



THE IMMIGRATION ALLIANCE

MOBILIZING CHURCHES | CULTIVATING RELATIONSHIPS | PROVIDING LEGAL SERVICES

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PRESS RELEASE

The Immigration Alliance launches national effort to provide legal services to immigrants through local churches

National alliance equips members to help meet demand for high-quality, low-cost legal services

October 21, 2014: The Immigration Alliance today announced the launch of a national effort that equips local churches across the country to provide immigration legal services to under-resourced immigrants.

With more than 22 million foreign-born, non-citizens in the United States – and with only 12,000 private immigration attorneys and 2,800 non-profit immigration attorneys and accredited staff in the United States – the need for trustworthy, authorized legal services has never been greater.

Currently a coalition of 15 evangelical church-based denominations that represent more than 28,500 churches, The Immigration Alliance is committed to dramatically multiplying the number of sites across the country providing low cost, high quality immigrant legal services over the next three years.

“The Immigration Alliance is uniquely positioned to equip local churches to provide legal services to under-resourced immigrants,” The Immigration Alliance’s Board Chair and Christian Community Development Association Chief Executive Officer Noel Castellanos said. “Churches are a trusted presence in immigrant communities that can – and should – help address this critical shortage of legal services.”

The Immigration Alliance’s legal sites provide services to immigrants including: low-cost legal counsel on immigration-related matters; support determining eligibility for benefits; and assistance in preparing applications for immigration legal status. The Immigration Alliance assists these church-based sites through a rigorous recognition process with the federal Board of Immigration Appeals. The Immigration Alliance provides member sites with thorough training, coordinates and oversees efforts to ensure quality and consistency, and shares resources to maximize effectiveness and reach.

While the demand for affordable, authorized legal services in the United States is already significant, it is anticipated to increase dramatically in the coming year. President Obama has pledged to act administratively to change U.S. immigration policy before the end of the year.

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Such executive action could make several million individuals potentially eligible to apply for benefits (such as Employment Authorization) from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. Thousands of additional not-for-profit sites would be necessary to help meet the coinciding need for affordable legal service. Churches are eager to help be a part of this response, meeting a tangible need.

Members of The Immigration Alliance plan to serve at least 1,000,000 immigrants through 1,000 church-based immigrant ministry sites by 2017.

“As followers of Jesus, we’re commanded to welcome the stranger, to love our neighbors, and to respect the rule of law,” The Immigration Alliance Executive Committee Member and Chief of Staff of The Wesleyan Church David Drury said. “Working together through The Immigration Alliance, churches can play a critical role in offering immigrants a welcoming community and helping to solve the shortage of trustworthy immigration legal services.”

About The Immigration Alliance

In 1986, with the passage of the Immigration Reform and Control Act, World Relief developed a coalition of 10 evangelical denominations that opened 108 church-based sites that served thousands of undocumented immigrants. Taking from that experience, the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) and World Relief formed a similar coalition to launch in 2014.

The Immigration Alliance began in early 2013 as The Church-Based Immigrant Ministry Coalition with the goal of uniting Christian denominations and churches to help serve the legal needs of immigrants. Throughout 2013 and 2014, denominations and churches were recruited to join in the collaboration.

For more information about The Immigration Alliance, visit www.theimmigrationalliance.org.

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