

What happens after I apply?

You will get a notice from Asylum Office, which will tell you when and where to go for an interview. At the interview, you will meet an Asylum Officer who will listen to your story and ask you questions. In some cases, people get their decision 2 weeks later. But, if your case involves domestic violence, it may take longer. The Asylum Office will grant you asylum or it will send your case to an immigration judge to decide.

If your case is sent to a judge, make sure to go to court and bring a lawyer, if possible. You will have a chance to tell your story to the judge. If the judge does not grant you asylum, you can still appeal the judge's decision, and you are allowed to stay in the U.S. while you wait for a decision.

What should I do if I am ever caught by immigration officials?

Call your lawyer right away. If you will be harmed in your country, tell the immigration officer that you are afraid to go back and you want "asylum." Do **NOT** let the government deport you. You have a right to a hearing. If you do not have a lawyer, the judge will give you time to find help. Do **NOT** give up your rights.

Years ago, I was caught at the border and forced to return to my country. Can I still get asylum?

If you were caught at the border or if you were ordered deported, you should talk to a lawyer. Tell your lawyer everything you remember – for example, did the U.S. government take your fingerprints or photo? Did anyone force you to sign any papers? Were you warned not to return to the U.S.? You may still be able to qualify for asylum, but talk to a lawyer.

Will I be able to get a work permit?

If the government takes more than 150 days to decide your case, you can apply for a temporary work permit. You may need to wait up to 30 more days before you receive the temporary work permit. If you caused any delays (for example, you asked the Asylum Office to reschedule your interview), you may have to wait longer before you can apply for a temporary work permit. If you are *granted* asylum, you are allowed to work legally and to apply for a Social Security card.

What can I do to help my lawyer?

It is important to tell your lawyer everything. Everything you tell your lawyer is confidential. Your lawyer cannot share this information without your permission. If you are worried or embarrassed about something, talk to your lawyer about this. She or he may be able to help.

You can also help your lawyer get documents for your case. Your lawyer may need your birth certificate or identity card & letters from relatives/friends to prove your case. If you don't have any of these documents, don't worry. You can still win your case without them. But if you can get these documents safely, get them.

Call a lawyer for legal advice. Do NOT rely on this brochure alone. Because the law may have changed, you should talk with a lawyer before making any decisions.

ASYLUM & DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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for Civil Rights
(415) 543-9444*

If you are in danger right now, call 911.

To find the domestic violence program nearest you, call (800) 799-SAFE or (800) 799-7233.

What is asylum?

If you apply for “asylum,” you are asking for permission to stay in the United States because it is too dangerous to return to your home country.

Who can apply for asylum?

You need to show:

- (1) You are afraid to return to your country AND
- (2) Your government is trying to harm you or your government will not protect you from harm AND
- (3) You are in danger because of your political beliefs, race, religion, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or tribe. For example, if your husband is hurting you and the police will not protect you because you are a woman, you may be able to win asylum. If you are in danger for a reason that is not listed here, talk to a lawyer to see if you can apply for asylum.

There are other things you will need to show. Talk to a lawyer or call the Lawyers’ Committee for more information.

I am scared of my boyfriend or husband, who is here in the United States. What can I do?

If you are in danger right now, **call 911**. You can also **call (800) 799-SAFE or (800) 799-7233** for a list of agencies that can help you find a safe place for you and your children.

If you are in danger and you are married to a U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident, you may qualify for “VAWA or waiver petition.” If you have been a victim of a reported crime, you may qualify for a “U visa.” For a legal referral in your area, contact API Legal Outreach at 415-567-6255 or the American Immigration Lawyers Association at (800) 954-0254

If you are in danger **in your home country**, you may be able to apply for asylum. Please read below for more information about asylum.

How do I get help with asylum?

The Lawyers’ Committee offers free legal help and can be reached at (415) 543-9444. The Lawyers’ Committee is **NOT** the government or Immigration Court. Everything you say to Lawyers’ Committee is **confidential** and cannot be shared with anyone without your permission.

The Lawyers’ Committee may be able to meet with you to talk about your case or give you a list of lawyers in your area.

If possible, talk to a lawyer before you make any decisions. If you win asylum, you will be able to stay in the United States, get a work permit, and apply for a green card after one year. You may also be able to bring your children to the United States. But, if you do not win asylum, you might be ordered to return to your country.

For some people, it is better if they do not apply. But, you should make this decision **only after** you have talked to a lawyer.

Should I get help from a “notario” or immigration “consultant”?

Many immigration “consultants” or “notarios” are NOT experts and may not even be lawyers. Be careful before you pay anyone to help you with your immigration case. Make sure that: (1) the person is a lawyer; (2) the person has a law degree; and (3) the person is an asylum expert.

If you have been harmed by a “notario” or immigration “consultant,” call the Immigrant Legal Resource Center at (415) 255-9499, extension 774.

How do I apply for asylum?

You will need to fill out forms from the government. Make sure to get help from a lawyer! You will also need to get documents to support your case. The application must be mailed to a government office in Nebraska. You should talk to a lawyer before sending anything to the government or the Immigration Court.

When should I apply?

You must apply for asylum within 1 year of your last arrival in the United States. The one-year deadline may be different for every person. So, talk to a lawyer right away for help!

If you have already been in the U.S. for more than 1 year, you may still be able to apply for asylum. But, you should definitely talk to a lawyer first. Tell your lawyer why you did not apply within the 1-year deadline.