



Doug Ford, Managing Attorney

Se habla español

Respectful, low-cost, non-profit community education and representation for everyday people
immigration, family, and other legal issues

Purpose: Collaborate with community-based service providers to deepen local understanding of immigration. Also provide a low-cost, sliding-scale fee option for the clients of such service agencies and for others who do not qualify for Legal Aid and cannot afford a market-rate lawyer.

Need: Charlottesville Metropolitan Service Area (MSA) has a population of 230,000, which includes Charlottesville city and five surrounding counties.¹ The median household income is \$58,454² -- less than 325% of the federal poverty level. This means half of Charlottesville MSA's population is poor or, at most, modest income. They cannot afford the \$284 national average or \$250 or more hourly rate typical in Charlottesville and law firms across the U.S. for their immigration and other legal matters.³

Solution: To meet this need, a non-profit model brings certain advantages. We will expand community education of immigration complexities in collaboration with community-service agencies. We will provide an option to these agencies who have clients with limited means. Fees will be scaled to client income, making clear that fees are reasonable. We will work with clients to match their priorities with their ability to pay and, if needed, plan a phased representation. Fees start at \$60/hour for those below 100% of federal poverty level and step up with increased client income.

The 501(c)(3) non-profit framework helps to make transparent costs, such as wages. It means we accept donations and do not pay taxes. Also, we can access volunteers for a variety of services, including office administration and language interpretation. The model is recognized by the ABA's Access to Justice Program,⁴ and the number is growing, see Open Legal Services, and their national list.⁵

Qualifications: Doug Ford, founder and managing attorney, directed the Immigration Clinic of the Legal Aid Justice Center and Uva Law in Charlottesville for more than a decade. He has extensive non-profit oversight experience, serving on several boards, recently as Chair of Habitat for Humanity of Charlottesville, a national leader in affordable housing. Doug has an array of service agency contacts.

Operations: We offer a free initial consult to potential clients. Community service agencies are invited to contact us to see how we can help. Volunteers help us in various capacities, and we welcome help with clients, technology, translation, office management and other aspects of our operations.

¹ Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Dept of Commerce, Nov. 2016, at <https://www.bea.gov/regional/bearfacts/pdf.cfm?fips=16820&areatype=MSA&geotype=4> accessed 31 Mar 17.

² Virginia HomeTown Locator, at http://virginia.hometownlocator.com/cities/msa/msa_id,16820.cfm, accessed 31 Mar 17.

³ Incisive Legal Intelligence, 2009 Billing Rate report, www.incisivelegalintel.com; see Business Wire, www.businesswire.com/news/home/20090707005052/en/Incisive-Legal-Intelligence-Releases-2009-Billing-Rates.

⁴ See, https://www.americanbar.org/groups/delivery_legal_services.html.

⁵ See, Open Legal Services and its national list at <http://openlegalservices.org/about/resources/>