

Frequently Asked Questions

[The Asylum Seeker Advocacy Project \(ASAP\)](#) has compiled these answers to common questions that we have received from people who arrived to the United States to seek protection, have been freed from detention and now are soliciting asylum in the immigration courts. ASAP hopes that this information will be helpful for asylum applicants. Nevertheless, this information does not substitute for legal advice.

You will read and see that in our resources we have used masculine and feminine pronouns. Our intention is not to exclude anyone, and the ASAP team is in agreement that any person, including people that belong to the LGBTQ+ community, should have access to the necessary information to continue advocating for their rights while navigating the asylum system in the USA.

Visit <https://asylumadvocacy.org/> for more resources. *Updated August 11, 2020.*

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SEARCH FOR LEGAL HELP

It is very important to find competent legal assistance for your immigration court case!

How can I find a lawyer?

[Visit this web page](#) of the IAN to find information about migrants' rights nonprofit organizations in the United States that offer free or low-cost legal assistance. You can use your zip code to find local organizations or select your state.

[And look at this list](#) of private immigration lawyers in different cities. ASAP doesn't personally know these lawyers, but they have been recommended by other local non-profit organizations. These offices charge, but you can always ask an office if they can offer a payment plan. The list is organized by state and city in alphabetical order.

What should I know when I look for a lawyer?

[These are some important things](#) that you should know when you look for a lawyer:

1. A notary is NOT a lawyer in the United States.
2. Before contracting a lawyer, ask them how much experience they have with asylum cases in immigration court.
3. There are lawyers that work for nonprofits and private lawyers. All lawyers, free or paid, have the same professional responsibilities.
4. The lawyer should offer you a contract in your language that includes a clear price and a description of the legal services they will give.

Also, [watch these informative videos](#) from the organization Ayuda (Help) about how to have a legal consultation, how to contract a lawyer, and how to avoid notary fraud.

What should I do if I call the office and no one answers?

If no one answers when you call a lawyer's office, you can leave a message with your name and phone number. And you can keep trying!

What can I do if the lawyer says (s)he can't help me?

If the organization or the lawyer says that they can't help you, you can ask them if they have recommendations of other trustworthy lawyers in the area. Some offices only take certain cases—because of this, it is important to continue the search for a lawyer and to call various offices.

What are my rights and responsibilities when I have a lawyer?

Your lawyer is working for you and has certain professional responsibilities toward you and your case. Below we review a few important points:

- Different types of lawyers: There are lawyers that work for nonprofit organizations and private lawyers. But all are lawyers and, free or paid, they have the same professional responsibilities. Before hiring a lawyer, ask them how much experience they have with asylum cases in immigration court. NOTE: A notary is NOT a lawyer in the United States.
- Contract: It is important to have a contract of legal services prepared by your lawyer. You should receive a copy of the contract in your language. The contract should include a clear price and a description of legal services that will be provided by the lawyer with regards to your case.
- Communication: It is important that you stay in communication with your lawyer and advise them about changes in your case. Make sure that your lawyer has your current address and telephone number. You should receive regular communication from your lawyer and feel comfortable calling to ask for the most recent updates on your case.
- Documents: You should save the originals of all your case documents and your lawyer should save the copies as well. You can ask your lawyer for copies of everything your lawyer has prepared and turned in to the government for you.
- Confidentiality: All communication with your lawyer is confidential. This means that your lawyer cannot share the information with anybody without your permission. It is therefore important that you feel comfortable sharing everything

that has happened. It is also important that all of the information that you share with the lawyer is correct.

- Firing your lawyer: Finally, if you are not satisfied with your lawyer's work in your case, you can always fire them. Also, if you think your lawyer violated professional rules, you can make an official complaint.

GENERAL ORIENTATION

What should I keep in mind with regards to my asylum case in immigration court?

These are some very important things to know about your case:

1. It is important to attend all of your hearings in immigration court and all of your appointments with ICE.
2. To find out if you have a hearing in court and to review the status of your case, call 1-800-898-7180 and press 2 for Spanish.
3. If you moved to a different address, you must let the court and ICE know.
4. The asylum application must be turned in within a year of arriving in the United States.
5. For more information, keep reading this document, and visit our website apoyodeasilo.org.

I have an appointment. What is it? What is the difference between appointments with ICE or ISAP, appointments with USCIS, and hearings in the immigration courts?

There are various government agencies that asylum applicants may interact with throughout the process of asylum application in the United States. Here we want to explain to you the difference between three of those with which many asylum applicants have contact: ICE, USCIS, and immigration courts. The three agencies have local and regional offices throughout the country. It is very important to attend ALL your appointments and scheduled hearings.

ICE/ISAP: ICE (“Immigrations and Customs Enforcement”) is the agency that acts as the migration police in the United States. Many people refer to ICE as “la migra”. ICE supervises the immigrants that are in the United States in a variety of ways, such as in person signature appointments, home visits, and phone calls. ISAP is one of the supervision programs of ICE for people who have been released from the detention centers. Immigrants who have ankle bracelets are usually under the supervision of ISAP. Normally a person who is under the supervision of ICE or ISAP receives a notification upon being released from the detention center that indicates the requirements that they need to meet.

USCIS USCIS (“United States Citizenship and Immigration Services”) is the United States migration system agency that normally processes immigration applications, for example, the work permit application. USCIS is also where one goes to get biometric fingerprints for various applications, including the asylum application and the work permit.

The Immigration Court: The immigration court is part of a Department of Justice agency in the United States and is the office where most of the immigrants who are in removal proceedings have their hearings in an immigration court before a judge. To confirm if you have a hearing with the immigration court, you can call 1-800-898-7180, press option 2 for Spanish, type in your A-number and press option 1 to review when you have your next hearing and what type of audience it is. [Here is a resource with more detailed instructions.](#)

There are other agencies of government dedicated to immigration as well, but these are the three with which many asylum applicants have appointments and hearings during the process of seeking asylum.

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HEARINGS IN THE IMMIGRATION COURT

How can I know when I have my next immigration court hearing?

To know when and where you have your next hearing and what type of hearing it is, you can call the automated court number, 1-800-898-7180, press option 2 for Spanish, type in your A-number and press option 1 to review when you have your next hearing and what type of hearing it is. [Here you have a resource with more detailed instructions.](#) The “A-number” is an immigration number with 9 numbers that begin with the letter A. You can find this number on your immigration documents. You should also receive by mail a notification that looks like [this document](#) with the date and address of your next hearing. This announcement will arrive by mail to the address that the courts have registered for your case in the immigration courts. The immigration courts will have the address that you gave the immigration officials when you were released from detention or at the border. Because of this it is VERY important to keep your address updated with the immigration courts.

What should I do if I call the authorized line but my “A-number” doesn’t appear in the system?

Sometimes it takes a few months for the “A-number” to appear in the system. You should continue calling the number, 1-800-898-7180, every week to know when you have your first meeting. And if you move, you should update your address with the immigration court using the E-33 form. You can read more about how to fill the E-33 form [below](#).

What will happen during my first hearing in the immigration court?

During the first preliminary hearing in the immigration court, the judge will ask you some initial questions and you may request more time to find a lawyer. It is not necessary to bring a lawyer. The most important thing is that you are there!

You should bring your children to the first hearing if your children are part of your case. During the first hearing, ask the judge if you need to bring your children to the next hearing. It is important to keep bringing your children until the judge tells you that you don’t need to bring them.

[Here is a resource with information about what will happen in the first hearing.](#)

You can also see the following videos:

[General recommendations about your hearings in the immigration courts](#)

[What should I know before my first hearing?](#)

What will happen during my second preliminary hearing?

During the preliminary hearings, the judge will ask initial questions and you can ask for more time to find a lawyer. It is not necessary to bring a lawyer. The most important thing is that you are present! Given that this hearing is your second preliminary hearing, you can bring a written list of all the places that you have called to search for representation to show your efforts to obtain representation.

If you asked the judge during your first hearing if your child needs to attend the hearings and the judge said that it wasn't necessary, your child does not need to attend. But if the judge did not say whether or not your child needs to attend, it is better that you come with your child. And during the hearing, you can ask the judge if you need to bring your child to the next hearing. You should bring your children until the judge says that you don't need to bring them. That's why it is always good to ask!

[This video explains what you should know before other preliminary hearings.](#)

What will happen during the merit court or the individual hearing?

The merit court (also known as the individual hearing) is the hearing where you need to present your case in front of the judge. During this hearing, you will explain your story and also may present evidence like documents and testimonies to support your case. Many people know the merit court as the last court. Nevertheless, this is not always the last court.

It is VERY important [to find a lawyer](#) that can represent you during this hearing. Statistically speaking, it is very difficult to gain asylum in the immigration courts without competent legal support. The judge will decide based on this hearing if you meet the requirements for asylum or other forms of protection.

[This video explains what you should know about the merit hearing.](#)

I have my merit court, but I still don't have a lawyer. What can I do?

Sometimes, one can't find a lawyer to represent them for their merit hearing and they have to represent themselves. These resources from other organizations can help you prepare yourself for the merit court: [Guide 1](#), [Guide 2](#), [Video](#).

Remember that if the judge denies your case during the merit hearing, you still have the right to appeal your case in the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) and that you need to do it within 30 days. [This video explains more about the appeals.](#)

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ICE and ISAP

What is ICE? What is ISAP?

ICE ("Immigrations and Customs Enforcement") is one of the agencies in the government that enforces the laws of immigration. ICE acts as the "police" of immigration in that they can detain a person they suspect of being in violation of immigration laws.

ISAP ("Intensive Supervision Appearance Program") is a supervision program of ICE for immigrants that aren't detained but that ICE wants to supervise in some way.

Frequently, when ICE allows someone to leave a detention center, they are placed in the supervision program. There are various levels of control, which include wearing an ankle bracelet, having to present oneself in an office to sign a paper, having to receive home visits, or having to make telephone calls. The level of supervision varies greatly.

How can I know if I have an appointment with ICE, when it is, and where it will be?

If you have an appointment with ICE, you will normally receive a document upon leaving the detention center that indicates your level of supervision, and when and where you will have your first appointment with ICE. Later, after you go to your first appointment with ICE, you will have another document that will have all of your next appointments.

Also, you can call the local ICE office to learn when and where your appointment is. You can find the phone numbers of the ICE offices in different cities on this [web page](#).

What should I do if I can't attend my appointment with ICE?

You should call your ICE agent to notify them and ask them to change the appointment for another date that you can attend. If you don't have the number, you can look for the phone number of the ICE office and call to let them know. You can find the different phone numbers of ICE offices in different cities on [this web page](#).

ICE took away my passport. Can I get a new one?

If ICE took your passport, they normally keep it until the end of the asylum process. If the asylum applicant gains asylum, ICE can return your passport (but you must request it). If you want to get another passport for yourself, you should speak with a lawyer or consulate about that.

I have an ankle bracelet. How can I get it removed?

The time varies in how long it takes to take off the ankle bracelet and each case is different. Sometimes the lawyer that represents you can advocate for its removal. [If you don't have a lawyer, look for legal assistance here!](#)

Also, [this guide](#) has ideas about how to ask your ICE or ISAP official to remove the ankle bracelet. The guide was created by the Migrant Rights Clinic of the School of Law at Stanford and is specifically for people with cases in San Francisco, California.

Nevertheless, the general information can be useful for asylum applicants with ankle bracelets in other locations as well. It is important that you keep in mind that the guide was created in 2016 so information may have changed since then.

SEEKING ASYLUM

When should I apply for asylum?

As a general rule, you should submit your application for asylum (Form I-589) within a year of arriving in the United States. You can learn more about the application for asylum from [this video](#). If possible, you should get legal help to fill the form. [Get legal help here](#).

What happens if I didn't submit my application for asylum within the year?

Even if you didn't submit it within a year of being in the United States, you can still file the application for asylum and you may still qualify for protection and withholding of removal under the United States Convention Against Torture (CAT), so you should file form I-589. For more information on protection and withholding of removal under the Convention Against Torture, read [this guide](#).

In the application, you can also explain why you could not submit it before, and the immigration judge may accept that the delay was caused by an exceptional circumstance, or a change in your circumstances.

For example, you may explain that there were exceptional circumstances -like health issues, house problems, domestic violence, etc.- that caused you to submit the application late. You can also let the judge know that the immigration authorities did not tell you about the one-year filing deadline for asylum applications. In 2018, in the case Mendez-Rojas, a federal judge decided that many detained asylum seekers had not been properly notified of the time limit. Therefore, they could still apply for asylum after the one-year deadline.

If you have been in the USA over a year, you should consult a lawyer as soon as possible to file your asylum application. [Get legal help here](#).

Do I still classify for asylum if I have been deported before? Do I need to submit the asylum application?

People with previous deportation warrants are often not eligible for asylum, but they can still apply for other forms of protection under American immigration laws, like the withholding of removal and protection under the United States Convention Against Torture (CAT). To apply, you need to follow the corresponding court process and file form I-589. For more information, read [this guide](#).

It is important that you find a lawyer to help with the application and with your case. [Get legal help here](#).

Can I file the asylum application by myself, without a lawyer?

You can file the application on your own, but it is better to have a lawyer's help. If you cannot get a lawyer and decide to file the application yourself, these resources may be helpful: [Guide](#) (see section 2 and annex F) and [video](#). Remember that the application must be completed in English.

Do I have to include evidence in my application?

Normally, you don't need to include all of the evidence in your application, but you should consult a lawyer or a non-profit in your area. You will have another hearing -the individual, or "merit" hearing- where you can present all of your evidence. You can work with a lawyer to determine what evidence you should present to help your case. For more information on individual hearings, watch [this video](#); for more information on asylum applications, watch [this video](#).

Once I submit the application to the court, will I be summoned to present my fingerprints?

Submitting the application does not mean you will be automatically summoned to get your fingerprints taken. Instead, you need to send certain documents to USCIS before they summon you to take your fingerprints. It is really important to have that appointment before your individual hearing. You can find more information about the appointment to get your fingerprints taken [here](#).

Once you submit your asylum application, you can request an appointment to get your fingerprints taken at any time. You need to mail the following documents to USCIS:

1. A copy of the first three pages of your application. You can see a template of the pages [here](#).
2. A copy of the instructions (2 pages) found [in this USCIS website](#).

You must send both documents through USPS to the following address:

USCIS Nebraska Service Center
Defensive Asylum Application With Immigration Court
P.O. Box 87589
Lincoln, NE 68501

[This video explains how to send documents through mail.](#)

Once you have sent the documents, you will get a receipt from USCIS in the mail. Then, USCIS will send you a [notice](#) with the date of the appointment.

It is important that you attend the appointment. To be granted asylum, you need to submit your fingerprints, and missing the appointment may affect your eligibility for a work permit. If you cannot attend on the date given, you can ask for a different date.

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WORK PERMITS

How can I apply for a work permit while my asylum application is pending?

The rules about work permits for asylum seekers on the waiting list are about to change. You can watch [this video](#) about how the process works currently, and read [this article](#) to understand how it is changing.

Can I apply for work permits for my children?

Usually, if you qualify for a work permit, and your child lives in the USA and is part of your case at the immigration court, you can also request a work permit for them. Each of you will have to file form I-765 individually, but you can mail them together in the same envelope. The process is the same for you and your children. Many people apply for a work permit for their children as a way to get them an identification.

If you request a work permit for your child and say that you want a social security number card on the application, your child should also get a card if their permit is approved. The process for children and adults is the same.

My work permit is about to expire. What should I do?

Normally, if your case is still on the waiting list, you can apply for a work permit renewal starting from six months before the expiration date.

I was granted asylum. Do I need a work permit?

The people who are granted asylum can work without a work permit, as their legal status gives them the right to work in the USA. However, it can be difficult to get a job or a social security number without a work permit, so many choose to get a work permit card because of their asylum status. Those who were granted asylum can apply for category (a)(5) and must include a copy of the judge's ruling on their case.

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CHANGE OF ADDRESS

I moved. What now?

When you move, it is important to update your address with the immigration court using form E-33. You also need to update your address with ICE or ISAP if you have upcoming appointments with them. Lastly, you need to update the address with USCIS if you have pending applications with them. You must update your address with each agency individually.

If you moved far away, you may also need to submit a petition to be transferred to another court.

Learn how to update your address when you move and have a pending case at the immigration court in [this leaflet](#). For a more detailed explanation, watch [this video](#).

Keep in mind it is very important that you show up to every hearing at the immigration court. If you miss a hearing, they will probably issue a deportation warrant in your absence.

How can I change my address with the immigration court?

If you moved and have/will have hearings at the immigration court, you must submit form E-33 to the court to update your address. You must send the forms within five days of moving, or as soon as possible. You need one form for each person in your case, including children. It is important that your address is up to date to ensure that you get every notice from the court.

Watch [this video by Innovation Law Lab about filling in form E-33](#). You can download form E-33 from [this government website](#). Make sure you select the right court.

You must send a copy of form E-33 to the court and another one to your district attorney's office. Find your court's address [here](#) and the corresponding attorney's office address [here](#).

If you moved far away, you may need to submit a petition to be transferred to a different court.

Can I still update my address with the immigration court even if my case hasn't been registered by the automated line?

Even if your case hasn't been registered by the immigration court, you can try updating your address with the court using form E-33. To find out which court you have to send the form to, check if you have the document titled ["Notice to Appear"](#). Most people get this document when they are released from detention. The notice signals that the government intends to start your process at an immigration court, and that you will have the opportunity to appear in front of a judge to state your case. Sometimes, the notice has the date and place of your first hearing with the immigration court.

It is really important that you call the [automated line](#) EVERY WEEK, so you will know as soon as possible that your first hearing with the immigration court is scheduled. You must show up to every hearing with the immigration court. If you miss a hearing, they will probably issue a deportation warrant in your absence.

What should I do if I have hearings with an immigration court and I moved far away?

Each immigration court handles the cases of a specific area. If you move outside of your court's area, you may have to transfer your case to the court in charge of the cases in your new living area. This can happen if you move to a different state, or if you move within a big state like Arizona, California, Florida, New York or Texas. If you move far away, in addition to form E-33, you may need to file a petition to have your case transferred to a different court. This petition is called "Motion to Change Venue". Sometimes, a judge will transfer you to a new court even if you don't file the petition. You can find a list of immigration courts [here](#).

Remember to update your address with form E-33 even if you don't ask for a new court. It is very important that you show up to every hearing at the immigration court. If you miss a hearing, they will probably issue a deportation warrant in your absence.

What should I do if I have hearings with ICE or ISAP and I moved?

If you have upcoming hearings with ICE or ISAP, you must update your address with both ICE/ISAP and the immigration court. The court will not notify ICE or ISAP about your change of address, and vice versa. You can update your address or give notice of your move during your hearing with ICE or ISAP. If you don't have hearings with them, this step is not necessary.

If you are moving far away, it is advisable that you notify your court officer and ask that your hearings be transferred before you move. If you move states before your next hearing and you need to have your hearings transferred, you can call your ICE or ISAP officer and let them know you moved. If you don't have their phone number, try calling the local ICE office. The phone numbers can be found on this [government website](#). If you can't communicate with them, you can try going to their offices during work hours.

What should I do if I have a pending application with USCIS (e.g. for a work permit) and I moved?

If you have a pending application with USCIS, you need to update your address with them so any notice about your case arrives at your new place. Click [this link](#) to update

your address with USCIS online and in Spanish. To get the website in Spanish, go to the top of the page and click the link that reads “Para tener acceso a este sitio en Español, presione aquí.” You can also print form AR-11, fill it in by hand and mail it to USCIS.

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APPEALS AND WARRANTS OF REMOVAL/DEPORTATION

What do I do if the judge denied my asylum application?

Know that your case does not have to end with the immigration judge’s ruling. If a judge denies your application, you can appeal that decision to the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA). Once the judge has made the decision, you have 30 days to take the 1st step: you need to file and send form E-26, known as “Notice of Appeal”. You cannot be deported while your appeal is pending with the BIA. If you decide not to appeal, a final order for your deportation will be issued.

[Read this leaflet about appeals.](#)

[Watch this video about the process of appealing.](#)

If you don’t have a lawyer, find legal help [here](#).

How do I know the deadline to send the Notice of Appeal?

After the judge denies your claim for asylum, you have 30 days to submit form E-26 (Notice of Appeal). If you don’t know when the 30 day period ends, ask the immigration court automated line: call 1-800-898-7180, select option 2 for Spanish instructions, enter your A-number, and select option 4 to hear the date for when they need to receive your Notice of Appeal.

What do I do if the Board of Immigration Appeals denies my appeal?

If the BIA denies your appeal, you can appeal against that decision to a federal court. Sometimes, you can also ask the BIA to reconsider. If you choose to appeal to a federal court, you need to submit the first document for the appeal within 30 days of the BIA's decision. Additionally, you can ask the court to stop the government from deporting you while your case is pending, but there is no guarantee that the court will accept that request. This is a complicated process and you would benefit from a lawyer's assistance. If you don't have a lawyer, find legal help [here](#).

I missed a hearing with the immigration court and now there is a warrant out for my deportation. What can I do?

[Read this leaflet about what to do if you missed a court hearing.](#)

First of all, you need to call the automated line to check the status of your case. To find out if your case is still pending at the immigration court, call 1-800-898-7180, select option 2 for Spanish instructions and enter your A-number. Select option 1 for information about your next hearing, and option 3 to see if your asylum case is still pending. Read [this leaflet](#) for more detailed instructions.

If you confirm that you received a deportation warrant for missing a hearing with the immigration court, do not give up! You can try to reopen your case with a lawyer's help. [Get a lawyer immediately.](#) [Get legal help here.](#)

It is important to start now. The process takes time and they are more likely to reopen your case if you file a Motion to Reopen within 180 days (6 months) of missing the hearing.

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OTHER QUESTIONS

How do I find someone who's been detained?

To find a detained adult, use [ICE's website](#). Type in the person's information (name, last name and country of origin) to find out in which center they are located. You can change the language to Spanish at the top of the page to make navigation easier. Read [this leaflet](#) to know more about how to use the website.

If you went through ICE's website and couldn't find your loved one, know that it may take time until they show up in the system. Keep trying. If you still can't find them after a few days, try to get in touch with Freedom for Immigrants (Libertad para Inmigrantes), an organization that helps people who can't find their loved ones who have been detained. Fill in [this form](#) to ask for help.

If your child has been detained, [read this government leaflet](#) to know how to find them. The government has a hotline for parents looking for their children: 1-800 203-7001.

If a loved one has been detained, you can try to get [legal help](#) for them. You can also get financial support to bail them out [here](#). For more information on how to request liberation for those in detention, read these guides from different organizations: [Guide 1](#), [guide 2](#), [guide 3](#) (section 4).

Can I travel within the USA if my asylum case is pending?

You can travel within the USA with your ID or passport, and you can carry the documents you were given when arriving in the country, just in case. Keep in mind that, if you have upcoming hearings with ICE or ISAP, you have to notify them before leaving the state.

Am I eligible for a government assistance program if my asylum case is pending?

If an asylum seeker receives government assistance, is granted asylum, and wants to change their status to permanent resident after a year, receiving government assistance does not affect them. However, if you are going through a different process of immigration, your case may be affected if you receive assistance. We recommend that you talk to a lawyer about your specific case. [Find more information here](#). Each state has its own rules about what type of assistance you can receive if your asylum case is pending at the immigration court.

Can I apply for a driver's license if my asylum case is pending?

People with asylum cases pending at the immigration court can apply for a driver's license only in some states. Make sure you meet your state's requirements to apply. Applying for a driver's license should not affect your asylum case. If you live in New York, find more information [here](#).

Can I open a savings and credit account if my asylum case is pending?

Yes.

Can I apply for unemployment benefits?

In general, immigrants with work permits can apply for unemployment benefits, but the rules and requirements vary from state to state. Go to [this website](#) to learn how to apply for benefits in your state. Go to [this website](#) to learn about the different organizations that may help you apply for benefits in different states.

Where do I find information about taxes?

If you need help with your taxes, go to [this website](#) for more information on places that can assist you. You can enter your ZIP code to find providers of free tax help near you. You can also call the free hotline 1-800-906-9887 for updated information about the help centers in your area. If you live in New York, find help [here](#), or [here](#) if you live in Houston.

I was granted asylum. What can I do now?

Learn about the opportunities available for people granted asylum in [this leaflet](#). Legal help is useful for the next steps. If you don't have a lawyer, find legal help [here](#).

What is the SIJS for children?

The SIJS, known as "visa juvenil," is not a visa but a special status that stands for "Special Immigrant Juvenile Status". It is a special immigration classification for people under the age of 18 (or 21, in some states) who have been abused, neglected or abandoned by one or both parents. The SIJS can be a step towards obtaining legal permanent residence in the United States.

There are various requirements in order to qualify for SIJS as well as several steps that must be followed with the state court and the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). If your child's case is in process at the immigration court, their case

needs to be handled by an immigration judge as well. We advise you to consult an immigration lawyer. [Get legal help here.](#)

Becoming a permanent resident through the SIJS classification may take a long time, and it depends on the number of visas available at a given time. Once an immigrant files the application for the SIJS (form I-360) and receives the classification, they have to wait for a visa to become available to apply for permanent residence, given that there is a limited number of visas each year and for each country of origin. Once there is a visa available, immigrants can apply to have their status changed to permanent resident.

What is the U visa for victims of crimes within the USA?

The U visa is a status that some people can apply for if they are victims of a crime in the United States. You can find more information about the process in [guide 1](#) and [guide 2](#). You should ask a lawyer if you are eligible. [Get legal help here.](#)

If you feel unsafe at your current household, call the 24-hour domestic violence helpline 1-800-799-7233. They can help you find a safe place to stay.

How can I sue the government for the abuse and mistreatment we suffered when we arrived in the USA?

[This leaflet](#) explains the possibility of suing the United States government for the abuse and mistreatment that you or your family suffered when arriving in the USA, under the Federal Tort Claims Act (FTCA). Filing a lawsuit under the FTCA is a separate process from your immigration case, and it is completely optional and voluntary. If you win a case under the FTCA, you will receive financial compensation from the USA government. Ask a lawyer about your case.

[Back to the start](#)

[For more resources, go to apoyodeasilo.org](http://apoyodeasilo.org)

CERTIFICATE OF TRANSLATION

23.8.2020

I, Martina Piccioni, am competent to translate documents from Spanish to English, and certify that I have translated the preceding documents faithfully and accurately to the best of my ability.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Martina Piccioni', with a stylized star-like symbol above the first few letters.

Martina Piccioni

Suipacha 987

[-]

CERTIFICATE OF TRANSLATION

8-26-2020

I, [Anna Hilbelink], am competent to translate documents from English to Spanish, and certify that I have translated the preceding documents faithfully and accurately to the best of my ability.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Anna Hilbelink". The signature is written in black ink on a white background.

[SIGNATURE]

[Anna Hilbelink]
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