

A Message from
ILLINOIS ATTORNEY GENERAL
KWAME RAOUL



Running a business is as challenging as it is fulfilling. When a business becomes a victim of a scam or fraudulent practices, the result is a waste of resources, time and energy that would otherwise be directed toward your business goals.

The Office of the Attorney General will protect small businesses from fraud and will be available to help you work through situations that arise. Even the most watchful and diligent business could get caught up in telemarketing schemes, office supply scams or payment ripoffs by service providers, to give just a few examples. To respond to the dishonest forces, this office has cultivated experts in the Consumer Fraud Bureau, the Health Care Bureau and the Franchise Bureau to analyze fraud complaints and seek a resolution.

I invite businesses throughout the state to learn about the services available to small businesses in the Office of the Attorney General. Our knowledgeable, experienced staff ready to help.

Together we can create a climate of fairness and integrity that will benefit small businesses and by extension, Illinois business environment.

Kwame Raoul
Illinois Attorney General



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

Chicago
1-800-386-5438

Springfield
1-800-243-0618

Carbondale
1-800-243-0607

Spanish Language Toll-Free Hotline:
1-866-310-8398

Franchise Bureau
(217) 782-4465

Health Care Helpline
1-877-305-5145

Individuals with hearing or speech disabilities can reach us by using the 7-1-1 relay service.

www.IllinoisAttorneyGeneral.gov

PROTECTING SMALL BUSINESSES



KWAME RAOUL
ILLINOIS ATTORNEY GENERAL

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 by enforcing the Franchise Disclosure Act and applicable administrative rules. The goal of the bureau—and the Franchise Disclosure Act it administers—is to provide pre-sale disclosures and protection for prospective franchisees so they can make informed purchasing decisions. among other things, the franchise bureau makes sure franchisors disclose relevant information such as total cost, financial performance, and the franchisee’s obligations under the franchise agreement.

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 create a fair marketplace and protect Illinois consumers and businesses from victimization by fraud, deception, and unfair methods of competition. Through the Attorney General’s informal consumer complaint mediation program, the bureau facilitates potential resolutions to disputes in which businesses or consumers feel they have been victimized in the marketplace.

Through this informal mediation program, the parties to a dispute can try to resolve a dispute without 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. Although the Attorney General’s mediators are not judges and cannot make factual determinations with respect to a dispute, both businesses and consumers can benefit from this informal mediation program.

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 the 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:

Tech Support Scams

Office Supply Scams

Fraudulent Charitable Solicitations

Phishing Attempts/ Business Email Compromise

Phony Billing Schemes