

## HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST FRAUD

### WHO CAN HELP YOU WITH YOUR IMMIGRATION CASE?

Just two groups of people are able to provide legal advice and services in your immigration case: 1) lawyers/attorneys and 2) accredited representatives from religious organizations, charitable, social services, or non-profit organizations recognized by the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA).

### LAWYERS / ATTORNEYS



Although you are allowed to be represented by a lawyer, the court will not give you a lawyer for free. It can be very important to find a licensed and qualified lawyer who can help you understand your legal options. Remember that although it is very helpful to have a lawyer, you are not required to have one, and you should always go to your court hearings even without a lawyer representing you.

To find a lawyer please call the Asylum National Help Line at 612-746-4674 or refer to the Immigration Court's List of Pro Bono Legal Service Providers.

### NO TO NOTARIES!



You should know that in the US notaries public and immigration consultants are neither allowed, nor licensed or qualified to assist in immigration matters. Notaries and immigration consultants are not lawyers. They can cause serious problems in immigration cases due to their lack of legal training. They will charge you money but are not allowed under the law to represent immigration cases, so they won't go to court with you. In the United States a notary public is a civil servant who is authorized by law to certify official documents, take depositions and oaths.

### Before paying any money, educate yourself on who can help you with your immigration case.

- Don't trust people who claim to have a special relationship with the Department of United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) or who guarantee results.
- Be careful with anyone who works in the United States claiming to be a lawyer in a foreign country but who's not a lawyer licensed in the United States.
- Ask to see their bar certificates / card issued by the state (lawyers) or the letter of accreditation from the BIA (accredited representatives) before accepting advice or legal services.



### Follow Some Precautions

- Ask for and save a written contract that explains what legal services you will receive.
- Don't make cash payments for professional immigration services. If possible, use a check or credit card instead, and ask for and save a receipt.
- Avoid giving away your original documents (birth certificates, passport or others) to anyone who's helping you with your immigration case. Make them a copy!
- Don't sign a blank form, application or petition, or a document that you don't understand.
- Don't sign any form, application or document that contains false or incorrect information.



### What to do if you've been a victim of fraud?

Contact a non-profit law office, immigrant rights group, or another community organization that's trustworthy for advice on filing a state bar or EOIR complaint.