

**Options for Asylum Seekers Who Do Not Have an Attorney
and are in Removal (Deportation) Proceedings**

Requesting asylum is a very complicated process and we strongly encourage all asylum seekers to find a competent immigration attorney with experience representing asylum seekers. It is important that you only hire a licensed attorney or Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) accredited representative to represent you and that your attorney has immigration, and especially asylum, experience.

- Avoid immigration fraud and do not hire a “notario” to represent you.
- If you do not believe that your attorney is properly representing you, you always have the right to find a new attorney or obtain a second opinion.

**But if you cannot find an attorney to represent you,
you can request asylum on your own (also known as “pro se”).**

- If you decide to file for asylum on your own, the attached document titled “*I’m Afraid to Go Back: A Guide to Asylum, Withholding of Removal and the Convention Against Torture*” may help you.
- To be eligible for asylum, you must file your asylum application within one year of the last date you entered the United States. You must do this even if your next court hearing is not until after this date. Please review the information in “Filing for Asylum in Removal (Deportation) Proceedings Without an Attorney” on the reverse side of this document for more information.

This document is not intended as legal advice. It is always advisable to consult with a licensed attorney or BIA accredited representative to determine whether you are eligible for asylum or any other benefit under immigration law or policy.

Filing for Asylum in Removal (Deportation) Proceedings Without an Attorney

To be eligible for asylum in the United States, the immigration judge must receive your asylum application, called Form I-589, within one year of the last date you entered the United States. This means that if you entered the United States on December 2, 2014, the immigration judge must receive your Form I-589 asylum application by December 1, 2015.

Q. I entered the United States on October 15, 2014, so the immigration judge must receive my asylum application by October 14, 2015. My next hearing is on September 2, 2015. What do I do?
A. Because your next hearing date occurs before your asylum deadline, you should file your I-589 asylum application with the judge at your next hearing. Complete the I-589 application and make two copies. At your next hearing, give the original I-589 to the immigration judge and give a copy to the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) attorney. Keep one copy for yourself.
Q. I entered the United States on October 15, 2014, so the immigration judge must receive my asylum application by October 14, 2015, but my next hearing is not until November 2015. What do I do?
A. If your asylum deadline will occur before your next hearing date, you must “lodge” your Form I-589 asylum application with the immigration court before your asylum deadline. To lodge your asylum application, you must do the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Complete the I-589 application (see <i>“I’m Afraid to Go Back:” A Guide to Asylum, Withholding of Removal and the Convention Against Torture</i> for information about preparing the I-589 application). On the top of the application, write “To Lodge.”2. Complete the attached “Motion to Accept the Lodged Date as the Filing Date.” Make two copies.3. Take the I-589 application, the original motion and one copy of the motion to the immigration court at 525 W. Van Buren St., Suite 500, Chicago, IL 60607.4. Give the I-589 application to the clerk at the immigration court window on the 5th floor. The clerk will stamp the application with the date and the word “lodged” and return it to you. You MUST keep this to give to the judge at your next hearing.5. Give the original motion and one copy of the motion to the clerk. The clerk will keep the original motion and will stamp the copy of the motion with the date and return it to you. You MUST keep this copy for your records.6. Mail the second, unstamped copy of the motion to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) at 525 W. Van Buren St., Suite 701, Chicago, IL 60607 on the same day. You do not need to mail a copy of the I-589 asylum application to ICE.7. You have now “lodged” your asylum application.
Q. Where can I get the I-589 asylum application?
A. If the immigration judge did not give you a copy of the I-589 asylum application at your last hearing date, you can get a copy online at http://www.uscis.gov/i-589 .
Q. I came to the United States on my own when I was under 18 years old and I was detained at a shelter. Should I lodge my asylum application too?
A. No, if you came to the United States as a child and did not have a parent or legal guardian with you, you must file your application with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).
Q. I lodged my asylum application. When can I apply for a work permit?
A. You can file for a work permit 150 days after you lodged your application if you did not cause any other delays in your case. To file for a work permit, follow the instructions for Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization (available at http://www.uscis.gov/i-765), and include a copy of the I-589 application with the “lodged” stamp to prove the date you lodged the application. You do not have to pay a fee to USCIS the first time you file an application for a work permit.