

# Immigration scammers prey on people's hopes



## What is an immigration representative?

In Canada, there are two types of immigration representatives: paid and unpaid.

### *Paid immigration representatives*

Only the following people may charge a fee or receive any other type of consideration, to represent or advise you in connection with a Canadian immigration proceeding or application:

- Lawyers and paralegals who are members in good standing of a Canadian provincial or territorial law society;
- Notaries who are members in good standing of the Chambre des notaires du Québec; and
- Immigration consultants who are members in good standing of the Immigration Consultants of Canada Regulatory Council (ICCRC).

The Government of Canada will not deal with unauthorized immigration representatives who charge a fee for their services.

### *Unpaid immigration representatives*

A person or an organization that does not charge a fee for its services may also represent you (for example, a family member or a friend, or a member of a non-governmental or religious organization).

No one knows for sure how often it happens, but even once is too often: would-be immigrants eager to fulfil their dream of a new life in Canada pay someone a small fortune in exchange for a “guarantee” that their application will be approved by Canada.

However, no one can guarantee that anyone will be admitted to Canada. Canada's immigration system is based on fairness. It is also true that no one can guarantee that your case will be processed faster. Every application receives the same consideration. Potential immigrants to Canada should stay away from anyone who says anything different.

The Government of Canada has a zero tolerance approach to immigration fraud, and is working domestically and internationally to protect would-be immigrants from phony consultants who extract large fees in exchange for false promises—and in the process, possibly ruining the person's chances of ever getting into Canada.

Crooked consultants take advantage of individuals eager to come to this country and pose a serious threat to the integrity of Canada's immigration system. Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) is committed to seeing that all levels of government and law enforcement work together to ensure that those who commit this kind of fraud are punished.

On the international front, Canada led an advertising campaign, with several other like-minded countries, to warn potential immigrants about fraudulent consultants. The Government of Canada, with the support of Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States—members of the Five Country Conference—launched an overseas advertising campaign last year.

In June 2011, CIC designated a new regulatory body for immigration consultants in Canada.

It is anticipated that the Immigration Consultants of Canada Regulatory Council (ICCRC) will not only help ensure public confidence in the integrity of the immigration program, but also that immigration consultants provide their services in a professional and ethical manner.

Even with a new regulator in place, with immigration consultants, as with anything else, it is “buyer beware.” To start with, potential immigrants should understand that there is no requirement to have a consultant or anyone else represent them during the process.

To apply for a visa or Canadian citizenship, you are not obliged to hire an immigration representative—which includes immigration consultants, lawyers, Quebec notaries and paralegals regulated by a law society—but if you do, choose carefully. Always check to see if the person is authorized and if they are not, go to someone else.

For more information on how to choose an immigration representative and how to avoid the fraudsters, please visit [www.immigration.gc.ca/antifraud2](http://www.immigration.gc.ca/antifraud2).

