



Department of State
Office for New Americans

ONA Webinar: Immigration Scams - How to Recognize and Avoid Them

September 28, 2023

Featured Presenter: Belia Jimenez



Director of Consumer Education
New York State Division of Consumer Protection



Department of State
Consumer Protection



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Office for New Americans



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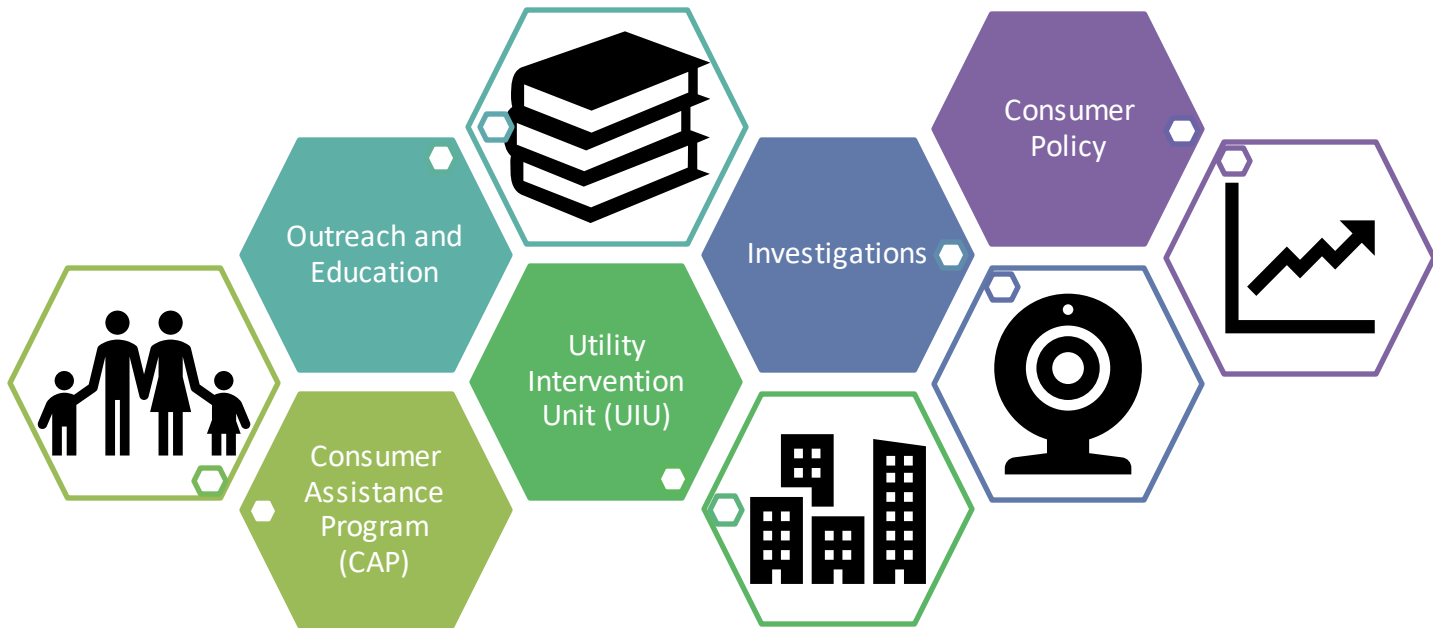
ONA Webinar: Immigration Scams - How to Recognize and Avoid Them

September 28, 2023

Today we will review:

- Warning Signs of a Scam
- Top Scams And Tips To Avoid Them
- Resources Available to Stay Informed

Division of Consumer Protection (DCP)



What is a Scam?

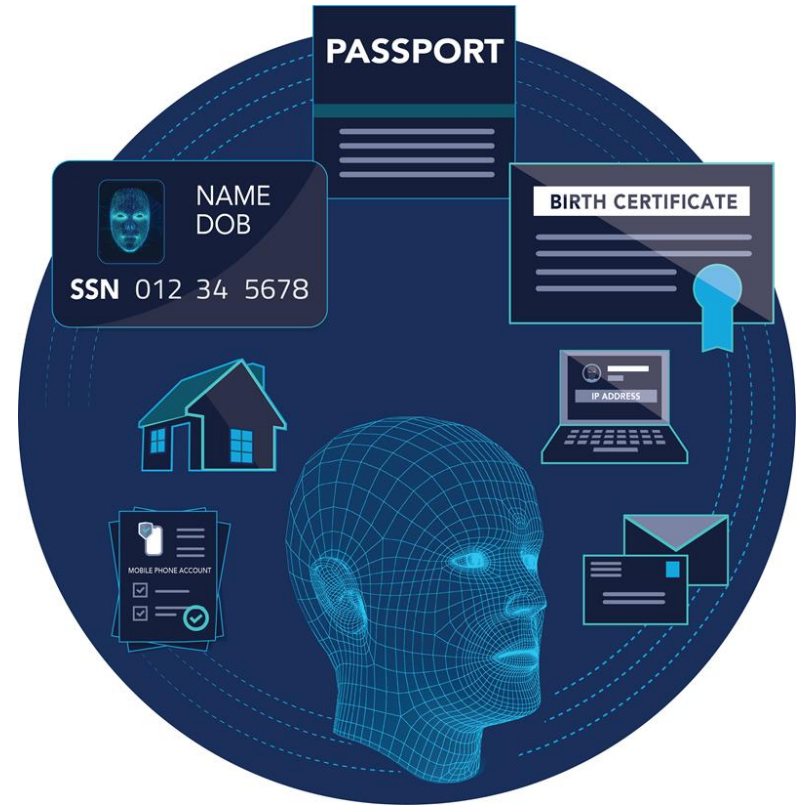


Dishonest or fraudulent attempt to take something of value from you (money, personal information or other valuables)

What is Identity Theft?

When someone takes your personal information without your permission.

It's a type of fraud where the main objective is to steal your personal information instead of money or other valuables.



What You Can Do:

1. Learn the warning signs for different types of scams
2. Protect your personal information
3. Never rush into anything



Signs That Someone is Trying to Scam You:

- Unexpected contact
- Tries to gain trust in some way
- Emotional manipulation



Signs That Someone is Trying to Scam You:

Emotional manipulation

Fear:

- Use of Scare Tactics
 - act now or you will be deported
 - your computer has been hacked
 - threatening arrest if you don't act now

Urgency:

- Time Pressure Tactics
- Asks for an immediate action. (e.g., transfer money quickly)
- Time-limited offers

Excitement:

- Attractive promises such as free gift cards, job offers, or a deal that seems too good to be true.
- Fake prizes, fake contests, giveaways.
- Fraudsters claim you are entitled to receive something, only to ask for an "advance payment."

Signs That Someone is Trying to Scam You:

- Asks to pay in an unusual way (Wire transfer request, gift card, mobile app, etc.).
- Asks for personal information (passwords, PINs, etc.)
- You suspect you're not dealing with a real organization



Test Your General Knowledge About Scams

Trivia Questions

Test Your General Knowledge: Is This a Scam?

Congratulations!

You've been selected to receive a \$100 Walmart gift card.

Press 1 to be transferred to a representative.



Test Your General Knowledge: Is This a Scam?

*Hi! I'm a nurse practitioner. Your son just got into a car accident and is in the emergency room. **We urgently need to verify his information to provide any emergency medical care.***

Could you quickly verify his full name, date of birth and social security?



Test Your General Knowledge: Is This a Scam?

This is the US Department of Homeland Security. We need to confirm your citizenship credentials.

*We will be sending an officer to your door, and you will need to produce the paperwork, or we will deport you. The paperwork must include your proof of citizenship **and a processing fee.***



Common Scams Targeting Immigrants

Notary Public “Notario Publico” Scams



What it looks like:

Individuals or services represent themselves as qualified to offer legal advice or services concerning immigration or other matters of the law.

Notary Public “Notario Publico”

Tips:

- “Notario Publicos” in the United States are **not lawyers** and cannot help you with immigration.
- **They are authorized only to certify your identity and signatures (witness the signature of forms).**

Remember:

- Don't go to a “notario” for immigration or legal help
- Don't sign blank immigration forms
- Don't let a “notario” or anyone else keep your original documents



Immigration Service Provider Fraud



What it looks like:

Individuals who provide false information

- Represent themselves as qualified to offer legal advice or services they do not intend to provide or are not licensed to provide
- Produce and sell fake documents
- Make false promises:

“We can help you get your green card faster”



Immigration Service Provider Fraud

HELPFUL TIPS!

There are legitimate organizations that can help you, but there also are scammers looking to trick you into giving them money and sensitive information.

Tips:

- New York State law prohibits immigration service providers from giving legal advice, threaten to report you, promise special favors, or charge a fee for a referral to someone qualified to help or represent you. In many cases, These services are often readily available at no charge.
- Ask for a written agreement that describes the services being provided



Immigration Service Provider Fraud

What immigration service providers can and cannot provide:



- ✓ Immigration service providers may assist with clerical services such as filling out immigration forms or translating documents.
- ✓ Providers must post clear, multi-lingual, signage about the limited scope of their services.
- ✓ Providers must provide written contracts in the language that you understand.



- ✗ Providers cannot demand a fee for providing immigration forms or a referral to a qualified legal service provider.
- ✗ Providers cannot state or hint that they can influence or get special favors or specific outcomes from any government entity.

Diversity Lottery “Visa Lottery” Scams



dvlottery.state.gov

Only way to enter the Diversity Visa Lottery

Diversity Lottery “Visa Lottery” Scams

- **What it looks like:**

- Scammers try to trick people by charging money to apply to the program, promising special access, or promising to increase someone’s chances of winning the lottery

- **Tips:**

- The U.S. Department of State manages the Diversity Visa Immigrant Program
- It’s FREE to enter
- Winners are picked at random to win the chance to apply to become lawful permanent residents – no one can influence the results
- You can **only** enter at dvlottery.state.gov
- Can only enter once a year
- Only if you’re from an eligible country and meet the educational or work requirements



Fake Government Websites

What it looks like:

- Poor design quality, poor grammar, insufficient contact information

Tips to identify a fake:

- Check the url
- For government websites, avoid selecting sponsored links
- Check the contact page
- Check for the website's privacy policy
- **Exercise Caution When Doing Any Transaction Online:** Make sure that you transact with reputable websites that use encryption.

NOTE:

https: The "s" in https stands for secure

All government websites end with **.gov**



Fake Job Opportunities

- **What it looks like:**
 - Scammers try to trick people by charging money to apply for jobs, or to get access to their personal information

- **Tips:**







Some red flags to look for:

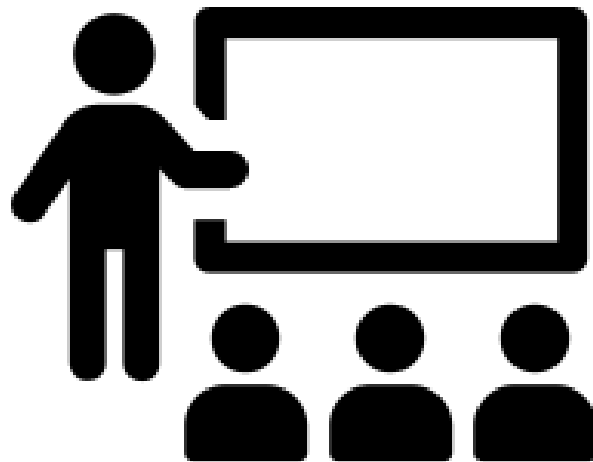
- You didn't contact them; they contacted you
- You must provide very sensitive personal information before applying or interviewing



Fake Job and Training Opportunities

If You're Considering a Training Program, Career or Vocational School,
Avoid Schools That:

-  Guarantee employment
-  Promise a degree in a very short time and provide limited information
-  Charge a flat rate for a degree or certificate
-  Use high pressure sales tactics



Fake Job and Training Opportunities

3 Ways to Identify a Legitimate Career or Vocational School:

① Confirm if the School is Licensed in New York State

- Medical Assistance
- Nursing as a Certified Nurse's Aide
- Barber
- Cosmetology
- Esthetics & Nail Technology
- Personal Trainer
- Computer Applications/Programming
- Auto Mechanic
- Audio/Visual and
- Film Careers, Construction Trades

② Licensed vs. Unlicensed Program

Students attending licensed schools receive many benefits and protections which cannot be provided to students who attend non-licensed schools.

- Training recognized by employers
- Tuition protection and reimbursement
- And more!

③ Look for This Symbol



Required by law to be licensed and must meet rigorous State standards

What is Phishing?

- The practice of sending fraudulent communications that appear to come from a reputable source
- Usually performed through calls, emails, social media (What's App, Facebook, etc.), or texts
- Includes bad links that can download malware



Phishing Scams: Government Impersonator

What it looks like:

“you’ve violated immigration law”

“your identity information is wrong”... or “out of date”

“you owe fees or need to pay an immigration bond”



Phishing Scams: Government Impersonator

Tips:

- **Government agencies (ICE and USCIS) will never contact you out of the blue and demand money.**
- Be wary of someone who wants you to pay a fee or share personal details without going through proper channels.
- **When in doubt, contact the government agency directly**

Remember:

Government agencies **do not**:

- ☒ Request personal or financial information through email, or social media (What's App, Facebook, etc.)
- ☒ Ask for credit card numbers over the phone.
- ☒ Demand money to dismiss an investigation.
- ☒ Receive payment via pre-paid gift cards or money transfer apps.

General Tips To Avoid Phishing Scams

- Anything can be imitated
- Stay vigilant, well informed and prepared.
- If you didn't initiate the communication, don't share your personal information
- Inspect the sender's information to confirm that it comes from a legitimate source
- Don't pay anyone who asks you to pay by gift card, money transfer or cryptocurrency for immigration help
- Don't click on suspicious links



NYS Division of Consumer Protection Resources

New York State's Identity Theft Resource



The Division of Consumer Protection's consumer advisors can act as liaisons to intervene and troubleshoot for consumers to help victims recover from the damages of identity theft.

Telephonic interpretation services are available

Go to our website and file a consumer complaint

www.dos.ny.gov/consumer-protection

or call our Helpline at **1-800-697-1220**.



Outreach & Education Program

Request FREE Outreach Presentations and Workshops:



dos.ny.gov/consumer-protection

518 486-3933

DCPOutreach@dos.ny.gov

Topics Available:

- ✓ Child Safety: Precautions to Save Little Lives
- ✓ Credit and Credit Management: A Matter of Life and Debt
- ✓ Internet Safety in Today's Hi-Tech World
- ✓ Preventing and Responding to Identity Theft
- ✓ Protecting Your Child's Identity
- ✓ How to Recognize and Avoid Scams: Stop, Think, Act
- ✓ Do Not Call Compliance: A Seminar for Business

Presentations can be delivered in Spanish



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www.dos.ny.gov/consumerprotection



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Outreach & Education Program



Advocating for and Empowering New York Consumers

A Division of the New York Department of State

www.dos.ny.gov



Предлагаем вам посетить веб-сайты следующих учреждений, чтобы получить дополнительную информацию о пожарной безопасности, профилактике и ликвидации возгораний.

Комиссия по безопасности потребительских товаров (Consumer Product Safety Commission, CPSC) www.cpsc.gov

American Red Cross www.redcross.org

Управление по вопросам национальной безопасности и чрезвычайных ситуаций (Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services) штата Нью-Йорк
Служба предупреждения пожаров и пожарной охраны (Office of Fire Prevention and Control) www.dhs.gov/officeof-fire-prevention-and-control



Защита прав и расширение возможностей потребителей штата Нью-Йорк
Управление Государственного департамента штата Нью-Йорк
<https://dos.ny.gov/consumerprotection>

Горячая линия: 1-800-697-1220

Kelly Hochstetler, Robert J. Tompkins, Государственный департамент



صارف کا معاونتی یونٹ (Consumer Assistance Unit) 800-697-1220 <https://dos.ny.gov/consumerprotection>

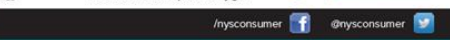
وفاقی تجارتی کمیشن (Federal Trade Commission) / ڈو نٹ کال (Do Not Call) 888-382-1222 www.donotcall.gov

سالانہ کریڈٹ رپورٹ (Annual Credit Report) 877-322-8228 www.annualcreditreport.com

صارف کی مصنوعہ کا سلامتی کمیشن (Consumer Product Safety Commission) 800-638-2772 www.cpsc.gov

OPT OUT (اپنی سبھی اسکرین شدہ کریڈٹ پیشکشوں) 888-5-OPT-OUT www.optoutprescreen.com

نیویارک کے صارفین کے لیے وکالت کرنا اور انہیں بالاختیار بنانا 1-800-697-1220 <https://dos.ny.gov>



Защита прав и расширение возможностей потребителей штата Нью-Йорк
Управление Государственного департамента штата Нью-Йорк



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Questions?



Division of Consumer Protection

[E-mail: DCPOutreach@dos.ny.gov](mailto:DCPOutreach@dos.ny.gov)

www.dos.ny.gov/consumer-protection

Advocating for and Empowering NY Consumers

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Facebook.com/NYSConsumer

Consumer Helpline:
1-800-697-1220



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Thank you!

Please share your feedback by answering a brief exit poll.

Contact Us:

NewAmericans@dos.ny.gov

@nysnewamericans

<https://dos.ny.gov/office-new-americans>

