

**This FAQ provides general information, not legal advice.
For individualized guidance consult with an immigration attorney.**

FREQUENT ASKED QUESTIONS

ASYLUM

What is asylum?

Protection for people who fear persecution in their home country based on race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group.

When must I apply?

Generally within one year of entering the U.S., unless an exception applies.

Process:

- File Form I-589 with USCIS or immigration court
- Interview or court hearing
- If granted, may apply for green card after one year

Work eligibility while pending:

May apply for work permit after 150 days pending.

Protection from deportation:

While asylum is pending, you generally cannot be removed.

REMOVAL PROCEEDINGS

What are removal proceedings?

Court hearings before an immigration judge where the government seeks deportation.

How do I check my case status?

- EOIR Automated Case Portal: [English](#) | [Spanish](#)
- By phone: 1-800-898-7180 (enter your A-Number)
- ICE Detainee Locator (if detained): locator.ice.gov
- USCIS Case Status: egov.uscis.gov

Master Calendar Hearing (MCH):

- First type of hearing, often with many people scheduled at once
- Judge reviews NTA, explains rights, sets deadlines, schedules Individual Hearing
- No full testimony or evidence presented

Individual Calendar Hearing (ICH):

- Also called the merits hearing
- Evidence, testimony, and witnesses presented
- Judge decides whether to grant relief (e.g., asylum, cancellation) or order removal

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What happens if I miss court?

The judge can order removal in your absence. Always update your address and attend every hearing.

WORK PERMITS (EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION DOCUMENTS, “EADS”)

What is a work permit?

A work permit (EAD) is a document issued by USCIS that allows certain noncitizens to work legally in the United States.

Who can apply for a work permit?

- Asylum applicants with pending cases (after 150 days)
- TPS recipients
- DACA recipients
- Applicants for certain family or employment-based benefits
- Adjustment of status applicants (green card applicants)
- Individuals granted withholding of removal or CAT protection

How long is it valid?

Most EADs are valid for 2-5 years, for C08 category.

What if my work permit is about to expire?

File for renewal 180 days before expiration. Some categories have automatic 540-day extensions if renewal is filed on time.

Does a work permit give me legal status?

No. A work permit allows you to work lawfully but does not give permanent status.

ICE RAIDS AND ENFORCEMENT

Current situation:

- ICE enforcement has increased, including home and workplace arrests.

Your rights during enforcement:

- Right to remain silent
- Right to ask for a lawyer
- Do not open the door without a judicial warrant
- Do not consent to searches
- Do not lie, but do not volunteer information

Safety planning:

- Keep important documents (passports, IDs, court papers) accessible

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- Memorize important phone numbers (lawyer, family, emergency contacts)
- Arrange care plans for children in case of detention
- Prepare a family meeting place if separated
- Store medical information and medications securely
- Keep a written power of attorney or emergency authorization if possible

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Do I need to tell immigration if I move?

Yes. You must update your address within 10 days of moving. If you don't, you may miss important notices, and the judge can order your removal in your absence.

How do I change my address with USCIS?

- File Form AR-11 (Alien's Change of Address Card)
- You can do this online or in the mail at uscis.gov/ar-11
- Update your address for each pending application

How do I change my address with EOIR (immigration court)?

- File Form EOIR-33 (Change of Address/Contact Information Form)
- Send the form to both:
 - The immigration court where your case is pending
 - The government attorney (ICE/OC) handling your case
- You can also file online through the [EOIR Respondent Access system](#)

What happens if I don't update my address?

- You may miss hearing notices
- The judge may order your removal without you present
- USCIS could deny your application if they cannot reach you

GENERAL QUESTIONS

Do I need to bring documents to my consultation?

Yes. Bring immigration notices, work permits, passports, criminal court documents, and union employment records.

Is the consultation confidential?

Yes. Conversations with the attorney are confidential.

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Does union membership affect immigration status?

No. Union membership is separate, but unions can connect you to resources.

Can employers retaliate based on immigration status?

No. Labor law protects all workers from retaliation for union activity.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

- **EOIR Automated Case Portal:** Check immigration court case status and hearing dates.
 - English: <https://acis.eoir.justice.gov/en/>
 - Spanish: <https://acis.eoir.justice.gov/es/>
- **ICE Detainee Locator:** Find where someone detained by ICE is being held.
 - <https://locator.ice.gov/odls/#/search>
- **USCIS Case Status Online:** Track your case status with a receipt number.
 - <https://egov.uscis.gov/>
- **USCIS Case Inquiry:** Request help with lost receipts, errors, delays, or accommodations.
 - <https://egov.uscis.gov/e-request/Intro.do>
- **Check USCIS Processing Times:** See average times for different case types.
 - <https://egov.uscis.gov/processing-times/>

PREPARING FOR YOUR CONSULTATION WITH AN ATTORNEY

- Write down your main questions
- Gather your documents
- Review this FAQ so the consultation can focus on your personal situation