

## PREPARE YOUR COMPANY FOR AN ICE I-9 AUDIT

By: **Madeleine Moreno, Esq.**

Immigration is a growing topic on political agendas as the number of immigrants entering the country continues to grow. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security, and responsible for identifying and shutting down vulnerabilities in the nation's border, economic, transportation and infrastructure security.

Beginning in 2007, ICE has taken initiative and exponentially increased the amount of national Employment Eligibility Verification (Form I-9) audits they conduct. Employers must complete Form I-9 to document verification of the identity and employment authorization of each new employee (both citizen and noncitizen) hired after November 6, 1986, to work in the United States. Employers are responsible for completing and retaining Form I-9. Companies that fail to follow immigration compliance laws have been subject to raids, civil and criminal liability.

In 2007, ICE conducted 250 I-9 audits nationally, rapidly increasing over the next five years to more than 3,000 audits in 2012 and nearly \$13 million dollars in fines. In fiscal year 2013, 14 Massachusetts companies were fined a total of \$175,122.70 for hiring unlawful employees, substantive and technical

violations. Moreno Law Office, LLC is always up to date on the current I-9 compliance laws and has experience with I-9 audits conducted by ICE. Let us help your business and prospective employees meet immigration employment compliance laws before ICE comes knocking on your door.

### **Moreno Law Office, LLC specializes in:**

1. Conducting internal audits of companies to help maintain I-9 compliance and assess civil and criminal liability.
2. I-9 Training for your business or Human Resources Department.
3. Analysis of potential fines according to ICE matrices used to calculate and impose fines on a company.
4. Developing a compliance plan for your company to become better compliant to the I-9 process and procedures in order to avoid potential liability.
5. Drafting compliance policies that will help your company become better aligned with I-9 procedures.

Moreno Law office, LLC recommends businesses to conduct regular I-9 internal audits to avoid non compliance whether intentional or simply caused by oversight.

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