



ARE YOU AFRAID TO RETURN TO YOUR COUNTRY BECAUSE OF WHO YOU ARE?

If you are afraid to return to your home country because of your sexual orientation or gender identity, you may be eligible for asylum.

What is asylum?

Asylum is a legal immigration status for immigrants who are afraid to return to their home countries. Immigrants granted asylum can work and travel and can receive a green card after one year.

Can I get asylum because I am lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT)?

LGBT people can be eligible for asylum if they would face harm in their home countries and if they are unwilling to go back because of fear of harm. Each case is different and you should speak to an attorney before applying.

But what if I am an “illegal” immigrant?

Even immigrants who came here “illegally” or who overstayed their visas can be eligible for asylum. The law will not penalize your “illegal” status if you left your country to escape harm or cannot go back.

But what if I have been here for years?

It is best to apply for asylum within one year of coming to the United States. However, if you fear returning to your country, you should still talk to an attorney about applying for asylum.

Who can help?

Before applying for asylum, you should speak with a qualified immigration attorney. “Notarios” are NOT qualified attorneys and cannot provide legal advice. The **National Immigrant Justice Center (NIJC)**, a program of Heartland Alliance for Human Needs & Human Rights, provides **free legal representation** to low-income asylum seekers. If you make too much money to qualify for our services, we can refer you to private attorneys.

To discuss your asylum case with a NIJC representative, call our office for a free consultation:

**Wednesdays,
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
(312) 660-1370**

Our intake workers speak English, Spanish and French. If you speak another language, please have someone help you make this initial call and we will try to find a translator.