



STATE OF NEW YORK  
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
THE CAPITOL  
ALBANY, NY 12224

*Dear New Yorker:*

*Our immigrant communities are an important component of the rich cultural fabric of New York State. Their many daily contributions allow our state to be recognized as the world's capital of diversity, achievement, and opportunity.*

*Unfortunately, many immigrants who lawfully seek to adjust their immigration status are victimized by fraudulent immigration service providers. The consequences can be devastating.*

*This brochure is designed to inform you about your rights and options under the law and we hope you will use this information to protect yourself as you build your future in New York.*

Eric T. Schneiderman

If you are a victim of immigration fraud, call the Attorney General's Immigration Fraud Hotline at **1-866-390-2992** or visit **www.ag.ny.gov**

We will not inquire about your immigration status or share that information with anyone.

### Additional resources

- New York State Immigration Hotline: 1-800-566-7636 or email: **bria.contact@otda.state.ny.us**  
Operated by the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability - Bureau of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance, they can supply referrals to not-for-profit organizations.
- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS): 1-800-375-5283 or at **www.uscis.gov/immigrationpractice**
- To obtain a list of free legal services, visit U.S. Department of Justice: **http://www.usdoj.gov/eoir/probono/states.htm**
- For organizations accredited by the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA): **www.usdoj.gov/eoir/statspub/raroster.htm**
- To find a licensed attorney and other legal resources visit the New York State Bar Association at **www.nysba.org** or The American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) at **www.aila.org**



New York State Office  
of the Attorney General

# Immigration Services Fraud: Know Your Rights!



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Attorney General

# IMMIGRATION SERVICES FRAUD

Immigration Law is complex and many people look for help when dealing with immigration authorities. Unfortunately, there are individuals and organizations who may promise you more than is legal, and charge for services they cannot provide. Before you hire someone to help you with immigration issues, it's important to understand exactly who can help you and what they can legally do.

## Who can represent you before the USCIS?

Only you, an attorney or a recognized organization may communicate on your behalf about your application with USCIS. If you need advice about what application or petition to file with USCIS or need someone to represent you in these matters, seek the assistance of:

- A licensed attorney: You can check <https://iapps.courts.state.ny.us/attorney> to see if an attorney is currently registered with New York State.
- An organization recognized by the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) listed at [www.usdoj.gov/eoir/statspub/raroster.htm](http://www.usdoj.gov/eoir/statspub/raroster.htm)

## What is an immigration service provider?

Other people, sometimes called immigration service providers, may only assist you by providing clerical services such as filling out immigration forms or translating documents. To protect you from becoming a victim of immigration fraud, New York State regulates immigration service providers and prohibits them from offering certain services.

## Under NYS law, an immigration service provider MAY NOT:

- Give you legal advice;
- Represent you in a case pending before USCIS, the Department of Labor or in immigration court;
- Threaten to report you to immigration authorities;
- Promise that they will obtain special favors from immigration authorities;
- Instruct you to provide false information to immigration authorities; or
- Charge you for a referral to someone qualified to assist you with immigration matters.

## If you choose an immigration service provider to help you fill out forms and translate documents, the provider MUST:

- Give you a contract in English and in a language you understand describing in detail the services they will provide for you and the fees they will charge you. The contract may be cancelled at any time;
- Post signs clearly indicating that they are not attorneys and cannot give you legal advice;
- Give you a copy of any documents filed with the government;
- Return any original documents belonging to you; and
- Give you a copy of your file on demand and without a fee.

# BE CAREFUL ABOUT WHAT YOU AGREE TO AND SIGN

There are many immigration service providers who claim to be able to get you a work permit, a visa or other results quickly. Beware of promises like these, and be careful of what they ask you to do. You should not:

- Agree to pay high fees for help filling out forms;
- Make a payment without obtaining a detailed receipt;
- Sign blank applications or petitions; or
- Sign documents that contain false or inaccurate information.



## Beware of Notario Público Fraud

In many Spanish speaking countries a Notario Público is an attorney. In the United States, they are not (although many attorneys may offer the same services). Notaries Public may certify your identity and signatures (and charge a small fee), but they may not represent you before USCIS, in immigration court, or give you legal advice.