

A Message from  
ILLINOIS ATTORNEY GENERAL  
**LISA MADIGAN**



Running a small business is not without its challenges. While some challenges are an expected part of operating a business, others are not. All too often, small businesses find themselves the victims of fraud and

other bad practices, such as telemarketing schemes, office supply scams and slamming (the switching of telephone service providers without the customer's knowledge or authorization).

As Attorney General, I have made it a priority to protect businesses from fraud and assist Illinoisans in confronting some of the most frustrating and unexpected challenges of running a small business.

I invite businesspeople throughout the state to learn more about the services offered by my office and take advantage of our programs, which can provide valuable information and assistance.

Through the cooperation of consumers, business owners and government agencies such as my office, we can ensure fair treatment and instill integrity in Illinois' marketplace.

  
Lisa Madigan  
Illinois Attorney General



**LISA MADIGAN**  
ILLINOIS ATTORNEY GENERAL

For more information or to request assistance, please contact the Office of Attorney General Lisa Madigan.

**Consumer Fraud  
Hotlines**

Chicago  
1-800-386-5438  
TTY: 1-800-964-3013

Springfield  
1-800-243-0618  
TTY: 1-877-844-5461

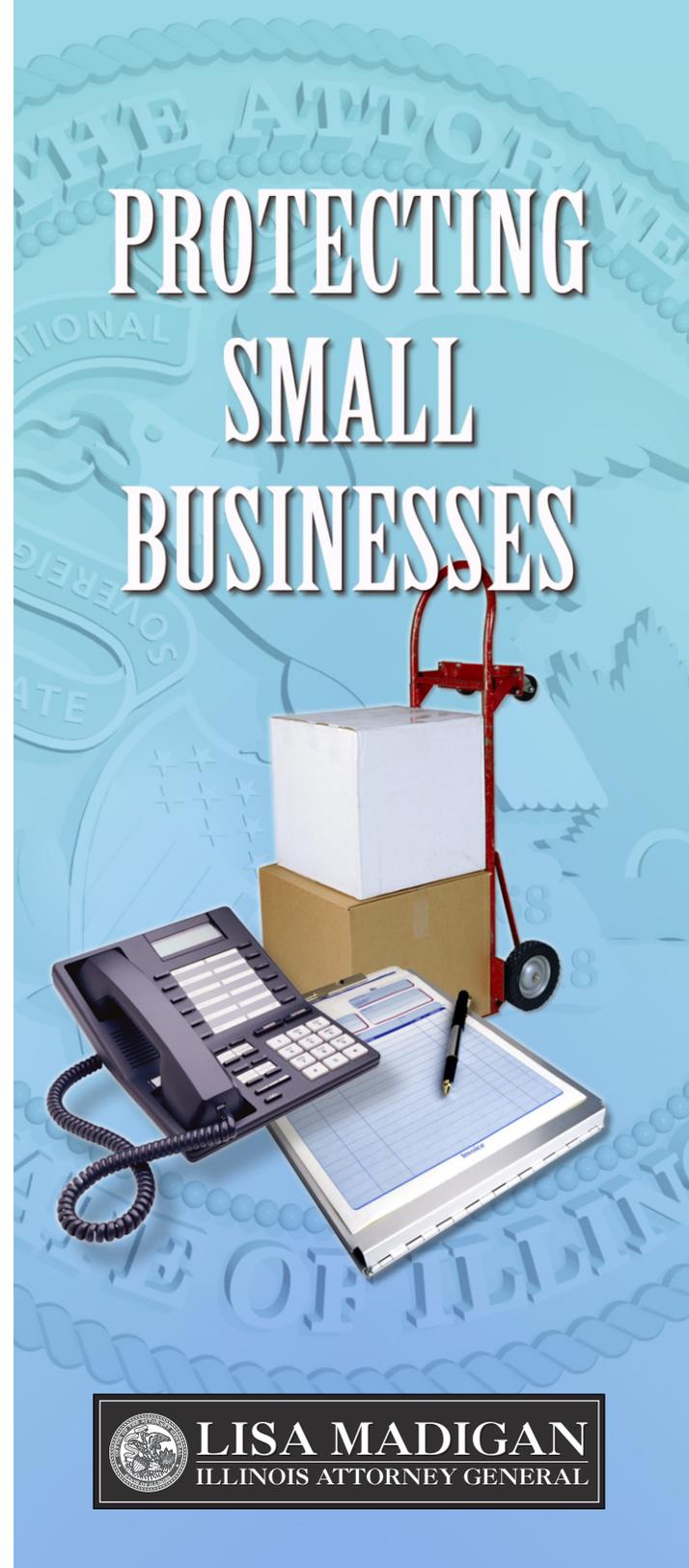
Carbondale  
1-800-243-0607  
TTY: 1-877-675-9339

**Franchise Bureau**  
(217) 782-4465  
TTY: 1-877-844-5461

**Health Care Helpline**  
1-877-305-5145  
TTY: 1-800-964-3013

[www.IllinoisAttorneyGeneral.gov](http://www.IllinoisAttorneyGeneral.gov)

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Several bureaus within the Attorney General's Office provide services that assist small businesses in Illinois.

### Franchise Bureau

The Franchise Bureau registers and monitors franchisors and brokers who seek to sell franchises in Illinois. The goal of the bureau—and the Franchise Disclosure Act it administers—is to provide pre-sale disclosures and protection for prospective franchisees. The bureau provides information on the Franchise Disclosure Act, rules applicable to the offering of franchises, and business and financial histories of franchisors.

### Health Care Bureau

Through mediation, the Health Care Bureau can help business owners and their employees resolve disputes with health insurance companies and health care providers, ensuring that plan participants receive the coverage to which they are entitled.

### Consumer Fraud Bureau

The Consumer Fraud Bureau seeks to protect Illinois consumers and businesses from victimization by fraud, deception and unfair methods of competition through both mediation and legal action.

With the goal of breaking down barriers that stand in the way of amicable resolutions, the Attorney General's consumer mediation program facilitates resolutions to disputes in which businesses or consumers feel they have been victimized in the marketplace. Although the Attorney General's mediators are not judges and cannot make factual determinations with respect to a dispute, both businesses and consumers benefit from the program and are able to avoid spending the significant amounts of time and money associated with litigation. As a result, the Attorney General's Office has saved Illinois businesses and consumers millions of dollars.

Under Illinois law, small businesses are entitled to the same protections against fraud and deception as consumers. If a pattern of fraud is found, the Attorney General can take legal action against the perpetrators on behalf of the State of Illinois.

### Tips to Protect Your Business

- Assign one person or department to handle incoming sales calls or solicitations and approve all purchases of office supplies.
- Instruct employees not to give out information regarding office machines and copiers, especially when responding to telephone solicitations.
- Check out unfamiliar companies and offers before placing an order.
- Keep a list of regularly used vendors as protection against schemers who claim an order is a “renewal.”
- When you place an order, ask for written confirmation with all conditions clearly spelled out.
- Immediately notify the supplier in writing of unauthorized shipments or invoices. Clearly state that you did not place an order and will not accept delivery. If the goods have already been delivered, notify the company that you will not pay and that the goods are available for pickup. If the company claims to have a tape recording of the order, insist on hearing it. If they claim to have an invoice or other documentation, insist on seeing it.

#### WATCH OUT FOR:

Office Supply Scams

Collect Call Scams

Fraudulent Charitable Solicitations

Telephone Service “Slamming”

Phony Billing Schemes