Tips for Finding a Lawyer

Do I Really Need a Lawyer?
Maybe, maybe not. Before contacting a lawyer regarding an immigration issue:

- Speak with your Visa & Immigration Services adviser.
- Visit the US Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) website (www.uscis.gov) where you will find answers to many of your questions.

How Do I Find the Name of a Lawyer?
There are many ways to find lawyers:

- **American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA)** website (www.ailalawyer.com) click Immigration Lawyer Referral Service.
- Call your local bar association lawyer referral service. In Suffolk County, contact the **Suffolk Bar Association Referral Service** at (631) 234-5577 or visit www.scba.org.
- Consult a law directory, such as **Martindale-Hubbell Law Directory**, which gives a brief biography of lawyers practicing in the New York area.
- Search the **American Bar Association’s (ABA)** clickable map of State & Local Bar Associations (www.americanbar.org).

How Do I Choose a Lawyer?
Before choosing a lawyer, call the offices of the lawyers on your list, briefly explain your legal problem and ask:

- Are you specialized and/or experienced in my type of problem?
- Do you charge a flat rate or hourly fee for this type of work?
- Can you give me an estimate of the cost?
- Can you estimate the amount of time it will take?

How Should I Make My Decision to Hire a Lawyer?
Consider the following factors before agreeing to hire a lawyer:

- Can you communicate effectively with the lawyer? Was the lawyer clear and easy to understand?
- Are the fees reasonable in comparison with other lawyers’ charges?
- Did the lawyer give clear explanations of how he or she will let you know about progress in your case?
- If you are not satisfied with this lawyer, do not hire him or her. Look elsewhere for legal help.

Before you finally sign a contract with a lawyer, read it carefully. Make sure you understand it. Everything you and the lawyer agreed to should be in writing.

What if I Have a Problem With My Lawyer?
If you have a problem with your lawyer, you should discuss it with him or her. Try to work out any problems. If you cannot agree on a solution, you may wish to contact the New York State Bar Association.

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