

# Finding help for Immigration Problems



Immigrants in Santa Clara County often need to work with an immigration attorney or specialist to help them understand complicated immigration laws and requirements. Below are some questions and answers about immigration specialists and how to get the best immigration legal assistance available to you and your family.



## Who can be an attorney in the U.S.?

An attorney or lawyer in the U.S. is someone who attended a graduate program in law and received a Juris Doctor (J.D.) degree. In order to practice law in the U.S. the attorney must be a member of the State Bar Association and must pass an exam given by the State Bar Association.

A licensed attorney can:

- give legal advice to his or her clients and
- can represent them in court.

Usually an attorney is knowledgeable in only a few areas of law. For example, an attorney who can help someone with a criminal problem may not know immigration law.

## Are attorneys the only people who can help me with my immigration problem?

No. Non-attorneys may be able to assist you in some cases. Non-attorneys can gain the legal knowledge and experience necessary to practice immigration law.

Non-attorneys may help you by:

- Working with an **accredited agency** by the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) in Washington, D.C.
- An independent accredited representative of the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA.)
- Immigration Consultants can help you as long as they don't give you advice. The primary job is to give you information about the law.

## Are there accredited agencies in Santa Clara County?

The only accredited agencies in Santa Clara County are: Catholic Charities, the Center for Employment Training (CET), the International Rescue Committee, SIREN, and MAITRI. The majority of their staff members are not attorneys. There are also non-profit law firms that practice immigration law with majority of staff comprised of attorneys. See the directory below for both types of organizations.

## My friend told me of a notary or "notario" that did work cheaply and quickly.

An immigration consultant (also called Notaries or Notario) without formal training or connection to an attorney or accredited representative can help someone fill out an immigration form but cannot give legal advice. They typically do not have any formal legal training. For this reason, they may not



**Need more information?** Contact SIREN's Immigrant Assistance & Information Line for general questions. All lines are open M-F, 10am - 4pm, and are bilingual English and the following languages:  
Spanish- (408) 453-3017  
Vietnamese- (408) 453-3013

# Finding help for Immigration Problems

know how to resolve a question, concern or problem with an application because they have no formal legal training.

---

---

## PROTECT YOURSELF!

**Beware of notaries or "notarios" who are scam artists and steal people's money.**

---

---

NO MATTER WHO assists you in your immigration legal matters, always remember to:

- Ask for a copy of the service contract.
- Keep your original documents (birth certificate...)
- Check with the better business bureau to see if there are any complaints filed against the person.
- Talk to a community organization about your options.

## How does U.S. CIS work?

The U. S. Citizenship and Immigration Service is the agency that grants immigration benefits. Another agency within the same Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) enforces immigration law and oversees deportation and border patrol. It has many different offices. The US CIS district office is located in San Francisco, but it has a branch office in San Jose. The San Jose U.S. CIS office covers four counties: Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Monterey, and San Benito.

Generally, it is very difficult to speak to anyone by telephone at the US CIS and it is better to go in person. However, a person who is deportable

(undocumented) may be risking deportation if they go to this office. It is safer to seek advice from one of the immigration legal service providers first, rather than going there or contacting the department electronically.

## How can I immigrate my family members?

In order to be eligible to immigrate a family member, you must be a:

- a. Permanent Resident (green card holder)
- b. U.S. Citizen

A person with a green card can immigrate their spouse and their unmarried children.

A U.S. Citizen can immigrate their spouse, their unmarried or married children, their parents and their brothers and sisters.

The petitioner, or the resident or Citizen, must file a family petition for their family member who is usually in their native country. Because of current law in effect at the time this book was written, immigrating a family member who is currently living in the U.S. without permission or a visa can have negative consequences. Contact an immigration specialist before you file a petition for this family member.

The current system for issuing greencards is based on a system of categories and preferences. For this reason, the amount of time to immigrate your family member can be immediate or up to 20 years, depending on your status, the relationship you have with that family member, and your country of origin.



Need more information? Contact SIREN's Immigrant Assistance & Information Line for general questions. All lines are open M-F, 10am - 4pm, and are bilingual English and the following languages:  
Spanish- (408) 453-3017      Vietnamese- (408) 453-3013

# Finding help for Immigration Problems

## **Asian Law Alliance**

991 West Hedding Street #202, San Jose, CA 95126

Tel: (408) 287-9710

Website: [www.asianlawalliance.org](http://www.asianlawalliance.org)

Language(s): English, Vietnamese, Korean, Cantonese, Mandarin, Spanish.

Services: Citizenship Assistance, weekly and monthly legal clinics, public benefits, VAWA, U & T Visa petitions, DACA, housing rights, civil rights.

## **Asian Pacific Islander Legal Outreach**

1121 Mission St., San Francisco, CA 94103

Tel: (415) 567-6255

Website: <http://www.apilegaloutreach.org>

Languages: Cantonese, Chiu-chow, Gujarati, Hindi, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Punjabi, Tagalog, Taiwanese, Toisan, Vietnamese, Arabic, Russian, and Spanish.

Services: Violence against women/family law, immigration and immigrant rights, senior law and elder abuse prevention, the rights of those with disabilities, anti-human trafficking, youth violence prevention, affordable housing preservation and tenants' rights, and other issues.

## **Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County – San Jose Office**

2625 Zanker Road Suite 201, San, Jose, CA 95134-2107

Tel: (408) 944-0691

Language(s): English, Spanish, Tagalog and Vietnamese.

Services: Immigration legal services, citizenship.

Gilroy: 7950 Church Street, Gilroy, CA 95020

Tel: (408) 842-4808

Website: [www.ccsj.org](http://www.ccsj.org)

Language(s): Spanish & English

Services: Immigration legal services.

## **Center for Employment Training (CET)**

701 Vine Street, San Jose, CA 95110

Tel: (408) 534-5451

Website: [www.cetweb.org](http://www.cetweb.org)

Language(s): English, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

Services: Legal consultations, representation, family visa petitions, affidavits of support, adjustment of status, consular processing, employment authorization, general information and referrals, citizenship and naturalization, citizenship classes.

## **The Centro de Ayuda Legal para Inmigrantes (CALI)**

1125 Benton Street, Santa Clara, CA 95050

Tel: (650) 938-4041 Fax: (408) 404-0409

Website: [www.cali-immigration.org](http://www.cali-immigration.org)

Languages: English, Spanish

Services: Immigration legal services, VAWA, DACA, TPS, citizenship, work permit, family law/clinics.

## **Coastside Hope**

99 Alhambra Ave., P.O Box 1089

El Granada, CA 94-18

Tel: (650) 726-9071 x 224

Website: <http://coastsidehope.org>

Languages: English & Spanish.

Services: Immigration legal services & citizenship.

## **Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto**

2117-B University Ave., East Palo Alto, CA 94303

Bay Road Office: 1861 Bay Rd. East Palo Alto, CA 94303

Tel: (650) 326-6440

Website: [www.clsepa.org](http://www.clsepa.org)

Languages: English, Spanish, French.

Services: all aspects of removal defense, asylum, U visas, VAWA, DACA.

## **Immigration Services of Mountain View**

1058 W. Evelyn Ave., Ste. 30, Sunnyvale, CA 94086

Tel: 650-938-4911

Website: [www.ismv.org](http://www.ismv.org)

Languages: English and Spanish.

Services: Citizenship, U Visa, VAWA, DACA, TPS, Green Card application, Fee Waivers and other immigration legal services.



Need more information? Contact SIREN's Immigrant Assistance & Information Line for general questions. All lines are open M-F, 10am - 4pm, and are bilingual English and the following languages:

Spanish- (408) 453-3017

Vietnamese- (408) 453-3013

# Finding help for Immigration Problems

## **International Institute of the Bay Area**

Redwood City Office: (650) 780-7530

San Francisco (415) 538-8100

Fremont: (510) 894-3585

Oakland: (510) 894-3585

Website: <http://www.iibayarea.org>

Languages: English and Spanish.

Services: Citizenship, DACA, family reunification, TPS, VAWA, U Visa, Asylum.

## **International Rescue Committee**

1210 S Bascom Ave #227, San Jose, CA 95128

Phone:(408) 277-0255

Website: [www.rescue.org](http://www.rescue.org)

Language(s): French, Laotian, Persian, Thai, Vietnamese, Oromo, Somali, Amharic, Assyrian, Arabic.

Services: Immigration legal services, legal consultations, relative visa petitions, adjustment of status, consular processing, employment authorization, affidavit of support, removal of conditional residence, refugee travel documents, naturalization, alien registration card replacement, freedom of information act request, document authenticity, information and referral.

## **Katharine & George Alexander Community Law Center**

1030 The Alameda, San Jose 95126

Tel: (408) 288-7030

Fax: (408) 288-3581

Website: <http://www.scu.edu/law/kgaclc>

Language (s): English, Spanish, Vietnamese.

Services: Consumer Law, Immigration Law, Workers' Rights, Community Workshops, Low Income Tax Clinic, Advice Clinics

## **La Raza Centro Legal**

474 Valencia St., Suite 295, San Francisco, CA 94103

Tel: (415) 575-3500

Website: <http://www.lrcel.org>

Languages: English and Spanish.

Services: Immigration legal services, workers' rights, senior law & housing law.

## **Legal Aid Society of Santa Clara County**

480 N. First St., San Jose, CA 95112

Tel: (408) 998-5200- Main Phone

Immigration Project: (408) 998-5200 ext. # 231

Website: <http://www.legalaidsociety.org>.

Voice Mail: (408) 283-1535

FAX: (408) 298-3782

Languages: English and Spanish

Services: Immigration legal services, family law, domestic violence, housing/fair housing.

## **MAITRI**

P.O. Box, 697, Santa Clara. CA 85052

Tel: (408) 436-8393

1-888-862-4874

Website: [www.maitri.org](http://www.maitri.org)

Languages: English, Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu, Tamal, and other Indian languages.

Services: Immigration information and referral, VAWA self-petition, U Visa, T Visa application, Removal of conditions on green card, citizenship application.

## **Pangea Legal Services**

350 Sansome, Suite# 650, St, San Francisco, CA 94104

Tel: (415) 254-0475

Website: <http://www.pangealegal.org/>

Languages: English, Spanish, French, German, Farsi, Krio, Portuguese

Services: Immigration legal services, legal clinics in South Bay.

## **Santa Clara County District Attorney's Office Consumer Protection Unit**



Need more information? Contact SIREN's Immigrant Assistance & Information Line for general questions. All lines are open M-F, 10am - 4pm, and are bilingual English and the following languages:

Spanish- (408) 453-3017

Vietnamese- (408) 453-3013

# Finding help for Immigration Problems

---

70 W. Hedding St., West Wing 4th Floor

San Jose, CA 95110.

Email: [consumer@da.sccgov.org](mailto:consumer@da.sccgov.org)

Tel: (408) 792-2880

Language(s): Farsi, Korean, Spanish, Mandarin  
Taiwanese, Vietnamese, Laotian Tagalog, French,  
German.

Services: Handles complaints regarding immigration consultant fraud. Provides dispute resolution for uses related to schools: students, parents, teachers, administration, neighborhoods and businesses affected by schools.

## **SIREN**

Services, Immigrant Rights and Education Network  
(SIREN)

1425 Koll Circle, Ste. 109, San Jose, CA 95112

Tel: (408) 453-3013 (English/Vietnamese)

(408) 453-3017 (English/Spanish)

Website: [www.siren-bayarea.org](http://www.siren-bayarea.org)

Languages: English, Spanish and Vietnamese.

Services: Citizenship, DACA, family immigration, green card renewals, work permits. Free walk-in legal consultations every Thursday, 9:00 AM to 6 PM.

## **Step Forward Foundation**

16264 Church St., Ste. 103, Morgan Hill, CA 95037

Tel: (408) 915-8698

Website: [stepfwd.org](http://stepfwd.org)

Languages: English

Services: law cost immigration legal services to low income families and victims of violence



**Need more information?** Contact SIREN's Immigrant Assistance & Information Line for general questions. All lines are open M-F, 10am - 4pm, and are bilingual English and the following languages:

**Spanish-** (408) 453-3017

**Vietnamese-** (408) 453-3013