

Why Hire an Immigration Attorney?

Today, when national security is at the forefront of current events and immigration regulations are constantly in flux, resolving your immigration matters can be more difficult than it seems. Improper filings can lead to delays, denials, or even deportation from the United States, and the appeals process is difficult and costly.

When you need to resolve an immigration matter quickly and efficiently, enlisting the assistance of a competent immigration attorney is often the best place to start.

I Have a Simple Question

Many people mistakenly believe that they have a simple “yes or no” question or a straightforward case, and that it is not necessary for them to seek legal advice. However, in immigration, nothing is as straightforward as it seems. Many situations involve hidden circumstances that, if left unaddressed, can unfavorably affect an applicant’s case and immigration status. Filing paperwork alone without obtaining legitimate, professional advice and assistance is an enormous risk. The consequences of wrongly assuming that your case is simple and straightforward can be devastating.

Immigration is Not Just Filing Forms

Resolving your immigration matters requires more than the preparation and filing of forms. To begin with, determining immigration eligibility requires in-depth knowledge of current immigration laws,

policies, and procedures. Different kinds of immigration cases involve different eligibility criteria, require various evidence and documentation, and need to be filed with different offices according to current law and procedure.

The instructions on immigration forms do not always accurately reflect recent changes in immigration law and policy, and they often do not address your actual eligibility for a specific immigration benefit.

Relying on information from the Internet and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) website alone is also not advisable, as the USCIS website cannot provide individualized information about legal options and eligibility.

In addition, USCIS customer service representatives are not required to be educated in immigration law or to advocate on behalf of immigrants. Free advice, (even from USCIS) does not offer the protection and security that a competent immigration attorney can provide.

How an Immigration Attorney Can Help You

An immigration attorney can help ensure the success of your case by analyzing the facts, determining your eligibility, explaining possible benefits, and identifying all available legal avenues.

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López at Murphy Desmond IMMIGRATION LAW

The attorneys of Lopez Immigration Law at Murphy Desmond S.C. have extensive experience representing individuals and employers with a wide range of immigration matters including:

- Permanent Residence / Green Cards
- Spouse, Fiancé(e) & Family Petitions
- Visas & Consular Processing
- Hardship Waivers
- Domestic Abuse Petitions
- Removal of Conditional Status
- Citizenship and Naturalization
- Representation at USCIS
- Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)
- Removal/Deportation Defense
- Student Visas / Reinstatement
- J-1 Waivers
- H-1B Employment Visas
- PERM Labor Certifications
- I-9 and Employer Compliance

It is the attorney's responsibility to stay informed regarding immigration law and current regulations and to keep you informed of your case status and progress. A competent immigration attorney will complete and file your case properly in order to avoid delays and negative consequences. Immigration attorneys are also held to high ethical standards by the State and U.S. Supreme Courts.

Like a doctor, your immigration attorney is required to keep all information about your case confidential. All the information you share with your attorney is protected by attorney-client privilege, and may not be revealed to third parties without your consent.

Also, a good attorney will "prescribe" the best legal avenue for you, and will look out for your best interests. If no viable options exist, a good immigration attorney will not mislead you into filing a case that could be detrimental to you, your family, or your business.

Choosing an Immigration Attorney

One of the first steps in choosing an immigration attorney is to find a lawyer who specializes in immigration law.

Since immigration laws and regulations are complex and require comprehensive knowledge, specialization in immigration law helps ensure that the attorney is focused on the ever-changing federal laws and the many complex nuances of immigration policies.

It is equally important to make sure your attorney is a registered member of the

State Bar in the state where he or she practices, and that the attorney is in good standing. In the State of Wisconsin, you should visit the State Bar of Wisconsin to verify an attorney's qualifications. At the State Bar website, you can confirm that our attorneys are members in good standing with spotless records of practice. Moreover, qualified immigration attorneys will also be licensed to practice in federal courts. Our attorneys represent clients at both state and federal levels, and will represent clients in court if required.

To help ensure that the immigration attorney you choose has good credentials and a sound record of practice, you should also make sure that the attorney is a member of the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA). AILA is the largest organized group of immigration lawyers in the U.S. Members of AILA have the tools to keep themselves informed of changing immigration laws and regulations.

Before deciding to retain an attorney, you should call the attorney's office to discuss his or her qualifications, as well as your questions and the circumstances of your potential case. You should ask questions about the attorney's credentials, experience, areas of practice, and previous examples of success with your type of case.

Don't Be a Victim

You should never rely on the advice of a notary public, "notario", or any other professional or para-professional who

claims to have knowledge of immigration law but is not an attorney. These individuals are not licensed practitioners of immigration law, and entrusting them with your case is a serious risk.

Notarios do not possess the required legal education and experience to competently assist you with your case. It is against the law for notaries and foreign lawyers who are not licensed in the United States to provide legal advice for U.S. immigration cases.

Likewise, you should also never rely solely on the advice of someone who claims to have gone through the process before. It is important to realize that situations which may seem similar are often very different, and the procedures and laws applicable to one case are not always the same for another.

Only a licensed, properly trained lawyer or accredited representative should assist you with your case, even if they are "simply" helping you complete forms.

Attorney Glorily A. Lopez and her associate attorneys are members of the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA). Attorney Lopez also served as Chair of the AILA Wisconsin Chapter from 2009 to 2011. Before that, she was the chapter's Vice Chair from 2007 to 2009 and Treasurer from 2005 to 2007. Attorney Lopez also represented Wisconsin on AILA's National Board of Governors from 2009 to 2011.

To discuss your immigration case, contact us today at 608.270.5550.

This information sheet provides general guidance about the titled subject, is not to be regarded as legal advice, and does not create an attorney client relationship between Murphy Desmond S.C. and the reader. Because the information herein may become outdated or may not apply to your specific circumstance, it should not be relied upon or used in place of a detailed consultation with a professional advisor. If you need legal advice, Murphy Desmond can help.