



Immigration Attorneys

The University of Oklahoma does not endorse the use of any particular immigration attorney for use in your individual case and cannot advise you in choosing an attorney. This handout is intended to provide you with some general tips to locate a qualified immigration attorney.

As with any important decision, do your research, and make an educated choice. Immigration law is complex and changes frequently. Attorneys, also called “lawyers,” are trained in graduate school and licensed by states to practice law. Most attorneys select an area of specialization such as immigration, personal injury, family, or criminal. An immigration lawyer should have a very good understanding of laws and procedures that pertain to non-US citizens. A good attorney who specializes in immigration law will discuss the legal options that are available to you and can correctly prepare and file immigration petitions.

How to find an immigration attorney

1. **American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA)** Immigration Lawyer Search service.
<http://www.aialawyer.com/>.
 - Because AILA attorneys in Norman are limited, we recommend you expand your search to include the Oklahoma City metro area.
2. **Oklahoma Bar Association.** <https://www.okbar.org/findalawyer/>
3. **American Bar Association (ABA).** For general information about the legal system and hiring an attorney, visit the ABA website at www.abanet.org/public.html.
4. **Friends and colleagues.** As an international student or scholar, you may know someone who previously used the services of an immigration attorney. Seek out the informed opinions of friends and colleagues to obtain the attorney’s name and contact information, the type of petition filed, and your friend’s level of satisfaction.

Questions to ask before you hire an immigration attorney

1. How long has the attorney been practicing immigration law; how much work is immigration-related?
 - Find an attorney who does all or most of his/her work in immigration law.
2. How much experience does the attorney have in your particular type of immigration case?
3. Will the attorney offer an initial consultation before you hire him/her to take your case?
 - If so, be sure to find out how much the consultation will cost and how long will it be. Many attorneys will offer a short (15-30 minute) complementary meeting/consultation, but you should ask what the costs will be before meeting with the attorney.
4. How will you contact the attorney?
 - Is he/she accessible via cell phone, email, or office phone?
5. Who will be handling the details of your case?
 - Will you contact the attorney or a paralegal with questions? What is training, experience of the paralegal?
6. How much will it cost to hire the attorney for your case?
 - Rates vary significantly based on geographic location, the specific situation, and other factors. Be sure to ask before the work begins what the costs will be.
7. Will you be charged a flat rate, or an hourly rate? If it is a flat rate, what services does the flat rate include?
 - For example, if an initial petition is denied, will an appeal be included in the flat rate?
8. Will you pay before (“up front”) or after services have been rendered?
 - If you pay before services are provided, how will you be assured that your case will remain a priority?