Notario scams

Spanish-speaking immigrants are being targeted by scam artists who claim to offer legal services. Notaries are not lawyers; they can’t give you legal advice or talk to government agencies for you.

People who call themselves notarios — or sometimes immigration experts — will charge you money, but cannot help you with immigration issues.

How to avoid being scammed:

- Don’t go to a notario, notario publico, or notary public for legal advice.
- Never pay for blank government forms. Government forms are free, though you’ll probably have to pay a fee when you submit them. You can get free forms at www.uscis.gov/forms, by calling the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) at 800-870-3676, or by visiting your local USCIS office.
- Get immigration information from official U.S. government websites. Make sure the website ends in “.gov,” meaning it is a government site.
- Don’t let anyone keep your original documents, such as your birth certificate or passport.
- Never sign a form that has not been filled out, that contains false information, or that you don’t understand.
- Keep a copy of every form that you submit and every letter you receive from the government.
- Contact the Ohio Bar Association for information on immigration attorneys in your area.
- Ask to see credentials. Work with an attorney licensed to practice law or an accredited representative capable of handling your immigration matters.
