



Understanding Immigration: Five Steps for a Smoother Immigration Process

When it comes to your immigration proceedings, it may seem like there's little you can do to help yourself or that your fate is out of your hands. In fact, the opposite is true. The more you do to educate yourself about the process, your rights, and your responsibilities; the more you can expect a positive experience with favorable results. By following five simple steps, you can take control of the immigration process and confidently pursue a brighter future.

1. Know Your Current Immigration Status - If you're in the United States on an expired visa, or if you've been living in the country without proper resident status, or have any other questionable scenarios involving your immigration state, it is vital to understand exactly what your current status is before we can analyse or strategize how to resolve the situation. Key issues to understand are (1) whether or not you are legally "inadmissible"; (2) whether or not you are legally "deportable," (3) whether or not you have ever legally accrued any "unlawful presence" and (4) whether or not you have ever been "out of status." These basic immigration concepts are critical to understand - and get advice on - before determining how to best advise you in your case. If you don't understand your current legal situation, you could inadvertently apply for a form of immigration relief and cause yourself to be deported or your application denied. For this reason, it is critical to understand those four basic issues of immigration law.

2. Don't Do It Alone - Just keeping track of all the forms and filings of an immigration application is a dizzying amount of work. Add to that the considerable amount of information requested on each form, the unclear requests for documentation, bank statements, financial records, family birth records, health status, criminal background checks, dozens of other pieces of paperwork, and in-person interviews... the immigration process can quickly become a huge, confusing and overwhelming system. If you don't know all the fine details and ins and outs of the process, you could easily miss a small-yet-necessary piece of information that has the power to derail the entire application. Getting the help of an experienced immigration attorney is one of the best ways to avoid such trouble and make sure things proceed at an efficient pace with as few surprises as possible.

3. Be Hands On - While it's certainly a relief to know that you have an attorney working on your immigration application, with something so important you simply can't make your immigration experience a low-priority item in your life. You need to stay involved to keep things moving forward. That means contacting your attorney regularly to check status, make sure no future documentation is needed, schedule upcoming appointments, make travel arrangements if necessary, or discuss potential challenges that may have occurred since your initial application. With good communication, you and your attorney will be a powerful team for moving your immigration case through the system as expeditiously as possible.

4. Stay Informed - Immigration laws can change quickly. Some programs or pathways to immigration can be suspended or discontinued with little or no notice due to international issues or immigration reform in the U.S. Staying up to date on what's happening in immigration law is important if you want to address challenges before they occur. A proactive approach is always a smart idea with something as important as your future.

5. Be Patient - Immigration is not an "easy" process. It doesn't always move as quickly as those hoping to immigrate would like. It can seem unfair and unreasonable at times. Do not allow those situations to cause you to take actions that may damage the process. Unreasonable demands for action, attempts to bribe officials, and threats will get you nowhere except a quick denial. This is another reason having an attorney on your side is helpful. He or she will help reassure you which parts of the process are proceeding as normal, and which items are presenting challenges. Remember, anything worth having is worth waiting for, and when your application is granted and your immigration is successful, you'll be glad you took the time to do things right.

With immigration, every step you take in your own best interests is one that can improve your chances of success. By following these guidelines and the best recommendations of your attorney or other trusted advisor, you can feel confident about gaining lawful immigration status here in the United States. Please don't hesitate to contact us today if you'd like further assistance!