



THE LEADER IN GLOBAL LANGUAGE AND BUSINESS SERVICES

LANGUAGE: [English \(US\)](#)

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Case Study: **FOLEY & LARDNER**

First Ever Pro Bono Translation Program for Public Interest Law

The Client

Foley & Lardner is a highly regarded national law firm offering companies a full range of legal services in multiple practice areas, including corporate governance and compliance, securities, mergers and acquisitions, litigation, labor and employment, intellectual property and IP litigation, and tax. The firm has always been deeply committed to the principle of pro bono work. It is a founder of the Public Interest Law Initiative, an organization that pairs law students and recent law school graduates with legal aid organizations in an effort to provide needed legal services free of charge. In addition, Foley & Lardner is a signatory to the American Bar Association's Law Firm Challenge, which calls on each attorney to provide 60 hours of pro bono work annually.

The Challenge

Foley & Lardner assumed representation of a 15-year-old girl seeking political asylum after suffering persecution in her home country of Iraq. The young girl had been diagnosed with a serious medical condition. None of the 27 Iraqi doctors she consulted was able to help, so her mother brought her to a US Army hospital in Baghdad where the necessary medical treatment was finally begun. After further treatment at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, DC, the girl and her mother returned to Iraq, only to find themselves the target of insurgents who accused them of providing "actionable intelligence" about Saddam Hussein's associates. Unable to live under this constant threat of violence, the two had no choice but to seek asylum in the United States.

In need of assistance, mother and daughter had to rely on the goodwill of others to help guide them through the asylum process. This process proved to be more challenging due to the various language issues involved. There was the asylum application, which had to be accompanied by several personal documents; the two had these required documents—birth certificates, marriage certificates, passports—but in Arabic only. In addition, there was a hearing before the US Citizenship and Immigration Services; however, neither mother nor daughter had sufficient knowledge of the English language.

The TransPerfect Solution

TransPerfect and Foley & Lardner joined forces and made this family's cause their own. Foley's committed legal counsel together with TransPerfect's document translation and on-site interpretation services led to a successful outcome: mother and daughter were granted asylum and thus a chance at a better, more secure future. Their case set a precedent, giving hope to other Iraqis seeking political asylum and freedom from persecution, and was an early success for TransPerfect's Pro Bono Program.

