

Step-by-Step Guide for Remote Bond Cases

Thank you for partnering with IJC to take on bond representation for your client in detention. This guide walks you through the core tasks, documents, and practical steps involved in a remote bond case. Your scope of representation includes bond/custody proceedings only unless you and IJC have agreed otherwise in writing.

SCOPE REMINDER

When drafting [Form EOIR-28](#), check the box for custody and bond proceedings only if your representation is limited to bond. This helps distinguish the bond case from the client's separate removal proceedings.

Required Forms, Documents, and Case Materials

Your case may require the following forms, documents, and processes. Confirm any case-specific requirements with your mentor.

- [Engagement letter](#) with the client for bond representation.
- [Form EOIR-28](#), Notice of Entry of Appearance before the Immigration Court, marked for custody/bond proceedings only.
- Motion to Appear Remotely, if required by the judge. Check the detention-center information sheet and ask the court clerk if needed.
- Motion for Custody Redetermination, also referred to as a request for a bond hearing, with supporting legal arguments.
- Supporting evidence, including sponsor documents, positive equities, eligibility for underlying relief, criminal records if applicable, and translations where needed.
- Sponsor letter.
- Sponsor identity documents, including proof of citizenship or lawful status and proof of address.
- Sponsor proof of income, if needed. Check with your mentor before omitting or relying on alternative documentation.

If the client is released on bond, you will also need to:

- Provide the sponsor with a copy of the bond decision or other proof needed to post bond.
- Provide the client with a pro se packet for filing a Motion to Change Venue if the client will move away from the area of the detention center.
- Submit an [EOIR-33](#) Change of Address form if needed.
- Send a closing letter at the end of the bond representation.

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Workflow Overview

Stage	Main Tasks	Mentor Checkpoint
Within one week	Review the placement materials, confirm court and detention information, meet with your mentor, prepare the engagement letter, and make first client contact.	Attend mentor office hours before first contact when possible. Begin work immediately after the client gives verbal consent; do not wait for the signed engagement letter to come back.
After First Client Contact	Call the court to confirm whether a bond hearing is already scheduled, contact the sponsor, gather evidence, and decide whether witnesses are needed.	Use only IJC templates and samples to prepare filings. Discuss hearing timing, sponsor issues, evidence needs, and any witness questions with your mentor.
Mentor Review and Filing	Prepare the EOIR-28, bond motion package: including the motion, supporting brief, proposed order, certificate of service, exhibit index, exhibits, and any translation certificates. Upload through ECAS.	Send the filing to your mentor for review before submission. After filing, monitor for the hearing notice and call the court if needed.
Prepare for the Hearing	Prepare the client and any witnesses, confirm remote-access procedures, organize key evidence and arguments, and coordinate with the sponsor and mentor before the hearing.	Confirm Webex or remote appearance procedures in advance. Review your hearing strategy, likely questions, and any concerns with your mentor.
After the Hearing	If bond is denied, reserve appeal. Report the result to your mentor. If bond is granted, provide the sponsor with proof of the decision so they can post bond, complete any immediate follow-up steps, and send a closing letter.	Confirm next steps with your mentor, especially if bond is denied, the client remains detained, or the client needs post-release guidance.

Before You Begin: Bond Hearings and Remote Appearances

Bond Hearings

Bond hearings, also called custody redetermination hearings, are usually conducted in parallel with the client's removal proceedings. The removal case may involve claims such as asylum, cancellation of removal, or another form of relief. An attorney may enter an appearance only for bond or custody proceedings and is not responsible for the merits case if the limited appearance is properly filed.

Bond hearings are not scheduled automatically. They must be requested orally or in writing. Your client may already have requested a bond hearing, so one of your first tasks is to determine whether a hearing is already scheduled. Ask the client whether they have discussed bond with the judge and also confirm by calling the immigration court clerk.

If a bond hearing is already scheduled, speak with your mentor about whether the hearing should go forward or be postponed. If no bond hearing has been scheduled, you will prepare and file a bond motion with supporting evidence. IJC sample materials are available on the [Immigration Justice Campaign website](#).

Appearing Remotely

Remote-appearance procedures vary by court and judge. Some judges automatically allow attorneys to appear remotely; others require a motion. The easiest way to confirm the judge's preference is to call the court and ask the clerk. If a motion is required, consult the relevant materials on the [Justice Campaign website](#).

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The courts use [Webex](#) for remote hearings by videoconference. Download [Webex](#) before the hearing or join through a browser, preferably Google Chrome. Telephonic appearance may still be possible in some cases, but video appearance is increasingly preferred.

When the hearing is set, enter the [Webex](#) room, type in your name and include the last four digits of your client's A number next to your name, and wait for the case to be called. Bond hearings are often scheduled in group time slots, so you may need to wait while other cases proceed first.

The court provides an interpreter when interpretation is necessary. The interpreter may appear in person or by phone. For less common languages, the court may ask whether the client will waive interpretation so the judge can rule on the papers. Do not agree to waive interpretation without first discussing the benefits and risks with your mentor and the client.

Step 1: Within One Week of Case Assignment

Initial Review and Mentor Contact

- ☐ Review the Orientation Manual, the detention-center information sheet, the case referral form, and all case materials you received. Contact your mentor with questions.
- ☐ Use the Orientation Manual to set up an ECAS account if you have not already done so.
- ☐ Check the client's case status through the [ACIS portal](#). Enter the client's A-number and nationality, note the next hearing date, and confirm the court is correct.
- ☐ Before contacting the client, attend your mentor's office hours. If your mentor does not hold office hours, follow the instructions in your placement email.
- ☐ Read the section on first client contact so you can review the plan with your mentor before the initial call.
- ☐ Review the [introductory bond training materials](#) on the [Immigration Justice Campaign website](#).
- ☐ Draft the engagement letter. Have it ready to read to the client during your first meeting. IJC provides a [sample legal representation agreement](#).

First Client Contact

- ☐ After your first mentor call, contact the client. If you have difficulty reaching the client within one week of placement, contact your mentor immediately.
- ☐ Introduce yourself and explain that the client's case has been referred to you.
- ☐ Confirm that the client understands the scope of representation: you represent them only for bond, and they have a separate removal case.
- ☐ Review the referral form with the client and confirm the information is accurate.
- ☐ Ask about the client's goals and whether anything has changed since referral, such as whether the client still wants bond or just wants to request voluntary departure.
- ☐ Ask whether the client has already appeared before a judge. If so, ask whether they requested bond and what the judge told them about the case.
- ☐ Ask whether the client has immediate relatives (i.e. legally married spouse, parents, or children) or friends in the United States with lawful status that would be willing to be their sponsor.

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- ☐ Read the engagement letter to the client. Explain that you will send a copy for signature and return. It is critical to keep an engagement letter on file, but do not wait for the signed copy before beginning necessary case work.
- ☐ Set the next communication date, time, and method. Decide whether the client should call you or whether you will schedule the next call.

Mailing Initial Documents to the Client Immediately After First Call

- ☐ After the client verbally consents to representation, explain that you will mail documents for signature and include an envelope for return mail.
- ☐ Mail the engagement letter for signature as soon as possible.
 - **Do not wait to receive the signed engagement letter before starting your work.** Begin working immediately after you receive the client's verbal consent to representation.
- ☐ Use U.S. Postal Service with tracking. Do not use FedEx.
- ☐ Address the envelope with the client's full name and full A-number.
- ☐ Include your name and address as sender and mark the envelope: Legal Mail - Confidential.
- ☐ Include a prepaid, self-addressed USPS Priority Mail (with tracking) envelope so the client can return signed documents to you.
- ☐ **Practice tip:** Some detention centers use a mailing address, often a P.O. Box, that differs from the physical facility address. Verify the correct mailing address on the [ICE detention facilities page](#) before sending legal mail.
- ☐ Re-review the [introductory bond training materials](#) after first client contact.

Step 2: After First Client Contact - Plan the Case

1. Call the court clerk to determine whether the client already has a custody redetermination hearing scheduled. This information generally cannot be confirmed through the EOIR 1-800 number or ACIS website; it is available from the court.
 - a. Some courts are extremely busy and difficult to reach. Good times to call are often 7:30-8:30 a.m. or 4:00-4:30 p.m. If you cannot get through, keep trying, but continue preparing the case so this step does not hold up your work.
2. Contact the sponsor. Walk the sponsor through what should be included in the sponsor letter. Ask for proof of the sponsor's immigration status, such as a U.S. birth certificate, U.S. passport, naturalization certificate, or green card. You may also need financial information, such as tax returns, W-2s, or pay stubs, and proof of domicile, such as a lease agreement or utility bill.
3. Gather evidence for the bond case. Review IJC materials to determine what evidence is necessary and what evidence is most helpful for the client's facts.
4. Decide whether witnesses are needed. Witnesses are not required, and immigration judges vary in whether they allow witness testimony in bond hearings. Talk to your mentor if you think a witness may help.

Evidence to Consider

- Sponsor letter and sponsor identity/status documents.
- Sponsor proof of address and income, if appropriate.

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- Translations and certificates of translation for any foreign-language documents.
- Criminal records, if applicable and available.
- Positive equities, such as letters of support, employment records, educational records, religious membership or leadership, community service, volunteer work, and other community ties.
- Evidence of eligibility for underlying relief from removal (relates to flight risk).

Step 3: Prepare and Submit the Filing

Prepare the Bond Filing

The filing should comply with the [Immigration Court Practice Manual](#) and should generally be submitted through the ECAS web portal. Please use the templates available on the IJC website only.

Your filing should include:

- Your [Form EOIR-28](#) appearance. If your representation is limited to bond, make sure the form is marked for custody/bond proceedings only.
- Motion for Custody Redetermination, also referred to as a bond-hearing request.
- Certificate of service.
- Proposed order.
- Brief or memorandum with discussion of the primary bond elements: the client is not a danger to the community and is not a flight risk.
- Dates and times when you are available for a bond hearing.
- Index of exhibits.
- Tabbed exhibits.
- Certificate of translation for each foreign-language document.

MENTOR REVIEW

Send the complete draft filing to your mentor for review **BEFORE** submission unless your mentor instructs otherwise. **Please use only the IJC templates to prepare your filings. They are there to support your work and help make the mentor review process smoother and more efficient.**

Submit the Filing

1. Prepare for the possibility that the bond hearing may be scheduled quickly after upload. Bond scheduling can move faster than merits-case scheduling.
2. Upload the filing through ECAS. Under “Appearances,” select “I want to file a Form EOIR-28 with a bond request.” ECAS will prompt you to upload three separate PDFs:
 - a. Form EOIR-28 — upload the completed EOIR-28 as its own PDF.
 - b. Bond motion packet — upload one PDF containing the motion for custody redetermination, proposed order, and certificate of service.
 - c. Exhibit packet — upload one separate PDF containing all exhibits, with its own cover page/index and certificate of service.
3. One to two days after filing through ECAS, call the court clerk if you have not received a notice of hearing. Ask whether a custody redetermination hearing has been scheduled and whether any remote-appearance motion has been ruled on.

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4. Keep the client and sponsor updated. Detention is disorienting, and they will want to know what is happening in the case.

Step 4: Prepare for the Bond Hearing

- As you submit the written filing, contact your mentor with any questions about how the bond hearing is likely to proceed.
- Confirm the remote-appearance instructions and make sure you can access the hearing platform before the hearing date.
- Prepare the client for the hearing, including likely questions from the judge and the importance of answering clearly and honestly.
- Prepare potential witnesses, if you have any and if testimony is allowed or useful. Witnesses are not always permitted or necessary.
- Have a clean copy of the filing, exhibits, and key notes available during the hearing.

Step 5: After the Bond Hearing

- If bond is denied, always reserve appeal unless your mentor advises otherwise based on the case strategy.
- Email your mentor and tell IJC what happened.
- If bond is granted, provide the sponsor with a copy of the decision or other proof of the decision so the sponsor can post bond. Share this link with the sponsor or the obligor who plans to post the bond:
<https://www.ice.gov/detain/detention-management/bonds>
- Provide the client with any required next-step materials, including change-of-venue or change-of-address guidance if applicable.
- Send a closing letter when your bond representation is complete.

Helpful Links Referenced in This Guide

These links are included for convenience. Confirm case-specific procedures with the court, the detention-center information sheet, and your mentor.

- [Immigration Justice Campaign training materials](#)
- [IJC bond materials](#)
- [IJC Preparing Bond Submission](#)
- [IJC sample legal representation agreement](#)
- [ACIS case status portal](#)
- [EOIR immigration court contact information](#)
- [EOIR Immigration Court Practice Manual](#)
- [EOIR-33 Change of Address form](#)
- [ICE detention facilities page](#)
- [Webex downloads](#)
- [How to Post a Bond](#)