



Beware of notarios and fraud

Anyone who promises to “fix your papers” fast can leave you without money and without a case.

In the U.S., a notary is not a lawyer

In many countries, a “notario público” is a licensed attorney. Here, not at all. A notary only certifies signatures and identity. They can't give you legal advice or represent you before immigration or the court, and in New York neither can anyone who only fills out forms or translates.

Who can legally help

A licensed attorney

You can check they are registered at iapps.courts.state.ny.us/attorney.

An accredited representative

From an organization recognized by the Department of Justice. List at justice.gov/eoir/can-someone-represent-you-eoir.

Warning signs

- They promise a permit, a visa or a quick result.
- They charge a lot just to fill out forms.
- No detailed receipt, or no copy of what they file.
- They ask you to sign blank forms or ones with false information.
- They keep your original documents.
- They threaten to report you to immigration.

Fake calls from “ICE” or “immigration”

- They say you owe a fine or a bond, or that your data is wrong.
- They demand money now, by gift card, cryptocurrency or wire transfer.
- They tell you not to tell anyone.
- ICE and USCIS don't call out of the blue to demand money. Hang up, and don't call that number back.

If it already happened to you

Don't feel ashamed: these people fool very smart people. Keep receipts, messages and documents. Report it to the NY Attorney General's immigration fraud hotline, 1-800-771-7755: they say they don't ask about immigration status or share it. And talk to an attorney soon, because a badly handled filing can affect your case.

Before you pay or sign, stop and ask

Asking us is free and commits you to nothing. Call or text (561) 445-6141, or get free legal help through ActionNYC (800-354-0365 or 311).

Dignity Toolkit: (561) 445-6141 (call or text)

ActionNYC: 800-354-0365 or 311

Report fraud (NY): 1-800-771-7755

FTC: ReportFraud.ftc.gov

Based on information from the New York Attorney General and the FTC. General information, not legal advice.