

# ISAAC Project offers updated information on immigration law

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SAN ANTONIO—Because immigration laws change when new officials are elected, the ISAAC Project of the Baptist General Convention of Texas offers the Summer Institute on Basic Immigration Law every year.

The ISAAC Project recently offered its 7th annual summer institute in San Antonio, allowing participants to complete the first step toward receiving accreditation from the U.S. Department of Justice to represent immigrants before [immigration courts](#).

Accredited representatives must work at a nonprofit or religious organization. This year, many employees of social-service agencies across the country came to Texas to take the course.



Jesus Romero leads a session during the ISAAC Project Summer Institute in San Antonio.

Jesus Romero, director of the ISAAC Project, hopes more ministers and churches will participate.

“We do not have enough legal help,” Romero said. “We even have Caesar—the government—turning to the church asking for help with immigrants.”

Romero views immigration ministry as missions—not going to serve in another country but meeting the needs of people from other nations who come to the United States.

At the institute, students complete a 40-hour intensive study that not only includes family migration, but also provides information about visas for [victims](#) of human trafficking, as well as mental or physical abuse.

The curriculum also covers other topics such as asylum protection and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals.

Cases regarding victims of violence and mental abuse can take up to five years before a judge hears the case, and evidence may no longer be useful at that point, said Marisol Perez, a San Antonio immigration attorney who taught at the ISAAC Project institute.

Before the last presidential election, immigration courts already were experiencing a [backlog](#). Now, it can take years for courts to hear the cases of some defendants.

Both Perez and Romero spoke of the need for immigration advocates to continue their work, even when it is difficult or when their role is small.

Accredited representatives offer a cost-effective service to immigrants, and the more representatives there are, the greater the opportunity for immigrants to receive a just court hearing, Perez said.

From the time of its inception in 2013, the ISAAC Project has seen itself not just as a social service, but as an avenue to represent Christ, said Romero.

“This is for the body of Christ, to get it to join us in immigration ministry,”

Romero said.