



# The State Bar of California

## Supporting California's Immigrant Communities

The State Bar's mission of public protection includes all California residents, regardless of citizenship or immigration status.

- There are over 10 million immigrants living in California, more than any other state.
- Of those, approximately 75 percent are documented and almost half are U.S. citizens.
- Nearly one in five California children is a U.S. citizen living with at least one undocumented family member.

We support California's immigrants in numerous ways, including the following:

### Outreach to Immigrant Communities

- We distribute multilingual public alerts—posters, flyers, and online—about legal issues of affecting immigrants. Recent outreach has focused on fraud alerts for those seeking help following immigration raids, detention at the border, or family separations; and legal aid disaster relief following the California wildfires.
  - The alerts are translated into the five most common languages in California other than English: Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, and Russian.
  - Alerts go to consulates, Public Defender's Offices, the ACLU, Centro Legal de la Raza, California Immigrant Policy Center, California Rural Legal Assistance Inc., other legal aid organizations, and the United Farm Workers.
- We have performed outreach to those held at immigration detention centers to help these vulnerable individuals avoid falling prey to unscrupulous attorneys or those holding themselves out as attorneys.
- We partner with community-based legal aid organizations in an ongoing campaign to educate consumers about how to avoid immigration-based legal scams, distrust quick-fix promises, and contact the Bar with questions and complaints.

### Addressing Notario Fraud and Other Unethical Practices Targeting Immigrants

- A dedicated unit in the State Bar's Office of Chief Trial Counsel investigates and addresses complaints about the Unauthorized Practice of Law (UPL) by non-attorneys.
- In 2017, we processed nearly 700 UPL complaints.
- This unit proactively searches for notario fraud by monitoring advertising and news targeted to Latino immigrant communities.
- Our website highlights [multilingual information](#) on ways to avoid fraud and make complaints about practicing attorneys. We promote this information actively on social media.
- Our non-attorney UPL enforcement includes cease-and-desist letters; law enforcement and other agency referrals; and seizing practices by taking client records, freezing bank accounts, and redirecting phone and email. Several recent cases targeted individuals who preyed on thousands of immigrants in fear of deportation.
- In 2018, the State Bar referred more than 500 cases to law enforcement for prosecution.

- We work with District Attorney's Offices statewide, through outreach with informational flyers as well as in-person meetings, to better coordinate investigation and prosecution.
- We post notice of UPL cease-and-desist letters online, making this information more readily available to the public.
- Complaints about unethical immigration attorneys are investigated and pursued through the State Bar's attorney discipline process.
- If an unethical immigration attorney is not licensed in California, we refer cases to the appropriate state licensing jurisdiction as well as federal authorities.
- We assist in drafting legislation dealing with immigration status and attorney discipline.

### **Multilingual Access to Attorney Discipline Information and Other State Bar Resources**

- Our Resource Center hotline is staffed by service representatives bilingual in English and Spanish.
- The Resource Center hotline also utilizes interpretation service in over 200 languages, removing the need to take the caller's number and return the call.
- Our online complaint portal is available in Spanish as well as English, and our online information and complaint forms for UPL and attorney misconduct are available in Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, and Russian.
- We have expanded and improved certification of staff bilingual in English and Spanish in the State Bar's Office of Chief Trial Counsel.

### **Funding Legal Aid Providers that Provide Direct Legal Aid to Immigrants**

- In 2019, we will distribute more than \$62 million in grants to legal aid organizations who provide direct legal services to immigrants and other vulnerable Californians.
- California legal aid organizations offer their services in over 40 languages.
- In 2017, the legal services organizations we fund assisted over 100,000 individuals to file DACA applications and closed nearly 33,000 immigration-related cases. Some of their results that year included:
  - 1,080 individuals became U.S. citizens;
  - 1,664 obtained employment authorization; and
  - 2,700 gained permanent residency or attained safety through other legal status.