



Anis

Anis left Kabul, Afghanistan, in 2021 to finish his PhD in geology in India. Anis earned his master's degree in geology and mining from the University of Kabul Polytechnic

in 2017 and then worked as head of technical analysis for the housing department within the Afghan Ministry of Urban Development and Land.

Pro bono lawyers advised Anis and his family on his Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV), which allowed him to obtain legal permanent residence ('green card') status in the US. The lawyers also provided pro bono support to his parents and siblings, for their immigration pathways to the US. Anis is now based in the US. and works as a groundwater geologist for GZA, an international geoengineering firm. He has been on the Board of Building Community in New Hampshire (BCNH), a multi-ethnic Mutual Assistance Association, since December 2024.

How do you measure the impact of pro bono lawyers who advise/advised you? Why is that thing/those things important to you?

The visa application for me was nothing before I was introduced to pro bono lawyers. When I was introduced to you guys, and you guys started working on my things, then I got everything and you put all the story, you know, all the things, in place. We really, kindly appreciate all your work, your support, your help and I don't know how to explain it any other way.

I don't think I could have done my appeal on my own, because the first time when I did it on my own, it was rejected because the format and the documentation requirements are not very clear on the SIV website. And there is not an exact format, it is just an explanation and if English is not your native language, it is very difficult to make a recommendation or a human resources letter according recommended guidelines.

On my own, I had just lost hope. I thought there was no chance for me if I did the appeal on my own because, you know, I worked hard on the application, but I didn't get any result from that, and it takes years to process these things.

“ [Pro bono advice] made something that was otherwise impossible possible.

My pro bono lawyers made all these things very easy for me and they know the right way to do it and were able to contact my supervisor. From the start, when my pro bono lawyers started to work for me, to when I submitted my application, until I got my visa to come to the US, my lawyers were in touch with me, supporting me and even helping me and my family. All those things were really hard for me at that time and it was really, really helpful.

One thing that I would recommend is that sometimes lawyers could be clearer when they speak with client, and they should try to use simple words that the client understands. Some words which are very common in daily use if you're very highly intellectual or are fluent, these are English words which are not in daily use for others. That can be challenging. It is important that the lawyer knows where the difficulties lie for their client.

This is an abridged version of an interview with Anis.