

FIRST STEPS

An LIRS Guide for Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Migrants Released from Detention

LIRS ANNOUNCES the release of *First Steps: An LIRS Guide for Refugees, Asylum Seekers, and Migrants Released from Detention*. Printed and electronic versions of *First Steps* and accompanying supplements are available now. Spanish versions will be available December 2014. Books are available to download and order at LIRS.org/firststeps.

FIRST STEPS provides refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants who have been released from detention with information and resources critical to safely integrating into the United States. *First Steps* helps them navigate the complex system of laws, agencies, and public and private systems they must master by providing important information on legal rights, responsibilities, and eligibility for services and benefits such as healthcare and education, according to immigration status.

AN UPDATED VERSION of LIRS's 2006 "Pocket Knowledge" guide, *First Steps* provides:

- An overview and in-depth explanation of the United States' complex system of laws, expansive network of agencies, public and private systems, civil responsibilities, and eligibility for services and benefits.
- Detailed information and appendices on organizations that provide legal and community support, as well as torture treatment.

FIRST STEPS IS RECOMMENDED FOR

- Lawyers, case managers, or other service providers to aid in understanding the complex system of rights and benefits available to clients and to empower clients to access their rights.
- Churches and service providers at partner organizations to inform their own understanding of the complex systems, and to use as they walk alongside refugee, asylum seeker, and migrant clients and congregation members.
- Refugees, migrants, and asylum seekers to learn the steps to take to maintain or adjust their immigration status, access benefits, and comply with U.S. law.

AUTHOR'S BIO

Angela Edman, Esq. is Staff Attorney for the Access to Justice unit of LIRS. She manages the Detained Torture Survivors' Legal Support Network, which provides critical legal services and ensures access to social, medical, spiritual, and holistic services to survivors of torture impacted by immigration detention. Ms. Edman holds expertise in refugee/asylum law, immigration, and international human rights law; and specializes in the provision of holistic legal services for victims of torture and of sexual and gender-based violence. Prior to joining LIRS, Ms. Edman was a staff attorney at the Hong Kong Refugee Advice Centre, providing direct legal services to asylum seekers and torture survivors from parts of Asia and Africa. In addition to working in Hong Kong, Ms. Edman has lived and worked in the refugee and human rights fields in Europe, Africa, and the United States. She received her law degree from American University's Washington College of Law, and her Bachelor's degree in Political Studies with a focus on Human Rights from Bard College.

TESTIMONIALS

"Navigating the legal and social services systems as an immigrant are hugely challenging tasks, which are all too often compounded by the misinformation circulating outside our office doors. LIRS has created an amazing resource that addresses not only the resources available, but how they vary and evolve dependent upon status, location, and phase of the immigration process. It's going to be a great asset for the populations we serve and I cannot wait to start getting this out there!"

—Casie-Lee Miller, Case Manager,
Ascentria Care Alliance

"Personally, from the immigrant point of view, I found information extremely helpful and I wish I had this guidance at my fingertips when I first moved to the United States."

—Migrant and U.S. Citizen



**Lutheran Immigration
and Refugee Service**

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