



**MONTAVON  
McKILLIP  
LAW**

# *Onboarding Guide*



You'll find everything you need to know about working with Montavon McKillip Law in this guide.

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# Welcome!

I am so happy that you have entrusted me with your immigration case. Your immigration case is one of the most important issues in your life right now, and I appreciate that fact and am honored to serve you.

Every client has a unique immigration journey, but at Montavon McKillip Law, my goal is to make sure that you feel supported and fully informed throughout the process.

Thank you again - I look forward to working with you.



*Andie Marie McKillip*  
Board Certified Immigration Attorney

# General Contact Information

**Telephone (858) 519-9551**

**Email [info@outimmigration.com](mailto:info@outimmigration.com)**

## Office address

Montavon McKillip Law, P.A.  
380 S Melrose Dr, Ste 341  
Vista, CA 92081



Mailing address:

Montavon McKillip Law, P.A.  
1895 Avenida del Oro #4648  
Oceanside, CA 92056



# HOURS OF OPERATION

The firm does not keep traditional fixed-location office hours. In general, Attorney Andrea and support staff are working on your case from:

**Monday – Friday 9 am – 5:30 pm**

Your file will be available to you electronically while your case is open with the firm. More information on the online client portal follows below.

## Holidays and Vacation

*The firm is closed for all Federal Holidays. The firm is also closed Thanksgiving week and for at least 2 weeks at the end of December and beginning of January. The specific dates will be provided to all clients in advance. Attorney Andrea's vacation schedule is posted here and updated as needed:*

**February 23, 2024**

*Out of town at conference, available by email*

**June 11-14, 2024**

*Out of town at conference, available by email*



# Client Portal Instructions

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An invitation to the portal should have been emailed when you paid your retainer. If you did not receive it, please contact us at [info@outimmigration.com](mailto:info@outimmigration.com).

## How to Setup Your Account

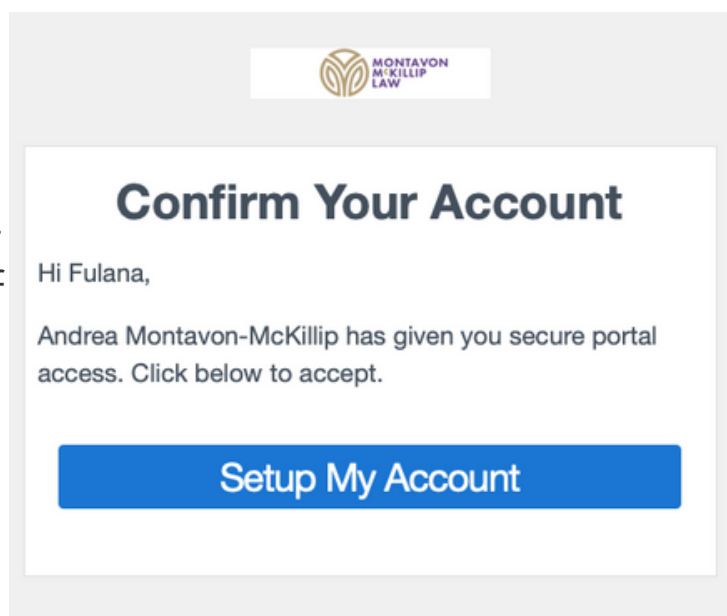
Montavon McKillip Law uses a secure online case management software called Docketwise. It hosts the firm's client portal, which provides a convenient and secure way for you to check on the status of your case and communicate with your attorney.

### 1. Invitation email

The firm will invite you via an email from [no-reply@notifications.docketwise.com](mailto:no-reply@notifications.docketwise.com) with the subject line "Confirm your email and set password." Check your junk or spam email if you do not see it.

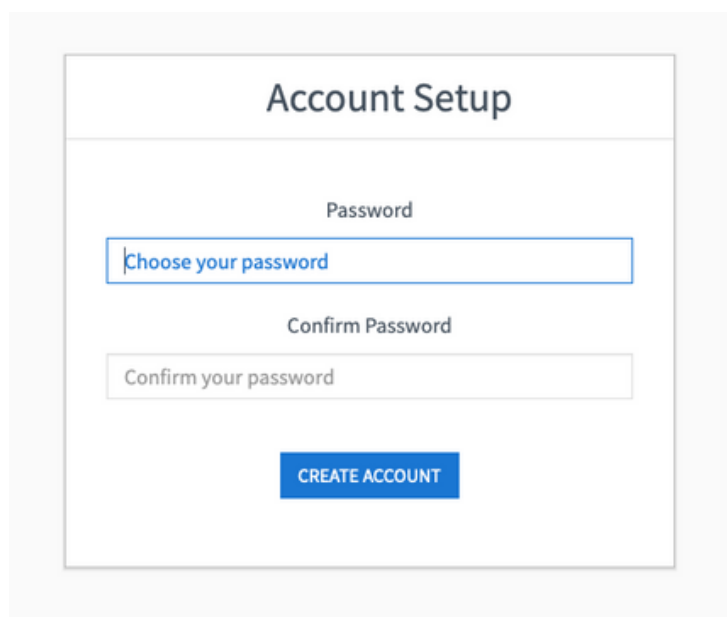
### 2. Click on button

Open the email and select the Setup My Account button.



### 3. Account setup

You will be sent to the Account Setup page to set up your account. Create a unique password, then click the Create Account button. (The password must be at least 8 characters long.)



# Your Account

Montavon McKillip Law, P.A.

## Welcome, Fulana Cliente

[UPLOAD FILES](#)

Tasks	Forms
You do not have any tasks yet.	<b>Name</b> You do not have any forms yet.
<a href="#">SEE ALL</a>	<a href="#">SEE ALL</a>

USCIS Receipts	Invoices	Files
You do not have any receipts yet.	<b>Balance</b> <b>Status</b> You do not have any invoices yet.	<b>File</b> You do not have any files yet.
<a href="#">SEE ALL</a>	<a href="#">SEE ALL</a>	<a href="#">SEE ALL</a>

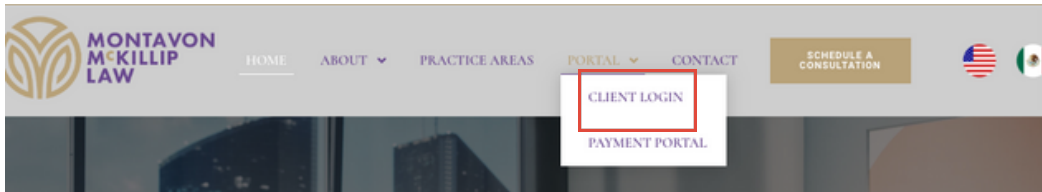
Once you've chosen a password, you'll be sent to your account, where you will be able to upload and download documents, complete questionnaires and forms, check on your case status with USCIS, and view and pay your invoice. You'll be able to review your tasks, forms, documents, USCIS receipt notices, and invoices from your online account.

Your file will be available on this secure server through the duration of your case. You are responsible for downloading all materials prior to or upon the completion of your case. (Original notices and any original documents you provided will be returned to you prior to completion of your case.)

# Access Your Account

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After setup, you can access your account from the firm's website at [outimmigration.com](http://outimmigration.com). From the top menu choose Portal and then Client Login.



Enter your email and password at the sign-in page to login.

A screenshot of the 'Client Login' page. The title 'Client Login' is at the top. Below it are two input fields: 'Type your email' and 'Type your password'. There is a checkbox labeled 'Remember me'. At the bottom, there are two buttons: a blue 'LOGIN' button with a red border, and a white 'RESET PASSWORD' button.

Additional instructions for using the client portal are available at the following links:

- [Work on Your Case](#)
- [Check on Your Case](#)
- [Reset Your Password](#)



# Uploading Documents

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All documents and evidence needed for your case should be uploaded through the secure client portal. This streamlines the process and allows us both to see which documents have been provided and which ones are still needed.

## Acceptable Formats

Documents should be in PDF format. Photographs can be in PDF or JPG format. If you do not have a scanner available, there are several free apps that allow you to use your phone's camera to make a scanner-quality PDF of your documents.

- iPhone. If you have an iPhone, open the Notes app, open a new notes, and click on the camera icon. You will see an option "Scan Documents." Click on this option to scan your document with your phone's camera.
- The following free apps can be downloaded for iPhone or Android to scan documents:
  - Microsoft Lens
  - Adobe Scan
  - Genius Scan

## Translations

We will need certified English translations for all documents not in the English language. However, we also need scans of the original document, as the original must be presented together with the translation.

We can get a quote from a translation company to translate your documents for you. In most cases, you will need to pay the translation company directly for your translations.

# Communication Policy

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## Phone Call Policy - 858-519-9551

In general, the attorney does not accept unscheduled phone calls that are expected to last more than 5 minutes. This frees her up to work faster on your case, and makes her more productive working on your case without interruptions. This also allows us to offer reasonable, flat fees for our services. If you would like to speak to the attorney for more than a 5-minute conversation, please use the following calendaring link for existing clients to schedule a 15-minute phone call or videoconference with the attorney:

[calendly.com/outimmigration/15min](https://calendly.com/outimmigration/15min)

This link is only for existing clients, so please do not share it with others. There is no additional charge to existing clients for this meeting. The attorney sets aside time 3 mornings and 3 afternoons a week for scheduled calls with existing clients.

If it is a short call of 5 minutes or less, please give the receptionist the reason for your call. By providing a reason for your call, the attorney can prepare to answer your questions before calling you back. Our receptionists provide us with your message immediately so that we can get back to you as soon as possible. Please be assured that our receptionists are required to provide the same level of confidentiality as the attorney. If you do not provide a reason for your call, we will assume it is not urgent.

If you call after hours, or on the weekend, please leave us a detailed voicemail that includes your name, number and the reason for your call. The attorney listens to all voicemails and returns calls in the 24-hour timeframe beginning the next business day. If you do not leave a voicemail, you should not expect a call back.

The attorney is often with clients, out of the office at meetings, in court or the USCIS office, busy working on your case, working on other cases, or on the phone, and as a result there will be times when she will be unable to return your call immediately. However, she returns all client calls within 1 business day, if not sooner (unless it's a Friday, in which case she will return your call the following business day). If, for some reason, she is not able to return your call within the 1-business day timeframe, she will send you a message or email to let you know when she can get back to you.

Please do not call multiple times the same day. If it is urgent, please let the receptionist know so that the message can be passed along.



# Communication Policy

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## Messaging through Client Portal – Preferred!

Messaging through the secure client portal or email (see below) are the two best and fastest ways to reach me. I set aside two time blocks each day to check and respond to portal messages and emails, once in the morning and once in the afternoon. This allows me uninterrupted time to work on cases. You can expect a message back within 1 business day, though it will usually be sooner. Messages and emails received outside business hours or on holidays will be addressed during regular business hours.

## Email Policy

You can reach me by email at [andrea@outimmigration.com](mailto:andrea@outimmigration.com). Please add this email to your contacts so that my emails do not end up in your spam/junk folders. Please feel free to email me as needed, but please give me a business day to respond. I will respond during business hours.

## Text Message (SMS/MMS) Policy

Text messaging is available for existing clients only, at (858) 519-9855. Texts will be returned during business hours. If you text after hours or on the weekend or holidays, you will not receive a response until the next business day. Because text messaging is not a secure form of communication, it is preferable to message through the secure client portal, particularly when discussing sensitive issues. For this reason, the attorney may choose to respond to your texts by messaging through the client portal instead.

## Emergencies v. Important Legal Issues

An emergency is a threat to your life or liberty. If there is a threat to your life, you should call 9-1-1 immediately in the USA. I can only help you with an immigration legal emergency. An example of an immigration legal emergency would be if ICE shows up at your door to take you into custody, or Border Patrol stops your vehicle. Thankfully, such a situation happens very rarely.

In contrast, there are legal issues that are important, but not emergencies. For example, you may receive a document from an immigration agency that is confusing or sounds bad, and you would like an explanation from the attorney. Or you may have checked your online case status and have questions about what it means. Please consider whether the matter is very important as opposed to an emergency. Important issues will be prioritized and handled as soon as possible.

# Expectations & Timelines

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## Immigration Timelines

Having an experienced attorney usually means that your case will proceed as fast as possible through the system, because your attorney will be able to anticipate what is needed at each stage of the case to avoid delays. However, the attorney cannot control the precise speed at which the immigration agencies reach a decision in your case. You can do your part to speed up the process by responding in a timely manner to our messages and requests for documents or other information.

We do our best to provide an educated guess on the timeframe for your case based on our internal timelines and the immigration agency's posted processing times, and we will continue to update that estimate as needed through your process. We will also let you know of any new immigration-related developments that could delay your case. However, the length of the case depends on many factors, some of which are outside the attorney's control.

In most cases, the immigration agencies process cases on a first in, first out basis. Many immigration processing times are posted online, and there are links to those sites below. Government processing times change on a monthly basis. Posted processing times are averages and there are always cases that take longer to process. Also, processing times can increase (or decrease) over time based on the demand for certain types of visa and the budget for the immigration agencies provided by Congress. For visas that are subject to an annual cap, it is useful to know that the new crop of visas are issued in October with the start of the new fiscal year of the federal government.

There are many factors that can cause delay, including security checks and government error or inefficiencies. USCIS is a giant bureaucracy. Like any other bureaucracy, i.e. IRS, VA, etc., many times it can seem dysfunctional, impersonal, and inhumane. That is why you hired us, to be there every step of the way and to explain the process as it unfolds. Trust that we will do everything that we can to push your case through the system as fast as possible. However, in 9 out of 10 cases, you will not be happy with the time it takes your case to be approved, so please do not expect to be.

In certain urgent circumstances, we can seek expedited review or process. However, please be aware that any expedite request will require additional legal fees, as it requires additional work on our part.

# Expectations & Timelines

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## Advice from Friends, Family and the Internet

Most of the research you do about your case online or the advice you get from friends or family will be incorrect or will not apply to your individual case, so you should not compare what is happening in your case to what you find online or what friends or family may tell you. As your attorney, we are the only reliable source of information regarding the process and status of your case.

Please do not act based solely on what you read on the Internet. Actions you take based such information will likely result in additional work for us, additional cost, and may lead to us withdrawing as your attorney. If you are confused or concerned, we are happy to discuss the issue with you.

## Skeletons in the closet

We all have them. Tell me now. I can't help you compensate for any weaknesses in your case if I don't know about them.

Please don't assume that the government doesn't know about something simply because you did not tell them. Lying to the government never ends well, and I cannot be part of it. So let me know any problems up front and we will come up with a strategy for dealing with them. You will receive a better result admitting a past fault than if you are caught in a lie. If I learn about a prior indiscretion at the USCIS interview, there is not much I can do at that point except kick you in the shin (metaphorically) for not telling me.

## Social Media

Please do not post anything on social media that you wouldn't want to have to explain to an immigration officer, consular officer, or immigration judge.



# Expectations & Timelines

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## Contact with Immigration Agencies

Please do not contact the immigration agencies directly without first informing your attorney. It can cause serious delays in your case if you are attempting self-help at the same time as your attorney. In general, immigration agencies should never contact a represented person directly. If an immigration agency, or someone posing as an immigration agent contacts you, tell them that you are represented by an attorney and that they should contact your attorney directly.

## Mistakes

I am not perfect. Mistakes sometimes occur despite everyone's best efforts. I will immediately correct a mistake if we find it or if you point it out. But please remember that I am only human.

The immigration agencies are REALLY not perfect. The immigration bureaucracy is large, unwieldy, and extremely inconsistent. Please do not assume that a government mistake means that your attorney did something wrong. Unfortunately, it is impossible to control of all of the possible mistakes that government agencies can make.

If you believe you have found a mistake made by a government agency or by the firm in your case, politely bring it to our attention. We will do everything we can to make sure that it does not prejudice your case.

# *Important Links & Resources*

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**Montavon McKillip Law Website**

**Client Portal**

**Client Follow Up Scheduling Link**

**USCIS Processing Times**

**USCIS Case Status Online**

**Get Your I-94 From CBP**

**Visa Bulletin**

**Change Your Address - USCIS**

*we look forward to working with you!*