



LOS ANGELES COUNTY  
**CONSUMER &  
BUSINESS AFFAIRS**

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Serving Los Angeles County consumers and  
businesses since 1976.



**OUR MISSION**

To promote a fair and vibrant marketplace, we serve consumers, businesses, and communities through education, advocacy, and complaint resolution.



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# Immigration Services Fraud

## FACTS FOR CONSUMERS



## IMMIGRATION SERVICES FRAUD

Dishonest immigration consultants often defraud consumers by charging fees for illegal or misleading services including giving wrong legal advice, claiming to have inside “connections” or encouraging consumers to lie on their applications. Consumers who deal with these people often lose their money and can hurt their chances to adjust their immigration status.

Immigration consultants may include: “notarios”, paralegals or anyone offering immigration-related services.

### **I’m seeking immigration services. Who can help me with my immigration case?**

Always work with a licensed lawyer who specializes in immigration law. Ask to see their license.

If you seek help from an immigration consultant, you may be charged thousands of dollars and only receive minimal services from the consultant.

### **An immigration consultant must:**

- **Prove they are bonded:** Immigration consultants must show you proof they have filed a \$100,000 bond with the California Secretary of State before they offer you service. Bond verification is available through the Secretary of State’s website: [www.sos.ca.gov](http://www.sos.ca.gov).
- **Display visible signs in their office that state** the immigration consultant’s name, bond number, the services they provide

and a list of fees. They must also have a sign that states they are not an attorney.

- **Give you a receipt** that is typed or printed from a computer and includes the amount paid, date of payment, and the immigration consultant’s signature.

### **Immigration consultants CAN:**

- Translate documents
- Get necessary documents
- Fill out the applications you specifically choose
- Refer you to an attorney (at no cost)
- Deliver your completed forms to the U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS)

### **Immigration consultants CANNOT:**

- Give you legal advice or tell you what forms to prepare for your case
- Guarantee or promise a specific result
- Keep your original documents
- Charge you upfront for services

### **Most common immigration scams**

#### **1) Deceptive “notario públicos”**

In some foreign countries, a “notario” has the authority to provide legal services. In the United States they are not licensed attorneys and cannot practice law or provide legal advice related to immigration.

#### **2) False advertising**

Some businesses in your community may advertise immigration assistance

in misleading ways. Some will falsely guarantee you immigration benefits such as a visa, green card or Employment Authorization Document.

### **3) Phony government officials**

Someone may call you or knock on your door and pretend to work for INS, USCIS or another government agency to try to get your personal information such as your Social Security Number, Passport number, or A-number. They may even tell you there are problems with your immigration status and convince you to pay large amounts of money to correct the problem.

For more information on scams, visit [dcba.lacounty.gov](http://dcba.lacounty.gov).

## REPORT IMMIGRATION FRAUD

### **I’m a victim of immigration services scam. Who can help me?**

If you feel you have been or are being defrauded by an immigration consultant, call the Los Angeles County Department of Consumer and Business Affairs at (800) 593-8222. You can also ask a question or complete an online complaint form on our website; [dcba.lacounty.gov](http://dcba.lacounty.gov).

### FOR MORE INFORMATION



(800) 593-8222



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