American Immigration Lawyers Association
Colorado Chapter

Questions To Ask Before You Hire An Immigration Attorney

How long have you been practicing immigration law? How much of your work is immigration related? How much experience do you have in (your particular issue)?
> We recommend that you look for an attorney who does all or most of their work in immigration law.

Will you provide an initial consultation before I hire you to take my case?
> If so, be sure to find out how much the consultation will cost and how long will it be.

When will staff be available to me? What is the best way for me to contact you?
> Are you limited to office hours? What about emergencies? Will the attorney be accessible by cell phone, email, office phone, or all of those?

Who specifically will be handling the details of my case?
> Will you contact the attorney or a paralegal with questions? What is the training and experience of the paralegal?

How much will it cost to hire you to handle my case?
> Rates vary based on the specifics of your situation, the urgency of your case, and other factors. Ask before the work begins what the legal fees includes and any other costs will be that are not included in the legal fee. Be sure you understand those answers completely.

Will I be charged a flat rate, or an hourly rate? If it is a flat rate, what services does the flat rate include?
> If the attorney charges an hourly rate, ask how they handle phone calls and emails. If the attorney charges a flat rate and if an initial petition requires additional evidence or is denied, will the response or an appeal be included in the flat rate?

Will I have to pay before the work starts ("up front") or after services have been rendered?
> Some attorneys will ask to be paid a "retainer," which is a partial fee paid in advance for the professional services to be provided. Many attorneys who charge a flat fee will require all or part of the fees and costs before starting the work. However, the attorney still must be able to account for how the money is spent.