SAY NO TO IMMIGRATION SERVICES FRAUD!

Know your rights and be an informed consumer

* With President Obama’s announcement about the change in the immigration policies, it is very likely that more people are going to try to defraud immigrants through fraudulent immigration services.
* For this reason, it is very important that you are informed. Look for free workshops in your community –there are organizations that want to help!
* Remember that anyone CANNOT offer immigration legal help. They have to be qualified and permitted by law.
* Only a lawyer or an accredited representative can give you legal advice. Ask them if they are a licensed attorney or an accredited representative.
* Also remember that accredited representatives must work at a non-profit organization with lawyers and that they can only charge nominal (little) money for services.
* A legal assistant or paralegal only can work on an immigration case if they are working under the supervision of an attorney.
* A guarantee that you will be successful in any immigration application (like for a green card) is a red flag - there are no guarantees with immigration.
* If a non-lawyer (like a paralegal or legal assistant) helps you fill out an immigration form, remember that they cannot give you advice on how to answer a question or what form to use!
* Do not believe that all lawyers provide good assistance! Get a referral from a trusted person or organization. Go to more than one attorney to find out what your immigration options are. As the client, you are in charge of your case and can always get a second opinion – even if you have an agreement with another attorney.
* Appearing on the television or radio does not guarantee that the person (including a lawyer) is reputable. Scammers are on the TV and radio!
* A lawyer should always explain what kind of immigration relief you are applying for, the expected processing time, and the TOTAL cost from the very beginning.
* Ask for a written contract from your attorney in a language that you can understand. The contract should explain the specific services and the total cost.
* Ask for a receipt every time you pay. The receipt should have the name of the office, the amount of money that you paid, and the reason for the payment. Ask for a business card of every person you have an appointment with.
* Ask for a copy of all documents submitted to the government on your behalf.
* Do not trust people who say that they can use their special connections with Immigration to help your case. The U.S. government is very strict about prohibiting bribes and favorable treatment for personal connections.

If you believe you have been defrauded, call Friends of Farmworkers. They have a legal project to help victims of immigration services fraud. Tel: (215) 733-0878

Visit www.paimmigrant.org or call (215) 832-0895 for more information about the free workshops about President Obama’s announcement on immigration policy changes.

**Prepared by the PA is Ready Campaign, a coalition through PICC with more than 25 organizations who are organizing together to inform immigrants in Pennsylvania about the changes in immigration policy.**