



# KNOW


# YOUR RIGHTS




## PLEASE NOTE:

Some of the resources linked in this guide may only be available in Spanish. We apologize for any inconvenience.

We are here to support you! Please don't hesitate to contact us.

 (WhatsApp) (972) 885-8251

 [Facebook.com/Info.ImportaMi](https://www.facebook.com/Info.ImportaMi)

[www.importami.org](http://www.importami.org)

[info.importami@rescue.org](mailto:info.importami@rescue.org)





# KNOW

# YOUR RIGHTS



In this packet, we explain the most important things you need to know about **immigration court and your case in the United States (U.S.)**.

You can click on each title below to see more information:

1.



Who we are

2.



Important documents you will need

3.



How to find/search your **immigration court date**

4.



What to do if you move

5.



How to find an attorney

6.



Forms of **legal assistance**

7.



What to do if you want to return to **home country**

8.



The day of your **court date**

9.



What is an **order of deportation**

10.



Safety **plan**

11.



What to do if you are in **danger**

12.



**Legal orientation** for sponsors

*The information in this document is for educational use only. It is not legal advice. If you have specific legal questions, please speak with an attorney about your case.*



Click the **light bulb** for more information.



Click the **soccer ball** to view a video.

## 1. WHO WE ARE



We are the Children's Legal Services Department of the International Rescue Committee (IRC), helping unaccompanied children in the United States access legal services and local resources.

The IRC is also part of the Vera network, which consists of a group of immigrant rights organizations that provide free legal services to minors like you.

## 2. IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS YOU WILL NEED

### Verification of Release "Verification of Release" (VOR):

Inside the package you received at the shelter or from your caseworker, there should be a piece of paper called "Verification of Release" (or VOR). This document:



**a form of identification**, and it has your photo on the left side.



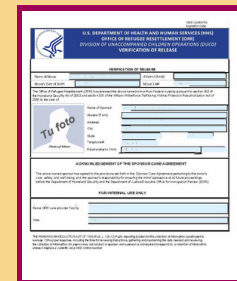
states you can leave the shelter, live with your sponsor, and **continue your immigration process**.



**it does NOT give you permission to live or work legally in the U.S., nor does it give you legal status.**



**Click here for an example of a VOR.**



### Notice to Appear (NTA):

The Notice to Appear (or NTA) is a document prepared by the Department of Homeland Security (or DHS) that states:



**the reasons the government has** for trying to return you to home country.



**you need to go to immigration court hearings** (before a judge) to try to remain in the U.S.



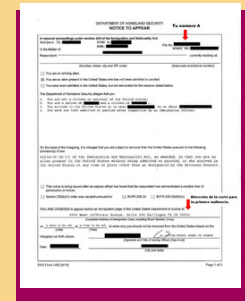
**your A-Number (A#)**, an 8- or 9-digit number given to you when you arrive in the U.S. to identify you during your immigration process, and



**the time, date and address of your next court date** - this can be subject to change.

If you did not receive your NTA upon leaving the shelter or later by mail, you can call your case worker or the shelter to request a copy.

**Click here to view an NTA example.**



### What is an NTA?



### 3. HOW TO FIND/SEARCH YOUR COURT DATE IN IMMIGRATION COURT

Just because you have left the shelter **does NOT mean you are allowed to live and work in the U.S. legally.** Your case will follow a legal process in immigration court through which you can request authorization to remain in the U.S. This authorization is known as legal status. Typically, your NTA has the date, time, and address of the court where you have to go and plead your case **before the judge to stay in the U.S.**

#### If you did not receive your NTA (or NTA does not have this information):

You can check when/where your court date is, and there are 2 options:



Call the automated EOIR hotline: **(1-800-898-7180)**



Visit the EOIR website: (<https://acis.eoir.justice.gov/en>)

Instructions on how to complete can be found here

It is very important that you check **once a week** if you have an immigration court hearing.

Don't worry if your case hasn't appeared yet, sometimes it takes several months.

★ **Remember:** You must attend **ALL of your hearings.** If you miss a court hearing, the immigration judge can order you to be deported, which means you will have to **return to your home country.**

To learn more about the process of immigration court, you can watch these videos:

**How to check your case status**

**CÓMO REVISAR EL ESTATUS DE TU CASO EN LA CORTE DE INMIGRACIÓN**

POR TELÉFONO:	EN LÍNEA:
<b>PASO 1:</b> Llama al: 1-800-898-7180	<b>PASO 1:</b> acis.eoir.justice.gov/es/
<b>PASO 2:</b> Marca 2 para español Marca 1 dos veces más para seleccionar los idiomas	<b>PASO 2:</b> Pon tu Número A □□□□□□□□
<b>PASO 3:</b> Marca tu Número A	<b>PASO 3:</b> Haz clic en Enviar
<b>PASO 4:</b> Marca 1 para confirmar tu Número A	
<b>PASO 5:</b> Marca 1 para confirmar tu nombre	

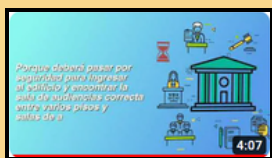
**QUIERO SABER...**

- ¿Cuándo tengo mi audiencia en la corte? → **MARCA 1**
- ¿Dónde está localizado la corte? → **MARCA 2**
- ¿Cuántos días han pasado desde que mande mi aplicación de asilo (reloj de asilo)? → **MARCA 3**
- ¿Qué decisión tomó el juez en mi caso? → **MARCA 3**

ESTAMOS AQUÍ PARA AYUDARTE ImportaMí [www.importami.org](http://www.importami.org)



**What is a preliminary hearing?**



**Immigration Court Process**



## 4. WHAT TO DO IF YOU MOVE

If you move to another home, **you must tell the immigration court and the prosecutor** (the Department of Homeland Security, or DHS). If you don't, they won't know where you live and you may not receive important documents in the mail, such as the notice of your next court date. **You may lose your court hearing.**

### Change of Address

The change of address (or COA) is also known as form **EOIR-33**. This form notifies the court and the prosecutor that you have a new address/residence.

### Change of Venue

If you move and there is an immigration court closer, **you should ask the court to transfer your case to the court that is closer to you.** You can do this by filling out the "Change of Court Venue" (or Jurisdiction) form, which is called "Change of Venue" (or COV).

If you have moved, but your current immigration court is still the closest to you, you do not need to file a petition to request that your court be moved.



**How to fill out a Change of Address and request a Change of Venue**



**How to Change your Address with the Court and the Government Lawyers**



**We recommend that you speak with an attorney or organization to help you complete these forms.** If you need help finding a lawyer or organization, contact us!

## 5. HOW TO FIND A LAWYER

Although having a lawyer is not necessary to go to court, having one is a good idea because it **helps you present your case in a better way**. It is very important that you find a lawyer as quickly as possible, because it **can take months to find one in certain places**.



**What does it mean to be represented by a lawyer?**



★ **Remember:** Only **lawyers and accredited representatives** can help you with your court case legally. You must still attend your court hearings, even if you do not have a lawyer.



**Guide:**  
**How to pick an immigration lawyer**



**BE CAREFUL WITH NOTARIES:**

**A notary is NOT a lawyer in the U.S. and cannot legally assist with your immigration case.** If someone tells you that they are a notary (or “notary public”) who can offer you legal help or advice, you should NOT trust or work with that person.

Working with a notary or others persons not authorized to give legal advice can **damage your chances of obtaining status legal in the U.S.**



**Protect yourself against immigration services scams**



**Work Permits:**

Not everyone can legally work in the U.S.— to do this, you must have a **work permit** (also known as an **Employment Authorization Document or EAD**).

It is against the law to work in the US without permission and this may affect your case. A lawyer can explain your options and see if you qualify for a work permit. Even if you do not have immigration status, you have rights as a worker and there are groups that can help you.



## 6. FORMS OF LEGAL ASSISTANCE

There are several forms of legal assistance (reasons why you could stay in the U.S.) that you should know about. Here are some of the most common ways. It is important that you speak with an attorney to see which legal options are best for your specific case.

### Asylum:

if you are afraid to return to your country because **someone**

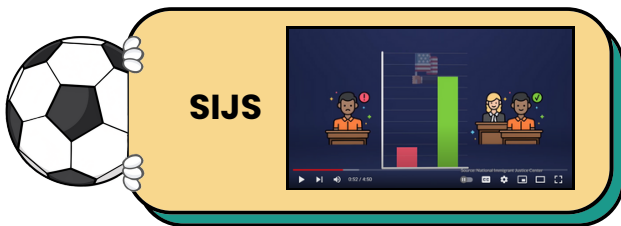
**harmed you**, or fear that someone will harm you for a particular reason (for example, your nationality, race, religion, political opinion, or particular social group).



#### Asylum: Your Case is in Your Hands



### Special Immigrant Juveniles (SIJS):



If you have been a **victim of abuse, abandonment, and/or neglect by one or both of your parents**, you may be eligible. If you have never met your parents, you could possibly qualify.

### T Visa

if someone **forced you to work or do things you did not want to do** in the U.S. (these acts can be work or sexual). If you are working in the U.S., there are youth labor laws that protect your rights as a worker. Depending on your case, you may be able to obtain legal protections, but you **should talk to a lawyer!**

What is human trafficking?

10 Signs Your Employer is Exploiting You

★ **Remember:** No one can force you to work if you don't want to. If you are in this situation, you can call the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-373-7888 or text **"HELP"** to **233733**. In certain cases, you can receive a certification from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and you may qualify for a special visa.

**Learn More About the OSHA process**

## U-Visa:


If you **suffer harm or crime after coming to the U.S.**, you report it and cooperate with the police in the investigation.

## Family Petitions:

If you have any close family members who **already have legal status** in the US.

## 7. WHAT TO DO IF YOU WANT TO RETURN TO HOME COUNTRY

If you decide that you want to return to your country, you should speak with a lawyer to request a **Voluntary Departure**. If the judge approves your voluntary departure, **you must leave the U.S. on the date the judge tells you**. It is a serious decision with very serious consequences. If you change your mind and you decide later not to leave the country (**since you don't you could return to the US for 5-10 years** and it could be very difficult to get legal status in the U.S. in the future).



**Guide:**  
**How to Get Voluntary Departure**

## 8. THE DAY OF YOUR COURT DATE

**You must go to your court date whether you have a lawyer or not.**

The process of searching for a lawyer takes time. If the date of your hearing arrives and you still have not found someone to represent you in front of the judge, go to court anyway and tell the judge these three things:



1. **You are a minor** (if you are still younger than 18 years old)
2. You are still **searching for a lawyer**
3. You **need more time** to find a lawyer

It is possible that the judge will give you more time given your situation and will summon you again after a few months.

## What to do if the judge does NOT grant more time?

- If the judge does not give you more time to find a lawyer, **you have the right to explain to the judge why you want to stay in the country.**
- To do this, you can talk to them about (1) what your life was like before coming to the US, (2) why you decided to come, (3) why you don't want or are afraid to return to your home country, (3) what could happen to you if you return, or (4) how you would feel if that happens.
- If you are afraid to return to your home country, you should explain to the judge why and provide specific examples.
- **Remember that there will be an interpreter in the courtroom** who will translate what you say into English so that the judge can understand you.



## 9. WHAT IS AN ORDER OF DEPORTATION?

An **order of deportation (or removal order)** is a document where the judge begins the removal process from the US. If you receive a final order, it means that:



**you CANNOT remain in the U.S. legally,**



the U.S. government has decided to **send you back to home country,**



you are not allowed to return to the U.S. within **5-10 years,**



if you return illegally to the United States after being deported, that is considered a **crime**, and



if one of your family members becomes a United States citizen and files a petition for you to return legally, **you will not be able to do so for 3-10 years.**

★ If you receive an order for failing to appear in court – all is not lost! You may be able to appeal and try to reopen your case. You must do this before the order is made final. **You need to talk to a lawyer as soon as possible to see what options you have.**

## 10. SAFETY PLAN



**Educate all house members about your rights.**



Maintain your A-number in a safe place.



Memorize the name/number of a trusted immigration attorney.




Always carry a copy of the ORR Release Verification Form and show it if an agent asks for identification.



**NEVER:**

- carry false documents, documents that belong to another person or documents from your country of origin,
- lie to an immigration official, or
- Sign anything without first talking to a lawyer and understanding what you are signing.



**Help Guide  
for you + your  
family**

★ Remember that you have the **right to be treated with respect and to a life free of violence, abuse and mistreatment.** This means that NO ONE should hurt you, insult you, force you to have sex, touch you without your permission, make sexual comments to you, or show you photos with sexual images. If this happens, or if you have an emergency, call 911. You can also call your attorney.

# What should I do if a police officer stops me on the street or knocks on my door?

- If an immigration agent or police officer stops you on the street or in a public place, remember that **(1) you have the right to remain silent**. You are NOT obligated to answer the agent's questions or provide information; **(2) you have the right to speak with a lawyer** before speaking with the immigration agent.
- If an immigration agent knocks on your door, you do NOT have to let them in, unless he or she shows you a search or detention order signed by a judge.

## 11. WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE IN DANGER



If you have an emergency where your **life is in danger**, call 911 so that the authorities can help you immediately.



If you need **medical assistance** you can call 911 to request an **ambulance**.



If there is a **fire or natural disaster**, you can ask for help from the **fire department** or the Red Cross.



If you are in **crisis** and need to talk to someone, there are **hotlines** you can use to speak to counselors by phone, text, or web chat.

**List of  
Crisis Hotlines**

## 12. LEGAL ORIENTATION PROGRAM FOR CUSTODIANS (LOPC)

If your sponsor has questions, the Legal Orientation Program for Custodians (LOPC) offers free legal information on:



the immigration court process,



how to get social services and free legal representation,



how to protect the minor against abuse, exploitation, and human trafficking.

**Click here for more  
information about the  
orientation**

### HAVE QUESTIONS?

### CONTACT US!

# ImportaMi



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