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Preface

We are excited to introduce the first-ever manual, specific to North Carolina law and practice, on the immigration consequences of convictions in North Carolina. Our goal has been to develop a clear, usable resource for attorneys representing noncitizen defendants in criminal cases. We hope the manual meets that goal. We also hope the manual will be a useful resource for others who need to understand this challenging area of law.

It is critical for criminal defense attorneys to have an understanding of this area when representing noncitizen clients. Because of the impact a criminal conviction may have for a noncitizen client, both the American Bar Association and the National Legal Aid and Defender Association recommend that criminal defense attorneys investigate and advise clients of potential immigration consequences. See infra § 1.2A (discussing practice standards of these two organizations). As acknowledged by the Supreme Court of the United States, “preserving the client’s right to remain in the United States may be more important to the client than any potential jail sentence.” See INS v. St. Cyr, 533 U.S. 289, 322–23 (2001).

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