volunteers handle intake interviews and manage cases from start to finish.
- Clinic Fellows: Experienced volunteers or employees who run the technical side of the clinic and who can answer procedural questions about the clinic. Clinic fellows hold a 30-minute training before each clinic for volunteers who have questions, are new to the clinic, or need to review clinic proceedings.
- Clinic Lawyers: Lawyers who oversee the legality of the clinic proceedings and who determine if NOMAS can take a case. They can also answer legal questions during the clinic.

1.7 U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

- United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)
 - Is part of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
 - Handles most of the case types that NOMAS represents
- Communication with USCIS is vital for case progression
 - Responses from USCIS can include
 - Receipt of applications
 - Biometrics appointments
 - Interview dates and times
 - Requests for additional information
 - Approvals of cases
 - and more
 - If clients do not receive/respond to USCIS responses, they could lose their opportunity to apply for and/or receive legal status.
 - It is critical to inform USCIS if the client moves or changes their address
- Volunteers will receive a copy of the responses that USCIS sends clients. When you receive a response from USCIS:
 - Alert the client that we have received a notice.
 - Ask if the client has received a notice.
 - Help client locate scanned copy of the notice sent through email by the NOMAS secretary
 - Do NOT summarize the contents of the response for the client

Resources and References

- [USCIS Form AR-11: Change of Address](#)
- [USCIS Form G-1145: E-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance](#)
- [USCIS Form I-797: A category of forms USCIS sends in response to applicants](#)

1.8 Applications & Petitions

- Volunteers prepare applications and petitions for submission. Then clinic lawyers write a cover letter to include with the case.
- A cover letter is a summary of what is being submitted to USCIS. NOMAS includes a cover letter with all applications and petitions. It contains the following:
 - Client's full name
 - Address to which the case will be mailed
 - Case type
 - A description of the documents accompanying the application or petition.
 - Legal arguments in response to request for evidence or other communication from USCIS, if needed
- The G-28 form is:
 - The Notice of Entry of Appearance of Attorney.
 - An authorization that must be signed in order for NOMAS to both communicate and receive communication from USCIS about a client's case.
 - It is auto-populated from the NOMAS questionnaires sent through the Clio system.
- Volunteers receive scanned copies of USCIS communications from the NOMAS secretary through Clio.
 - Review lesson 1.7 for how to handle forms received from the NOMAS secretary.

Resources and References

- [USCIS Form G-28](#)