



Josué Cruz Morales J.D.
Immigration Lawyer • Vieques Youth Leadership Initiative

Josue Cruz Morales is an Immigration Lawyer with his firm in Houston, Texas. Josue achieved his childhood dream of becoming a lawyer, practicing first in Puerto Rico. He graduated in 2015 from the University of Puerto Rico Carolina, Forensic Investigation, Law & Society Interactions in the top five of his class.

Josue has aspired to change the social, economic and educational destinies of Vieques by offering his services pro-bono to communities in need. Previously, Josue worked as the co-director of a pipeline program called Enlace, which exposes high school students from marginalized areas to real law school classes. Josué's main role was to train students in legislative affairs and community involvement; over 250 students participated in this program during his time there. His final project was to create a database program to encourage his students to pursue college careers; this program is the first software of its kind in the legal field, and it will help identify the needs of students and provide them with the help they need to be accepted into law school. Josue also worked closely with the first Legal Profession Self-Study in Puerto Rico—a combined effort between the University of Puerto Rico and the Chief Justice of the Puerto Rico Supreme Court.

Josué's dream of enriching his community began early. When he was a shy and quiet 14-year-old, he discovered—at the Institute's first Youth Leadership Summit—that his dream was to become the Mayor of Vieques and to inspire other youth to become leaders of their island. Josué took that goal seriously and created strategic plans to accomplish his dreams. In 2004, Josue co-founded the Vieques Youth Leadership Initiative to train young people to build a new Vieques. Josué wrote *The Challenges Facing Vieques Youth*, which became the foundation for the Institute's four-year bi-lingual demonstration project. Josue and VYLI college youth produced a 2020 Report on Sustainable Development for Vieques that was presented at the APEC Youth Summit in Peru in 2008. In 2009, Josue co-founded Comunidad Verde Vieques (Green Vieques) where the Mayor dedicated 500 acres to 300 landless families—the second-generation victims of the U.S. Navy land expropriation in the 1940's. Josué's deep commitment to designing the best practices for his island inspired him to help implement the first "Green Initiative" in Puerto Rico's public schools in which more than 5,000 students and 150 teachers created more than 100 school gardens. At his Law School graduation, Josué received the prestigious Award for founding VYLI and his dedication to his Vieques community. Josue serves as Co-Director of the Institute's Youth Leadership Summit and works with the Martha's Vineyard Youth Leadership Initiative and Sustainable Hawaii Youth Leadership Initiative. In 2010, Josue received the Institute's first Walter Cronkite Award. He serves as faculty for the Institute's newest initiative in Holyoke, MA.

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