

Immigrant Exploitation

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Department of Justice

Office of Special Counsel for Immigration-Related Unfair Employment Practices

Resources + Employer and Worker Hotlines:

<https://www.justice.gov/crt/office-special-counsel-immigration-related-unfair-employment-practices>

United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)

Investment Scams (EB-5 Immigrant Investor Program)

<https://www.uscis.gov/news/alerts/investor-alert-investment-scams-exploit-immigrant-investor-program>

<https://www.uscis.gov/avoid-scams/common-scams>

Federal Trade Commission (FTC)

<https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/features/feature-0012-scams-against-immigrants>

To prevent business practices that are anticompetitive or deceptive or unfair to consumers; to enhance informed consumer choice and public understanding of the competitive process; and to accomplish this without unduly burdening legitimate business activity.

The FTC offers resources for avoiding immigration-related scams as part of its consumer education efforts, and can take legal action to protect immigrants targeted by scams. Example:

<https://www.ftc.gov/news-events/press-releases/2011/06/ftc-combats-immigration-services-scams>.

Their website [Consumer.gov](https://www.consumer.gov) includes resources related to scams, including notario fraud:

<https://www.consumer.gov/content/notario-fraud>

Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB)

<http://www.consumerfinance.gov/data-research/research-reports/financial-education-programs-serving-immigrant-populations/>

We aim to make consumer financial markets work for consumers, responsible providers, and the economy as a whole. We protect consumers from unfair, deceptive, or abusive practices and take action against companies that break the law. We arm people with the information and step stools that they need to make smart financial decisions.

The CFPB developed a report on financial education programs for immigrant populations. A small portion of the report discussed the fact that there are financial scams designed to exploit immigrant populations. In their own words, part of the purpose of the report is so “The CFPB, along with policymakers, financial educators, and others concerned with consumer financial

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well-being, can use these research findings to develop, spread, and scale targeted approaches to help immigrants with financial decision-making.”

Federal Anti-Trafficking Efforts

Federal agencies are involved in anti-trafficking efforts, including:

- Department of Health and Human Services
- Department of Justice
- Department of Labor
- Department of Homeland Security
- Department of State

*Learn more about federal anti-trafficking efforts at:

<https://traffickingresourcecenter.org/what-human-trafficking/federal-anti-trafficking-efforts>

***NOTE: There are a number of nonprofit organizations that work on human trafficking issues, an issue with significant overlap to immigrant exploitation.**

LEGAL

Migrant Legal Aid

<http://migrantlegalaid.com/legal-services-2/>

Migrant Legal Aid offers a continuum of services as an independent non-profit organization governed by a volunteer board of directors and operated by a staff of eight.

Engages in advocacy, community education, outreach, legal services, and referrals to migrants, including on exploitation-related issues.

La Raza Centro Legal

<http://www.lrccl.org/legal-services/workers-rights-program/>

Mission: La Raza Centro Legal is a community-based legal organization dedicated to empowering Latino, immigrant and low-income communities of San Francisco to advocate for their civil and human rights. We combine legal services and advocacy to build grassroots power and alliances towards creating a movement for a just society.

The Worker's Rights Program protects the rights of low-wage immigrant workers who have been exploited by employers, assists with wage and hour cases, wrongful termination, and employment discrimination cases, ensures that workers receive the minimum wage, sick leave, and health insurance benefits, and provide education and outreach.

Legal Aid Justice Center

<https://www.justice4all.org/immigrant-advocacy-program/>

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Mission: Our mission is to seek equal justice for all by solving clients' legal problems, strengthening the voices of low-income communities, and rooting out the inequities that keep people in poverty.

"The Immigrant Advocacy Program represents low-wage immigrant workers in court and administrative proceedings, counsels them about their rights under federal and state law to be paid for their work, recovers unpaid wages they have earned, and fights workplace discrimination. With a special focus on day laborers and migrant farmworkers, we seek to stop unjust employment practices and assist hard-working immigrants throughout Virginia who face discrimination and exploitation."

Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF)

<http://www.maldef.org/employment/litigation/index.html>

Founded in 1968, MALDEF is the nation's leading Latino legal civil rights organization. Often described as the "law firm of the Latino community", MALDEF promotes social change through advocacy, communications, community education, and litigation in the areas of education, employment, immigrant rights, and political access.

Litigation focuses include immigrants who are owed unpaid wages and experience unequal and exploitative working conditions.

Greater Boston Legal Services (GBLS)

<https://www.gbbs.org/impact-advocacy/employment>

Mission: Our mission is to provide free legal assistance to as many low-income families as possible to help them secure some of the most basic necessities of life.

Spearheads impact advocacy that relates to exploitation of immigrants, such as Combating 'Wage Theft' through Stronger Wage Enforcement and Laws, Advocating for Rights for Workers in Temporary Jobs, and Protecting Massachusetts Domestic Workers' Basic Workplace Rights. Were part of the lawsuit with Chelsea Collaborative that resulted in back wages being paid for immigrant workers whose rights were being violated.

American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) - Immigrants' Rights Project

<https://www.aclu.org/issues/immigrants-rights>

The ACLU Immigrants' Rights Project is dedicated to expanding and enforcing the civil liberties and civil rights of immigrants and to combating public and private discrimination against them.

While the ACLU focuses on immigrant rights rather than exploitation-issues specifically, they do provide a directory of immigration service providers by state that may be able to provide assistance at low or no cost (http://www.aclu.org/files/assets/ImServDir_20101229.pdf).

American Bar Association (ABA) - Commission on Immigration

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http://www.americanbar.org/groups/public_services/immigration/projects_initiatives.html

The Commission directs the Association's efforts to ensure fair treatment and full due process rights for immigrants and refugees within the United States.

Partner with AILA (below) in The Fight Notario Fraud project, which is dedicated to putting an end to immigration consulting fraud.

In addition, these resources can help you locate the contact information for free or low-cost legal services for immigrants and refugees in your state:

http://www.americanbar.org/groups/public_services/immigration/resources.html

American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA)

<http://www.aila.org/practice/consumer-protection/stop-notario-fraud>

The American Immigration Lawyers Association is the national association of immigration lawyers established to promote justice, advocate for fair and reasonable immigration law and policy, advance the quality of immigration and nationality law and practice, and enhance the professional development of its members.

Partner with ABA (above) in The Fight Notario Fraud project, which is dedicated to putting an end to immigration consulting fraud. See their joint website "Stop Notario Fraud" here:

<http://www.stopnotariofraud.org/about.php>

AYUDA

<http://ayuda.com/wp/get-help/legal-services/immigration-law/project-end/>

Exists to advocate for and defend the legal and human rights of low-income Latino and other immigrant communities in the Washington, D.C. area.

"Project END (Eradicating Notario Deceit) is a direct legal services project aimed at remedying the harm caused by notario or immigration consultant fraud. Project END provides advice, counsel, and representation to victims in civil, criminal, and immigration proceedings."

Washington Lawyer's Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs

<http://www.washlaw.org/projects/immigrant-and-refugee-rights>

The Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, was established in 1968 to provide pro bono legal services to address discrimination and entrenched poverty in the Washington, DC community.

Immigrant and Refugee Rights project works with clients to file charges with the EEOC or local agencies and pursues litigation on behalf of clients on a range of issues, including workplace abuse and exploitation.

Catholic Charities

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<https://www.catholiccharitiesdc.org/immigrants-and-refugees>

Mission: The mission of Catholic Charities is to provide service to people in need, to advocate for justice in social structures, and to call the entire church and other people of good will to do the same.

In many states, provides legal representation and information related to immigration issues, including workplace exploitation.

National Immigration Law Center (NILC)

<https://www.nilc.org/issues/workersrights/>

Established in 1979, the National Immigration Law Center (NILC) is one of the leading organizations in the U.S. exclusively dedicated to defending and advancing the rights of low-income immigrants. Conducts policy analysis and impact litigation and provides publications, technical advice, and trainings to a broad constituency of legal aid agencies, community groups, and pro bono attorneys.

“All workers, no matter where they were born, should be able to work free from fear that they will be underpaid or placed in a dangerous environment...Through a variety of tactics, including know-your-rights trainings, policy analysis, and raids response, NILC defends the fundamental rights of all those working in the U.S.”

National Immigration Project of the National Lawyers Guild

<http://www.nationalimmigrationproject.org/victims.html>

Mission: The National Immigration Project is a national non-profit that provides legal assistance and technical support to immigrant communities, legal practitioners, and advocates working to advance the rights of noncitizens.

Advocacy on behalf of immigrant victims of crimes related to workplace exploitation and abuse.

Immigrant Law Clinics

There are immigration clinics at various law schools that can assist with immigrant exploitation issues, just one example is:

University of Arizona - Immigration Law Clinic

https://law2.arizona.edu/clinics/Immigration_Law_Clinic/immigrant_workers_project.cfm

The Tucson Immigrant Workers' Project advocates for the rights of low-wage immigrant workers through direct service, public policy research, and community education and outreach.

LABOR

Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC)

<https://www.splcenter.org/issues/immigrant-justice>

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<https://www.splcenter.org/20110301/rights-all-immigrants>

Mission: The Southern Poverty Law Center is dedicated to fighting hate and bigotry and to seeking justice for the most vulnerable members of our society. Using litigation, education, and other forms of advocacy, the SPLC works toward the day when the ideals of equal justice and equal opportunity will be a reality.

The Immigrant Justice Project, a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), is a legal initiative that defends labor rights and civil rights in the Southeastern United States. The SPLC exposes civil rights violations and has documented systematic exploitation of some categories of immigrant workers. Along with public education, the SPLC provides legal resources to immigrants, including engaging in lawsuits. Reports related to immigrant exploitation include [Injustice on Our Plates](#) and [Unsafe at These Speeds](#).

American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)

www.afsc.org/immigrants-rights/

Mission: The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) is a Quaker organization that promotes lasting peace with justice, as a practical expression of faith in action. Drawing on continuing spiritual insights and working with people of many backgrounds, we nurture the seeds of change and respect for human life that transform social relations and systems.

The Immigrant Rights program of AFSC focuses on defense of human and civil rights for immigrants in the U.S., including migrant workers and farm laborers, and fighting abuses in the agriculture and service industries.

Latino Justice

<http://latinojustice.org/LAW/>

Mission: LatinoJustice PRLDEF champions an equitable society. Using the power of the law together with advocacy and education, LatinoJustice PRLDEF protects opportunities for all Latinos to succeed in school and work, fulfill their dreams, and sustain their families and communities.

“The *Latinas At Work Project* seeks to stop the exploitation of Latina immigrant workers by working with our partner organizations in the community to document, publicize and strategically challenge pervasive violations; hold employers accountable; educate workers about their workplace rights; and provide referrals and legal advocacy to victims of labor exploitation.”

Worker Justice Center of New York

<http://www.wjcny.org/program/worker-advocacy>

Mission: Worker Justice Center of New York pursues justice for those denied human rights with a focus on agricultural and other low wage workers, through legal representation, community empowerment and advocacy for institutional change.

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Workplace Safety, Worker Advocacy, and Human Trafficking programs include education and advocacy efforts around fighting the exploitation of immigrants.

Chinese Staff & Workers Association

http://cswa.org/?page_id=69

“In response to the super-exploitation that many workers face on a daily basis, and to the multiple barriers of race, gender, age, and immigration status that often compound exploitation, we emphasize developing leadership among working people in NYC’s Chinatowns and to bridge the divides within the Chinese community and beyond; we believe working people, as the creators of society will be the agent for change.”

Organizes campaigns that directly relate to exploitation of workers, including immigrants.

Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Safety & Health (MassCOSH)

<http://www.masscosh.org/what-we-do/initiatives/immigrant-worker-center>

<http://www.masscosh.org/what-we-do/policy-advocacy>

Mission: MassCOSH strives to ensure that all workers earn their living and return home alive and well. MassCOSH unites workers, unions and community groups with environmental and health activists, to end dangerous work conditions, to organize for safe, secure jobs, and to advocate for healthy communities. Through training, technical assistance and building community/labor alliances, MassCOSH mobilizes its members and develops leaders in the movement to end unsafe work conditions.

“The Immigrant Worker Center is a safe place for immigrants to speak up about workplace abuse and join with a powerful network of workers demanding safe, healthy working conditions.” MassCOSH assists with resources, organizing, policy advocacy, and more to assist workers in their efforts to fight abuse. MassCOSH also works on policy related to labor reform that would help prevent immigration-related abuses, such as policy related to the Right to Know law and workers compensation.

Chelsea Collaborative

<http://www.chelseacollab.org/who-we-are/programs/chelsea-latino-immigrant-committee>

Mission: The Chelsea Collaborative, Inc. originally founded in 1988 as the Chelsea Human Services Collaborative, is an organization dedicated to the needs of the community of Chelsea. Our mission is to enhance the social, environmental and economic health of the community and its people.

The Chelsea Latino Immigrant Committee focuses on workers’ rights: elimination of hazardous working conditions, discrimination and unfair wages. For example, they successfully partnered in a lawsuit that resulted in “winning hundreds of thousands of dollars in back wages for immigrant workers whose rights were being violated.”

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National Employment Law Project (NELP)

<http://nelp.org/campaign/enforcement-of-worker-protections/>

“NELP is at the forefront of designing state and local policy solutions to expand worker protections, raise industry standards across low-wage labor markets, and build robust enforcement systems that translate policy wins into real improvements in workers’ lives.”

Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF)

<http://aaldef.org/programs/>

Founded in 1974, the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF) is a national organization that protects and promotes the civil rights of Asian Americans. By combining litigation, advocacy, education, and organizing, AALDEF works with Asian American communities across the country to secure human rights for all.

Programs include Economic Justice for Workers and an Anti-Trafficking Initiative, both dealing with the exploitation of low-wage workers, many of whom are immigrants.

Immigrant Worker Center Collaborative

<http://workerscollab.org/wordpress/our-work/>

The Immigrant Worker Center Collaborative’s mission is to be a movement building institution that unites and strengthens worker centers to develop the leadership of immigrant workers.

Supports member campaigns related to wage theft and other issues pertinent to immigrant exploitation.

The Advocates for Human Rights

<http://www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org/labortrafficking>

The mission of The Advocates for Human Rights is to implement international human rights standards to promote civil society and reinforce the rule of law. By involving volunteers in research, education, and advocacy, we build broad constituencies in the United States and select global communities.

One area of work is labor trafficking in MN, which disproportionately affects migrant workers. Also created a report, [Asking the Right Questions: A Human Rights Approach to Ending Trafficking and Exploitation in the Workplace](#).

National Day Laborer Organizing Network (NDLON)

<http://www.ndlon.org/en/program-areas/labor-rights/wage-theft>

NDLON improves the lives of day laborers in the United States. To this end, NDLON works to unify and strengthen its member organizations to be more strategic and effective in their efforts to develop leadership, mobilize, and organize day laborers in order to protect and expand their

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civil, labor and human rights. NDLOM fosters safer more humane environments for day laborers, both men and women, to earn a living, contribute to society, and integrate into the community.

Supports campaigns related to exploitative working conditions and worker's rights, including wage theft.

National Domestic Workers Alliance (NDWA)

<http://www.domesticworkers.org/initiatives/immigration-and-trafficking>

The National Domestic Workers Alliance (NDWA) is the nation's leading voice for dignity and fairness for the millions of domestic workers in the United States, most of whom are women.

One of their main initiatives "...seeks to build the capacity of our affiliates and their communities to respond to human trafficking of domestic workers."

Wage Theft Clinics

Wage theft clinics can be hosted by a variety of agencies and help workers get wages or benefits that were wrongfully denied to them. Two examples:

New Immigrant Community Empowerment

<http://www.mass.gov/ago/doing-business-in-massachusetts/workplace-rights/wage-theft-clinic.html>

Massachusetts Attorney General's Office

<http://www.mass.gov/ago/doing-business-in-massachusetts/workplace-rights/wage-theft-clinic.html>

FARM LABOR

National Farm Worker Ministry (NFWM)

<http://nfwm.org/campaigns/>

Mission: National Farm Worker Ministry (NFWM) is a faith-based organization committed to justice for and empowerment of farm workers. NFWM educates, equips and mobilizes member organizations and other faith communities, groups and individuals to support farm worker led efforts to improve their living and working conditions.

Supports several national and local campaigns - led by farm workers - addressing exploitative living and working conditions of migrant farm workers; website contains campaign packets with further resources.

Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs (AFOP)

<http://afop.org/cif/>

Mission: The Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs' mission is to improve the quality of life for migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their families by providing advocacy for the

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member organizations that serve them. That means securing the same rights and benefits for farmworkers that the rest of the American people enjoy.

AFOP has a Children in the Fields campaign which involves educating the public, advocating for educational programs for farmworker children, and supporting fair living wages for all farmworkers. This and other campaigns are necessary because of exploitative working conditions for migrant workers.

Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC)

<http://www.floc.com/wordpress/cross-border-organizing/>

Since it's founding in 1967, FLOC has worked to organize farmworkers and empower them to demand better wages, working, and living conditions.

Organizes campaigns and provides information related to exploitative working conditions.

United Farm Workers of America (UFW)

http://ufw.org/_board.php?b_code=org_key

The United Farm Workers of America has over 25,000 workers under contract in California, Washington, Florida and Texas. With the passage in the fall of 2002 of historic legislation that strengthened the California Agricultural Relations Act, the UFW is beginning its biggest farm worker organizing drive in twenty years throughout California.

Organizes campaigns related to exploitative and unsafe working conditions for farm workers.

Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW)

<http://www.ciw-online.org/about/>

The Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) is a worker-based human rights organization internationally recognized for its achievements in the fields of social responsibility, human trafficking, and gender-based violence at work.

The Fair Food Program, a partnership between farmworkers, retail buyers, and growers, prevents exploitation; the Anti-Slavery Campaign has uncovered, investigated, and assisted in the prosecution of farm slavery operations; and the Campaign for Fair Food educates consumers on farmer labor exploitation.

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

Center for American Progress

<https://www.americanprogress.org/>

The Center for American Progress is an independent nonpartisan policy institute that is dedicated to improving the lives of all Americans, through bold, progressive ideas, as well as

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strong leadership and concerted action. Our aim is not just to change the conversation, but to change the country.

Brief: [How Predatory Debt Traps Threaten Vulnerable Families](#)

Migration Policy Institute (MPI)

<http://www.migrationpolicy.org/>

The Migration Policy Institute is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit think tank in Washington, DC dedicated to analysis of the movement of people worldwide.

Report: [Spheres of Exploitation: Thwarting Actors Who Profit from Illegal Labor, Domestic Servitude, and Sex Work](#)

Brief: [What We Know: Regulating the Recruitment of Migrant Workers](#)

Urban Institute

<http://www.urban.org/research-area/immigrants-and-immigration>

Urban's mission is to open minds, shape decisions, and offer solutions through economic and social policy research.

Report: [Hidden in Plain Sight: Labor Trafficking in the United States](#)

ONLINE TOOLS/LEGAL DIRECTORIES

Immigration Advocates Network

<http://www.immigrationadvocates.org/nonprofit/legaldirectory/>

Mission: The Immigration Advocates Network (IAN) is a collaborative effort of leading immigrants' rights organizations designed to increase access to justice for low-income immigrants and strengthen the capacity of organizations serving them.

Is a resource center so not directly involved in exploitation-issues but provides online resources and tools, including a national directory of nonprofit organizations that provide free or low-cost immigration legal services (<http://www.immigrationadvocates.org/nonprofit/legaldirectory/>).

Immigration Law Help

<https://www.immigrationlawhelp.org/about/>

Not directly involved in exploitation-issues but is a searchable online directory of over 940 free or low-cost nonprofit immigration legal services providers in all 50 states.

Pro Bono Net

www.probono.net

Not directly involved in exploitation-issues but provides resources for pro bono and legal services attorneys and others working to assist low income or disadvantaged clients.