

Delivering Value: AILA Membership

AILA membership brings with it considerable value, both direct and indirect, to attorneys in the field of immigration. Below are some of the items one can get only by being an AILA member:

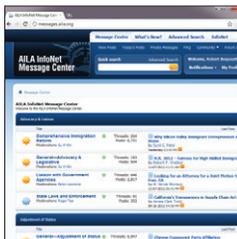
Direct Benefits Included with Membership



1. AILA InfoNet

Go to www.aila.org, then log OUT. Now, try to look at the various documents on the site—the government memos, liaison minutes, practice pointers, BALCA decisions, Federal court decisions, litigation section sample briefs, etc. Can't open most of them, can you? Only AILA members can access all the documents on the site—public users get only a handful of items. Then try to find the goodies like the Message Center, Mentor Directory, Wiki, Member Directory. Can't find them? You have to be logged in as a member to even see them.

This compendium of more than 21,000 documents relevant to immigration law practice is *the* most valuable resource in the field of immigration law. And it comes with your membership in AILA.



2. Information Sharing and Mentoring

AILA national provides several different avenues for member-to-member sharing of information and knowledge and for mentoring, including:

- Listserves
- Message Center (<http://messages.aila.org/>)
- Wiki (<http://wiki.aila.org>)
- Mentor Program (<http://myaila.aila.org/search/default.aspx?ref=mentors>)

In addition, many of the chapters have local mentoring programs and other information exchanges.



3. Practice Management and Marketing

AILA provides, without charge, a variety of resources to help members to better manage their practices and to market themselves to potential clients. These include:

- Attorney referral service (<http://www.aila.org/content/default.aspx?docid=1186>). Many referral services charge hundreds or thousands of dollars to be listed in their services. AILA charges nothing for its members. To qualify for listing, an attorney must be a member for at least 2 years, and meet minimum requirements for CLE credits and maintenance of professional liability coverage.
- Ability to promote oneself through speaking and writing opportunities. AILA's many in-person, webcast, and distance learning programs offer opportunities for large numbers of members to build credibility by being invited to speak as authorities before their peers. And AILA's many publications allow similar opportunities for writing authoritative pieces for peer use. Also, members have the opportunity to write for *Voice*, a "turn-page" format digital magazine distributed not just to AILA members, but to thousands of members of the public, including potential clients and government officials.
- Practice management (<http://www.aila.org/content/default.aspx?docid=20446>) and ethics (<http://www.aila.org/content/default.aspx?bc=11836|15764>) resources on demand.
- Free consultations by AILA's in-house practice and professionalism expert, Reid Trautz (rtrautz@aila.org)
- Coming soon: A free report of the results of AILA's recent economics of practice survey, which will provide intelligence that can be used in developing practice management and marketing plans.



4. Digital and Electronic Periodicals (all provided to members without charge):

- *Voice* (a turn-page format magazine)
- *AILA's Immigration This Week* (e-mail recap of the week's top developments in immigration law)
- *The Pulse* (a weekly round-up of the week's top developments in the political world as related to immigration law)
- *New Members Division Newsletter* (a bi-monthly turn-page format newsletter oriented specifically to attorneys who are relatively new to the practice of immigration law)
- Periodic newsletters on immigration practice management, ethics, and pro bono.



5. Seminars and Similar Learning Tools

AILA charges members discounted fees for attendance at many CLE programs, as discussed below, but also offers CLE-credited and other learning opportunities at no cost to members. Members can subscribe to, or download one at a time, free monthly podcasts providing information and education on a variety of immigration subjects. In addition, lengthier podcasts are issued from time to time that qualify in most jurisdictions for CLE credits, including Ethics credits. (see the April and September 2011 podcasts at <http://www.aila.org/content/default.aspx?docid=29669>)

In addition, AILA offers scholarships for most of its in-person and distance learning programs, and provides the services to ensure CLE credit for both live in-person and distance events, and even for recordings of those events. Further, AILA is moving more and more in the direction of webcasting some in-person conferences, allowing the option of coming to the event in person, participating in the convenience and comfort of your own home or office, or gathering in a local area to participate as a group, thus splitting the costs of registration among multiple people.

AILA also offers some 70 teleseminars and webinars per year, on discrete specialized subjects within immigration law. These provide multiple opportunities to pick up low-priced CLE from the comfort of your own office on narrow topics that, for most CLE providers, would not be cost-effective to offer. Because AILA's mission includes advancing the quality of immigration practice, these narrow topics are a regular part of our offerings, as they provide detailed explorations of topics either not often touched upon or of pivotal timely importance.



6. Assistance in Dealing with the Government

One of the many disadvantages of filing through remote adjudications (aka, Service Centers) is the walling off of adjudicators from the served public. For AILA members, our Service Center liaisons can help with sorting out problems and communicating with the Center, through the case liaison assistance program (<http://www.aila.org/content/default.aspx?docid=10309>).

In addition, AILA is a gathering place for reports of problems and issues in the field. So, for example, when attorneys found that they suddenly were no longer getting the original I-797s, or that DOL's iCert has hiccupped, members notified AILA via reports@aila.org, and AILA's liaison immediately got on the agency to fix the problem. AILA also works on longer term issues, such as when adjudication standards change, as discussed below under Indirect Benefits.



7. Learning to Work with Media and Government

AILA provides members with the tools and training to stretch beyond the traditional practice of law. Through AILA's Communications, Advocacy, and Liaison operations, trainings are offered on how to deal with the media, how to deal with Congress, and how to deal with the agencies.

For example, AILA provides members with one-on-one assistance with local press - if an AILA member has been approached to be interviewed or invited by media to appear on TV or radio, that AILA member can contact the Communications Dept and will receive tips on how to make the most out of that opportunity. AILA staff can conduct a mock interview over the phone, provide the member with talking points, and give the attorney background information about that specific reporter and media organization.



8. Discounts

Some members value some items more than others, and some members need certain items that other members do not. For those, AILA offers discounts—often deep discounts—to members. Among the discounts offered by AILA national to members of AILA:

- 30-35% discounts on in-person conferences/seminars and on webcasts.
- 30% and more discounts on purchases of books, AILALink, toolboxes and other publications.
- Discounts on vendor offerings such as professional liability insurance, overnight package delivery, credit cards, computers, health insurance, etc.

Indirect Benefits for Members

In addition to the kinds of items mentioned above, AILA provides many broad-based programs, intended to benefit the profession as a whole. These programs leverage the strength of 11,000+ attorneys and their clients to work toward a fair and just legal system for immigration and for members' clients.

Among these broad-based benefits are:

8. Battling UPL

Through cooperation with local, state and federal agencies, and through publicity and programs such as StopNotarioFraud.org, AILA is heavily engaged in fighting the unauthorized practice of law in immigration, and in seeking redress for the victims of UPL practitioners.

9. Congressional Advocacy

Times have never been worse for obtaining positive immigration legislation. But as with all political cycles, this worm will turn, and AILA continues to cultivate the ground for better immigration laws, and battle efforts at negative legislation.

10. Agency Liaison

AILA has multiple committees engaged at many levels with many agencies that administer the immigration laws. So, whether it is fighting for appropriate application of the preponderance of the evidence standards, advocating for reasonable exercise of prosecutorial discretion, arguing the correct standards for CSPA or EB-5, AILA is there. If there is a regulation proposed, or a guidance letter draft for which comment is sought, AILA teams prepare what are often the highest quality comments on the subject. If standards seem to be shifting downward, AILA collects the examples and uses them to push back on the agency. If a policy needs to be advocated for, it's AILA that does the advocating.

11. Litigation

AILA is involved in litigation on a number of fronts, be it encouraging and teaching members to litigate through the Federal Court Litigation Section, providing amicus support through the many briefs prepared by and at the behest of the Amicus Committee, or providing support to AIC's Legal Action Center for direct impact litigation.





12. Media

In recent years, AILA has pushed forward into the media, making spokespeople available to analyze legal developments and clarify what the law really says. It's a heavy lift to combat the myths and out-and-out lies told about immigration, but AILA is out there doing it. For example, when the prosecutorial discretion memos came out, 92% of all articles about it cited an AILA spokesperson. And, when a lawyer is not the best messenger for a point, AILA assists others in the field in becoming educated on immigration subjects and speaking knowledgeably about them.

In addition, AILA's Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube channel have become the social media centers for all things immigration law.



13. Pro Bono

Pro bono is a key part of an attorney's professional obligation, and few are as generous in this regard as AILA members. In addition to pro bono programs in many chapters, AILA operates numerous pro bono projects on specific subjects, such as the Military Assistance Program, the AILA DREAM Defenders, Citizenship Day, Salvadoran TPS re-registration, an Annual Conference pro bono clinic, and clinics for victims of UPL fraud.