

CONCEPT NOTE

US Refugee Rights Pro Bono Workshop 2026

Building on momentum to expand free legal support for displaced and stateless communities

September 10 2026 | 10:00–11:30 AM Pacific Time / 1:00–2:30 PM Eastern Time | Virtual

Introduction

Across the United States, nonprofits, including refugee-led organizations (RLOs), diaspora groups, and other community-based organizations (CBOs), are central to protecting the rights and dignity of refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons, and other forcibly displaced communities. Yet, they are operating in increasingly challenging environments, navigating growing legal and regulatory complexity alongside shrinking resources.

[PILnet](#), together with [Orrick Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP](#), [A&O Sherman](#), [UNHCR](#), and [Refugee Congress](#) is teaming up to channel the support of [Global Refugee Forum \(GRF\) Legal Community Pledge](#) members and the wider pro bono community towards RLOs and nonprofits across the country. Together, we will hold the **2026 US Refugee Rights Pro Bono Pitching Roundtable on October 16** creating a space for nonprofits to present concrete legal projects directly to law firms and in-house legal teams. In preparation for the Roundtable, we will be hosting a **2026 US Refugee Rights Pro Bono Workshop on September 10** for RLOs, and nonprofits.

Background

In advance of the Global Refugee Forum (GRF) in 2023, over 110 legal and refugee rights actors made commitments towards a second multi-stakeholder GRF Legal Community Pledge. Collectively, pledge members committed to provide over one million hours of free legal services to support displaced populations and the organizations working with them. The Refugee Rights Pro Bono Pitching Roundtable offers a unique opportunity for organizations to present (“pitch”) projects in need of pro bono legal assistance to law firms who have committed to the GRF Legal Community Pledge.

[The First US Refugee Rights Pro Bono Pitching Roundtable \(October 2025\)](#), saw over 20 projects pitched, with 17 matched to law firms. Half of the participating organizations were refugee-led, and nearly all were engaging with an international pro bono network for the first time.

Building on this foundation, and as refugee-serving organizations navigate a fast-shifting legal landscape with shrinking resources, Pledge Core Group members [PILnet](#), [Orrick Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP](#), [A&O Sherman](#), are teaming up with [UNHCR](#), and [Refugee Congress](#) to co-organize the 2026 US Refugee Rights Pro Bono Pitching Roundtable connecting refugee-led and community-based organizations directly with law firms committed to the Pledge and

fostering locally led, sustainable partnerships. The Second Roundtable will again prioritize organizations least likely to access pro bono pipelines on their own, particularly those led by people with lived experience of displacement, statelessness, or diaspora life, advancing shared localization commitments.

Structure and Key Timeline

Preparatory Workshop (10 Sept) → Intake and Collaborative Scoping (September - October 2026) → Project Catalogue (Mid-October 2026) → The Pitching Roundtable (October 16 and/or 20) → Matching and Ongoing Support (October 2026 onwards)

1. **Preparatory Workshop (September 10 2026 | 10:00–11:30 AM PT / 1:00–2:30 PM ET, virtual):** Introduces the pro bono landscape and draws on case studies and lessons from the first US Roundtable, consistently the most valued part of past workshops, plus practical guidance on scoping and pitching a project.
2. **Collaborative Intake & Project Scoping (September - October):** Interested organizations submit project ideas via a [Legal Assistance Intake Form](#); Orrick, A&OShearman and PILnet will work with the organisations to help refine their proposals, supporting organizations that may be engaging with pro bono processes for the first time.
3. **Project Catalogue (Mid-October):** PILnet will compile the scoped proposals into a project catalogue and pitching agenda, shared with participating legal professionals in advance of the Roundtable.
4. **US Refugee Rights Pro Bono Pitching Roundtable (October 16):** Nonprofits present concrete legal projects, spanning transactional and programmatic needs, from governance and regulatory compliance to complex immigration matters and systemic advocacy, directly to law firms, in-house teams, and other legal professionals.
5. **Matching & Ongoing Support (October 2026 onwards):** PILnet and co-organizers provide follow-up support to facilitate effective matching and sustainable partnerships.

About the Workshop

To maximize success of the Roundtable, partners will host the US Refugee Rights Pro Bono Workshop virtually on September 10 to:

- Learn about pro bono legal support available in the U.S. and internationally
- Hear real-life examples of successful pro bono partnerships
- Get practical guidance on navigating common challenges when working with law firms
- Learn how to develop strong, actionable pro bono project proposals

Workshop Agenda

- 1:00 – 1:10 p.m.:** Introduction to the Workshop
- 1:10 – 1:25 p.m.:** Introduction to Refugee Rights Pro Bono
- 1:25 – 1:45 p.m.:** Refugee Rights Pro Bono in Practice in the US
- 1:45 – 1:55 p.m.:** How to Scope and Pitch a Project
- 1:55 – 2:25 p.m.:** Question & Answers
- 2:25 – 2:30 p.m.:** Wrap-up and Next Steps

Who Should Attend

- Community-based organizations (CBOs), refugee-led organizations (RLOs) and diaspora groups working with forcibly displaced and stateless populations across the United States
- Refugee or stateless-serving nonprofits and civil society organizations working at any level in the US (local to national).
- International refugee or stateless-serving nonprofits and civil society organizations that are based in the US, or have legal needs associated with their US programming.

Register

You can register here:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/kG8AsCYmRR2U7e-kPxi8wg#/registration>