

AI FOR IMMIGRATION PRACTICE

AI for the *Immigration* Lawyer

A plain-language primer. What these tools actually are, what they are good at, and the three rules that keep them safe on a client file.

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What these tools actually are

A large language model is a prediction engine. You give it text, and it produces the words most likely to come next, based on patterns it learned from an enormous amount of writing.

That single fact explains almost everything about how it behaves. It is fluent because it was built to be. It is sometimes wrong because likely is not the same as true. And it does not know the law. It knows what legal writing tends to look like.

So it is not a database, and it is not a lawyer. It is a fast, tireless drafter and organizer that needs a lawyer to direct it and to check it.

Understood that way, it stops being intimidating. You already know how to supervise capable help that occasionally gets things wrong. This is that, at speed.

Reference: ABA Formal Opinion 512, 2024.

Good at, and not

GOOD AT

Drafting a first version. Summarizing long records. Organizing scattered facts. A first pass at research or translation that a human then checks. Reformatting and tidying. Turning a messy intake into a clean outline.

NOT GOOD AT

Deciding the case. Guaranteeing a citation is real. Keeping a client's information secret unless you have contracted for that. Knowing the current rule. Anything where being confidently wrong is dangerous.

The pattern is simple. AI is strong wherever the work is assembly and a human will review the result. It is weak wherever the work is judgment or where an unchecked error reaches a client or a court.

Four workflows to start with

Each is high volume, repeatable, and reviewed by you before it matters. Begin with one.

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- **Intake summary.** Turn a long first conversation or questionnaire into a structured summary you can scan in a minute.

 - **Evidence checklist.** From the relief sought, draft the list of documents the client needs to gather.

 - **Document drafting.** First drafts of routine letters, cover pages, and declaration outlines, edited by you.

 - **Status and deadline notes.** Plain-language updates and internal summaries, never a substitute for the docket itself.

The three rules

Everything else is detail. If you only remember three things, remember these.

- **No-training tools only.** Client information goes only into a tool contracted not to train on it, with a signed agreement. Never a free or personal tier.
- **Verify everything.** Every case, statute, source, and translation is confirmed in a primary source before it is used.
- **A human signs off.** Nothing is filed or sent until a named person has read and approved it.

Three rules, and the rest is practice. **No-training tools, verify everything, a human signs off.**

WHERE TO START

A capable drafter. *You are the lawyer.*

You do not need to become technical to use this well. You need to understand what the tool is, give it the right jobs, and keep the three rules. The expertise stays with you.

Simplarity sets up that first workflow with you, in a tool you can trust, so the primer becomes practice.

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