



AMERICAN
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Launching a New
Immigration Practice
Live Online Course

AILA Launching a New Immigration Practice Online Course Outline

Making the choice to start your own practice is a big decision. In exchange for the benefits of work-life balance and flexibility that come with being your own boss, you will need to take on business ownership and all its nuances. The practice of law is a profession, but a law practice is a business. This course will prepare you for the many considerations that come with becoming a law practice entrepreneur, including business planning, marketing, money management, staffing, technology decisions, and market awareness. Welcome to the **AILA Launching a New Immigration Practice Live Online Course**.

What to Expect

The program consists of five discussion panels presented over four weeks, interspersed with hands-on practice and feedback, and short videos from our faculty.

- Five 90-minute webinars, including lectures and Q&A
- Optional independent practice: exercises designed to continue learning and build skills
- Instructor reflection: A summary of discussion and lessons learned, posted to the course site following each session
- Short topic videos: Pre-recorded by faculty to accompany the live sessions
- Access to recordings of webinars
- AILA course discussion board

Outline:

Short Video: Course Introduction

Prerecorded, about 5 minutes

Faculty:

Reid Trautz, Senior Director, AILA Practice and Professionalism Center, Washington, D.C.

Charity Anastasio, Practice and Ethics Counsel, AILA Practice and Professionalism Center, Washington, D.C.

Short Video: Why Be in Business for Yourself Right Now? Myriad Delights of Solo Practice

Prerecorded, about 5 minutes

Faculty:



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Elina Santana, AILA Board of Governors, Coral Gables, FL

Live Session 1: Opening Your Practice

Wednesday, September 17, 1:00-2:30 pm Eastern Time

This session provides a practical exploration of the basics of opening your own law practice by two experts who have advised lawyers collectively for over thirty years. Topics will include business planning, choice of business entity, budgeting basics; various office arrangements and essentials, the must haves before you take your first client, branding, and the complicated decision of “where you practice” for immigration lawyers.

Faculty:

Reid Trautz (DL), Senior Director, AILA Practice and Professionalism Center, Washington, D.C.

*Charity Anastasio, Practice and Ethics Counsel, AILA Practice and Professionalism Center,
Washington, D.C.*

Instructor Reflection

Prerecorded, about 2 minutes

Reading: “Essentials to Opening Your Practice,” by Charity Anastasio and Reid Trautz

Optional Independent Practice: Business Plan Exercise

Live Session 2: Building Your Client Base – Marketing Basics

Friday, September 19, 1:00-2:30pm Eastern Time

Effective marketing is a major factor in the success of any law practice. The speakers will discuss the basics of a marketing plan, getting personal referrals, building a website, and how to develop a social media presence that credentials you while complying with ethics rules. The speakers will help you get a jumpstart on client development with proven ideas before you open the doors.

Faculty:

*Charity Anastasio (DL), Practice and Ethics Counsel, AILA Practice and Professionalism Center,
Washington, D.C.*

*Ruby L. Powers, AILA Author, Power Up Your Practice: Create the Law Firm and the Life You Deserve,
Houston, TX*

Instructor Reflection



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Prerecorded, about 2 minutes

Reading: “Practice Development: Building Your Client Base,” by Reid Trautz

Optional Independent Practice: Marketing Plan Exercise

Short Video: Marketplace Snapshot

Prerecorded, about 5 minutes

Faculty:

*Charity Anastasio, Practice and Ethics Counsel, AILA Practice and Professionalism Center,
Washington, D.C.*

Live Session 3: How to Get Paid and Manage the Money

Friday, September 26, 1:00-2:30pm Eastern Time

This session addresses the important financial issues in a new practice including which fees and costs to charge for and how to set them, deciding on free or fee consultations, drafting representation agreements, basic time and billing policies all firms need, and what goes into sound financial management.

Faculty:

Reid Trautz (DL), Senior Director, AILA Practice and Professionalism Center, Washington, D.C.

Andrew K. Nietor, AILA Board of Governors, San Diego, CA

Meghann Eileen LaFountain, Middletown, CT

Instructor Reflection

Prerecorded, about 2 minutes

Reading: “The Fine Art of Getting Paid: How to Keep Clients Paying (And What to Do When They Don’t),” by Reid Trautz and Charity Anastasio

Optional Independent Practice: Business Budget Exercise

Short Video: Taking Care of Yourself While Running Your Own Immigration Practice



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Prerecorded, about 5 minutes

Faculty:

Jennifer Howard, AILA Well-Being Committee Vice Chair, Aurora, CO

Live Session 4: Leading and Running the Business

Friday, October 3, 1:00-2:30pm Eastern Time

This session will introduce the essential elements of law practice infrastructure. You'll learn how to streamline workflows and effectively recruit and train the people who support your firm—whether they're staff, vendors, or consultants. We'll break down the fundamentals of law firm operations and provide practical tools and templates to help you build and scale your own systems.

Faculty:

Charity Anastasio (DL), Practice and Ethics Counsel, AILA Practice and Professionalism Center, Washington, D.C.

Kirby Gamblin Joseph, AILA Future of Immigration Law Practice Task Force Chair, Aurora, CO

Sandra Grossman, Bethesda, MD

Instructor Reflection

Prerecorded, about 2 minutes

Reading: "Managing Your Practice Ethically and Effectively," by Reid Trautz and Charity Anastasio

Reading: "When (and How) to Hire," by Charity Anastasio and Reid Trautz

Optional Independent Practice: Financial Analysis of the True Cost of an Employee

Optional Independent Practice: Writing a Job Description – Identifying "What" You Want to Hire and Writing to Attract Applicants

Short Video: Impact of the Second Trump Administration

Prerecorded, about 5 minutes

Faculty:

Reid Trautz, Senior Director, AILA Practice and Professionalism Center, Washington, D.C.

Short Video: Let's Talk Tech: Using Technology to Lighten Your Load

Prerecorded, about 5 minutes

Faculty:



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Live Session 5: Making Good Technology Choices

Wednesday, October 8, 2025, 1:00-2:30pm Eastern Time

The market is full of legal technology products to make your workflow easier, improve client communications, and help manage and measure your success. But if you aren't careful, you can spend all your profits on shiny objects. Learn what is essential for a new law practice, where to find it, how much you should expect to pay, and how to choose what technology is right for your practice. Speakers will discuss the basic tech stack and what different investments or compromises in technology choices can mean for your budding business.

Faculty:

Reid Trautz (DL), Senior Director, AILA Practice and Professionalism Center, Washington, D.C.

Elizabeth Rompf Bruen, Chicago, IL

Instructor Reflection

Prerecorded, about 2 minutes

Optional Independent Practice: Technology Audit Exercise to Identify Your Needs

Short Video: Giving Yourself a Job - It's Okay to Start Small

Prerecorded, about 5 minutes

Faculty:

Charity Anastasio, Practice and Ethics Counsel, AILA Practice and Professionalism Center, Washington, D.C.