

Sponsor Responsibilities Guide

Understanding Your Role as an Immigration Sponsor

What is a Sponsor?

A sponsor is someone who agrees to support an immigrant during their immigration proceedings. There are two main types of sponsors in immigration law: Court Sponsors (for bond hearings) and USCIS Sponsors (for visa petitions). Understanding the differences and responsibilities is crucial before agreeing to sponsor someone.

Court Sponsor vs. USCIS Sponsor

Aspect	Court Sponsor	USCIS Sponsor
Purpose	Secure release from detention	Support immigration application
Legal Status Required	Not always required	Usually required
Financial Requirements	Must show ability to house detainee	Must meet income threshold (125% FPL)
Duration	Until case is resolved	10 years or until naturalization
Court Appearance	May need to testify at bond hearing	Typically not required
Liability	Ensure court attendance	Financial support if needed

Court Sponsor Responsibilities

Who Can Be a Court Sponsor?

- U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents (preferred)
- Individuals with valid immigration status
- In some cases, undocumented individuals with strong ties
- Must be at least 18 years old
- Must have stable residence and income

Primary Responsibilities

- Ensure the detainee attends ALL court hearings
- Provide housing for the released individual
- Report any address changes to ICE and the court
- Maintain contact with the detainee's attorney
- Notify authorities if the detainee fails to comply

Documents You'll Need to Provide

- Valid government-issued photo ID
- Proof of legal status (if applicable)
- Proof of residence (lease, mortgage, utility bills)
- Proof of employment and income
- Recent tax returns (1-2 years)
- Bank statements
- Letter explaining your relationship to the detainee

USCIS Sponsor (Affidavit of Support)

What is an Affidavit of Support?

An Affidavit of Support (Form I-864) is a legally binding contract between a sponsor and the U.S. government. By signing, you agree to financially support the immigrant and reimburse the government for any means-tested public benefits they receive.

Income Requirements

You must demonstrate income at or above 125% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines for your household size (including the immigrant). For 2024, this means:

- Household of 2: \$25,550/year minimum
- Household of 3: \$32,188/year minimum
- Household of 4: \$38,825/year minimum
- Add \$6,638 for each additional person

Duration of Obligation

Your obligation as a USCIS sponsor continues until one of the following occurs:

- The immigrant becomes a U.S. citizen
- The immigrant has worked 40 qualifying quarters
- The immigrant permanently leaves the United States
- The immigrant dies
- You (the sponsor) die

Tips for Being a Successful Sponsor

- Understand your obligations BEFORE agreeing to sponsor
- Keep copies of all documents you submit
- Maintain open communication with the immigrant
- Keep records of any financial support you provide
- Update your contact information if you move
- Attend court hearings if requested (court sponsors)
- Consult with an immigration attorney if you have questions

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I withdraw my sponsorship?

For court sponsors, withdrawing sponsorship is difficult once bond is granted and may require court approval. For USCIS sponsors, you generally cannot withdraw the Affidavit of Support after the immigrant is admitted.

What if I can't meet the income requirements?

You may be able to use a joint sponsor (someone else who meets the requirements) or include assets to meet the threshold. Consult an attorney for options.

Can a sponsor be held responsible for the immigrant's actions?

Court sponsors may face scrutiny if the immigrant fails to appear at hearings. USCIS sponsors are primarily responsible for financial support, not behavior.

Questions About Sponsorship? Contact Amaral Law

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