



Tips for Finding a Lawyer

Not every immigration question requires a lawyer—but when it does, choosing one with genuine immigration expertise is key. The guidance of a qualified immigration attorney can help you avoid delays, misinformation, or costly mistakes.

Do I Really Need a Lawyer?

Maybe, maybe not. Before contacting a lawyer regarding a legal issue:

- Speak with your Visa and Immigration services advisor.
- Visit the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) website (www.uscis.gov) where you will find answers to many of your questions.

How Do I Find the Name of a Lawyer?

There are many ways to find lawyers:

- **American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA):** Visit www.ailalawyer.com, and select the type of lawyer you are looking for.
- Call your local bar association lawyer referral service. In Suffolk County, contact the **Suffolk Bar Association Referral Service** at (631) 234-5511 or visit www.scba.org.
- Consult a law directory, such as **Martindale-Hubbell Law Directory** at www.martindale.com, which gives a brief biography of lawyers practicing in New York State.

How Do I Choose a Lawyer?

Before choosing a lawyer, contact the offices of the lawyers on your list, briefly explain your legal problem and ask:

- Are you specialized and/or experienced in my type of problem?
- Do you charge a flat rate or hourly fee for this type of work?
- Can you give me an estimate of the cost?
- Can you estimate the amount of time this will take to resolve?

How Should I Make My Decision to Hire a Lawyer?

Consider the following factors before agreeing to hire a lawyer:

- Can you communicate effectively with this lawyer? Were they clear and easy to understand?
- Are the fees reasonable?
- Did the lawyer give clear explanations of how you will be informed about the progress in your case?

Before you sign a contract, read it carefully. Make sure you understand it. Everything you and your lawyer agreed on should be in writing.

What If I Have a Problem With My Lawyer?

If you have a problem with your lawyer, you should first discuss it with them. If you cannot agree on a solution, you may wish to contact the New York State Bar Association.