

Malm in Law360: 6 Practice Pointers for Pro Bono Immigration Practice

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PRACTICES Immigration, Litigation

Haynes Boone Counsel [Steven Malm](#) authored an article for *Law360* with advice for lawyers considering immigration for pro bono work.

Read an excerpt below:

Immigration remains as volatile as ever, wrapped in election-year politics, news reports about the migrant surge at the southern border, the bussing of migrants to Democrat-led cities, impeachment proceedings against the secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and negotiations between U.S. Senate Republicans and the Biden administration over a border deal.

As the 19th Century French critic and journalist Jean-Baptiste Alphonse Karr said, "plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose."^[1] When it comes to immigration, the more things change, the more they stay the same.

With scores of new arrivals to the U.S. struggling to navigate this tumultuous environment, immigration also represents fertile terrain for attorneys who've resolved to take on pro bono work in the new year. And while the new year brings a fresh slate of billable-hour requirements, many law firms propitiously offer substantial credit for pro bono work, eclipsing even the aspirational norm of 50 hours annually set by the American Bar Association.

Yet, when considering immigration for pro bono work, attorneys should take heed. Constant changes in immigration — which consistently serves as a political wiffle ball — and attendant procedural dysfunction make the practice area beguiling.

Immigration law has been described by courts as labyrinthine and as second only to the Internal Revenue Code in complexity. Unsurprisingly, there are many traps of which a novice immigration practitioner would not be aware.

Of course, at a minimum, attorneys must be competent to take on a pro bono matter. Per the ABA, this requires "the legal knowledge, skill, thoroughness and preparation reasonably necessary for the representation."^[2]

A logical first step in attaining competence for immigration is reviewing the Immigration and Nationality Act and its implementing regulation.

To read the full article in *Law360*, click [here](#).