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TO: COMMUNITY MEMBERS WORKING WITH REFUGEES
FROM: IDAHO OFFICE FOR REFUGEES
SUBJECT: IMMIGRATION SERVICES
DATE: 9/22/2009
CC: ALL AGENCY DIRECTORS AND PERSONNEL

It has come to our attention that there are a number of community members who are providing immigration assistance to refugees. Please be advised that providing immigration advice without Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) recognition and accreditation is considered *unauthorized practice of law* and is illegal.

We ask that anyone who does not have BIA recognition and accreditation cease providing immigration assistance to refugee clients. Immigration applications are complex, with rules and regulations changing constantly. Errors can have serious and long lasting consequences for clients. It is imperative that services are provided by recognized agencies with trained, accredited staff and that complex cases are referred to an attorney.

The Agency for New Americans and World Relief have both received agency recognition and staff accreditation through BIA. The International Rescue Committee is in the process of gaining this recognition. Immigration staff members at these agencies receive extensive training before earning accreditation. They continue to receive on-going training in order to maintain these credentials. Staff members at these agencies are knowledgeable about immigration laws, especially those relating to refugees, and are committed to providing the best information and service possible. Fees charged are nominal, in accordance with BIA requirements.

If you have questions, please feel free to phone any of the agencies listed above. They will be happy to answer any questions you may have. If you are aware of individuals who are providing immigration services without proper credentials or individuals who are receiving these services, please share this information and help us to protect the legal interests of our refugee clients.