

ELIZABETH M. TRINIDAD (previously Elegbede) **ATTORNEY-AT-LAW**

Trinidad Law Office, LLC, 17 E. Commerce Street, 2nd Floor, Bridgeton, NJ 08302
ALL MAIL TO: P. O. Box 294, Bridgeton, NJ 08302 lawyer@etrinidadlaw.com

Elizabeth M. Trinidad opened her Law Office in April 2001. The practice represents predominantly working class, mostly Mexican and Guatemalan immigrants. We have clients from all walks of life and do have clients from numerous other countries. LGBT clients and/or members of faith communities, including Muslims, Pentecostals, and Jehovah's Witnesses, are naturally welcome at the office. Everyone at the office speaks, reads, and writes both Spanish and English. Elizabeth likes to handle her cases with dogged attention to detail. She prefers a thorough, investigatory, and holistic approach to client representation. Cases are handled either on a flat fee basis or, increasingly, on an hourly basis for complex cases and/or for clients in removal proceedings.

Elizabeth is a member of AILA, the American Immigration Lawyers Association. AILA is a nationwide organization of over 15,000 attorneys. By contrast, Elizabeth is one of only 2 to 4 (depending on how one counts) immigration attorneys in Cumberland County. Two neighboring counties –Salem and Cape May counties– have no immigration attorneys. Elizabeth works in an under-served area. She travels for continuing legal education (“CLE”) and has received training in Texas, Philadelphia, Minnesota, Las Vegas, and New York. Since 2017, Elizabeth has provided CLE training to other lawyers and even a panel of judges. She maintains close relationships with her immigration colleagues and with other attorneys. Elizabeth is also a member of ACMDAA, an informal but active group of 150+ municipal court defense attorneys.

Types of Immigration Cases: U-Visa Cases from Deferred Action to Adjustment. Elizabeth has been handling U Visa cases since 2004. They used to be Elizabeth's favorites because U visa laws provide a long-term path to citizenship for non-citizen Victims of Crime. Many grounds of inadmissibility can be waived for such clients. Elizabeth is selective now about starting new U visa cases, given the now agonizingly long path to U status (about 15 years). Our office still routinely handles the following types of cases: DACA Requests, including difficult ones & lapsed DACA. Adjustment of Status under Sections 245(i) and Section 245(m). Immigrant Visa & Waiver cases (I-130 + I-601A + DS-260). Family-Based Immigration in general, incl. same-sex marriages and I-130s for unconventional couples. Removals of Condition I-751 Cases (especially after unrepresented individuals have gotten stuck). Special Immigrant Juvenile cases. Naturalizations for those with tricky histories. Defense against Removal (EOIR-42B). Elizabeth appears mainly before the Immigration Court of Newark and, less frequently, in other immigration courts such as Philadelphia or Chicago. She has won complex, out-of-time Motions to Reopen. Elizabeth is sensitive to --but not an expert in; for that, she

refers her clients to others!-- the ever-changing legal landscape of immigration consequences that can, and often do, follow criminal convictions.

Municipal Court Practice in New Jersey: Unlicensed Driver defense is close to Elizabeth's heart. She also handles quasi-criminal (so-called “disorderly persons offense”) cases within in New Jersey's municipal court system. Those cases can affect a client's immigration status and/or immigration future - not to mention result in a permanent stain on one’s record. Elizabeth handles Post-Conviction Relief in municipal courts. In the year 2014, Elizabeth won a published case before the New Jersey Appellate Division, State v. Armando Carreon, interpreting the unlicensed driver statute.

Documentation Issues: Our office helps licensed and unlicensed clients deal with the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission in connection with driver suspensions and restorations, including post-DUI interlock issues. Finally, Elizabeth routinely assists her clients with challenges related to their own foreign birth records or with rectifying birth certificates of their U.S. Citizen children. She counsels clients so they are able to legally obtain identity documents, such as passports and consular ID cards. From 2014 to 2018, Elizabeth was chair of AILA's Liaison Committee re. the NJ Motor Vehicle Commission.

Education & Professional Licenses: From 1990 to 1993, Elizabeth M. Trinidad attended the University of Pennsylvania, receiving a Bachelor of Arts Degree from there magna cum laude in Linguistics, with minors in African Studies and in Folklore & Folklife Studies. From 1995 to 1998, Elizabeth attended Temple University School of Law in Philadelphia where she received a J.D. (regular law degree). As a law student, Elizabeth studied international & human rights law. She has been licensed to practice law in the State of New Jersey since March 2000 and has been admitted to practice before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit since June 2006. Elizabeth very occasionally handles immigration cases before the Third Circuit. Such cases are exceptionally high-stakes endeavors but can be very gratifying.

Legal Background & Other Work History: Elizabeth gained experience at Legal Services offices in Philadelphia and Bridgeton. She also worked for two fine general practice attorneys in Private Practice in Camden and Philadelphia. During college and law school, Elizabeth was an intern at the Womens Law Project and AIDS Law Project in Philadelphia. She was introduced to Immigration Law in 1994, when she worked for, and was trained by, an attorney who later became an Immigration Judge. From 2005 to 2006, Elizabeth served as a Substitute & Conflicts Public Defender for the Bridgeton Municipal Court. From 2009 to 2010, she provided training to the Cumberland County Public Defender's Office about immigration law basics. Elizabeth’s “non-legal” work history includes pizza delivery driver, transcriber, editor, cleaning lady, fine arts model & literacy tutor. Since the Spring of 2001, Elizabeth has devoted herself to helping her clients, many of whom are incredibly brave and heroic. Together with her spouse and excellent staff, this work has involved countless hours at the office, on the road, and in

court. She likes to help people but must also charge enough to support herself financially (student loans were finally paid off in 2017; now working on getting health insurance).

Travel, Languages, Personal: Elizabeth was raised in West Germany. She speaks, reads, and writes American English, Spanish, German, and French. (The French is a bit rusty.) In the past, she spoke Russian, Yoruba, and Hausa reasonably well. Elizabeth is currently most interested in learning Turkish, Arabic, and Zapotec – time permitting. During college and law school, she studied abroad at universities in Nigeria and South Africa. Elizabeth has been to Venezuela, Spain, Italy, Poland, France, plus spent time in the former USSR and former East Germany (GDR). In order to protect clients' legal interests, Elizabeth has traveled to Minnesota, Texas, Tennessee, various parts of Mexico, as well as a remote mountain in Guatemala. From 1987 to 1990, Elizabeth attended the Freie Kunstschule Hamburg, a free university of the arts based in Hamburg, Germany that was founded by two master students of the late Joseph Beuys. In her personal life, Elizabeth has been an I-130 petitioner. Also, she herself became the client of another immigration lawyer when her family went through the ordeal of her own husband being placed in removal proceedings. He sought non-LPR cancellation of removal during what was a stressful, challenging, and uncertain time. Elizabeth lives with that spouse, their child, and a senior citizen cat. (Revised 09/2018)