

# Unauthorized Practice of Immigration Law (UPIIL)



CATHOLIC LEGAL  
IMMIGRATION  
NETWORK, INC.

## The Basics

The practice of immigration law is allowed only by attorneys and individuals acknowledged by the Department of Justice as accredited representatives.

Law students and law graduates as well as certain other individuals are allowed to represent under certain conditions.

### A non-authorized person can assist in form completion by:

- Reading the form
- Translating and/or interpreting
- Filling out the form

### What a non-authorized person cannot do:

- Say they are an attorney or accredited representative
- Provide legal advice by interpreting or applying immigration law to present facts
- Recommend what immigration forms to use or provide case strategy
- Charge more than a nominal fee



**Note:** Those engaging in UPIIL do not have the proper training and licensing. There are very few ways to hold them accountable.

## Notario Fraud



In many Latin American communities, a notario is someone who has training similar to lawyers and can perform legal services in their countries. The same is NOT true in the United States. A notary only has the authority to witness and certify legal documents.

## Ways to Protect Yourself Against UPIIL

- 1) Specifically ask if the person is authorized to practice immigration law.
- 2) Look up the attorney or DOJ accredited representative to ensure they are in good standing.
- 3) Check the EOIR list of currently disciplined practitioners.
- 4) Obtain a written contract for any work being done which lists the services the individual is providing.  
\*It should clearly list out all fees and costs associated with the work.  
\*Ask for a copy of the contract and be sure to get a copy in a language you understand.
- 5) Obtain copies of everything your consultant files.
- 6) Only provide the consultant copies of your documents.
- 7) Be wary if you are asked to pay cash.
- 8) Get a receipt for everything you pay and ensure it includes the name and address of the consultant.
- 9) Be wary if the consultant asks you to pay in full before they do the promised work.
- 10) Look up the filing fees that are quoted to you at [uscis.gov](http://uscis.gov) to ensure they are the same.
- 11) Do not sign a document that contains false information.
- 12) Obtain references from trusted community-based organizations.