

Know Your Rights When it Comes to Your Immigration Court Case

▶ Don't Panic ▶ Get the Facts ▶ Don't Get Scammed

- 1. You have the right to legal help with your immigration case.** A lawyer can help you understand the law and your options so that you can make the best decision for yourself and your family. Beware of notarios or immigration “consultants”—they cannot provide legal advice or represent you in immigration court.
- 2. Even if you do not have a lawyer,** you must go to your immigration court appointment or you could be ordered deported without the chance to present your case. The immigration judge is required to give you information about how to find free or low cost legal help. If you are having trouble finding help, you can ask for more time. Do not be afraid to go to court.
- 3. You can still fight your case even if you do not have a lawyer.** The immigration judge will help you understand your rights and must help you if you are presenting your case on your own. If you cannot speak English, the court will provide a free interpreter.
- 4. If you need more time to prepare** or if at any time you decide that you want a lawyer to help you, ask the immigration judge for more time. No one can force you to defend yourself before you are ready.
- 5. Know when and where you are supposed to go to immigration court.** You can find out about your case status any time, day or night, on the immigration court hotline, 1-800-898-7180. You must make sure the immigration court has your correct address at all times.
- 6. If you were harmed in your home country or are afraid to be sent back,** you have the right to ask the immigration judge for protection. Not everyone will qualify, but if you truly fear returning to your country, there is no penalty for applying. You cannot be deported until your case has been fully heard.
- 7. You may qualify for protection for a number of reasons,** including harm or fear of harm based on your race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or being targets because of social factors, like your profession, education or family, including private matters, such as domestic violence or sexual orientation.
- 8. If you were told by a lawyer or anyone else that you do not qualify for protection, consider getting a second opinion.** Immigration laws are complicated: there have been many recent changes, and sometimes people make mistakes.
- 9. If an immigration judge denies your case,** you have the right to ask for that decision to be reviewed. If you file an appeal, you cannot be deported while your case is being reviewed.
- 10. Make sure you talk to a lawyer about other options** that might allow you to stay in the United States. Children abandoned by one or both parents may qualify for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS). Some crime victims may qualify for a U visa, and others who were harmed by traffickers may qualify for a T visa. If you have relatives in the U.S., they may be able to sponsor you for status.