



THE IMMIGRATION ALLIANCE

MOBILIZING CHURCHES | CULTIVATING RELATIONSHIPS | PROVIDING LEGAL SERVICES

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PRESS RELEASE

The Immigration Alliance Mobilizes Churches to Support Increased Demand for Immigrant Legal Services

National evangelical alliance aims to serve 1,000,000 immigrants by 2020

November 20, 2014: Following President Barack Obama's executive action on immigration, The Immigration Alliance today announced it is expanding mobilization of evangelical Christian churches across the country to support the increased need for high-quality, low-cost immigrant legal services, with a goal of serving one million immigrants through its sites by 2020.

Today's executive action has exponentially increased the need for trustworthy, authorized legal services to foreign-born, non-citizens living in the United States. It is estimated that, based on today's executive action, approximately five million non-citizen immigrants may be eligible to apply for benefits (such as Employment Authorization) from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

"The Immigration Alliance has already begun mobilizing local churches across America to meet the critical demand to make high-quality, low-cost legal services available to under-resourced immigrants," said Leith Anderson, President of the National Association of Evangelicals. "Located in virtually every community across our country, churches are trusted places that are uniquely positioned to help address this critical shortage of legal services."

Now a coalition of 15 evangelical church-based organizations, representing more than 28,500 churches, The Immigration Alliance was formed as part of the evangelical Christian community's longstanding commitment to serving immigrants holistically, a philosophy that has been underway for more than 28 years. With 31 church-based immigrant legal services sites already in operation and many more in the pipeline, The Immigration Alliance dreams of serving 1,000,000 immigrants through as many as 1,000 church-based immigrant legal sites by 2020. This will only be possible by a movement of God working through many denominations and organizations.

"The Immigration Alliance has received an overwhelming response from churches across the country who are looking to serve immigrants in their communities," The Immigration Alliance Executive Director Damon Schroeder said. "The Immigration Alliance is equipping churches – large and small, urban and rural – to care for immigrants by providing authorized and trustworthy legal services to thousands of under-resourced immigrants."

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The Immigration Alliance’s legal sites provide services to immigrants including: low-cost legal counsel on immigration-related matters; support determining eligibility for immigration 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.

With only 12,000 private immigration attorneys and 2,800 nonprofit immigration attorneys and accredited staff in the United States – the need for trustworthy, authorized legal services has never been greater. Thousands of additional not-for-profit sites are now necessary to help meet the increased need for affordable legal service. Churches are eager to be a part of this response, meeting a tangible need.

“The evangelical Christian community has a long history of ministering to immigrants living in our country,” The Immigration Alliance Board Member and National Latino Evangelical Coalition President Gabriel Salguero said. “Evangelicals know firsthand the need to help immigrants access trustworthy legal services. Today’s executive action underscores the importance of The Immigration Alliance’s work in providing critical legal services to immigrants and will continue to compel us forward.”

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. Building on that experience, the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) and World Relief initiated a similar coalition in 2013, called 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. The Immigration Alliance officially launched in October 2014.

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

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