

Frequently Asked Questions

Chicago Immigration Court

525 West Van Buren Street
5th Floor
Chicago, Illinois 60607
312-697-5800

When can I file paperwork or speak with a court clerk?

- You can file paperwork or speak with a court clerk from 8:30 AM – 4:00 PM at the filing window behind security, near the entrance on the 5th floor.

How do I find out if the Court is closed?

- If there is bad weather, check the following web pages to determine whether the Court is open: <https://www.justice.gov/eoir> and <https://www.justice.gov/eoir/chicago-immigration-court>. You can also check EOIR's Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/doj.eoir/>, or check Twitter @DOJ_EOIR. You can also call 312-697-5800 and listen to the voicemail greeting for the Court.

What if I don't know my file number?

- Your file number is also called your "alien number" or "A number." It begins with the letter "A" followed by nine digits. The same number will always be used to identify your immigration case. It is written at the top of the first page of the Notice to Appear ("NTA") and just below your name on the Notice of Hearing.

Where do I find information about the asylum clock?

- Asylum applicants in removal proceedings before EOIR may call 800-898-7180 to obtain certain information about their 180-day Employment Authorization Document clock. This is an automated system where you can get information about your case. Find your A number before calling.

What if I don't remember the date and/or time of my hearing?

- Please call 800-898-7180 as explained in the previous answer.

Where can I find forms?

- To obtain immigration forms, please visit the following websites:
 - www.uscis.gov, Click on "Forms"
 - www.justice.gov/eoir, Click on "Forms"
- Call the USCIS National Customer Service Center at 800-375-5283 to have the forms sent to you by mail.

- You can obtain some forms from the clerk at the filing window, located near the entrance of the Court, behind the security guard, or at the information center in the waiting room.

Where can I find more information about Court filings?

- You can find more information on hearings and filings in the Immigration Court Practice Manual, which you can find at the following website: <https://www.justice.gov/eoir>, Click on "OCIJ Practice Manual."

If I don't speak English, can I file documents written in my native language?

- The Immigration Court cannot accept any documents filed in a language other than English. Any document written in any other language should be accompanied by a certified English translation.
- All motions and application forms should be completed in English.

What do I do when I arrive at the Courthouse?

- Once you go through security, walk through the hallway and find the docket boards. The daily calendars are posted there.
- Find your name on the calendar. Look for the name of your Immigration Judge and the courtroom number. Put your name and the three numbers that appear to the right of your name on the sheet that says "Sign-in/Respondent" in red. Take a seat and wait for the Immigration Judge's assistant to call your name. If you have a lawyer, you do not need to sign up because your lawyer should do so for you.
- If you do not find your name on the calendar, go to the filing window behind security and ask the court clerk for assistance.

What will happen in my hearing?

- You may have more than one hearing with the Immigration Judge.
- If you are here for one of your first hearings, which are called "master calendar" hearings, there will be many other people in the courtroom who are also scheduled for a hearing at the same time as your hearing.
- If you are there for your "individual" hearing, you do not need to sign up. Simply take a seat in the waiting room until you are called into the courtroom.
- The Immigration Judge will tell you what your rights are and will ask you questions. The government attorney might ask you questions, too.
- The Immigration Judge will tell you if there are ways you may be able to stay in the country, and will allow you to present your case at your individual hearing.

Will there be an interpreter if I don't speak English?

- At your first hearing, there might be an interpreter available to interpret for you. If not, the Judge might be able to provide a telephonic interpreter for you.
- At your next hearings, there should be an interpreter available in person or on the telephone.

Do I need a lawyer?

- No, you are not required to have a lawyer. You can represent yourself.
- The Department of Homeland Security will have a lawyer to represent the government.

What if I don't have a lawyer with me?

- YOU MUST COME TO YOUR HEARING ANYWAY.
- You should have received a List of Pro Bono Legal Service Providers from the Department of Homeland Security. The representatives on this list may be able to represent you without charging a fee. If you need another copy of the List of Pro Bono Legal Service Providers, the Immigration Judge will give you one.
- If you can't afford a lawyer, you can talk to a volunteer lawyer at the Help Desk, located behind the security guard at the entrance.

What if I move?

- You must fill out Form EOIR-33 to notify the Immigration Court of any change in your address. You should send this form within 5 days of your move. You can get this form at the filing window behind the security guard by the entrance or from the Immigration Judge.
- If you move out of the area, you may want to have your case moved to an Immigration Court near your new address. You can request a "change of venue" from the Immigration Judge. However, until the Immigration Judge grants your request, you are required to appear at all scheduled hearings in Chicago.

What if I want to leave the country while my case is pending?

- If your case is pending, you or your lawyer can make a written request to the Immigration Judge to ask for an earlier hearing. Until your case is finished with the Court, you must appear at all hearings or you might be ordered removed in your absence.
- If you leave the country without permission while your case is pending, you are giving up your rights in your case and you might be ordered removed for failing to appear.

What if I disagree with the Immigration Judge's decision?

- You have a right to appeal the Immigration Judge's decision to the Board of Immigration Appeals. If you want to appeal, the Board of Immigration Appeals must receive your Form EOIR-26 (Notice of Appeal) by no later than 30 days from the date of the Immigration Judge's decision. The instructions and the address are available on the form.