

## 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](https://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](https://calbar.org)

Federal Trade Commission  
[ftccomplaintassistant.gov](https://ftccomplaintassistant.gov)

Office of Immigrant Assistance,  
CA Department of Justice  
[caag.state.ca.us](https://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](https://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](https://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](http://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](http://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/](http://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?