

FREQUENTLY ASKED IMMIGRATION QUESTIONS:

I am a nonimmigrant with a currently valid visa (for example, a student or tourist visa). Do I qualify for in-state tuition? You do NOT qualify for California in-state tuition under the law (AB 540). However, you may qualify for in-state tuition as a “resident” if your nonimmigrant status allows you to “establish domicile” in the U.S. and you satisfy other requirements for residency. For example, persons with “V” or “K” visas, and citizens of Micronesia or the Marshall Islands should be able to pay in-state tuition if they have lived in the state for more than one year.

How do I apply for a social security card? To obtain a social security card, you must be a U.S. citizen, Lawful Permanent Resident, or have been lawfully admitted to the U.S. You must complete an application, and prove your age, identity and lawful status. There is no charge for a social security card. For more information, go to www.ssa.gov or call, toll-free, 1-800-772-1213. This information is also available in Spanish at www.segurosocial.gov or call, toll-free 1-800-772-1213.

My parents use a number for their tax returns. Is this a social security number? Your parents probably have an Individual Tax Identification Number (ITIN). This number is issued by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to persons who are not eligible for a social security number. It does not provide you with the employment authorization and does not grant you any immigration status. To apply for an ITIN, you must file a Form W-9 or W-9SP (in Spanish) with the IRS.

How do I apply for a California driver’s license or ID? To obtain a California driver’s license or ID, you must have a social security number and meet other requirements. If you are not eligible for a driver’s license or ID, you should apply for some other form of photo identification. For example: Apply for a passport at your local consulate office. If you are from Mexico, you can apply for a “Matricula Consular” or Consular Identification Card at the Mexican Consulate. Sometimes you can use the card to get a library card, public utilities, and to open a bank account. The card does not provide you with employment authorization and does not grant you any immigration status.

How do I select an immigration lawyer? There are a number of guidelines for selecting an immigration attorney that you must take into account. Remember that some agencies that administer information for immigration help and advice have no responsibility or liability for information they provide because they are usually not adequately trained in immigration law. On the other hand, immigration lawyers do because they keep up with the latest updates of the law. Because individual cases differ dramatically, consulting with an immigration attorney can assure you that your immigration matters will be handled in the best possible way. Immigration attorneys can help you overcome and avoid legal issues, and simplify the immigration process as much as possible. The following are suggestions to consider but are not sufficient for choosing an immigration attorney.

- County Bar Lawyer Referral Services
- MABA of Los Angeles County Lawyer Information Referral Services: www.mabalawyers.org
- Visit the California Bar website at www.calbar.org to verify whether the individual is licensed