

Immigration Court Information

When Immigration Enforcement (ICE/CBP) detains someone who they suspect is in the U.S. unlawfully, they issue a **Notice to Appear (“NTA”)**. These are the immigration charges and they file the document in Immigration Court. In immigration court if the attorneys of Immigration Enforcement prove that the detained person is not a citizen of the U.S. and s/he do not have authorization to be in the U.S., the judge can order her/him to be sent back to her/his native country – this is called removal or deportation.

If you have been stopped by Immigration Enforcement and issued a NTA, it is very important to talk to an attorney as soon as possible to see if you might be able to file any kind of application to stay in the U.S. In Immigration Court, you are not provided an attorney or public defender so you have to find one by yourself.

I have immigration court. What should I do?

Go to court! It is very important that you go to your court hearing. If you don't go to your court hearing, the judge can order you deported in your absence. If you already missed court, you can ask the judge to reopen your case but you usually have to ask within 180 days.

I got a letter from the court but I don't know what it says.

Look at your letter from the court. It is called a **“Hearing Notice”** and it tells you when and where your next court hearing will take place. It will also include:

- Your name
- Your address
- Your A# - number starts with the letter “A” and is the number for your case with immigration. It is very important and all your immigration paperwork will have the same number.
- The date of your hearing
- The address of your hearing

I didn't get a letter or I lost it and I don't know when my hearing is. What should I do?

If you know your A# call 1-800-898-7180 and enter your information. The recording will tell you when and where your next court date is.

If you don't know your A#, but you know where your court is, call the courthouse and ask. Here is a link to the list of courts: <http://www.justice.gov/eoir/eoir-immigration-court-listing>

If you don't know your A# or your courthouse, you should talk with a lawyer or call LSC to see if we can find out for you.

Can I go to court if I don't have a lawyer?

Yes! You should go to your hearing even if you don't have a lawyer yet. Remember, if you don't go to court, the judge could order your deportation. There will be a volunteer lawyer, called "Attorney of the Day" to help you in court for the day only. The volunteer lawyer will ask you questions before you talk with the judge to see what kind of case you have and to give you recommendations, or "referrals," to help you find a lawyer.

When it is your turn to talk with the judge, the volunteer lawyer will sit next to you and explain to the judge that you need more time to find a lawyer. If you don't have a lawyer yet, the judge will probably give you more time to find one.

How do I get to the San Francisco Immigration Court?

The San Francisco Immigration Court for people who are not detained is at 100 Montgomery Street. Depending on your courtroom number, you might have to go to the 7th, 8th, or 9th floor. Look at your hearing notice.

- If your courtroom is 1 - 2, you should go to 7th floor
- If your courtroom is 3 - 10, you should go to 8th floor
- If your courtroom is 11 - 18, you should go to 9th floor

This [map](#) shows the exact location of 100 Montgomery Street.

If you can take public transportation, which is highly recommended, because it is hard to find parking around the court and it can be very expensive

- You can take BART to the Montgomery station and walk to the building.
- You can also take MUNI to the Montgomery stop
- You can take the bus – there are many buses that stop near Montgomery and Market Street

Below is a picture of the entrance of this building.



What should I bring to immigration court?

You should bring your hearing notice and any other immigration paperwork you have and any identification documents such as your passport, ORR release sheet, or school ID. If you were detained and released, you should bring the packet the facility gave you when you were released. **If you don't have identification – don't worry!** You can still go to your court hearing.

Can I bring someone with me?

You can bring someone with you. However, the person you bring should be careful if they don't have immigration status (don't have their papers) because it might not be safe for them. It is better if the person who comes with you has their papers.

What will happen when I get inside the building?

On the first floor you can show the guards your "hearing notice" (the letter from court). They will check off your name on their list and tell you to take the elevators on the left to go to your floor. When you get to your floor, you will need to stand in line to go through security.

- Don't bring pocket knives, forks, or anything that could be used as a weapon
- You will need to go through metal detectors and your bag will be X-rayed
- You can sit in the waiting room until the courtroom is open
- If you don't have a lawyer, the attorney of the day (volunteer attorney) will talk with you to see how s/he can help you talk with the judge

Who will be in the courtroom?

Here is a [Diagram](#) of what the courtroom looks like. There will be a Spanish interpreter in case you need to speak in Spanish. The interpreter sits here. If you need an interpreter for a different language, you will be able to ask for the court to give you one at your future hearing

What will happen in court?

When your case is called, you will sit at the table in front of the judge. Your lawyer, or the volunteer lawyer, will sit next to you.

The judge will ask you your full name and confirm your address. If you have changed your address, the lawyer can help you fill out a form to change your address with the court. The judge will also want to make sure what your best language is.

The judge will ask the lawyer what you want to do. For example, if you need more time to find a lawyer, the judge will give you a "continuance." This means that the judge will give you a future hearing date to give you time to find a lawyer to represent you. If you have a lawyer, your lawyer might ask for more time to prepare your case and the judge will give you a continuance.

At the end of the hearing, the judge's assistant will give you a new hearing notice with the next date to come to court.

I missed my court date. What should I do?

You should speak with a lawyer as soon as possible. They can help you find out what happened. If you've been ordered deported, the lawyer will ask you questions to see if they can reopen your case.

How do I find a lawyer?

There are several organizations that may be able to help you for free or at a low cost. Also, if you go to court, the attorney of the day might ask you questions too. The volunteer lawyer asks these questions to give you referrals and to help you talk to the judge.

You can find a list of some organizations that provide free or low cost immigration representation for immigration court in California at

<http://www.justice.gov/eoir/pages/attachments/2015/01/29/freelicht-ca.pdf>

You can also find other organizations nationwide that provide free or low cost immigration representation on the Immigration Advocates Network

<http://www.immigrationadvocates.org/nonprofit/legaldirectory/>