

I Need Immigration Help. Who Can Help Me?



I need to know which immigration forms to use.

Go to **www.uscis.gov** - that's the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services website. Look for "Find it Fast" on the left side of the screen. Click the drop-down menus to find out which forms you need.

If you're still not sure which forms you need, you might need help from an immigration lawyer or another person who's authorized to help you. See page 3 to find out where to get the right kind of help.

I need to get immigration forms.

You can do this yourself. All the forms you need are free. You can print them from **www.uscis.gov/forms**, order them by phone: 1-800-870-3676, or visit your local USCIS office. Never pay for copies of blank government forms. They are always free, though you probably will have to pay when you submit them to USCIS.

I need help filling out my immigration forms.

Anyone can help you put your information into your immigration forms. What's important is that this person – a friend, your pastor, a teacher, a relative – should write or translate only what you tell him to. Your helper should not tell you what to say. That can cause problems for you later. If you need advice, be sure you get it from the people authorized by the U.S. government to help you.

A translator may charge a small fee for translating your information. Remember never to pay for the forms.

Who can help me fill out my forms?

A lawyer or an accredited representative from the list kept by the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) can help you. See page 3 to find out how to get the right help.

I need to find out if USCIS has my forms.

You will get a receipt from USCIS when you turn in your paperwork. Keep it! It proves that USCIS received your application or petition. You will need the receipt to check on the status of your application.

You can check on your application status at **www.uscis.gov**, or call the USCIS National Customer Service Center: 1-800-375-5283.

I need someone to talk to USCIS for me. USCIS calls this “representing” me.

You can talk on your own behalf. You may not need someone to represent you. It’s not required. If you want someone to represent you, you need someone who’s authorized by USCIS to represent you. The only people who can represent you to USCIS are lawyers who are members of the state bar association, accredited representatives on the list kept by the Board of Immigration Appeals, and a few other people. Only lawyers and accredited representatives may charge a fee to help you. See page 3 to find out where to get the right kind of help.

I got a “Notice to Appear” as part of removal proceedings.

A lawyer or an accredited representative can help you. See page 3 to find out how to get the help you need. Your lawyer must be a member of the state bar association.

For an accredited representative, look at this “Organizations and Representatives, Listed by State” list; choose someone who does not have the words “DHS Only” beside their name: www.justice.gov/eoir/ra.html

“DHS Only” means that person can help you with a USCIS application, but cannot help you if your case goes to an immigration judge or to the Board of Immigration Appeals.

I might have been scammed. How can I find out about my immigration status?

Check with USCIS.

You can check your status online at www.uscis.gov. Put your receipt number into the “Case Status” box on the left-hand side of the webpage.

If you don’t have your receipt number, make an appointment with your local USCIS office. You can do that two ways:

- Go to www.infopass.uscis.gov.
- Call the USCIS National Customer Service Center: 1-800-375-5283.

I want to report an immigration scam.

Immigration scams are illegal. If you or someone you know has seen an immigration scam or been the victim of one, it’s important to report it to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) or the attorney general of your state. Go to ftc.gov/complaint (or call 1-877-382-4357) or click on the map at naag.org to find out how to contact the attorney general in your state. The FTC does not resolve individual complaints. Instead, the FTC enters complaints in a secure online database used by law enforcement worldwide, including many federal, state and local officials, who spot trends and build cases.

The more information you can give, the more helpful your report is to the person who will investigate. Investigators are grateful for as much information as you feel comfortable giving.

How Do I Find Legal Help?

Getting help from someone who's not qualified to give you legal advice – like a notario – can be worse than not getting any help. Sometimes, even advice from a friend who means well can hurt your immigration status. If you need advice or help, get it from someone who is authorized by the U.S. government to help you:

Lawyers

Lawyers can give you advice and represent you. Lawyers, also called attorneys, must be a member of the “bar” – the professional association in their state. The state bar association can discipline, suspend, or even expel a lawyer for breaking the rules. Be sure the lawyer you choose is in good standing with the bar association. That means they're not in trouble for breaking the rules for lawyers. You can find a lawyer through government and non-government websites.

To find an immigration lawyer who doesn't charge or who charges low fees:

- Visit this state-by-state list from the U.S. Department of Justice: www.justice.gov/eoir/probono/states.htm
- Call USCIS at 1-800-375-5283 to ask about lawyers in your area.
- Visit this state-by-state list from the American Bar Association: www.americanbar.org/groups/public_services/immigration/resources/immigration_legal_service_providers_directory.html

To find a lawyer in your area who works in immigration:

- Visit this list from the American Immigration Lawyers Association. These lawyers may charge a fee to help you. www.aialawyer.com

To find out if someone is a lawyer, or to find out if a lawyer is in trouble for breaking the rules:

- Visit this site from the State Bar Associations. Click on your state to find the phone number you can call to ask about a specific lawyer. www.statebarassociations.org
- Visit the U.S. Department of Justice for this list of lawyers who are not allowed to practice law: www.justice.gov/eoir/discipline.htm

Accredited Representatives

Accredited representatives are not lawyers, but are authorized by the government to give legal immigration advice. They also may represent you. These representatives must work for an organization that's officially recognized by the US government. The names of both the accredited representatives and these recognized organizations are on a list kept by the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) at the Department of Justice.

To find an accredited representative:

- Visit this state-by-state list of accredited representatives and the recognized organizations where they work. Only a person, not an organization, is authorized to represent you. Look at this list for the name of someone near you. The people on this list are accredited representatives as long as they work at the organization on the list. They may charge a fee to help you. www.justice.gov/eoir/ra.html

Other Help

Some other people are authorized by the government to help you, but they can't charge you a fee. Law students can give you legal advice, if they are supervised by a lawyer or accredited representative. Someone you may know in your community, known to USCIS as a “reputable individual,” can represent you, but they cannot charge you – and they have to sign a legal document saying they won't take money from you.

Learn how to avoid scams against immigrants at:

ftc.gov/immigration

Aprenda cómo evitar las estafas contra inmigrantes en:

ftc.gov/inmigracion



Federal Trade Commission
ftc.gov