



Abogados & Notarios

FREQUENT MISTAKES

COMMON MISTAKES WHEN APPLYING FOR A RESIDENCY IN COSTA RICA – COSTA RICA IMMIGRATION SERVICES – COSTA RICA RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS .- Although it is no secret that Costa Rican Immigration Authorities do not process residency applications as fast as it would be desirable, under our experience, an immigration process should not take longer than 6 to 9 months. As follows, some of the mistakes that are most commonly made and that usually cause important delays and even the rejection of applications.

NOT APPLYING WHEN YOU SHOULD: The first and most common mistake is to apply when it may already be too late. If you have already decided to settle in Costa Rica, do not wait until our Immigration Authorities are “*inviting*” you to leave our country for being illegal or undocumented. Apply in time not only to avoid any unpleasant situations, but also because applying once a deportation process has been initiated makes it much more complicated and expensive to obtain a legal residency.

APPLYING FOR THE WRONG CATEGORY: Costa Rican Immigration Law includes a large list of categories under which immigrants can apply. Make sure the category you are applying for is actually the one that suits your needs. Forcing your situation or circumstances into fitting certain category should alert you that you may not be applying for the right kind of residency. Applying for the wrong category usually leads to unjustified delays and rejection of the application. For more information on the different immigration categories, check out our IMMIGRATION CATEGORIES section.

FILING THE WRONG REQUIREMENTS: Costa Rican Immigration Law is very clear and straight-forward concerning the requirements needed for each kind of application. For instance, citizens of the United States of America are required to file criminal records from the FBI, not from the local police. If the wrong record is filed, the application will get delayed, the applicant will lose the cost of the wrong documents that were filed, will have to incur in additional expenses, and assumes the risk rejection of his or her application. Always make sure you are explained and understand exactly what you are required to file and avoid trying to find ways around a specific requirement.

NOT FOLLOWING-UP: The fact that you properly and timely file all correct requirements does not guarantee you will obtain your residency fast. Constant follow-up is necessary. Keep in mind that the Costa Rican Immigration Authority handles, if not hundreds, thousands of applications every day, and files or documents may get lost or misplaced. Periodical visits to Immigration Offices are necessary to increase chances of faster approval, and even to become aware of additional requirements that you may want to provide the soonest possible to avoid unnecessary setbacks.



NOT SEEKING PROPER LEGAL ADVICE: In Costa Rica, just as elsewhere in the world, you will find people labeling themselves as experts in immigration matters. You may even find those who recommend the *do-it-yourself* method to save money. The truth is you need to find a real expert in Costa Rican Immigration Law, one who knows the ways of our Immigration Authorities and who is in constant contact with Immigration Officers. With the involvement of a real expert, you increase your chances of successful, timely and efficient processing of your application. Always ask for your attorney's background, ask for references and do not be impressed by fancy websites or premises. If your attorney shows interest in different possibilities and if you feel he or she is actually interested in carefully finding a way to help you, you might be on the right track.

Obtaining a legal residency in Costa Rica is totally feasible and should not turn into an endless story or an overwhelming and unreasonably expensive experience. If you should need further information or assistance, contact us at: info@costarica-law.com.