U.S. Department of Justice
Executive Office for Immigration Review
Office of the Director
5107 Leesburg Pike, Suite 2600
Falls Church, Virginia 22041

FACT SHEET

Contact: Office of Legislative and Public Affairs
          (703) 305-0289   Fax: (703) 605-0365
Internet: www.justice.gov/eoir

Sept. 9, 2010

Observing Immigration Court Hearings

The Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) conducts immigration court hearings in 59 immigration courts nationwide. Immigration court hearings are generally open to the public.

Immigration hearings may be closed to the public because:

- The immigration judge closed the hearing to protect witnesses, parties, or the public interest;

- The immigration judge granted a motion the parties filed to close a hearing; or

- The case involves:

    - An abused spouse or child;
    - Information that is protected by a protective order; or
    - An application for asylum, withholding of removal relief, or Convention Against Torture protections.

Before going to observe an open hearing, please note that:

- You do not need to notify the immigration court in advance to observe an open hearing. When planning to observe an open hearing held within a detention facility, however, you should contact the detention facility in advance to learn of any security clearance requirements for entry to the building.

- No cameras or recording devices are allowed in the courtroom.

- When courtroom space is limited, the news media has priority over the general public.

More Information

- Listing of Immigration Courts – http://www.justice.gov/eoir/sibpages/ICadr.htm.

- Hearing Locations - http://www.justice.gov/eoir/vll/courts3.htm.

- Public Access – *Immigration Court Practice Manual*, Chapters 1.6, 4.9, and 4.14
  http://www.justice.gov/eoir/vll/OCIJPracManual/ocij_page1.htm.

- EOIR Overview – http://www.justice.gov/eoir/press/2010/EOIRataGlance09092010.htm.

- EOIR -