AMERICAN IMMIGRATION LAWYERS ASSOCIATION

Protect Yourself from Immigration Scams

Immigration Scam Warning: How to Stay Safe and Protect Your Case

Scammers are impersonating real immigration lawyers and nonprofit organizations — especially on Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp. They may use logos, photos, and names of trusted organizations like Catholic Charities or well-known law firms. These scams have caused many people to lose thousands of dollars and, in some cases, harm their immigration cases.

Here's how to protect yourself and your family.

How Scammers Operate

- They pretend to be lawyers or accredited representatives.
- They use fake Facebook pages, WhatsApp numbers, or paid ads.
- They promise fast approvals or "guaranteed results."
- They sometimes charge a lot ($5,000–$30,000).
- They may file nothing, file false information, or hold fake "court hearings" online.
- It is fraud if the "judge" tells you to pay money to get the immigration status you want.
- After the scammers get what they want, they usually disappear.

How to Check if Someone Is Real

Before you pay anyone:

1. **Verify the person AND the organization.**
   Finding a real lawyer from an approved and vetted source is safer. Some sources for lawyer listings are:
   - **AILA Lawyer Search:** www.ailalawyer.com
   - **CLINIC Affiliate Directory:** www.cliniclegal.org/find-legal-help/affiliates/directory
   - **Immigration Advocates Network:** https://www.immigrationadvocates.org/legaldirectory
2. **Make sure the person actually works where they say they work.**
   Look up the organization independently — don't rely on a link they send you.
3. **Be careful with anything advertised on Facebook, Instagram, or WhatsApp.**
   Most scams are happening there.
4. **Get a written agreement or receipt.**
   Real legal providers offer documentation.
5. **Never pay through gift cards, cash apps, or cryptocurrency.**

If You Think You've Been Scammed

You can report it — and you may be able to fix your case. Save all messages, receipts, and screenshots.

Report scams to:

- **EOIR Fraud Prevention Program:** www.justice.gov/eoir/fraud-and-abuse-prevention-program
- **Federal Trade Commission:** www.reportfraud.ftc.gov
- **USCIS Tip Form:** www.uscis.gov/avoid-scams/report-immigration-scams
- **Your State Attorney General**
- **Your local or state bar association**

If someone used a lawyer's or organization's name, tell them right away.

Get Legitimate Legal Help

Find trusted immigration legal assistance through:

- AILA Immigration Lawyer Search
- CLINIC Affiliates
- Immigration Advocates Network
- National Association of Consumer Advocates (consumer protection attorneys): www.consumeradvocates.org/find-an-attorney

Protect your money. Protect your case. Always confirm that your legal helper is real.

This flyer is intended for general information purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. You should not act or rely on any information in this flyer without seeking the advice of a competent, licensed immigration attorney. If you do not have an immigration attorney, you may find a licensed one at www.ailalawyer.com.

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Flyer last updated on February 10th, 2026.

AILA is the national bar association of immigration lawyers comprised of over 15,000 members located in every state of the United States and worldwide.