

## BEFORE HIRING ANYONE TO ASSIST YOU, ALWAYS ASK:

- Whether the person is a licensed attorney (lawyer), an accredited representative, or an immigration consultant – by law, they are each only allowed to provide certain specific services;
- To see the person's credentials and a list of references (former clients) to contact;
- If you will be charged for a consultation appointment;
- How much you will pay for the consultant's assistance and how payment is set up;
- How long the process will take and the possible risks.

## AN IMMIGRATION CONSULTANT SHOULD NEVER:

- Perform any legal services for you;
- Advertise as a notario or public notary, or pretend to be a lawyer;
- Promise special or favorable treatment from immigration officials;
- Ask you to sign papers that are blank, contain false information, or that you don't understand;
- Threaten your immigration status if you are unable to pay more money;
- Take your money without or before performing the promised service;
- File documents on your behalf;
- Ask you to leave your original documents (you should only leave the consultant with copies of your documents); or
- Ask you to pay money for blank government forms. Government forms are free and available at [www.uscis.gov/forms](http://www.uscis.gov/forms).

## AN IMMIGRATION CONSULTANT SHOULD ALWAYS:

- Provide you with a written contract in a language you understand that states (1) why you have hired the consultant and (2) how much money you will have to pay;
- Return all of your documents to you;
- Provide you with a receipt for any payment you make to the consultant.

## HOW CAN I PROTECT MYSELF?

### Know who you are dealing with:

Licensed attorney, accredited representative or immigration consultant.

Verify their credentials with the following resources and suggestions:

### LICENSED ATTORNEYS:

- Maryland Client Protection Fund  
410-630-8140
- American Immigration Lawyers Association [www.ailalawyer.com](http://www.ailalawyer.com),  
1-800-954-0254

### ACCREDITED REPRESENTATIVES:

- <https://www.justice.gov/eoir/recognition-accreditation-roster-reports>

### IMMIGRATION CONSULTANTS:

- Ask the person to verify his or her credentials;
- Ask for a list of references;
- Make sure that the consultant abides by the guidelines provided in this brochure.

You can also call any of the community organizations listed on the last page for help and advice.

## KNOW YOUR RIGHTS!

Be aware of people and businesses that try to fraudulently provide legal assistance without authorization.

Anyone offering legal assistance must be either a licensed attorney, an individual authorized to represent individuals in immigration matters, or a representative from an authorized nonprofit organization or clinic affiliated with a law school in Maryland.



## FIGHT IMMIGRATION CONSULTANT FRAUD

If you think you have been a victim of immigration fraud, contact the Maryland Office of the Attorney General to ask questions or file a complaint.

Victims of immigration fraud can suffer many consequences, including deportation, and may lose the opportunity to become U.S. citizens entirely.

**By filing a complaint with the Attorney General, you may be able to recover:**

- Any fees paid to the immigration consultant;
- Reasonable attorney fees; and
- Damages up to three times the amount you paid to the immigration consultant.

Fraudulent immigration consultants may also be subject to additional penalties and imprisonment.

To learn more about this process, please call 410-528-8662 or 1-888-743-0023 (toll-free)

To file a complaint, please visit [www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/consumer](http://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/consumer)

Or send a letter describing your complaint to:  
Office of the Attorney General,  
Consumer Protection Division,  
200 St. Paul Place, 16th Floor,  
Baltimore, MD 21202-2202

***The Office of the Attorney General is NOT an immigration enforcement agency.***

## RESOURCES:

**Maryland Attorney General**  
410-528-8662, 1-888-743-0023  
<https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/Pages/CPD/immFraud/>

**Maryland Client Protection Fund**  
410-630-8140

**American Immigration Lawyers**  
1-800-954-0254, [www.ailalawyer.com](http://www.ailalawyer.com)

**DOJ Recognition and Accreditation Program** [www.justice.gov/eoir/recognition-accreditation-roster-reports](http://www.justice.gov/eoir/recognition-accreditation-roster-reports)

**For free copies of immigration forms**  
1-800-870-3676, [www.uscis.gov/forms](http://www.uscis.gov/forms)

**Community Resources:**  
ACLU of MD: 443-524-2558  
CASA de Maryland: 301-431-4185  
Catholic Charities: 410-522-2668  
Public Justice Center: 410-625-9409  
University of Maryland School of Law, Immigration Clinic: 410-706-3295



, *Maryland Attorney General*

Attorney General of Maryland (410) 576-6300  
1 (888) 743-0023 toll-free / TDD: (410) 576-6372  
200 St. Paul Place, Baltimore, MD 21202  
[www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/](http://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/)

# ARE YOU A VICTIM OF IMMIGRATION CONSULTANT FRAUD?



You may have been a victim of immigrant consultant fraud if the person offering immigration assistance identified him or herself as a “notario,” “visa consultant,” or “licenciado.”

In the United States, a notary is NOT an attorney and may not provide you with immigration assistance or legal advice.

<https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/Pages/CPD/immFraud/>