

How to Increase Your Chances of Finding a Pro Bono Lawyer

A limited number of organizations offer pro bono legal representation (free lawyers) but there is a massive demand for them! These lawyers are already very busy and therefore will select a few new clients. It is **VERY IMPORTANT** that when you are looking for a lawyer, you present your situation in the most specific way possible. The tips we are going to share will increase your chances to be selected at least for an initial screening.

Here are a few basic tips (*for more details please read our guides*):

1. First, prepare yourself mentally because contacting those pro bono legal providers can be very frustrating.

You may need to call many times and or write emails and you may get no response. Just be persistent and also make sure to keep a record of what organizations you have contacted and on which dates.

- *This is very important, especially for those who are going to Immigration Court for their first Masters Hearings and can explain to the Judge that they have not found any lawyer and you demonstrate that you really have tried.*

2. Second, it is very important to AVOID saying just one sentence like: “I am looking for a lawyer” with no other specific information. Otherwise, no legal providers will select you for a screening.

3. Prepare in advance the information you will need to give either by email or by phone.

- Your name
- Date of entry in the US
- If you came with a visa or by the border
- Country of origin (some providers may be more or less familiar with country conditions here and there)
- A mention of your evidence (whether you have some or none could really affect whether or not a lawyer will look at your case, especially in relation to your asylum ground)
- A very short description of the reason you are seeking asylum: Political, religious, sexual orientation, or other reasons.

4. Keep a record of which organizations you contacted and what they said. If they put you on a waiting list, give them a bit of time and then call them again to see if there are any new openings.

5. Once you are waiting for an appointment with a legal provider try to get familiar with the asylum application (Form I-589) and start to prepare to answer the questions yourself.

6. You can attend legal orientation or watch videos on how to fill out the application form (VIA, ASAP, RIF). You will feel more in control of the application process in case you are not able to get a free lawyer. Register for RIF's group asylum legal consultation here: <https://forms.gle/nXnzLCwyDz1LTpF9A>.

7. If you have not been able to find a free lawyer and you are considering hiring a private lawyer please do some research about their experience and mostly their reputation.