

Important Immigration Court Update

Many people with open cases in Immigration Court are receiving notices rescheduling their preliminary (“master”) hearings to a much sooner date. This is because some immigration courts, including Boston, Chelmsford, and Hartford, are scheduling very large preliminary (“master”) hearings, sometimes with more than 100 cases at a time. These large hearings are being called “mega masters.”

When immigrants appear in court for these “mega master” hearings:

- Court staff are checking that all individuals scheduled for the session are **physically present in the courtroom at the start of the hearing**.
- Most individuals who attend their hearing are leaving with a date for another preliminary (“master”) hearing.
- **If people show up late, appear online instead of in person, or fail to appear for their hearing, they may be ordered removed (“deported”) from the United States.**
- Some hearings are being conducted in a “classroom-style” format with instructions given to many people at once in one or two main languages.

What people with Immigration Court cases should do:

- Make sure the Immigration Court has your updated address. **If you move, [update your address immediately](https://acis.eoir.justice.gov/en/)** by going to <https://acis.eoir.justice.gov/en/>
- Regularly check your mail for notices from Immigration Court (“EOIR”) or DHS.
 - **Keep all notices and mailing envelopes.** The envelopes show when a notice was mailed and may help if a hearing is missed and a case must be reopened.
 - Read hearing notices carefully to see whether the hearing must be attended in person or whether it is permissible to attend online. **When in doubt, it is safest to attend all hearings in person.**
 - If you do not understand an immigration notice, consult with a qualified attorney or accredited representative, or [contact MIRA Coalition's Immigration Helpline](#).
- **[Check your immigration court case status online or by phone every day](#)** in case your hearing date changes. Take a screenshot of your case status, as it may help later if a hearing is missed and a case must be reopened.
- **Arrive one hour before your scheduled hearing** to allow time for security, locating the courtroom, and checking in with the court clerk.
- Remember that you have the **right to a free interpreter in your preferred language**. If announcements are being made in a language you do not understand, **ask the judge or court clerk for an interpreter**.
- **If you miss a hearing or are ordered removed from the U.S., speak with a qualified immigration attorney or accredited representative immediately.** There are strict deadlines to appeal or reopen a case, sometimes as soon as 30 days after the judge’s decision.

REMEMBER: One missed hearing can lead to deportation! Regularly check for updates to your hearing date, and attend all hearings as scheduled.