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Executive Office for Immigration Review Immigration Judge Training

The Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) operates a dynamic training program for immigration judges, to whom the Attorney General delegates his authority to preside over immigration court hearings. The training plan includes six weeks of initial training for new immigration judges, and the agency provides ongoing education for all sitting immigration judges. The agency invites subject matter experts from a variety of fields to speak to immigration judges through interactive live trainings, both online and in-person, and on-demand recorded trainings. The Office of Policy's Legal Education and Research Services Division is responsible for coordinating legal training for immigration judges.

Training for new immigration judges consists of two main components: extensive classroom-based training and on-the-job training. The classroom-based training component covers law and procedure, including asylum and other forms of relief and protection. The on-the-job training component includes a structured mentoring program where assigned mentor immigration judges observe new immigration judges on the bench and provide feedback and guidance, as needed.

The initial six weeks of training are consecutive and begin when immigration judges enter on duty with EOIR:

Week 1: 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 a minimum of one year.

Weeks 2-4: Formal, intensive classroom training on law and procedure, in person or via video teleconference. The intensive classroom training includes three weeks of detailed instruction on immigration law and process and judicial skills, including both classroom training and interactive practical exercises. At the end of the first week of classroom training, the new immigration judge must take an immigration law examination. Those who pass the examination are sworn in as immigration judges during an investiture ceremony.

[Weeks 5-6: Training in the home court with a home court mentor.](#) 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). The new immigration judge begins hearing cases with supervision by an experienced immigration judge during these weeks. When practicable, the new immigration judge may have the additional opportunity to train with a “field court” mentor in a field court. A field court is an immigration court that is not the immigration judge’s home court but that has similar characteristics.

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);

- Training required pursuant to litigation;

- Training offered to facilitate the implementation of new policies and procedures; and

- An annual multi-day training program on immigration law and related topics.

When determined to be appropriate by their supervisory chain, immigration judges receive additional individualized training.

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

- Decision templates, sample decisions, and circuit-specific materials;

- The Immigration Court Practice Manual, which sets forth the uniform procedures, requirements, and recommendations for practice before the immigration courts;

- Weekly case law summaries and related legal updates, as well as more frequent updates, as needed; and

- A Virtual Law Library that includes up-to-date Department and agency decisions, immigration law resources, and guidance.

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