

Warning! Do not hire anyone who...

- ⊗ Refuses to give you a written contract
- ⊗ Charges you for *blank* immigration forms.
Get free forms at: uscis.gov/forms.
- ⊗ Charges you to “get on a waiting list” or “put your application in line” for immigration reform. There is no list. There is no line.
- ⊗ Guarantees you a work permit or promise you a good result because of their special contacts at Immigration.
- ⊗ Pretends to be a qualified lawyer or bonded immigration consultant.
- ⊗ Takes your money without giving you the services promised.
- ⊗ Asks you to lie on a form or sign a blank document. If you do this, you may *never* get your immigration application approved.
- ⊗ Keeps your original documents or charges you to get them back.

Complaints:

Your Local
District Attorney

State Bar of California
(800) 843-9053
calbar.org

Federal Trade
Commission
ftccomplaintassistant.gov

Office of Immigrant Assistance,
CA Department of Justice
caag.state.ca.us



Warning! There is no new amnesty!

Congress has not approved immigration reform yet. Until the reforms become law, providers must **not** take your money to file an amnesty or immigration reform case.

We will post a notice at ilrc.org on the day immigration reform passes.



Protect Yourself!

Learn How to Get the Best Available Immigration Help



Immigrant Legal Resource Center

1663 Mission Street, Suite 602

San Francisco CA 94103

ilrc.org

Shop smart!

- Find a *qualified* legal services provider,
- Ask questions, and
- Get a second – or third – opinion before you decide who to hire.

Compare providers before you hire.

Look for a provider who will:

- Answer your questions, and
- Tell you your options.

Shop, check, and compare

- Talk to 2 or more legal service providers,
- Check each provider's license/status, and
- Don't use anyone who doesn't follow the rules explained in this brochure.

Do **not** hire anyone who:

- Says "*Trust me,*" without answering your questions,
- Guarantees that you will win your case, or
- Promises you a work permit or visa right away.

In California, only 3 kinds of providers can help you with your immigration case:

- **Lawyers**
- **Non-profit agencies with Accredited Reps** (The U.S. government authorizes some people to help with immigration. They are called accredited representatives)
- **Bonded Immigration Consultants**

Warning! Do **not** use anyone advertised as a *notario público*. In the U.S., *notarios* are **not** lawyers. *Notarios cannot* give legal help.

Lawyers can:

- Give you legal advice,
- Help you apply, and
- Speak for you in Immigration Court.

Look for a lawyer specializing in immigration.

To make sure your lawyer is licensed visit: calbar.ca.gov or call (415) 538-2000. Ask the lawyer for her state bar number.

Non-profits with Accredited Reps can:

- Give you legal advice, and
- Help you apply (in most situations).

To make sure your Rep is authorized, check him/her out at: justice.gov/eoir/ra/raroster.htm

Do **not** use an accredited rep who is not on this list!

Bonded Immigration Consultants can:

- Give you the forms you need and help you fill them out.
- Translate questions and answers for your forms.
- Help you collect documents.

Immigration consultants are **not** lawyers. They **must** say they are not lawyers and have signs in their office saying they are not lawyers.

They **cannot**:

- Give you legal advice,
- Speak for you in Immigration Court, or
- Keep your original documents.

Be careful! Only *bonded* immigration consultants can help with immigration cases.

Check if your consultant is bonded at: sos.ca.gov/business/sf/bond_search/

Checklist: Bring this with you when you meet the provider...

Did the provider:

- Show you her credentials or proof she paid the bond?
- Ask you to sign a written contract?
 - Make sure the contract lists the services you will get and how much you will pay.
 - If you don't speak English well, bonded immigration consultants must give you a contract in your language, too.
 - If you cancel in writing within 72 hours of signing the contract with a consultant, you have the right to get **all** your money back.
- Explain the forms and the process?
 - Do not sign blank forms.
 - Ask for a translation, if you need it.
 - Do not sign anything that is not true or that you do not understand.
- Give you copies of your contract and all papers filed for your case? (You may have to ask for the copies.)
 - Keep your copies in a safe place.
 - Do not give your provider **original** documents. Lawyers (not immigration consultants) may need your original documents to give to immigration authorities.
- Give you receipts for your payments? Make sure the receipt is signed by the provider and says:
 - the date you paid, what services you paid for.
- Tell you the interest rate for any loan or payment of fees?