

# IMMIGRATION CONSULTANTS



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## AVOID IMMIGRATION SCAMS – GETTING THE WRONG HELP CAN HURT YOU



Notary publics, or “notarios,” who do not have law licenses cannot help you with immigration matters and may hurt your chance to immigrate lawfully. Because immigration law can be complicated, even those who mean well – like a friend, a pastor, or a relative – may inadvertently provide advice that can cause problems for you later.



In many Latin American (and European) countries a notario, notario público, or notary public may have greater authority, experience and training to help with legal matters. In the United States, notarios are not attorneys and cannot provide legal advice.

**Under Colorado law, it is illegal for non-attorneys, unless they are designated as “accredited representatives” by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), to offer legal advice such as to:**

- Advise or assist another person in a determination of the person's status for the purpose of an immigration matter;
- Advise another person in selecting an immigration benefit, visa, or program;
- Offer their services as a notario público, notario, immigration assistant, immigration consultant, immigration specialist, or other title that implies, in any language, that he/she possesses professional legal skills or expertise in immigration law;
- Accept any money or other compensation to advise or assist any person with any immigration issue; or
- Otherwise represent another person's interests in a judicial or administrative proceeding in an immigration matter.



## WHO CAN ASSIST YOU WITH YOUR IMMIGRATION PROCESS?



- Relatives, friends, and document preparers can help you translate or type responses to forms but cannot provide you with legal advice.
- You can represent yourself before the U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services (USCIS).
- You can hire an attorney or a representative who is authorized by the U.S. DOJ:
  - AILA - American Immigration Lawyers Association: <https://www.aila.org/>
  - American Immigration Council: [www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org](http://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org)



Additional Resource:

Colorado Supreme Court – Office of Attorney Regulation Counsel:  
Visit <https://www.coloradosupremecourt.com/> or call 1-877-888-1370.





## HOW TO AVOID IMMIGRATION SCAMS

### What you should do



- Verify that the person who is helping you is an attorney or accredited representative.
- Keep a paper trail.
  - Request a receipt when paying for legal services.
  - Request copies.
  - Keep all original paperwork; only the copies stay with the attorneys.
  - Keep the receipt you get from USCIS when you turn in your paperwork.
- Make sure you have a written contract that you understand.
- Get information from U.S. government websites, with addresses ending in .gov.
- Be wary when cash payments are required.
- Be wary of tax preparers who represent they can prepare your immigration papers. Predatory preparers will hold your income tax refunds as payment toward immigration services, even if they fail to help you.
- Remember: Regardless of your immigration status, your lawyer must protect your identity, and cannot report your status to USCIS to retaliate against you.

### What you should never do



- Pay for immigration forms. You can get forms for free at <https://www.uscis.gov/forms/all-forms>.
- Sign a blank form.
- Send your original documents as evidence to support your application unless USCIS asks for the original.
- Go to a notario, notario público, or a notary public for legal advice.

### Report fraud or an immigration scam:



Report fraud or an immigration scam to the Colorado Attorney General:

- Visit [www.stopfraudcolorado.gov](http://www.stopfraudcolorado.gov) or call 800-222-4444

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