

How to Hire An Immigration Lawyer

Hiring a lawyer is likely something you've never done before. It can be scary and expensive, but the first thing you have to remember is that no lawyer is doing you a favor by taking your case. You are paying someone for a service, and you should expect them to do a good job. In other words, when you pay a lawyer to work for you, they are essentially your employee. But when you have to depend on your employee to help you navigate and understand your options, it is especially important to find someone trustworthy and competent.

Lawyer Shopping

Overview

It is worth your time to go lawyer shopping to find who you think will do the best job for you and your family. When any employer searches for a new hire, they don't always choose the first person they interview. Likewise, you don't have to hire the first attorney who agrees to take your case. It is perfectly acceptable to talk to several attorneys before hiring anyone. Feel free to talk to several lawyers before making a decision and signing a contract.

Finally, like any employer, you can fire an employee you don't think is doing a good job. Remember, you control whether or not you choose to work with a lawyer. If he or she does not show up for hearings or get the work done, you can fire that attorney and hire another. Furthermore, you may be able to get a refund on any prepaid money for services that the lawyer has not performed yet. However, dismissing a lawyer for giving you bad news may not be the best idea.

The Best Lawyer

Keep in mind that the best lawyer is one who will give you a candid assessment of your case and not necessarily the one who tells you what you want to hear.

Furthermore, the best attorney might not be the most expensive one, either. Some organizations may offer lower prices to low income clients, but that isn't always the case.

Expectations

What to Expect from Your Lawyer

You may control whether or not you choose to work with a lawyer, but you should still have realistic expectations of them. Remember, you are not their only client and immigration lawyers are often away from their offices. For example, the closest immigration court and asylum office for Catholic Charities Milwaukee is in Chicago, which means our legal team travels a lot. However, you deserve to have your phone calls returned and to have good communication with your lawyer. It might take a day or two, but you should expect to hear from your lawyer's office when you reach out.

Always remember that hiring a good lawyer does not guarantee that you will win your case, but in many cases, it is your only hope.

The first time you meet with a lawyer, you're going to be asked a lot of questions. Some questions might not seem important, but try to answer them as honestly and correctly as you can. For example, the date you first entered the United States can significantly affect your ability to stay here. Don't just guess at details, try your best to remember.

You should also know that a reputable lawyer cannot and will not lie for you. Once you have told your lawyers something, you cannot take it back.

What Your Lawyer Will Expect from You

Like any relationship, the lawyer-client relationship comes with mutual expectations. You expect things from your lawyer, but your lawyer also expects things from you. For example, it's very important to keep your lawyer up to date on significant events, such as any:

- Change of address or phone number
- Contact with law enforcement

- Pending divorces, marriages, births or deaths
- Letters that you get about your case.

To encourage a stronger working relationship with your lawyer, be mindful of time. Arrive to your appointments on time, and call if you cannot come or if you are going to be late. Lawyers tend to keep their calendars full, and if you come late your lawyer might have to reschedule. Also, your lawyer will have deadlines with courts and with Immigration, so it's really important that you get your lawyer whatever documents he or she needs as soon as you can. You don't want to lose your case because you did not provide your evidence on time. Lastly, if you cannot pay for services on time, do not avoid or hide from your lawyer. Talk to your lawyer and see if you can work out a payment plan.

Other Considerations

If you want to make sure that the person you hire is really a lawyer, you can check wisbar.org. Enter the attorney's name, and you can confirm their credentials and contact information.

Notaries public in the State of Wisconsin are not lawyers. As outlined on the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institution's website:

Any United States resident 18 years of age or older who has at least the equivalent of an eighth grade education, has passed a notary exam with 90% or better within one year of applying, and has demonstrated adherence to laws according to the Wisconsin Statutes with regard to arrests and convictions, is eligible to apply for a Wisconsin Notary Commission.

It takes more than an eighth grade education and no criminal record to become a lawyer. If a notary public has helped you and you have been harmed, you can submit a notary complaint at wdfi.org. A notary public is not a lawyer in the United States, and it is a crime to engage in the unauthorized practice of law.

Hiring a likable lawyer is good, but it is not enough.

Do NOT hire a referral based on having heard something like, "oh, hire this lawyer... you'll like him." Hiring a nice person is great advice if you're hiring someone to go to lunch with you. But you are not hiring someone to be your best friend, you are hiring someone who can help you navigate the law. Luckily, there are enough immigration

lawyers who are both very talented and very nice. Don't settle for a lawyer just because they seem nice.

Your file belongs to you; it does not belong to your lawyer.

Your lawyer must give you your original file regardless of whether or not you owe them any money. The lawyer might need time to make a copy, especially if it is a big file, but that file is your property.

Questions You My Want to Ask

Last updated on July 02, 2025.

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