

If You Have a Lawyer

Your Lawyer Must:

- Explain the law and what your options are so that you can make the important decisions in your case
- Keep you informed about your case, including any court dates or appointments
- Sign all papers he or she prepares and submits to the government on your behalf
- Provide you with copies of all papers submitted to the government if you ask for them (even if you owe money)
- Explain, in writing, any fees he or she is charging you
- Return your phone calls or emails promptly
- Treat you with courtesy
- Keep your information confidential

You Have the Right to:

- Ask for proof that your representative is a lawyer or a Board of Immigration Appeals “accredited representative” who works for a non-profit organization
- Get a receipt for any money paid (it is always better to pay by check or money order)
- Fire your lawyer and look for another one

Your Lawyer Should Never:

- Ask you to lie
- Ask you to sign blank forms or sign forms with untrue information
- Fail to appear at your court date or interview without letting you know in advance
- Ask you to submit fraudulent (fake) documents
- Keep your original documents

If You Need help:

Call the New York State New Americans Hotline at 800-566-7636. The Hotline can provide referrals to non-profit agencies that have immigration attorneys on staff or are recognized by the Board of Immigration Appeals. The Hotline can also help you make a complaint if you think you have been the victim of fraud or a non-lawyer is taking your money to provide legal services.



GETTING IMMIGRATION HELP: TIPS FOR AVOIDING FRAUD

Only Lawyers and certain Legal Representatives who work for non-profit organizations are allowed to represent immigrants

- Only lawyers and BIA accredited representatives (who work for certain non-profit organizations) can give legal advice.
- Never pay a “notario,” travel agent, tax preparer, or forms’ preparer to tell you which applications you need or to help prepare them for you.
- Filing the wrong application is not only a waste of money -- it could get you deported.

Never Pay in Cash

- When paying a lawyer or an application fee, use a check or money order.
- Always get receipts for any payments you make to a lawyer.

If It Sounds Too Good to be True, It Probably is

- Scammers often promise immigration benefits you are not eligible for, just to get your money. Lawyers and BIA accredited representatives are required to be honest, even if it is bad news.

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All immigration forms are available for free at www.uscis.gov

Never Pay for Blank Immigration Forms

Never Sign a Blank Form or let Someone Keep your Original Documents

- Never sign a form that is blank or has false information.
- Carefully read all documents before signing -- you are responsible for anything with your signature that is submitted to the government.
- Do not leave your original documents with anybody else. Make copies if you need to.

DON'T GET SCAMMED – GET HELP

Call the New York State New Americans Hotline (800-566-7636) for help finding a free or low-cost lawyer or legal representative.

