

# MY IMMIGRATION CASE IS MOVING VERY FAST : *UNDERSTANDING THE DEDICATED DOCKET*



*Did you enter the United States at the Mexico/United States Border on or after May 28, 2021?*



*Are you afraid to return to your home country?*



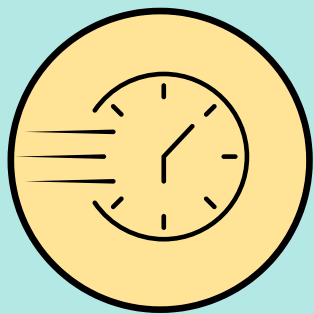
*Is your case moving quickly?*

***IF SO, THIS GUIDE CAN HELP.***

This guide is based on policies and practices observed in the San Francisco Immigration Court Dedicated Docket.



# IS MY CASE MOVING FASTER THAN OTHERS?



- DID YOU ENTER THE UNITED STATES ON OR AFTER MAY 28, 2021?
- WERE YOU WITH A SPOUSE OR A CHILD WHEN YOU ENTERED?
- DID YOU ENTER THE UNITED STATES FROM MEXICO THROUGH THE CALIFORNIA, ARIZONA, OR TEXAS BORDER?

If YES, your case is probably on a fast track called the "Dedicated Docket."



## HOW LONG BEFORE THE JUDGE DECIDES IF I CAN GET ASYLUM?

The judge will try to make a decision about whether you can remain in the country **in under 300 days**.

*For example, if you went to the immigration court and spoke to the immigration judge for the first time on October 12, 2022, the judge will try and finish your case before August 8, 2023.*



*Most people on this fast-tracked docket are **not** eligible for a work permit. If you have questions about if you can get a work permit, ask one of the lawyers listed on page 9.*

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# WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS IN THE FAST TRACKED PROCESS?

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YOU HAVE RIGHTS, AND YOU CAN FIGHT TO STAY IN THE U.S.

**1**

You have the right to speak to the judge in your best language. You can ask the judge for an interpreter who speaks your language.

**2**

If you are afraid to return to your country, you can apply for asylum and explain why you are afraid.

**3**

You have the right to have an attorney help you fight your case, but it is your responsibility to hire a lawyer or find one who can help you for free.

**4**

You can ask the judge for more time so that you can keep looking for a lawyer to help you.

**5**

Even if you can't find a lawyer, you can still apply for asylum and you can represent yourself.

**\*YOU MUST FILE YOUR APPLICATION FOR ASYLUM WITHIN ONE YEAR OF THE DATE THAT YOU ENTERED THE UNITED STATES.**

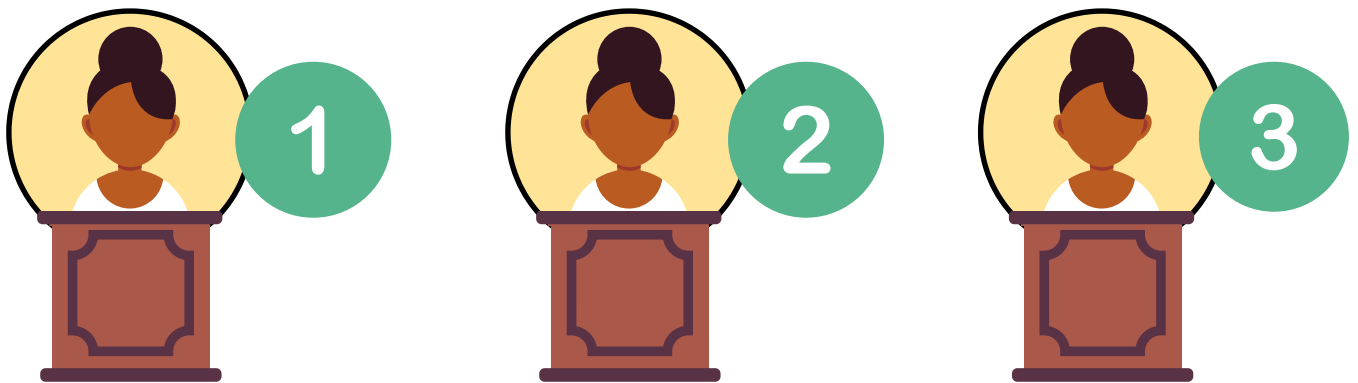
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# HOW MANY TIMES WILL I HAVE TO GO TO COURT?

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It depends...

Every case begins with a hearing called a "Master Calendar Hearing." Some people have two or three master calendar hearings before they have their final hearing. Each case is different.



If the judge decides to consider your application for asylum, the judge will schedule you for a longer hearing, called an "individual calendar hearing."

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# WHAT HAPPENS AT A MASTER CALENDAR HEARING?

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## WHAT WILL HAPPEN AT MY MASTER CALENDAR HEARINGS:



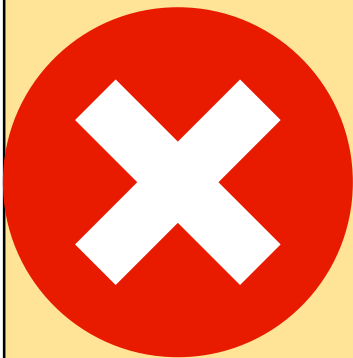
The judge will ask you:

- Where you live.
- What your best language is.
- What steps you have taken to try and find a lawyer. **See page 6.**

The judge will also:

- Give you warnings about what happens if you don't come to court.
- Ask you if you are afraid to return your native country. If you are, the judge will give you an application for asylum and will tell you when you must return the completed form.
- Ask you details about how, when, where you entered the country. **See page 7.**

## WHAT DOES NOT HAPPEN AT MY MASTER CALENDAR HEARINGS:



If you have filed an application for asylum, the judge will NOT make a decision about if you can stay in the United States during this type of hearing.

The judge will NOT ask you to tell them details about why you are afraid to go back to your home country during this type of hearing.

After one or more of your master calendar hearings, the judge will schedule you for an **Individual Calendar Hearing**. This is the final hearing where the Immigration Judge decides whether or not you can remain in the United States.

FOR INFORMATION ABOUT  
HOW TO PREPARE FOR YOUR  
FINAL HEARING, SCAN THIS CODE:



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# WHAT DO I NEED TO DO AT MY MASTER CALENDAR HEARINGS?

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## TELL THE JUDGE ABOUT YOUR SEARCH FOR A LAWYER



Tell the judge:

- The names of organizations and lawyers you called.
- If you had any consultations or meeting with lawyers.
- If you left voice messages or sent emails for lawyers.
- If you have any upcoming appointments with lawyers.
- If you are on any waitlists for appointments with lawyers.

## ASK THE JUDGE FOR MORE TIME TO FIND A LAWYER



If you want to fight your deportation and apply for asylum to stay in the United States and you want more time to keep looking for a lawyer, **tell the judge you would like more time to try to find a lawyer.**

***REMEMBER: You can apply to stay in the U.S. even if you don't have a lawyer!***

# WHAT DO I NEED TO DO AT MY MASTER CALENDAR HEARINGS?

Be prepared to answer questions about your immigration history and background at your second or third hearing. The Judge will ask you questions about a document called a "Notice to Appear." This is the document where the government gives the reasons why they believe you do not have legal status in the United States.



DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY  
NOTICE TO APPEAR

In removal proceedings under section 240 of the Immigration and Nationality Act: File No: XXX-XXX-XXX

In the Matter of: \_\_\_\_\_

Respondent: LAST NAME, FIRST NAME \_\_\_\_\_ currently residing at: \_\_\_\_\_

(Number, street, city, state and ZIP code) (Area code and phone number)

☐ You are an arriving alien.


☒ You are an alien present in the United States who has not been admitted or paroled.

☐ You have been admitted to the United States, but are removable for the reasons stated below.

The Department of Homeland Security alleges that you:

1. You are not a citizen or national of the United States;

The judge will ask you questions like these to determine if the government's reasons for why you don't have legal status (allegations) are true and correct.

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- Did you actually receive the "Notice to Appear"?
  - What is your nationality and citizenship?
  - When and how did you come to the United States?
  - Are afraid to return to your home country?

You have the right to agree or disagree with the allegations that the government makes. If you wish to admit to the allegations, you can say "yes" when the judge asks you each question. If you wish to deny any of the allegations, you can say: ***"no. I wish to deny the allegations and charges until I find an attorney to represent me."*** If you say "no," the Judge will make the government show evidence about why they believe they are right.

# WHAT STEPS SHOULD I TAKE AFTER I HAVE A COURT HEARING?

## START LOOKING FOR A LAWYER

- Call all of the organizations and lawyers on page 9 of this document and the ones on the list the government gives you.
- Use the log at the end of this guide to track your calls.
- Bring your list each time you go to court so you can show the judge you are trying to find a lawyer.

**BEWARE NOTARIOS!**  
In the U.S., notaries are not attorneys and cannot come to court with you.

## IF THE JUDGE GIVES YOU AN APPLICATION FOR ASYLUM, START FILLING IT OUT

Try calling the organizations at the end of this document. Even if they can't represent you in court, they might be able to give you information about the process and possibly help you complete your asylum application.

## START LEARNING ABOUT ASYLUM

Learn about the ways you can explain to the judge why you are afraid and who you are afraid of.

SCAN HERE TO LEARN MORE



## KEEP TRACK OF YOUR COURT DATES AND GO TO EACH AND EVERY COURT HEARING

- If you don't go to court, the judge can order you deported.
- **If you have an emergency, you can call the court at (415) 705-4415 and try to explain why you will be late.**



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# HOW TO FIND A LAWYER?

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## **Justice & Diversity Center of The Bar Association of San Francisco (JDC)**

PHONE: (408) 461-8795

Services Offered: A full legal consultation over the phone by an immigration attorney about your rights; attorney support and advice about different forms of relief for which you may be eligible to receive, based on your case, updated referrals to legal service providers in your area



## **Immigration Center for Women and Children (ICWC)**

PHONE: (415) 728-0420

Services Offered: ICWC offers individual and group information sessions, but cannot represent individuals in immigration court.



On the next page is a chart to help you keep track of the attorneys and organizations you call throughout your attorney search.

If you are able to speak to an attorney in the waiting room before your hearing, you should ask for any updated resources they may have available. These could include attorney lists and informational guides related to asylum, ankle monitor removal, and more.

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ATTORNEY SEARCH LOG

Full name:

Telephone number:

Date	Name of Organization	Telephone number	Did someone answer? YES NO	Did you leave a message? YES NO	Did you receive a legal consult? YES NO	Do you have an appointment pending? YES NO	If the organization didn't take the case, why did they not take it?
<b>EXAMPLE:</b> April 3, 2019	Centro Legal de la Raza	(510) 437-1554	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	The lawyer didn't take my case, but I'm on the waitlist. S/he says s/he will call me in the coming week.
			<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
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			<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	

Date	Name of Organization	Telephone number	Did someone answer?	Did you leave a message?	Did you receive a legal consult?	Do you have an appointment pending?	If the organization didn't take the case, why did they not take it?
			YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	
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