

Finding Free Interpretation and Legal Help

A practical English–Japanese–Korean guide for people facing a language barrier or legal problem

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Start here: what kind of help do you need?

If your situation is...	First useful step
You received a notice with a deadline	Keep the notice; ask what the deadline is for and whether a lawyer can review it.
You need to understand an immigration letter	Contact the immigration information service; request the language you need.
You want to challenge a decision or file a claim	Seek legal advice promptly. General information may not stop a deadline.
You cannot afford a lawyer	Ask about free consultation first, then separately about representation and eligibility.
You feel threatened, monitored or unsafe	Use a safe device/location where possible; prioritize emergency services or specialist protection support.

South Korea: verified starting points

Korea Legal Aid Corporation (KLAC)

KLAC lists telephone, online and in-person legal consultations and litigation support. Its official information lists the legal consultation number 132. An official leaflet states that legal consultation is free for Korean nationals and foreign residents in Korea; litigation support and other work have separate requirements. Do not assume the person taking a call can provide interpretation in your language or that free consultation automatically entitles you to a free lawyer. [Sources 1–2]

Website: <https://www.klac.or.kr/lang/?language=en> | Legal consultation: 132 (within Korea). Confirm reservation procedure and interpretation before visiting.

Immigration Contact Center: 1345

The Ministry of Justice describes 1345 as a multilingual service for immigration and life-in-Korea matters. It also describes three-way interpretation for certain public and nonprofit institutional services and the Village Lawyer for Foreigners scheme. This is not a promise of on-demand interpretation at every private lawyer's office, court, hospital or police station. Ask whether your situation is within scope. [Sources 3–4]

Website: https://www.immigration.go.kr/immigration_eng/1862/subview.do | Call 1345 inside Korea. Confirm the current language menu and opening hours.

Japan: verified starting points

Japan Legal Support Center (Houterasu / 法テラス)

The multilingual information service explains Japan's legal system and directs callers to appropriate organizations. This information service is free, although ordinary call charges may apply. It does not mean a lawyer will handle your case for free. A separate civil legal aid scheme may provide consultations or support subject to residence, financial and case-related conditions; criminal cases are not covered by that civil scheme. [Sources 5–6]

Multilingual information: 0570-078377; alternative 050-3754-5430 (Japan). English and Korean are among the listed languages. Confirm language availability, opening hours and any phone costs on the official page before calling.

Website: <https://www.houterasu.or.jp/site/foreign-nationals/>

Foreign Residents Support Center (FRESC / フレスク)

FRESC links several government-related services for foreign residents in Japan, including immigration and labour-related contacts. It is a referral route, not a general guarantee of free legal representation. The official directory explains which participating body handles which issue. [Source 7]

Website: https://www.moj.go.jp/isa/support/fresc/fresc_4.html?hl=en

Before you contact any service

Prepare only what you can safely access. Do not delay urgent help just because your documents are incomplete.

Bring or record	Why it helps
The notice, contract or letter (all pages)	It may identify the issuer, case type and legal deadline.
When the event happened	Dates may affect deadlines and evidence.
A short chronology (3–6 points)	A clear sequence is easier to interpret and advise on.
Relevant receipts, payment records or messages	The adviser can judge which items matter.
Your preferred language and safe contact method	Not all organizations offer the same languages or confidentiality arrangements.
What outcome you need	For example: understand a document, request an interpreter, seek representation, or find a safe referral.

Questions that prevent expensive misunderstandings

1 Is the first consultation free?

最初（さいしょ）の相談（そうだん）は無料（むりょう）ですか。

첫 상담은 무료인가요?

2 If a lawyer takes my case, will there be a fee or repayment obligation?

弁護士（べんごし）に依頼（いらい）する場合（ばあい）、費用（ひよう）や返済（へんさい）の義務（ぎむ）はありますか。

변호사가 사건을 맡으면 비용이나 상환 의무가 있나요?

3 Am I eligible for legal aid as a foreign national?

外国籍（がいこくせき）でも法律扶助（ほうりつふじょ）を利用（りよう）できますか。

외국 국적자도 법률구조 지원 대상인가요?

4 Can I request interpretation in English, Japanese or Korean?

英語（えいご）・日本語（にほんご）・韓国語（かんこくご）の通訳（つうやく）を依頼（いらい）できますか。

영어·일본어·한국어 통역을 요청할 수 있나요?

5 Does this service handle my kind of problem?

この相談窓口（そうだんまどぐち）は、私（わたし）の問題（もんだい）を扱（あつか）っていますか。

이 상담기관에서 제 문제를 다루나요?

6 Is there a deadline, even while I wait for an appointment?

予約（よやく）を待（ま）つ間（あいだ）にも、守（まも）るべき期限（きげん）はありますか。

상담 예약을 기다리는 동안에도 지켜야 할 기한이 있나요?

7 Can you refer me to a service that supports my language and situation?

私（わたし）の言語（げんご）と事情（じじょう）に対応（たいおう）できる窓口（まどぐち）を紹介（しょうかい）していただけますか。

제 언어와 상황에 맞는 지원기관을 소개해 주실 수 있나요?

8 Can you explain what personal information will be shared?

個人情報（こじんじょうほう）が誰（だれ）に共有（きょうゆう）されるか説明（せつめい）していただけますか。

제 개인정보가 누구에게 공유되는지 설명해 주실 수 있나요?

9 Can I have the next steps and any required documents in writing?

次（つぎ）の手續（てつづき）と必要書類（ひつようしょるい）を書面（しよめん）でいただけますか。

다음 절차와 필요한 서류를 서면으로 받을 수 있나요?

10 I do not understand the document. Please do not treat my signature as agreement until it has been explained.

書類（しょるい）の内容（ないよう）を理解（りかい）できていません。説明（せつめい）を受（う）けるまで、署名（しよめい）を同意（どうい）として扱（あつか）わないでください。

문서 내용을 이해하지 못했습니다. 설명을 듣기 전에는 제 서명을 동의로 취급하지 말아 주세요.

Short messages you can copy

Request interpretation

I would like to ask about [brief issue]. I am most comfortable speaking [language]. Is an interpreter available, and can I arrange a consultation before [date]?

〔問題（もんだい）〕について相談（そうだん）したいです。〔言語（げんご）〕での対応（たいおう）を希望（きぼう）します。通訳（つうやく）の手配（てはい）と〔日付（ひづけ）〕までの相談予約（そうだんよやく）は可能（かのう）ですか。

[문제]에 대해 상담하고 싶습니다. [언어]로 상담받고 싶습니다. 통역 지원과 [날짜] 이전 상담 예약이 가능한가요?

Ask about cost

Before I book, please confirm whether the consultation is free, whether interpretation is free, and whether any fees arise if I ask for further help.

予約（よやく）の前（まえ）に、相談料（そうだんりょう）・通訳費用（つうやくひよう）・その後（ご）の支援（しえん）にかかる費用（ひよう）を確認（かくにん）したいです。

예약 전에 상담료, 통역 비용, 추가 지원 시 발생하는 비용을 확인하고 싶습니다.

Deadline notice

I received a notice dated [date], and I am worried about the deadline. Can someone explain what action is required and where I can obtain legal advice?

〔日付（ひづけ）〕付（づけ）の通知（つうち）を受（う）け取（と）りました。期限（きげん）が心配（しんぱい）です。必要（ひつよう）な対応（たいおう）と法律相談先（ほうりつそうだんさき）を教（おし）えてください。

[날짜]자 통지를 받았고 기한이 걱정됩니다. 필요한 조치와 법률상담을 받을 수 있는 곳을 알려주세요.

Official sources and verification notes

- [1] Korea Legal Aid Corporation. <https://www.klac.or.kr/lang/?language=en>
Legal consultations, litigation support, reservations; 132
- [2] KLAC published leaflet. <https://www.klac.or.kr/fileDownload.do?id=180&type=leaflet>
Free legal consultation for residents including foreigners; representation is separate
- [3] Korean Immigration Contact Center 1345. https://www.immigration.go.kr/immigration_eng/1862/subview.do
Multilingual immigration counselling, third-party interpretation in defined institutional settings
- [4] Village Lawyer for Foreigners. <https://www.immigration.go.kr/immigration/1574/subview.do>
Legal consultation request through 1345; interpretation as needed
- [5] Japan Legal Support Center — Foreign Nationals. <https://www.houterasu.or.jp/site/foreign-nationals/>
Multilingual legal information line and languages
- [6] Japan Legal Support Center — Civil Legal Aid. <https://www.houterasu.or.jp/site/english/civillegalaid.html>
Civil legal aid eligibility and scope
- [7] FRESC. https://www.moj.go.jp/isa/support/fresc/fresc_4.html?hl=en
Referral and contact routing for foreign residents

This independently written LANGLOBE resource is not legal advice or an official publication of any listed agency. Information checked 16 October 2026; services, eligibility, phone numbers and operating hours may change. Verify current details on the official websites. Not continuously updated.