

**Evaluation of the justice AmeriCorps (jAC)  
Legal Services for Unaccompanied Children Program**

**Interview Guide for Assessing Child Understanding of Immigration Proceedings**

For children 12-16 years of age

**Preamble for interviewer:** Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I'm from the Vera Institute of Justice. We are evaluating the legal services program that you and your attorney are part of to find out how well it works. We would like to talk to you about how kids like you learn about what happens in immigration court proceedings and how this program might help you understand your legal options. We would like to tell you more about what we are doing, so you can ask us questions and then decide if you want to answer our questions.  
*[Follow informed consent protocols here—review appropriate consent form(s) with PRA advisal.]*  
Now, if you agree, we can start the interview.

**A. Knowledge of immigration court processes**

1. Have you been to immigration court yet? If so, how many times?
2. Did you go to court with, or without, an attorney?  
*Probe: How was it different once you received an attorney? In what ways?*
3. Can you tell me why you have to go to court?  
*Probe: What happens if you don't go?*
4. What does each person in court do?  
*Probes: What about the judge? Interpreter? Government attorney? Your attorney?*

**B. Relationship with attorney and knowledge gained from relationship**

5. What does an attorney do for a child who goes to immigration court?
6. How does your attorney help you?
7. What did your attorney tell you about going to court?
8. How do you contact your attorney when you have a question?  
*Probe: Have you been able to speak to your attorney when you wanted?*
9. Are there times when you don't understand your attorney?

*Probe: Can you tell me why?*

**10. What are some ways someone can win his or her case?**

*Probe: Does the child know the legal relief options, e.g. Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS), asylum, T visa, U visa, etc. (The reasons given by the child for these might be described without using the legal terminology e.g. as having experienced family abuse/ neglect/ abandonment; needing protection; being a trafficking victim; or witnessing a crime.)*

**C. Child's understanding of own case**

**11. Which of the above ways (if any), did your attorney tell you might apply in your case?**

(Options: SIJS, asylum, T visa, U visa, etc.)

**12. Who decides what to do in your case?**

*Probe: Should your lawyer make the decisions in your case? Do you talk to your attorney about what you want to do? Do you feel you are part of the decisions?*

**13. What do you know now that you did not know before you had an attorney?**

**14. Is there anything else you would like know about your case or going to court?**

**End interview with child:**

Do you have any questions for me?

Thank you very much for talking with us. You've been very helpful.

(Good luck!)