

Firms form new India connections: New firm offices, combinations give global reach to Hoosier law

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From left: Mike Hylton of the Indy Chamber; Ritu Chokshi, a partner in Chugh's Indianapolis office; Diya Mathews; and Susan Larios celebrate Chugh's new Indianapolis office June 1. (IL photo/Tyler)

Two recent law firm expansions have connected the legal community in Indiana to national and international markets, including India.

Dentons announced in May it had combined with Link Legal in India to create Dentons Link Legal, giving the firm a presence in five of the Asian country's six largest cities. According to Dentons – which has a Hoosier presence via Dentons Bingham Greenebaum – the combination marks the first time a global law firm has combined with a law firm in India.

Then there's Chugh, LLP, a firm based in California that has multiple offices in India. Now, Chugh is in Indianapolis. It's the first Midwest office for the firm.

Dentons Bingham Greenebaum Managing Partner Keith Bice said in a written response to Indiana Lawyer questions that the connections forming between India and Indiana show the legal profession is becoming more globalized.

"India has long been a key market for Dentons – we have many clients that operate in the country, and this combination allows us to continue to help them as they seek to grow, protect, operate and finance their business wherever they need us," Bice wrote.

He also said clients expect the "best of both worlds," where local connections are combined with global resources.

Ritu Chokshi, who is leading Chugh's new Indianapolis office, said companies can't ignore the big market India offers.

She postulated that expansion into the Midwest often comes on the heels of expansion that first happens on the coasts. Then, as companies and firms figure out what's next, they move inward.

Chokshi, who's from India, has been in Indiana since 2009.

"I think Indiana's changing," she said. "I can't put my finger on it."

Chugh Celebrates Indianapolis opening

Chugh held an open house for its new Indianapolis office on June 1. The office is on the third floor of a shared office building near Keystone at the Crossing on the city's north side.

The current staff, including Chokshi, is four people.

Andrea Mora, a paralegal for the Indianapolis office, works out of Atlanta but made the trip north for the open house. Mora said she met Chokshi a couple months ago and started helping with her caseload.

"She's such an amazing person and an amazing lawyer," Mora said. "...I've worked with so many different attorneys in the past, and you kind of get a sense for who really does care about their clients and who's just in it for the benefit of the money. And you can really tell that she really does care."

Diya Mathews, a partner in Chugh's New Jersey office, was also at the open house.

"We always wanted to have an office here," she said. "It was just a matter of finding the right person."

It turned out that Chokshi was the right person.

Before Chugh, Chokshi was at another immigration firm in Indianapolis, handling anywhere from 500 to 600 clients at a time on family cases.

Chokshi said she met Chugh's founder, Navneet Chugh, in May 2022, thinking he could be a referral source for her. But as they talked more and she told him about her background, Chokshi said Chugh asked if she'd be willing to open the firm's new office.

"I'm like, 'OK, you don't know me. We've only spoken for three hours,'" she said with a laugh.

The meeting was in New Jersey, and Chokshi said Chugh was already looking up Indian restaurants around where she lives and determined there were enough.

Chokshi was officially hired in August 2022, and they signed the lease for the office in October.

From there she filled out the staff, including Mora. Also on staff are Susan Larios, an administrative assistant who also speaks Spanish, and Amarpreet Kaur, a paralegal who is fluent in Hindi and Punjabi.

Language is "absolutely critical for me," Chokshi said.

Immigration law has two sides to it, she said: the business side, and then the people who are either new to the language or are bringing in others who are.

The new office will focus primarily on immigration services, catering to people, families and businesses seeking assistance with visa applications, naturalization and other immigration-related matters.

But aside from the strict work of immigration law, Chokshi said she wants the office to be a welcoming space. That's why it's outfitted with an area for kids, where they can sit at a mini picnic table and draw on big pieces of paper with crayons. There's also a kitchen area with floating shelves, an island and a rectangular table.

The furniture, Chokshi said, is a mix of what she was able to inherit from her husband's old office when they moved and what she could find at IKEA. She said her goal is for the office to be something of a community space, where other small businesses could host information sessions.