

TIPS on avoiding Dishonest Immigration Services Providers

*****The Office of Attorney General does NOT inquire into your immigration status, so please call with questions and complaints*****

What to Watch Out For:

Avoid Immigration Services Providers that do any of the following:

- Promise to get you green cards, work visas, or other benefits, even if you are not eligible.
- Tell you they have someone on the “inside” or connections to USCIS (United States Citizenship and Immigration Services) or INS (Immigration Naturalization Service).
- Use terms in their advertisements, stationery, or business cards implying that they are an attorney (such as “notario” or “poder notario”)
- Charge high fees.
- Make excuses for not filing documents.
- Cancel interviews, or tell you government interviews have been cancelled.

What an IMMIGRATION SERVICES PROVIDER can do:

- Give you materials, law books and forms, so that you can prepare legal documents yourself.
- Give you a list of forms and legal documents.
- Type or fill out forms for you IF you tell the provider what to write.
- File forms in court for you IF you tell the provider what to file.
- Serve legal papers on other parties.
- Must be registered with the Office of Attorney General.

What an IMMIGRATION SERVICE PROVIDER cannot do:

- Tell you what forms you need for your case.
- Fill out forms for you if you do not tell the provider what to write.
- Tell you what kind of immigration category (such as asylum or labor certification) you should apply for or give you any other legal advice.
- Promise to get you a green card, work visa, or other benefits for ineligible immigrants.
- Have someone on the “inside” or connections to USCIS (United States Citizenship and Immigration Services) or INS (Immigration Naturalization Service).
- Use terms in their advertisements, stationery, or business cards implying that they are an attorney (such as “notario” or “poder notario”)

Steps You Can Take to Protect Yourself from Dishonest Immigration Services:

- Ask about the provider's educational background, work experience and whether they are registered with Illinois Attorney General's Office.
- Discuss price. If the provider is not significantly less expensive than a lawyer, find another provider or get a lawyer. Immigration services providers operating in Illinois can only charge a maximum of \$75 per one completed application
- Make sure you get a written contract in English and in your native language. Read it carefully before signing. Make sure you get a copy of the contract and any other documents the provider prepares for you.
- Make sure you get a 3-day Right to Cancel. In Illinois, immigration services providers are required to provide you with a 3-day right to cancel with your contract.
- Be suspicious if the provider's promises sound too good to be true.
- Whenever you make a payment, get a signed receipt.
- Read all documents carefully before signing. If you cannot read English, bring someone to translate or request a translated copy.
- Check for signs posted on premises. Illinois law requires immigration services providers to post signs in the place of business informing consumers they are neither licensed attorneys nor accredited by the Board of Immigration Appeals. Signs informing consumers of their 3-day right to cancel and a fee schedule must also be posted.
- Do NOT let the provider keep your original documents or photos.
- Do NOT sign blank application forms.
- Avoid providers that pressure you to pay immediately.
- Ask questions. You should not hire a provider who refuses to answer your questions.