



PARISH TOOLKIT

Supporting Immigrants in a Time of Need

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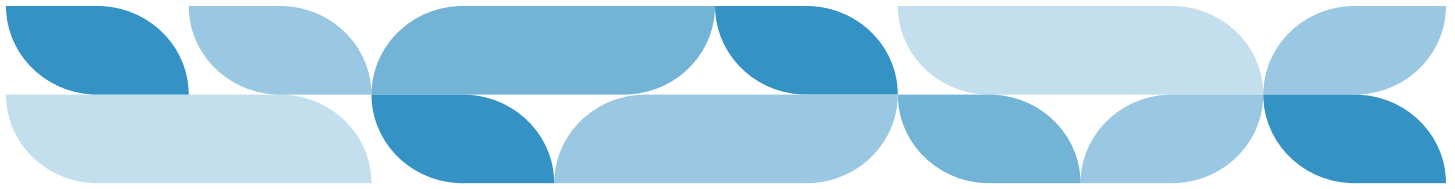


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Introduction

“The Church’s concern for neighbor and our concern [for] immigrants is a response to the Lord’s command to love as He has loved us (John 13:34). To our immigrant brothers and sisters, we stand with you in your suffering, since, when one member suffers, all suffer (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:26). You are not alone!”

U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Special Message on Immigration, Nov. 12, 2025

The concerns facing immigrants in the United States weigh heavily on the hearts of pastors, pastoral staff, and other lay members of the Church as they see their brothers and sisters in Christ burdened by anxiety and fear of increased immigration enforcement amid a crumbling and harmful immigration system. In the United States, [one out of every five Catholics](#) is at risk of being subject to deportation or is part of a household with someone who is. 4.7 million U.S. citizen children have an undocumented parent, including many children in Catholic schools. Many Catholic parishes, organizations, and schools are asking how they can support immigrant members who are suffering at this time.

As our nation continues to grapple with complex policy questions surrounding immigration, the Catholic Church remains committed to providing pastoral ministry and accompaniment to immigrants facing immigration challenges. We do this based on Christ’s command to serve the “least of these” and his call to welcome the stranger. We also are committed to advocacy for justice according to Catholic social teaching, including for policy which reflects our values of human dignity, family unity, safe communities, and due process of law.

This toolkit aims to provide immediate steps that parishes and Catholic institutions can take to promote the safety and security of their members and to accompany and support immigrants who are detained or threatened by deportation. It includes essential Know Your Rights information for immigrants, emergency preparedness planning resources, and accompaniment and educational resources for parish staff and volunteers.

This toolkit has been compiled with the support and consultation of external partners, including partners at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, various diocesan consultants, and staff at religious organizations. The project was supported in part by grants from the Open Society Foundations and the Raskob Foundation for Catholic Activities. We thank all our partners for their input, support, and feedback.

Important Note: This is intended as a general informational resource. Procedures and protocols established by the local diocese should be followed by parishes and other diocesan institutions. Pastors and staff are always encouraged to discuss any specific legal questions or concerns with their diocesan legal counsel and leadership.



Steps to Take to Keep Your Parish or Organization Safe: Introduction to Protected Areas

One major concern that many church pastors, staff, and administrators may have is how they can keep their parishioners safe and calm if immigration enforcement were to arrive on or near church property. This section equips parish leaders, church administrators, volunteers, and other parish personnel with practical knowledge to help respond to immigration enforcement encounters in ways that are law abiding, informative, and faithful to Catholic social teaching. Rooted in CLINIC's commitment to welcoming the stranger, promoting dignity towards immigrants, and the call to solidarity with immigrant communities, these resources are designed to minimize fear, prevent unnecessary harm, and promote thoughtful, consistent responses among various parishes.

Here you'll find explanations of what signage parishes may lawfully post to regulate access by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), sample internal policies addressing common workplace concerns (such as how staff should respond if confronted by ICE or how to engage with Customs and Border Protection when traveling), and scenario-based guidance illustrating how real-life encounters may unfold. Together, these materials support parishes in responding with clear guidance, compassion, and prudence.

History of Protected Areas in U.S. Immigration Enforcement

For decades, there has been a consensus in the United States that some areas and events should be exempted from immigration enforcement unless absolutely necessary and no reasonable alternatives exist. The Clinton administration first restricted enforcement activities in 1993 by issuing a memo titled, "[Enforcement Activities at Schools, Places of Worship, or at Funerals or other religious ceremonies.](#)" This memo required District Director or Chief Patrol Officer approval before conducting immigration enforcement at schools (from preschools to colleges and universities), places of worship, and religious ceremonies like gravesite services or rosaries. This memo was extended by the Bush administration in 2008 with the intention "to ensure that personnel conduct enforcement operations in a manner that is safe and respectful to all persons."

Under the Obama administration, ICE issued a memo informing its officers that they should not perform arrests in “sensitive locations” such as churches, schools, and hospitals. This also included events like weddings, funerals, and special religious services. This memo was reenforced by the Biden administration, which issued a “Sensitive Locations Policy” (also known as the “Protected Areas Memorandum”). In January 2025, President Trump issued several orders and [directives](#) that rescinded these protections. ICE is now more freely permitted to enter sensitive locations and perform immigration enforcement — including interrogations, searches, and arrests. In light of this reversal, our communities of parishioners and religious workers may now experience more interactions with ICE within their work locations, community spaces, and residences.

Church Rights and Responsibilities: What Rights Do Parishes Have Today?

Although immigration enforcement is now more freely permitted to operate in and near in previously protected areas like parishes, ICE must still present a warrant to enter any location that is not publicly accessible. Public locations would be considered any area that would be open to parishioners or visitors to freely gather. For example, areas such as the sanctuary or chapel, the courtyard, classrooms, social halls, etc. could all be considered public spaces where ICE would likely not have to present a warrant to enter and begin enforcement activities. Areas such as staff offices, rectories, and convents would not be viewed as public spaces because those spaces would not generally be available for public use without permission from the parish. In order to reinforce the private nature of these spaces, staff can add signage stating “Staff Only” or “Restricted” to areas that are not generally open for communal access or use. See [sample signage below](#) that you can post on doors.

PLEASE NOTE: A [recently revealed ICE internal memo](#) claims that agents can enter private spaces without a judicial warrant, relaying only on an administrative warrant issued by DHS. This memo does not seem to be based on any law or constitutional interpretation embraced by the courts. This memo seems very likely to be challenged in court. If immigration enforcement agents enter private areas without a judicial warrant, please document the incident in writing, and if you feel safe doing so, on video. Verbally state your objection to their entry into private spaces without a judicial warrant. You may not be able to prevent their entry, but asserting your rights and documenting the incident could be helpful in holding the officers and the agency accountable afterward.

Summary

Recent changes in immigration policies have caused an all-time high on immigration enforcement. On Jan. 20, 2025, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) issued a directive rescinding the Protected Areas Policy that had previously limited immigration enforcement in certain places providing essential services or activities, including places of worship. Although immigration enforcement is now permitted in previously protected areas like churches, ICE must still present a judicial warrant to enter any location that is not publicly accessible.



ICE Visits: What To Do If Immigration Enforcement Agents Arrive at Church Properties

ICE activity at or near a place of worship can understandably cause a lot of stress, panic, and anxiety. Having a plan is essential for a calm and coordinated response. If ICE enters your place of worship and they are in a public space, you can take the following actions:

1. Designate specific staff to engage with ICE officers.

It is important that parish and office staff know whom to contact if ICE arrives at your place of worship. **The parish should designate an individual within parish leadership that will intervene should ICE begin enforcement at the parish.** This individual should feel empowered to speak with ICE officers and check any warrant presented by an officer to make sure it is valid. This designee should also know whom to contact if ICE begins arresting parishioners or employees. This could include the diocese, a designated local immigration attorney, relatives of the detained individual, etc. The designee should keep notes of what the officer is requesting so that this information can be shared with the appropriate parties in the future. Please see a [sample script](#) and a [checklist](#) below for this designated staff member to use when engaging with ICE.

2. Ask to see a warrant.

If ICE is attempting to enter any restricted area not generally accessible to the public, they must present a [valid warrant signed by a federal judge](#). Often, ICE will attempt to use a warrant issued by DHS signed by an immigration officer in lieu of a judicial warrant. A DHS warrant does not permit entry, search, or seizure in private spaces. The parish designee should feel comfortable identifying the difference between a judicial warrant and a DHS warrant for removal. Please [see this resource](#) for a primer on the difference between types of warrants.

As noted above, a [recently revealed ICE internal memo](#) claims that agents can enter private spaces without a judicial warrant. This memo does not seem to be based on any law or constitutional interpretation embraced by the courts. This memo seems very likely to be challenged in court. If immigration enforcement agents enter private areas without a [judicial warrant](#), please document the incident in writing, and if you feel safe doing so, on video. Verbally state your objection to their entry into private spaces without a judicial warrant. Do not become physical or combative. You may not be able to prevent their entry, but asserting your rights and documenting the incident could be helpful in holding the officers and the agency accountable afterward.

3. Remain calm.

Although an ICE visit is stressful and frightening, it is important for both parishioners and staff to remain as calm as possible. **If ICE is on the premises and they are in a public space, do not panic, do not try to run away or hide. Do not try to hide anyone.**¹ These actions can be seen as suspicious to ICE officers and cause the officers to begin detaining individuals. If apprehended, calmly ask the officer if you are being detained. If they say no, you are free to go. If they say yes, you are being detained.

4. Know your rights.

If an ICE officer detains you and begins asking questions, it is important to know your rights. However, you must invoke your rights by either telling the officer that you are exercising your rights or hand them a card that provides them with notice that you are exercising your rights. You can (and should) invoke the following rights:

- **Right to remain silent:** You do not have to answer any questions without the presence of your legal representative. In some states, you may be required to state your name if asked to identify yourself. You can show the officer your Know Your Rights card or tell the officer that you are invoking your right to remain silent.
- **Right to refuse search:** You do not have to consent to a search of your person or your belongings. State clearly that you do not consent. Refusing consent may not stop the officer from conducting their search. An officer may pat down above your clothes if they suspect, for example, that you are in possession of weapons or drugs. If an officer begins conducting a search, remain calm, do not resist inspection, and keep your hands where the officer can see them. Stating your objection preserves your rights. Thereafter, the officer cannot arrest you without a warrant or probable cause that you have committed a crime.
- **Right to speak with a lawyer:** If an officer tells you that you cannot walk away, you are being detained. You should ask to speak to a lawyer (or show your [Know Your Rights card](#)) and then remain silent. It is okay if you have not hired a legal representative at the time that you are being detained; you still have the right to consult with one before answering questions from ICE.

¹ For more information on the legal risks of hiding immigrants, please visit the section of the toolkit entitled [“Legal Liability for Providing Direct Ministry to Migrants: What Parishes Should Know.”](#)

Additional Tips and Resources for Parishes Preparing for Encounters With ICE

Resource: Signs to Place on Doors for Restricted (Private) Areas

The following are sample signs that can be placed on doors to indicate parts of the property which are private or restricted access areas.

- [RESTRICTED AREA- Sample Sign for Parishes.docx](#)
- [RESTRICTED AREA- Sample Sign for Religious Organizations.docx](#)

Tips

→ If ICE is stationed outside or near your parish, note the following:

ICE is permitted to be stationed nearby (in proximity to) your place of worship. Be sure to have a well-trained administrator/staff member that is prepared to engage with them if necessary. If the individual can ascertain that the law enforcement is ICE, they should warn others inside the parish/church and remind people of their right to remain silent.

Note: Churches are places of worship where generally all are welcome. Common spaces such as the church lobbies and other open spaces in or around the church may draw crowds on certain days of the week. Be mindful of ICE's presence (uniformed or in plain clothes) on such days. All other closed spaces will require a judicial warrant.

→ If ICE approaches your parish, here's a sample script for a church administrator:

Hello, my name is [insert name], and I am the point of contact for [name parish]. For safety reasons, I am unable to open the door. Please provide a copy of your warrant under the door or hold it against a window. If the warrant is signed by a federal judge or magistrate, the church will comply with its orders and permit a search of the areas identified in the warrant. If you do not have a warrant or your warrant is an ICE/CBP administrative warrant, we do not consent to searches of any private areas. If you have any questions, we will contact our attorney first.

Staff should consult with legal counsel before proceeding with answering any questions from law enforcement. Remember you have the right to remain silent and should not reveal any information about anyone's immigration status.



Resource: Administrator Checklist

If you are the administrator having an encounter with ICE, please make sure you take careful note of the following:

- Date, time, and location of the encounter.
- Warrant details.
- Obtain the agent's name, badge number, and agency.
- Collect any relevant photo/video footage from security cameras. Individuals should only use devices to record the events if they feel safe doing so. There have been incidents where officers react aggressively to being recorded.
- Record written details of what happened.
- Contact family of any individuals who were detained.
- Log all details into an incident report and keep for future record and tracking immigration enforcement actions.

Tips

- The church should not keep any documentation that keeps record of their member's immigration status or immigration history, unless the church has an employee who has valid employment-based visa and an employment authorization card.
- Church staff members should avoid the unauthorized practice of law and be sure not to provide legal advice or assist members with immigration forms on behalf of the church, unless the staff member is an experienced attorney or a Department of Justice, licensed Accredited Representative. Church pastors should also take caution preparing letters or affidavit statements on behalf of detained individuals without having extensive knowledge of their immigration case.



Scenarios Involving ICE

These scenarios are not meant to incite fear or panic, but simply to provide examples for your consideration.

Scenario 1: ICE Requests Information About a Parishioner, Employee, or Volunteer

- **Situation:** ICE goes to a local parish, enters the church, and approaches a church administrator requesting information related to a church staff member/member of the clergy or a parishioner.
- **Note:** If the parish is a place of employment, there may be I-9 records that are subject to inspection by officers from DHS. This type of inspection is usually preceded by a notice a few days ahead of time that they intend to inspect I-9s. If you have not received advance notice, be sure to clarify with the officers what it is they are there to do.
- **How It May Play Out:**
 - **No Detention:** The parish asks the ICE agent for identification, the name of their agency, and reason for the visit. The ICE agent provides none of the requested information. The church administrator asks again and the agent refuses. The church administrator asks the agent to leave the premises and indicates to the agent that all inquiries regarding a church member or member of the clergy must be accompanied by a signed judicial warrant. The administrator also indicates they will be contacting their legal counsel. ICE does not provide a judicial warrant of any kind, and no information is shared by the church administrator. The matter ends without further action, and ICE leaves the premises.
 - **Detention:** If ICE already possesses independent evidence regarding the individual's immigration status, they may later detain the individual at a different location, unrelated to the church's response to the records request.

Scenario 2: ICE Encounter at a Church Community Event

- **Situation:** The parish hosts a food pantry, health clinic, or community resource fair open to the public. ICE agents are observed in the vicinity, walking about with a threatening presence. They are masked and in uniform. They have not approached anyone, but the community is concerned, and some members leave the event.
- **How It May Play Out:**
 - **No Detention:** ICE agents remain nearby but do not enter the event space or approach participants. The event proceeds without interruption, though parish leadership documents the incident. The pastor communicates their assurances to the community that they will continue to support the immigrant members and do all within their power to make members feel safe.
 - **Detention:** Agents identify and detain an individual outside the event area (e.g., in the parking lot or on a public sidewalk near the church) after the individual leaves. The detention is not tied to participation in the event but occurs in a public space. Church members are afraid and angry, but the event continues with the remaining members. Church staff attempt to prevent ICE from entering the church and walking about continuing to frighten members. The church also places additional signage for ICE near the church entrance.

Scenario 3: ICE Interaction With a Church Staff Member While Traveling

- **Situation:** A religious worker from India is returning to the United States after attending a religious retreat. He works for a diocese in New York and has an R-1 visa. He lands at JFK airport and after deplaning, he attempts to go through customs. He is immediately stopped by Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and pulled aside for questioning. Nervous and unsure of why he is being pulled aside, he obliques the officer's order.
- **How It May Play Out:**
 - **No Detention:** He presents his R-1 visa and explains he is a religious worker for a diocese and has complied with all his immigration requirements. Fearful and confused, he tries to ask why he is pulled aside but is dismissed by the officer. The officer asks to see his paperwork and after careful review and brief questioning about his work, the CBP officer admits the individual into the country.
 - **Detention:** CBP officers ask to look through the worker's phone, and he refuses. They ask him to enter his password to unlock his phone, and again he refuses. The CBP officer holds him for hours without indicating why he is being held. Eventually, the CBP officer identifies an issue related to the religious worker's immigration status and his documentation and refers the individual to ICE custody. The detention occurs at the port of entry, not at the church, but directly impacts parish operations and pastoral care responsibilities. If a member of your clergy or staff is detained off parish grounds, reach out to your diocesan counsel if applicable, and notify the individual's family.

***Note:** CBP officers may not select you for a personal search or secondary inspection based on your religion, race, national origin, gender, ethnicity, or political beliefs. Also, whether the government has the authority to search electronic devices such as cell phones is a complex issue. For more information on what electronic devices border agents can search at the port of entry, see this article titled [Can Border Agents Search Your Electronic Devices? It's Complicated.](#)



Providing Direct Assistance to Migrants

Many church communities are asking how they can help immigrant members who are facing challenges with immigration enforcement. Across the country, parishes are taking action to support the physical, spiritual, legal, and other needs of their immigrant community members. These actions witness to the inherent dignity of immigrants as beloved members of the Body of Christ, regardless of their immigration status. Later on in the toolkit, you will find materials on how to help immigrant members prepare in case they are detained, how to support family members of the detained, and how to help them find legal representation. The first section will focus on a specific model of action that many parishes are organizing: accompaniment of immigrants as witnesses in their legal processes (or sometimes in day-to-day errands and/or duties in the case they run into law enforcement).

As churches consider what kinds of actions they will take, they may specifically want to learn more about risks and legal implications of taking action to support immigrants. A section below gives general information on the legal implications of providing direct assistance.

Providing Accompaniment

What Is Accompaniment?

- With regards to immigration, accompaniment involves community members providing spiritual, physical, emotional, material, and informational support to immigrants and refugees as they navigate complex systems such as immigration court, check-ins with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) as well as Intensive Supervision Appearance Program (ISAP) check-ins, state court, and other bureaucratic processes.
- Accompaniment can encompass more than that depending on the specific program you are working with or the needs of the specific individual. Some church communities may even provide accompaniment for immigrants at places such as grocery stores/food pantries, medical facilities, domestic violence shelters, and other critical resources, as many immigrants are afraid to leave home to access basic needs.
- Be sure that you understand what your role is during accompaniment, and that all members of your group agree, including the noncitizen. Your role is not to provide legal advice or representation; be sure that the noncitizen understands that. If your role is to witness a potential detention in order to notify family and other contacts, be sure that the noncitizen is prepared and understands that you would not intervene in that detention.
- If your goal is to accompany immigrants to court as an observer, please note that we have seen increasing barriers to public court observation in recent months. By regulation, immigration courts should be open to the public with certain limited exceptions. However, observers have reported inconsistent access and closure policies that may vary across jurisdictions, and the federal government has produced [“fact sheets”](#) that appear to restrict the public’s access to online (Webex) dockets. If you encounter barriers to access, you may politely request the reason you are being excluded, if it is possible and safe to do so. Document the circumstance and location, and consider reporting that incident to CLINIC by emailing stateandlocaladvocacy@cliniclegal.org.

Key Aspects of Accompaniment:

- **Solidarity.** It provides migrants with the knowledge that they are not alone in a situation that can be incredibly confusing and scary.
- **Empowerment.** When migrants have someone by their side, this can help empower them to speak up for themselves. Those accompanying them can also remind them of their rights before their hearing or check-in so that they are fresh in their mind.
- **Witnessing.** It allows for accountability as witnesses can record interactions in public spaces, can write down anything they see, ensure that the migrant does not disappear without family and friends knowing what happened, and in general can just show others that there are people in this person's corner and that due process rights cannot be infringed without notice.
- **Information and Navigation.** Migrants often live a distance from their appointments that require transportation that they might not have. Accompaniment programs can provide rides and general information to ensure the migrant gets to where they need to go. *Please refer to the section on [legal liability](#) of providing transportation to migrants.

Best Practices When Accompanying:

- Do not give legal advice.
- Feel free to remind immigrants of their rights.
- If the immigrant has legal representation, be sure to give them privacy and space to speak.
- Protect the immigrant's personal information. If you write down their personal information as part of accompaniment, be sure to safely destroy that information as soon as it is no longer needed.
- Do not escalate a situation. There are ample opportunities out there for other types of advocacy. This is not the time to increase tension in an interaction that is already stressful. You, as an accompanier with stable immigration status, might walk away without ramifications should things escalate, but the immigrant you are supposed to be walking with that day may not be so lucky.
- Immigrants, like everyone else, come from a variety of cultural backgrounds and life experiences. Please offer no negative judgment.
- Ensure there is appropriate language access.
- Be respectful of the immigrant and do not ask for information about their case or anything else that may be invasive.
- Even if something egregious occurs during the check-in, do not share information with media or anywhere else public unless you have obtained the migrant's consent.
- Tell the immigrant any time restrictions you may have as oftentimes you cannot accurately guess how short or long of a time you may need to be there.
- Offer to hold the immigrant's possessions when they are conducting their check-in, hearing, etc. One may be able to enter into the hearing but will likely be kept out for check-ins. If the immigrant is detained, their items would otherwise be confiscated.
- Be sure to have the immigrant's emergency contacts so that you know who to call in the event they are detained, including the following:
 - Legal representative.
 - Significant other.

- Other guardians of children who need to know to pick up any children.
- For most of these accompaniments, one needs to pass through security. Be sure to leave all prohibited items at home or in your vehicle.

Questions to Ask If the Migrant Is Detained:

- Which detention center are they being sent to?
- Is deportation imminent?
- Obtain the name and contact information of each ICE or court officer that interacted with the migrant as well as that information for their supervisors.

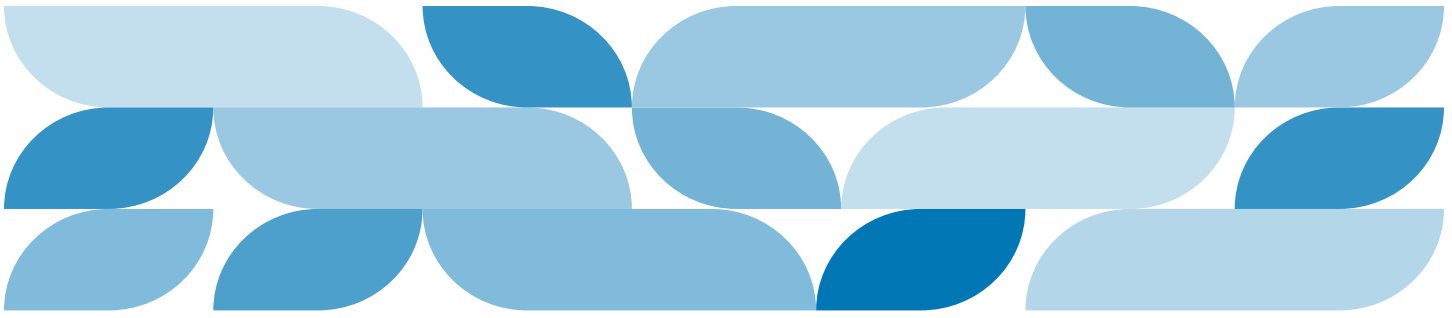
Information to Have to Ensure You Can Help Family Locate the Immigrant in Detention

- A-Number (or “Alien Registration Number”)*.
 - The A-Number is a seven-, eight-, or nine-digit number assigned to an immigrant.
 - Not everyone will have an A-Number as this will depend on the type of immigration relief an immigrant has or has applied for, as well as any interactions immigrants have had previously with immigration enforcement either at the border or in the interior.
 - Someone who entered the United States without documentation, who was never stopped by CBP or ICE, and who has never applied for immigration relief will not have an A-Number.
- Country of Birth.
- First Name and Last Name.
- Date of Birth.
- You can also reach out to the appropriate ICE Field Office [here](#).
- You can try and locate the individual at the Federal Bureau of Prisons [inmate search](#).

*This information can allow you to search the [Online Detainee Locator System](#) for an immigrant.

Accompaniment Resources

- United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and Justice for Immigrants (JFI), [Catholic Accompaniment and Reflection Experience \(CARE\) Program Training Guide 2019](#).
**Please note that while this program is not currently in effect, the toolkit still contains very valuable information.*
- Washington (State) Immigrant Solidarity Network, [Accompaniment Tips](#).
- JusticePower
 - [How-to Guide: Accompaniment](#)
 - [Acompañamientos: Immigration Court Accompaniment Training](#)
- UU College of Social Justice in Massachusetts, [The Community Accompaniment Program with Asylum Seekers \(CAPAS\)](#).
- American Friends Service Committee, [Attributes of empathetic/principled accompaniment](#).
- Long Island Jobs With Justice, Immigrant Accompaniment Project, [Best Practices for Accompanying Immigrants to Long Island Courts](#).



Providing Sanctuary

As some churches may consider the concept of providing sanctuary to noncitizens, whether based on a historical understanding of that term or otherwise, it is important to note that the idea of someone being in a place of worship and claiming “sanctuary” has never had federal legislative protection that would prevent immigration or other law enforcement from arresting someone in a church

As noted previously in this toolkit, for many years, the United States had some form of the Protected Areas Policy that was rescinded back in January 2025. This was a [memo](#) sent from DHS to ICE and CBP limiting enforcement actions in certain areas, including places of worship. Even when it was in place, enforcement agents could still enter into these important locations under certain circumstances.

Today, the Protected Areas Policy has been fully rescinded, and enforcement may occur more freely within sacred spaces. [Please see sections above for guidance on what to do if immigration agents arrive at your place of worship.](#)

For some communities of faith, the idea of providing a safe place for someone in need could be interpreted as fundamental to their religious practice. That being said, it is something that could result in legal action and even criminal prosecution (discussed in further detail below), so be sure to consult with legal counsel and, if applicable, diocesan leadership regarding these issues.

An [article](#) from U.S. Catholic on the practice of sanctuary shared the following:

Bishop Mark Seitz of El Paso, Texas, a leader in ministry to migrants and refugees, admits that the traditional practice of sheltering in church buildings may not be the best way to respond to today’s mass deportations, which could affect as many as 13 million people. But the history of offering care to people fleeing is an essential church teaching, he said in a lecture at Loyola University in May.

There are other critical ways that the church can take action to support immigrant brothers and sisters as part of this mission. “Sanctuary is also being publicly vocal and pushing back on what’s happening [to harm immigrants],” said Omar Angel Perez, director of Faith in Action’s immigration justice program, as quoted in the U.S. Catholic article. “That’s part of sanctuary work.”

As your parish prayerfully considers what sorts of ministries to provide, please consult the [“Legal Liability” section below.](#)



Visits to Parishioners Affected by Detention

Given the pace of arrests and detentions, pastoral staff or parishioners may be asked to visit an immigrant parishioner who has been detained. This can be an important way to show solidarity and witness to the suffering of immigrant detainees in your own community. In addition, it may be important to visit with the family members of those detained who remain in your community.

➞ **CLINIC Resource:** [Issue Spotting in Detention Centers: Tips for Prison Ministry](#)

This CLINIC resource gives tips for setting up a detention visit as well as what questions to ask the detainee, how/when to report information on abuses in detention, items to bring or avoid bringing, and other resources to support your visit. Here is an excerpt:

“Inspectors, advocates, and even lawmakers are having more and more difficulty accessing immigration detention facilities to inspect health and safety conditions and investigate cases of mistreatment. Clergy and faith groups may have more success entering these facilities and speaking to detainees due to constitutional rights to free exercise of religion. Clergy and faith groups can support efforts to ensure human dignity and save lives if they know what to look for and what questions to ask when they make a prison ministry visit with immigration detainees. This resource provides common problems to look for, and questions you may want to ask detainees to determine their treatment and if physical and mental health needs are being met.”

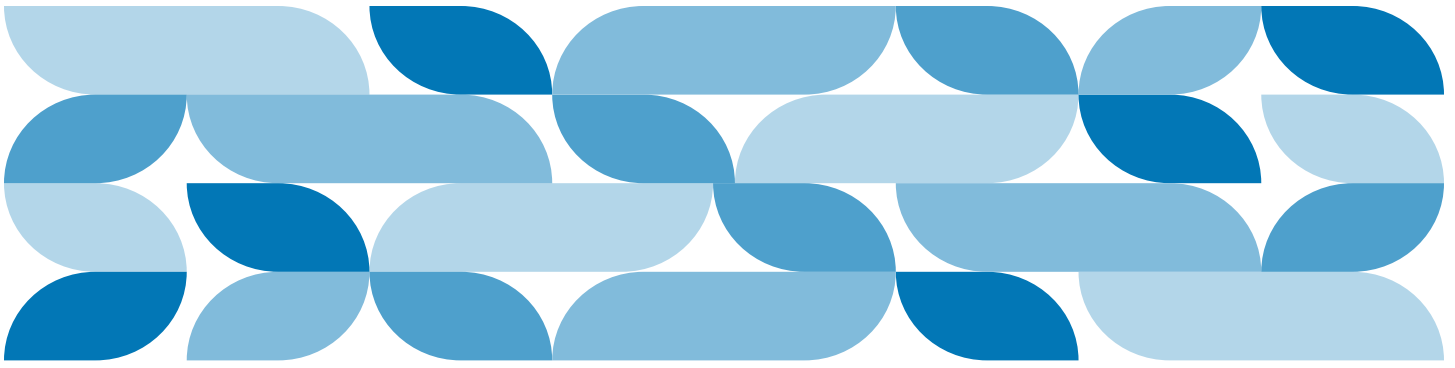
[Click here to read more.](#)

Paying a Pastoral Visit to an Immigrant Family

When you become aware of a family in your parish who is experiencing fear or hardship due to their immigration situation, a good way to show support for them is to offer to arrange a pastoral visit or phone call, whether with the priest/pastor or a parish staff member. This is especially true after a family member has been detained or if a family is afraid to leave home due to fear of immigration enforcement.

The following are some tips to consider when planning a pastoral visit:

1. When you contact the family, be sure to arrange an appropriate time and meeting place that feels safe and secure for them. It may be in their home or in another private location. Ensure that you will have a translator, if necessary – someone the family would be comfortable with. Relying on minor children to translate is generally discouraged.
2. When you arrive or begin the call, begin by expressing your deep concern for them as a member of the parish community. Gently try to get a sense of their needs without prying. Here are some sample questions you can ask:
 - Do you have a lawyer or representative supporting you? Do you need help finding one? When asking this, be sure to have available the number of a local nonprofit legal services organization. Also please be aware that finding available legal assistance can be difficult; ensure you do not make promises or raise hopes prematurely.
 - Does your family need support getting groceries, getting to doctors or legal appointments, transporting kids to/from school, attending church, or filling other basic needs?
 - Would you like accompaniment from someone at the parish at any appointments or court hearings?
 - Is your child feeling safe at school? If not, how can we support?
 - If you have a family member in detention, are you able to be in regular contact with them? Would they desire a pastoral visit in detention, if possible? [See CLINIC's resource on prison/detention ministry.](#)
3. You can share with them the Know Your Rights materials, list of local resources such as a Catholic Charities agency, and other emergency preparedness materials including guardianship plans in the case of a parent who may be/has been deported. Please see the section of the toolkit below on [Emergency Planning Resources for Parishes Assisting Immigrants.](#)
4. You can offer to pray with the family or offer to organize other parishioners to pray with and for them at designated times.
5. End by reminding them of the Church and parish's ongoing concern and support.



Legal Liability for Providing Direct Ministry to Migrants: What Church Groups Should Know

Many Catholic parish and religious communities across the United States have begun organizing a response to the heightened fear and anxiety that is affecting their immigrant community members. Parishes have created meal ministries for families of detained immigrants, systems of accompanying immigrants to court or appointments, childcare arrangements, prayer vigils, and more to show immigrants that they are not alone in this time.

As they create these ministries, some faith-based groups may wonder: what are the legal implications for these activities?

In 2017, 36-year-old college geography instructor Scott Warren was arrested and charged with three felony counts including conspiracy to transport and harbor migrants. Warren was volunteering for a humanitarian aid organization to deliver food and water along remote desert trails used by undocumented immigrants near Ajo, Arizona. Although he was acquitted, several years later, we continue to see various charges that aim to deter individuals and organizations from providing humanitarian aid to immigrants. As your parish community considers actions in support of immigrants, it is important to consider the legal liability that you may be exposing the parish to, or that you may be exposed to personally.

This resource will not, and cannot, tell you concretely whether any part of your immigrant services plans could result in federal charges. Legal advice on your situation cannot be provided in a toolkit; you must consult an attorney about your specific situation in order to receive accurate legal advice. The purpose of this resource is to educate you about what federal charges have been levied against humanitarian groups, along with a few similar and relevant laws, so that you know what questions to ask when you consult an attorney. You may first want to reach out to your diocesan counsel to ask if they have examined these issues already, or if they have legal counsel who you can consult. If your diocesan counsel is not involved in this question, you may want to seek a consultation with an attorney independently.

What kinds of federal criminal charges have we seen leveraged against people accompanying immigrants?

Three pieces of federal statute [8 U.S.C. § 1324\(a\)\(1\)\(A\)](#) have most commonly been used to charge humanitarian aid workers.

- **Harboring:** It is a federal crime to harbor, conceal, or shield a noncitizen from detection “knowing or in reckless disregard of the fact that [the] alien has come to, entered, or remains in the United States in violation of law.”
- **Transporting:** Any person who in knowing “or in reckless disregard of the fact that a [noncitizen] has come to, entered, or remains in the United States in violation of law, transports, or moves ... such alien within the United States by means of transportation or otherwise, in furtherance of such violation of law.”
- **Smuggling:** Any person who knowing that a person is a noncitizen, brings to or attempts to bring to the United States in any manner whatsoever such person at a place other than a designated port of entry.

There are additional statutes of concern including 8 U.S.C. § 1327 sections about “concealing” individuals and making false statements.

Tips

If you are planning to create a committee to serve immigrants, and that activity includes providing temporary or permanent shelter, or transportation to and from immigration appointments or places such as the grocery store, you may want to consult legal counsel to determine if these activities may expose your parish or volunteers to the charges described above. While it has been and remains uncommon for these charges to be levied against ministry groups, the second Trump administration has shown to be aggressive in its action against migrant aid groups, so seeking legal counsel may be appropriate as activities are planned.

If my faith calls me to assist migrants, what defense is there for me?

You should consult your diocesan counsel, your attorney, or a civil rights attorney. Although cases around humanitarian aid have upheld Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) arguments, the Supreme Court has yet to take this up. This means if you wish to carry out aid, you should also be prepared to litigate the issue.

Is there ongoing litigation?

Currently, there are several cases before the courts regarding the ending of the Protected Areas Policy in January of 2025. Various groups have made religious-based claims that their rights have been infringed.

Annunciation House in El Paso, Texas, is a Catholic ministry that has long served as a first stop for migrants who recently crossed the border, providing shelter, food, and clothing to those in need. It was targeted by the state's attorney general in an attempt to charge them with operating a "stash house" and engaging in human smuggling. The litigation is still ongoing, but some intermediate decisions have gone in Annunciation House's favor.

Catholic Charities of Rio Grande Valley (CCRGV) in Texas was also targeted by the Texas attorney general in a very similar way. CCRGV provides shelter and other services to asylum seekers, and are being accused of assisting illegal border crossings. This case is still ongoing.

Catholic Church leaders have vigorously [defended](#) migrant aid ministries as part of the church's obligation to perform the works of mercy and right to religious liberty. According to the USCCB's [statement](#), "Ministry to migrants is not peripheral to the work of the Church. It is central. It institutionalizes those corporal works of mercy which are an expression of the love of Christ."

Do the states have different penalties on these issues?

The preeminent legal framework regarding immigration is federal law. Under the Supremacy Clause, federal law supersedes state law. However, some states have their own laws that address specific issues, such as providing aid to noncitizens. The below is an excerpt from Alabama state law for illustration purposes; your state may have similar laws that should also be discussed with legal counsel.

According to Alabama [SB 53](#), from the 2025 legislative session, human smuggling is a Class C felony: "A person commits the crime of human smuggling if he or she knowingly transports into this state another individual if he or she knows is an illegal alien." There is an exception for anyone transporting an individual "to or from a location for governmental purposes."

In Alabama, for example, whether a parish may be liable for transporting people would depend on if they are crossing a state border, what they know about the person's immigration status, and whether or not the purpose of the transportation may be covered by that exception.

If we want to arrange a vigil, a protest, or other public demonstration, are there legal risks?

Unfortunately, yes. Where immigrant allies have gathered recently, DHS officers and some state law enforcement agencies have reacted with unnecessary force, and sometimes criminal charges. There have been examples of people at demonstrations, including faith leaders, being subjected to chemical irritants, excessive force to remove them, and sometimes criminal charges, including charges related to resisting or retaliating against arrest, even where no resistance occurred.

What about my right to protest and other First Amendment rights?

Under the first amendment of the United States Constitution, everyone has the right to peaceably assemble and protest as part of our right to free speech. People in the United States also have the right to freely associate with others to pursue common interests, including promoting the rights and dignity of noncitizens.

Many Constitutional experts have remarked that these Constitutional rights are being violated. Mary McCord, the director of the Georgetown University Law Center's Institute for Constitutional Advocacy, said in an [article](#): "It's clear from [the] data that the government is being extremely aggressive and charging for things that ordinarily wouldn't be charged at all. The other thing that is missing here from the way the federal government appears to be looking at these protests is there seems to be no respect for First Amendment rights. They appear to want to chill people from protesting against the administration's mass deportation plans."

Those interviewed for the same article discuss how many of these cases are not surviving in the courtroom. The actions of the administration have had a chilling effect on the ways communities feel safe showing up for their immigrant neighbors.

Conclusion

Ultimately, what activities your parish undertakes will be up to your leadership to decide. Certain parishioners may feel called to engage in ministry activities independently from the parish, taking on individual risk. For anyone making these decisions, we encourage you to do so after educating yourselves about the relevant laws and seeking out legal counsel to understand your rights and your limitations. Even if you conduct activities that seem to be well within the law based on an attorney's analysis, this administration's aggressive charging tactics could conceivably mean that you or your parish could face charges, fines, or harsh enforcement tactics anyway. You can choose to defend your rights by documenting the violations of your rights and discussing with a civil rights attorney the possibility of filing a lawsuit to hold the authorities accountable. However, all of those steps are dependent on what is best to serve immigrants and your community, your tolerance for risk, and analysis of any negative ramifications for your parish.

These are difficult decisions, but you are not alone. Seek advice and support from your diocese and members of the broader community of immigrants and their advocates. The Church has a long history of accompanying the vulnerable during times when it has not been looked on favorably by the government. We will continue to navigate such times together with integrity, courage, prudence, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.



Emergency Planning Resources for Parishes Assisting Immigrants

In the current climate of heightened immigration enforcement, many immigrants are at risk of detention or deportation even if they have followed protocols of U.S. law in applying for lawful status. Many others have suddenly lost status and are now at risk of arrest and detention. Heightened enforcement across the United States has created a crisis for immigrant communities. In the United States, [one out of every five Catholics](#) is at risk of being subject to deportation or is part of a household with someone who is. It is critical that Catholic parishes are prepared to assist their immigrant parishioners as they face the realities of detention, deportation, loss of livelihood, and family separation. In such a time as this, advance preparation can mean the difference between a panicked and a thoughtful response. This section focuses on emergency preparedness as an expression of responsible stewardship and care for the most vulnerable.

Members who may not have access to resources may rely on their church to serve as support in their time of need. These resources can help parishes and church organizations take basic steps to prepare to accompany immigrant members as they face these trials. With ample preparation, parishes can respond to urgent situations with calm, unity, and moral clarity and continue to bear witness to the Gospel's call welcome the stranger and the Church's mission to protect life, uphold human dignity, and accompany immigrant families with courage and compassion, even in times of uncertainty.

Model Emergency Contact Notebook for Parish Staff

Parish staff can use this model notebook as a guide for creating an emergency contacts sheet. This can be filled out and filed with the parish secretary or administrator. When an immigrant parishioner approaches staff asking for assistance, these numbers and contacts should be available.

Pastor

Name:	Email:	Phone:
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Associate Pastor or Parochial Vicar

Name:	Email:	Phone:
-------	--------	--------

Parish Secretary

Name:	Email:	Phone:
-------	--------	--------

Safe Environment Coordinator

Name:	Email:	Phone:
-------	--------	--------

School Principal

Name:	Email:	Phone:
-------	--------	--------

Diocesan Attorney or Catholic Charities Legal Office

Name:	Email:	Phone:
-------	--------	--------

Diocesan Emergency Line (Bishops' Office)

Name:	Email:	Phone:
-------	--------	--------

Local Food Bank/Pantry (Note if Spanish-speaking)

Name:	Email:	Phone:
-------	--------	--------

Nearest ICE Detention Center

Name:	Email:	Phone:
-------	--------	--------

Local Catholic Charities/Social Services Agency

Name:	Email:	Phone:
-------	--------	--------

Nearest Hospital or Urgent Care

Name:	Email:	Phone:
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Creating a Parish Response Team and Internal Communication Protocol

When a crisis happens, whether it is an immigration raid in the neighborhood, or the detention of an immigrant parishioner, it is critical that parishes have pre-identified parish members who are willing and able to step in and help. In addition, it is important to have a system of internal communication ready, such as a phone tree or secure text or email chain, for when a crisis emerges.

Getting a Parish Response Team Organized

As you begin, think through the various needs of an immigrant family in the case of an emergency such as a detention or raid and how the community can organize to respond. Who will be in charge of food, transportation, or childcare for the family? Who will liaise with ICE or the appropriate attorney? Who can provide interpretation services, if necessary? Who may be able to visit the affected person in detention? Please be sure to read the above “Legal Liability” section as you plan your parish’s activities.

In the context of a parish, it may be helpful to use existing structures as a starting point. Do you have a social justice committee or a chapter of the St. Vincent de Paul Society? Do you have a meal ministry already in place? These existing volunteers may have the time and capacity to volunteer for these emergency responsibilities or help identify other parishioners who do.

Here is a space where you can start brainstorming committees:

Food/Immediate Needs Committee

Name	Contact

Children and Youth Committee

Name	Contact

Legal Contact and/or ICE Liaisons

Name	Contact

Pastoral Outreach Committee

Name	Contact

Transportation Committee*

Name	Contact

*Please see the section on legal liability when planning transportation.

Creating a System of Communication

In the event of an emergency, rapid, organized, and safe communication is key. It is important for a parish and/or parochial school to have emergency plans in place about how to communicate with staff, parents, and the broader community. Here are some critical points to consider as you develop your individualized plan:

1. Designate primary liaisons with authorities, should they arrive. Please see this resource above in the Parish Toolkit as you develop your plan and name primary liaisons with authorities. Remember to stay calm, do not obstruct the investigation, [verify there is a judicial warrant](#), and know your rights in advance.
2. Ensure the report is credible before spreading news. Rumors of raids or detentions in the area can be dangerous and can spread like wildfire. How will you verify a report of a raid or detention is true? Contacting the local diocesan attorney or immigrant legal services organization can be a first step. Please take caution before interacting with media.
3. Ensure a system of secure communication among staff and parish community. Announcements should be carefully considered to avoid inciting panic or endangering staff, students, or parishioners. Rather than making an announcement over the PA or public email system, consider the most secure and private way to alert staff and necessary contacts as you begin to take action. Consider creating a phone tree or using a secure group messaging system, where certain administrators and/or parishioners or parents are pre-selected to communicate with designated subsets of the community. This [notebook](#) can help you create your phone tree or list of key contacts.
4. Make a plan for communicating and executing a lockdown of the school or parish property if ICE is known to be in the area. The parish or school may need to remain open after hours to serve as a safe location for those afraid to leave.
5. Plan for early and safe pickups from school for all or for affected students. Families afraid to leave home due to their immigration status may need to find other ways of getting their children safely home at this time. If you are aware of this fear for a family, you may ask them ahead of time to designate a documented person to pick their child up.
6. If a parent or child is detained, initiate your parish rapid response team and use your emergency contacts sheet to alert all relevant parties. See CLINIC's rapid response toolkit (excerpted below) for further guidance.

For a more detailed resource specifically for schools, see [“Preparing for ICE Raids: A Guide for School and Community Partnerships for Protecting Children From Trafficking and Abuse”](#) from AID Arkansas.



Resources to Help Immigrant Families Preparing for Detention and/or Deportation

Parishes and religious organizations may be approached by immigrant families asking for guidance in how they can prepare for the event of a family member's detention and/or deportation. This section contains resources to direct families to for this kind of preparation.

Families at risk face a series of challenges and difficult decisions in preparing for the possibility of being separated from one another. Planning to ensure children (as well as other dependents) and financial assets are taken care of is crucial, and preparation can be complex. Each state has its own set of laws, legal forms, and processes related to appointing a guardian for a dependent or for financial planning.

CLINIC strongly urges families to work with qualified attorneys to assist with these procedures, as state laws and legal forms may not clearly apply to a detention or deportation scenario. For example, a legal form may be intended for a parent preparing for the possibility of becoming ill, but not applicable for the possibility of detention or deportation. Attorneys with expertise in these areas of law can guide families in making the best decision for their situation. Here are some resources recommended by CLINIC to help families prepare:

Find Legal Assistance

- [Our CLINIC Affiliate Directory](#) can help you find a qualified legal services organization to assist immigrants.
- [CLINIC's Rapid Response Hotline Directory](#) provides state-by-state numbers of hotlines to help people facing deportation or raids.
- [Avoiding Immigration Scams](#): There are many bad actors out there trying to take advantage of immigrants through immigration legal aid scams. This resource helps immigrants avoid fraudulent providers.

Create a Family Emergency Plan

- [CLINIC's Emergency Planning Guide](#) in English and Spanish helps immigrant families create an emergency plan and have the appropriate contact information should someone get detained or deported.
- [Deportation Preparation Manual for Immigrant Families](#): From our partner organization, Appleseed, this manual helps families prepare their finances and plans for dependents ahead of deportation.

Create Guardianship Plans for Care of Dependents

- [CLINIC's 50 State Guardianship Resource](#) has information from all 50 states and D.C. on guardianship laws, along with contact information for consulates.
- [Detained or Deported – What About My Children?](#): This resource from the Women's Refugee Commission provides crucial information for immigrant families facing deportation to protect and maintain parental rights and make well-informed, critical decisions regarding the care and welfare of their children. It includes information on how to get a lawyer, how to stay in touch with children, and how to participate in family court or child welfare hearings.

Know Your Rights

- [CLINIC's Know Your Rights Flyers](#), available in many languages
- [CLINIC's Know Your Rights Card](#), in English, Spanish, and Portuguese
- [Know Your Rights: A Resource for Students, Parents, and Guardians](#)



Rapid Response Toolkit in Case of Immigration Raid

About

Given the rise in enforcement activity by immigration officials, it is essential for community navigators and neighbors to be prepared in the event of a small- or large-scale raid. A community navigator may be an advocate, community organizer, attorney, faith leader, volunteer, or student who provides comprehensive support to those who need it. Immigration raids may take place at workplaces, homes, checkpoints, or neighborhood wide. Being prepared before a raid or increase of ICE activities can help communities respond immediately and effectively by assisting those directly affected. The first few hours after a raid are crucial and being prepared allows for advocates, communities and families to work together and help those who are detained quickly and efficiently.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops reminds us that, “[t]he priority of the Lord, as the Prophets remind us, is for those who are most vulnerable: the widow, the orphan, the poor, and the stranger (Zechariah 7:10). In the Lord Jesus, we see the One who became poor for our sake (2 Corinthians 8:9), we see the Good Samaritan who lifts us from the dust (Luke 10:30–37), and we see the One who is found in the least of these (Matthew 25).” In working for immigrant rights, advocates and communities must be guided by both passion and purpose. Preparing your team reflects this commitment — it is an act of shared care and love. Saint Francis of Assisi’s teachings emphasize shared responsibility and love through service. This guide seeks to unite individuals into a focused, knowledgeable, and well-organized collective that stands in solidarity with their immigrant neighbors.

This toolkit outlines strategies for developing a rapid response plan to safeguard vulnerable immigrants in your area. Preparation, organization, and unity are vital.

Get Organized: Build Your Own Inclusive Rapid Response Team, A Step-By-Step Guide

Step 1: Team Coordination

- Model Rapid Response Team Notebook: Using the [attached notebook](#), identify reliable individuals to form the phone tree. Phone Tree Initiators (primary points of contact) are responsible for activating the phone tree system whenever they believe an immigration raid or detention is occurring or has already taken place. Initiators should call or text every person listed below in the [notebook](#). If any person below one of them is unreachable, the initiator should contact anyone that would otherwise be made by the unreachable person. If one of the initiators is unreachable, the other initiator(s) are responsible for making or delegating that initiator's calls or texts.
- Make Branches: Each initiator is a leader within a branch. For example, in the three listed branches found in the [notebook](#) each branch includes a person from a committee or is a liaison.
- Some rapid response teams may be proactive even without a raid to react to. Decide if that is something your team is interested in doing. Some actions may involve raising funds for bonds, helping obtain legal support, referrals to food assistance, advocating against a specific state bill that will harm your community, holding prayers for affected community members, and organizing regular community meetings.
- Decide on a designated headquarters location to gather your team in the event of an emergency.

Step 2: Establish Solid Leadership Structure

- Establish a phone or text tree initiation process with clear a coordination procedure. Confirm that there are clear channels of communication between members of your rapid response team.
- Have a readily available list of committees or organizations relevant to your community's needs. These could be local needs (children & youth, education & organizing events/trainers), immediate needs (food, shelter, transportation), legal assistance, media referrals (press releases/press conferences), religious outreach (interfaith presence), and fundraising opportunities.
- Prepare a detailed, written action plan outlining what to do if a raid or arrest takes place, and make sure it is distributed to everyone on the team.

Step 3: Identify Liaisons

- A liaison develops or strengthens working relationships with local law enforcement, ICE, state and federal public defenders, local nonprofits, and public schools. These relationships will help obtain accurate and timely information on detainees.
- Reach out to your local law enforcement agencies, nonprofits, schools, and county court offices to identify who can be your point of contact liaison.

Step 4: Resources & Materials

- Identify materials and resources that are useful to your rapid response team.
- Ensure that all members of your team are aware of where to obtain helpful resources and materials as they respond to raids or arrests. Keep copies accessible at headquarters or with an initiator.

- Immigration tactics are constantly evolving. Make sure that your team is fully prepared for various situations they may face. It is important to update and share internal procedures and resources with your team.
- Keep these updated materials accessible in physical binders or through a safe online system.

Step 5: Important Contacts

- Important contacts to obtain, share and archive include: local and regional detention centers, consulates, and selected government agencies. Get to know your surrounding communities and connect with other rapid response teams.
- Develop a contact list with phone numbers, emails, language(s) spoken, and the area of experience and knowledge most useful to the team. This information will be helpful when trying to locate those detained and assisting them in obtaining representation.

Step 6: Immediate Action

- If a raid does occur in your area, do not panic - you and your team have a plan and know what to do. If you are not sure what to do or simply need to go through the process with someone, contact the top of your phone tree, a rapid response veteran, or reach out to your national network - CLINIC.

Step 7: Know YOUR Rights

- Immigration raids and arrests may escalate quickly. Always remain calm and follow the officer's instructions. Your safety and the safety of those being detained is important.
- Know your rights and be ready to exercise them.
- Fifth Amendment: You have the right to remain silent. You do not have to answer any questions without the presence of your legal representative. (In some states, you may be required to state your name if an officer asks you to identify yourself and an officer may arrest you for refusing to do so.)
- Sixth Amendment: You have the right to speak to a lawyer. If an officer tells you that you cannot walk away, you have been detained. You should ask to speak to a lawyer and then remain silent. You have the right to speak to a legal representative. It is okay if you have not hired a legal representative; you still have the right to consult with one.

Before The Raid: Get Prepared

Communities across the country are being affected by large-scale raids. Detention encounters have risen over the past year, with immigration enforcement officers appearing in neighborhood streets, local grocery stores, near children's schools, and many other commonly visited areas. The impact has been widespread, and the fear of repeated actions continues to shape how our immigrant neighbors navigate their daily lives. When preparing for potential enforcement activity, it's important to consider the unique circumstances of your community. This information can help guide family preparedness, support understanding of individual rights, and aid in developing an inclusive rapid-response plan.

Tips

- Connect with local language schools, university language departments, and community centers to gather information about the languages spoken in your area and identify individuals who may be willing to volunteer as interpreters.
- Contact local temples, mosques, and churches to learn about their immigration efforts and explore opportunities for collaboration.
- Determine whether your local law enforcement agencies have entered into [287\(g\) agreements](#) or who seem to be cooperating with ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO).
- Familiarize yourself and your community members with the different types of immigration enforcement agencies as well as state and local law enforcement. Immigration officials may work for CBP, or ICE, which has two components, ERO and HSI. Local law enforcement agencies may include police departments, sheriff's offices, and state police or highway patrol.

Encourage a Personal or Family Plan

Gathering important documents is the first step in preparing for emergencies such as raids or detention. Encourage your immigrant neighbors to gather documents such as passports, birth certificates, deeds, insurance policies, tax documents, medical and school records, and any arrest or conviction records. Keeping immigration documents, such as letters or notices from USCIS or DHS, readily available can help a detained person's legal representative reconstruct their immigration history.

For community members with children, now is the time to consider childcare and guardianship options. Some states allow parents to appoint a standby guardian prior to an anticipated event, such as immigration detention or removal (deportation). Use [CLINIC's Emergency Planning Guide](#) and the [attached checklist](#) when getting prepared.

Tips

- Extra copies of documents should be left with someone the family trusts BUT who does not live in the same household.
- Consider connecting parents in your community with legal representatives who can help them appoint a legal guardian for their children.
- Help community members connect with a trusted immigration attorney or DOJ- Accredited Representative. Encourage them to schedule an initial consultation and ask whether obtaining their complete immigration record through a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request would be helpful — and whether the attorney or representative can assist with that process.

Empower Your Community Through Know Your Rights Trainings (KYR)

Being prepared begins with understanding our rights as individuals and as a community. Regardless of immigration status, knowing these rights helps people recognize situations, understand potential consequences, and make informed choices. Even in today's climate, where immigration officials may disregard these rights, it is still essential for community members to clearly assert and exercise them.

As advocates, one option is to encourage faith communities and other organizations to train their members in presenting know-your-rights (KYR) information to immigrants. KYR trainings are a positive way to get involved in your community. Connect with unions, places of worship, libraries and community groups and distribute KYR trainings and materials like this one.

CLINIC's KYR flyers explain the rights our immigrant brothers and sisters have in various places and contexts. See [CLINIC's Know Your Rights Flyers](#) for more information. Distributing these flyers within your community will help remind everyone that they have rights, regardless of immigration status.

Tips

- KYR trainings should teach people about their rights, equip them to protect themselves from unlawful law enforcement actions, and explain what steps they can take when encountering law enforcement.
- Hold a KYR workshop for school staff, business owners, and homeowners on how they can stand with their community.
- Even if community members know their rights, stressful situations, such as being detained by immigration officers, can cause people to forget or hesitate to assert them. As advocates, try using creative approaches like role-playing, skits, and family-friendly settings to make difficult conversations more approachable and effective.

Collaborate With Your Community to Create an Inclusive Rapid Response Team

A well-organized rapid response team should include people from the media, social services, community leaders, attorneys, legislative advocates, and faith leaders who can provide a coordinated response to any immigration enforcement action. The [attached step-by-step notebook](#) provides a basic framework for creating a phone tree and leadership structure. A phone tree is a tiered system that allows a group to be quickly activated by phone call or text.

A rapid response team in your area maximizes local resources and enables effective support for those directly affected by raids and arrests. Time is important, and a strong and inclusive rapid response team ensures a multidisciplinary approach to detention and enforcement response. Keep in mind the unique needs of your community when developing committees and liaisons. For instance, consider the needs of children and youth, shelter and food, nearby detention centers and location of factories and other immigrant worksites in the region.

Tips

- Who can speak on behalf of the community to government officials? That is your legislative advocate.

Name: _____

- Remember to keep alternative contact numbers handy as back-up on your phone tree.
- Include union leaders and immigrant-friendly employers in the conversation.

During The Raid: Remain Calm

Raids and encounters with immigration enforcement officials or local law enforcement often happen unexpectedly and can be intimidating. Be ready to document all facts about what is happening, including all actions taken by officers or agents that seem unlawful, as well as license plates and other identifying features of vehicles used by the enforcement agency.

Your team should identify trusted individuals who are willing and able to respond at the neighborhood or workplace where the raid is occurring. Be mindful of the high stress situation that your team will face. The raid will likely be filled with law enforcement and/or immigration officials, so always remember to keep in contact with your team and avoid situations that place you at risk. Your team should have a designated legal subgroup. At least two attorneys or DOJ-Accredited Representatives from the subgroup should go to the nearest ICE holding facility. If your local law enforcement agency collaborates with ICE, keep in mind that individuals may be held at local jails as well. It's important to have handy the contact information of a trusted family member or friend, preferably one who holds lawful status, that can be notified of the individual's detention. As an advocate, you may be the first responder in taking action by notifying such a trusted individual. This will start the process of locating the person detained and acquiring the necessary information for the attorney to determine what next steps to take.

On Jan. 20, 2025, DHS announced the cancelling cancelation of a previous order from Oct. 27, 2021. The previous order specifically determined that certain locations required special protection from enforcement of U.S. immigration laws. These locations, often referred to as "protected areas" or "sensitive locations," included areas such as schools, places of worship and religious study, domestic violence shelters, places where disaster or emergency relief is being provided and many other locations.

This means that "protected areas" no longer exist. Importantly, if individuals allow immigration officials to enter these spaces, they may then enforce U.S. immigration laws. While nationwide protections are no longer in effect, communities should remain informed about state and local laws and court rulings that restrict or limit immigration enforcement in certain areas, such as schools and courthouses.

Tips

- Remember that there are no longer “protected areas” or “sensitive locations.” This includes courthouses. Immigration officials can arrest, interview and search people in and around courthouses.
- Although “protected areas” are no longer formally recognized, people in schools, churches, businesses, and similar settings still retain [important rights](#). Engage with local spaces that immigrant communities often visit, such as these former “protected areas” and other places of gathering. Provide training on individual rights and work with administrators to coordinate ways they can help safeguard their immigrant community members.
- While lobbies, parking lots, and waiting areas are typically considered public spaces, many interior areas within these locations remain private. As you will learn in the attached Know Your Rights materials, in order to access private areas, DHS officials need to have a [judicial warrant signed by a judge or magistrate](#), not an administrative warrant issued by DHS itself. Support community members in understanding the distinction between public and private areas and how to protect them.
- Learn about your community’s state and local protections that limit or restrict immigration enforcement in certain areas, including those listed in [CLINIC’s Immigration Tracker, State and Local Edition](#).
- Contact any family members who were present during the detention as they may have useful information about the detainee, including personal details or agents’ badge numbers, as well as any recordings of the detention.
- Assist family members in finding qualified legal counsel and representation. This is likely to be an emotional and challenging time for them, so remind them that acting quickly is crucial and that securing proper legal assistance is essential.

Raids are typically rapid, highly targeted operations. If you receive notice that a raid is in progress, immediately notify your rapid response team by contacting the individuals listed under “Phone Tree Initiators” in the [accompanying notebook](#). Immigration officials may be attempting to locate specific people during these actions; however, if they encounter other undocumented individuals, the likelihood of additional arrests and detentions is high. Numerous reports have documented enforcement officials using coercive, intimidating, or intrusive tactics during these operations.

Rapid response teams should keep in mind that certain detained individuals are at greater risk of removal. These high-risk individuals may be, but are not limited to:

- Those who have a final order of removal.
- Those who were previously removed and have re-entered the country.
- Recent entrants (in the U.S. less than two years).
- Individuals with criminal charges, convictions or have committed acts that constitute a chargeable criminal offense.

Raids in the Home

Raids carried out in private locations such as homes have increased across the United States. These types of enforcement actions are different from raids in public areas because immigration officers typically need a warrant or permission to enter a home. Many community members live in mixed status households with different immigration statuses. Therefore, it is important to require immigration officials to show a valid judge-signed warrant to gain access to a home. Lawful access may be granted either with the homeowner's consent or a signed judicial warrant. Families should have a plan in place with clear roles in the event immigration officers attempt to enter the home.

Tips

- Use [CLINIC's Know Your Rights resource](#), specifically tailored to immigration enforcement in homes.
- Help families develop their own action plan, determine which documents they should begin collecting, and encourage them to attend a KYR training session.
- Remind your community that opening the door may give immigration officers permission to enter. It's essential that everyone in the household is informed about this, including children.
- If the immigration officer says they have a warrant, individuals should ask for their identification and review the warrant. It must be issued by a judge and not just by the agency.
- During a home raid, everyone present should know that they have the right to ask the officer for their name and badge number.

Raids in the Workplace

Immigration officials may come onto job sites with the permission of the employer or a properly signed warrant. As an advocate, it is important to learn about the employer's policy on law enforcement presence at the workplace. Some employers do not allow law enforcement officers, including immigration officials, into their facilities unless a signed warrant is presented. To deliver a well-coordinated response, preparedness and trust within the community are essential. Developing strong relationships and strengthening bonds with workers, union leaders and employers is crucial.

Tips

- Hold KYR trainings at local businesses, factories and other workplaces.
- If possible, designate a rapid response advocate as the point of contact in the event a workplace raid takes place.
- Ask employers if their human resources department has policies for front desk staff or first contact staff on what steps need to be taken if an immigration official is present.
- If no policy exists, consult with the employer about who is the best person to contact about setting up internal policies in the event of raids.
- Learn whether the employees have a union. Union leaders can help support workers in creating or improving workplace policies regarding cooperation with immigration officials.

One-on-One Encounters

If an immigration official or law enforcement officer approaches someone in a public space, it is crucial for that person to remember not to run, to remain silent, and to avoid physically resisting detention. Personal safety is one of the top priorities during these interactions. Such encounters can be confusing, especially because officers or immigration agents may initiate contact without an obvious reason — for example, a minor traffic violation could be the starting point.

For members of the rapid response team, it is important to recognize that monitoring or being notified about one-on-one encounters can be challenging. Family members of individuals being detained may hesitate to seek help out of fear that they themselves could face detention. This is why building and maintaining strong community connections is essential. Community members must know that the rapid response team exists and that it can be trusted. Establishing reliable, supportive relationships within the community helps break the cycle of fear that often prevents people from reaching out for assistance.

Tips

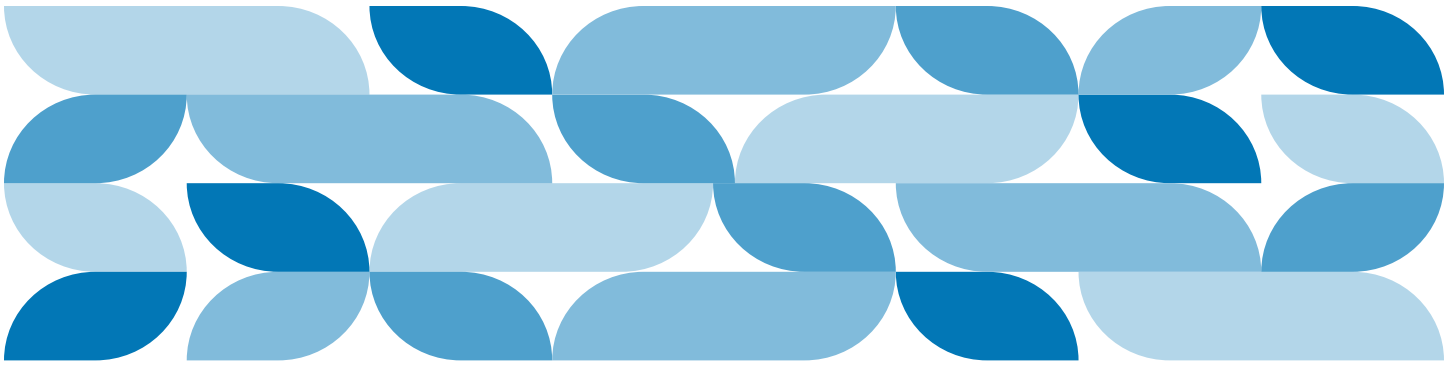
- Remember that in some states, individuals are legally required to provide their name when asked by law enforcement.
- Organize community or town hall meetings with local rapid response teams, giving them an opportunity to introduce themselves, identify points of contact for emergencies, and explain how community members can get involved or volunteer.
- Foster strong, trustworthy relationships between community members and your rapid response team so people feel comfortable turning to a familiar, reliable source for help.



After The Raid: Act Quickly

Once a raid or arrest has taken place, it is time to put your rapid response plan into action. Each person involved has a part to play in supporting those who have been detained. After an immigration raid or detention, consider taking the following steps:

- 1. Activate Rapid Response Team:** Timely communication is essential. Convene an emergency meeting with your rapid response team as soon as you confirm that a raid has occurred.
- 2. Legal Representative:** Contact the detainee's family members or trusted associates to verify whether the individual already has legal counsel, such as an immigration attorney or DOJ-Accredited Representative. If legal representation exists, help the family communicate with their representative. If not, connect them with a trusted legal representative.
- 3. Guardianship Support:** Help community members exercise their rights as standby guardians for children whose parent or legal guardian has been detained.
- 4. Assess the Incident:** Determine whether the situation is a single detention, a raid, or part of a broader enforcement operation. Understanding the scale can guide the team's response and inform appropriate advocacy steps.
- 5. Communication:** Maintain communication between the rapid response team and the detainee's affected families, friends, and parishes. Inform yourself about whether any witnesses were present during the detention and whether any video documentation exists.
- 6. Workplace Raids:** If the raid occurred at a workplace, reach out to the designated labor liaison. The rapid response team liaison may support local labor leaders in contacting their national organizations, local ICE offices, local law enforcement, local and state elected officials. If the rapid response team liaison has contact with the affected worksite, consider suggesting a statement from the company's management to reassure employees about steps being taken on behalf of their coworkers.
- 7. Compassion:** Detained individuals and their families face immense emotional strain. As advocates, offering guidance, compassion, and connections to supportive resources can make a meaningful difference during this challenging time.



Stand In Solidarity: Advocacy Actions

Raise Awareness:

- Become an active member of your local rapid response team.
- Be a good ally. Rely on leaders within the affected community to help guide your advocacy work in a way that respects their culture and addresses the community's specific needs.
- Hold meetings to educate community members on their rights. Individuals may avoid leaving their homes in fear of detention. Brainstorm ideas on how to educate community members virtually or remotely.
- Have a collective presence on social media by creating a Facebook page or using a common hashtag that becomes familiar to members of your community.
- Explore advocacy and messaging strategies if someone is interested in publicly speaking out regarding a detention or raid.
- Report any possible illegal or abusive practices by immigration officials or law enforcement agents to national organizations that lead efforts in this area or develop an advocacy response.
- Help fundraise to support members of your community who are in ICE custody.
- Partner with local officials to condemn enforcement actions or to review safety procedures for the community during or after an immigration raid.

Advocate for Legislative Solutions

- Write to your members of Congress and inform them about what is happening in your community and how it is affecting you.
- Advocate for state and local policies that protect the rights and dignity of vulnerable neighbors. If you need additional insight into the best approach for this, contact the advocacy team at CLINIC.

Support Faith Communities

- Hold a vigil or prayer service to stand in solidarity with the affected families and the entire community.
- Organize a visit to those detained; pastoral ministers and clergy should have access to those detained. Moral support is a kind reminder we are not alone.
- Keep in mind those family members left behind. Provide moral support and help where possible.

Rapid Response Action Plan

1. Get Organized: Build Your Own Inclusive Rapid Response Team

- Team Coordination
- Establish Solid Leadership Structure
- Identify Liaisons
- Resources & Materials
- Important Contacts
- Immediate Action
- Know YOUR Rights

2. Checklist: Essential Steps for Immigrants

Review this [checklist](#) with members of your community before immigration raids and detentions occur.

3. Before the Raid: Get Prepared

- Connect with local language schools, university language departments, and community centers to gather information about languages spoken in your area.
- Identify individuals who may be willing to volunteer as interpreters.
- Contact local temples, mosques, and churches to learn about their immigration efforts and explore opportunities for collaboration.
- Determine whether your local law enforcement agencies have entered into 287 (g) agreements or who seem to be cooperating with ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO).
- Familiarize yourself and your community members with different types of immigration enforcement agencies as well as state and local law enforcement.

4. During the Raid: Remain Calm

- Remember that there are no longer “protected areas” or “sensitive locations.” This includes courthouses. Immigration officials can arrest, interview, and search people in and around courthouses.
- Contact any family members who were present during the detention as they may have useful information.
- Assist family members in finding qualified legal counsel and representation.

5. After the Raid: Act Quickly

- Activate Rapid Response Team: Once a raid or arrest has taken place, it is time to put your rapid response plan into action.
- Each person involved has a part to play in supporting those who have been detained.

6. Stand in Solidarity: Advocacy Actions

- Raise Awareness
- Advocate for Legislative Solutions
- Support Faith Communities

Checklist: Essential Steps For Immigrants

1. Identify Your Emergency Contact

This person needs to be reliable. It is important that those at risk of detention memorize this phone number. A call to your emergency contact will activate your plan set in place across your family and network.

2. Memorize Your Alien Number (A-Number)

If you have been assigned an alien number, memorize it (for example, A012 345 678). Keep your important documents somewhere safe and make sure a trusted individual knows where to locate them in the event of an emergency.

3. Organize and Protect Your Documents

Review personal/family documentation and initiate the process of obtaining any missing paperwork. When all original documentation is gathered, be sure to obtain English translations of all of them. Then, make copies of both the originals and their translations, and provide them to a trusted individual who does not reside with you. These important documents may include, but are not limited to:

- Identity documents (birth certificates, identifications, valid and expired passports)
- Marriage and divorce certificates
- School records
- Financial documents (bank statements and bills)
- Deeds, title of cars, insurance documents, income tax returns
- Court documents (any documentation of previous arrests, final dispositions and FBI prints)
- Immigration history (FOIA results, any document received from or given to USCIS,

CBP or immigration court, current or expired work authorizations, social security cards, visas)

- Medical history (including ongoing treatments and prescriptions)

4. Plan for Children's Care

If there are children involved, plan for their care and needs:

- Consider existing protective orders before making any decisions on children's care.
- Have you considered stand-by guardianship? Please refer to: [Emergency Preparedness for Immigrant Families: A 50 State Resource | Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. \(CLINIC\)](#)
- Who may be authorized as a third party for school pick-up? Assign someone trustworthy.
- Is there ongoing medical care/treatment that should be considered? Make a list of medications and illnesses you and your children may have.
- Does the child have a valid passport and identification? Have copies readily available.

5. Consult a Legal Professional

Obtain a consultation with an immigration attorney or authorized legal representative. Learn about your options and what next steps are available to you. Keep the name and phone number of a reliable immigration legal representative with you.

6. Strengthen Your Support Network

Save money for emergencies. Attend a Know Your Rights (KYR) training. Stay in regular contact with trusted family members and friends, legal representatives, and community organizations.

Model Rapid Response Team Notebook

Rapid Response Standby Phone Tree

If the phone tree initiators have reason to believe that some kind of ICE enforcement action (i.e. raid) is underway or had occurred, the following phone tree will be initiated. Depending on the circumstances, back-ups and/or other contacts may need to be alerted as well.

The initiators are to call every person directly below them. If any person below one of them is unreachable, the initiator should go ahead and make any calls that would otherwise be made by the unreachable person. If one of the initiators is unreachable, the other initiator(s) are responsible for making or delegating that initiator's calls.

Phone Tree Initiators:

(Name & Number):

(Name & Number):

(Name & Number):

Initiator 1's Branch:

Core member 1 (Name & number) (Helps with legal issues). Names and numbers of backups.

Core member 2 (Name & number) (Liaison to interpreters). Names and numbers to backup.

Core member 3 (Name & number) (Liaison to Schools/Universities). Names and numbers to backup.

Core member 4 (Name & number) (Religious Outreach). Names and numbers to backup.

Initiator 2's Branch:

Core member 1 (Name & number) (Helps with legal issues). Names and numbers of backups.

Core member 2 (Name & number) (Liaison to interpreters). Names and numbers to backup.

Core member 3 (Name & number) (Liaison to Schools/Universities). Names and numbers to backup.

Core member 4 (Name & number) (Religious Outreach). Names and numbers to backup.

Initiator 3's Branch:

Core member 1 (Name & number) (Helps with legal issues). Names and numbers of backups.

Core member 2 (Name & number) (Liaison to interpreters). Names and numbers to backup.

Core member 3 (Name & number) (Liaison to Schools/Universities). Names and numbers to backup.

Core member 4 (Name & number) (Religious Outreach). Names and numbers to backup.

Leadership Structure

To provide an overview of the leadership structure and phone numbers for back-up people, here is a break-down of overall responsibilities:

Coordination & Phone Tree Initiation (Phone Tree Initiators):

(Name & Number):

(Name & Number):

(Name & Number):

Committees

Children & Youth Committee

Primary:

Backups:

Alternative contacts:

Education & Organizing Committee

Primary:

Backups:

Food/Shelter (Immediate Needs) Committee

Primary:

Backups:

Legal Committee

Primary:

Backups:

Media Committee

Primary:

Backups:

Religious Outreach Committee

Primary:

Backups:

Liaisons

Interpreter Liaison

Primary:

Backups:

ICE Liaison

Primary:

Backups:

Labor Liaison

Primary:

Backups:

Children & Youth Committee

Primary (Chair): Name & contact information

Members: Name & contact information (& name of school or university they are with). Make sure to note which schools have an active ESOL program.

It is important to develop a complete contact list for the rapid response team. Here is an example:

School Name	Name	Phone	Address	Email	Notes

Education & Organizing Committee

Primary (Chair): Name & contact information

Members: Name & contact information (& name of organization they are with). Develop a contact list with possible Know Your Rights Trainers and note who of them are bilingual have attended a train-the-trainer workshop. Keep materials accessible.

Org Name	Name	Phone	Address	Email	Notes

Food/Shelter (Immediate Needs) Committee

Primary (Chair): Name & contact information

Members: Name & contact information. Remember if you do not want to handle donations and distributions yourself, you can reach out to others with more experience or capacity.

Org Name	Name	Phone	Address	Email	Notes

Legal Committee

Primary (Chair): Name & contact information

Members: Name & contact information. Be sure to alert national groups. Would be helpful to develop a list of local organizations, Pro-Bono/Low-Bono trustworthy private attorneys and University Clinics.

Org Name	Name	Phone	Address	Email	Notes

Rapid Response Media Committee

Media Protocol

For Spanish language media:

- Provide them with the phone numbers that immigrant families can call who want to find out about family members who are detained or to obtain other forms of assistance.
- Provide names and contact information of media point person
- Provide time and place for community meeting or press conference
- Prepare press release
- Obtain and provide information about who will coordinate donations
- Radio stations: Determine if 1 or 2 well versed with what occurred and what the consequences the raid may participate in a call-in program immediately after the raid to answer any questions that people may have.

For English language media:

- Prioritize local stations – then contact others.
- Provide contact information for media point person
- Prepare press release
- Obtain and provide information about who will coordinate donations
- Provide time and place for community meeting or press conference

If the team deems it appropriate, plan a press conference

Identify within your partners who could provide a nice space that can be used for a press conference. Spokespersons are community members that may have some special authority or experience or represent in some authentic way a group or community. Spokespersons should all be able to articulate the agreed upon group message and be ready to diplomatically handle uncomfortable or even offensive questions.

These people have experience dealing with the press and have agreed to be spokespersons:

1. Name, phone number and Email (English speaker)
2. Name, phone number and Email (Spanish speaker)
3. Name, phone number and Email (Portuguese, English and Spanish speaker)

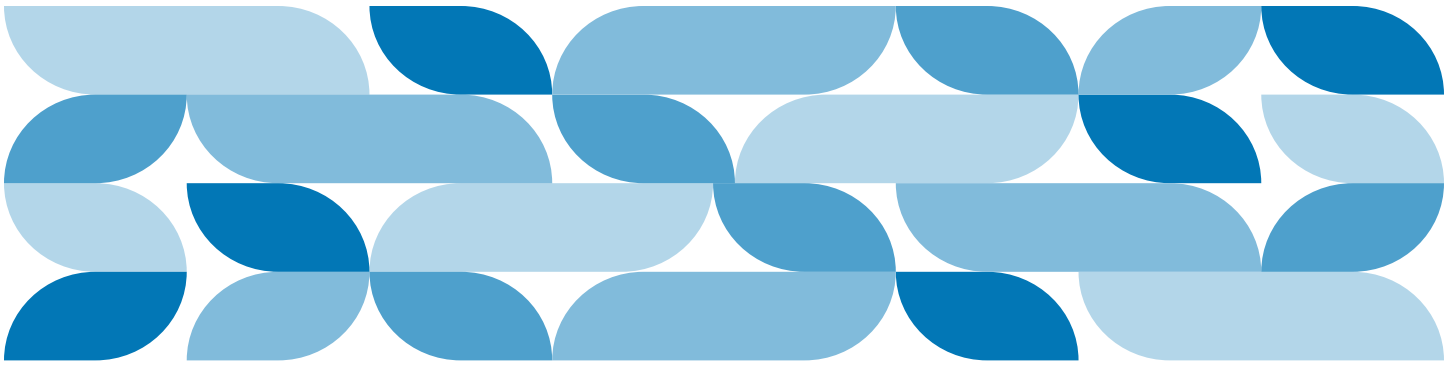
Tip: Keep list of all media contacts to be able to reach out when appropriate. Separate by type of media: online, newspapers, newsletters, magazines, radio, television channels. Identify which ones are high and medium priority.

Model Press Release

Outline For Press Release For Day After Raid

- Letterhead (with names of organizations and contact information)
- What happened? (Last night 24 of our community members were detained in an ICE raid ...)
 1. Was the local police involved?
 2. Name of employer?
 3. Who was targeted and why?
 4. Were children involved? What has happened to them?
 5. Where are people being detained?
 6. Are ICE officers following procedures?
- What is likely to happen next?
- Community reaction: We (who?) decry the targeted sweep by ICE against our community members and neighbors. (Why?)
- Action steps: We invite you to a protests on XXX, at XXX. OR We urge you to attend: workshops, community meeting. OR We are asking for your help in supporting families by donating, volunteering.

Tip: Have accessible the official descriptions of all partner organizations participating so they may be shared with media in one document and not spend time gathering the information.



Model Talking Points

(Note: These talking points should be considered as a place to start. They are NOT vetted by the Rapid Response Team)

- 1. The current practices and goals of immigration enforcement, such as raids and the increase of ICE encounters in communities, result in family separation.
- 2. An immigration policy that does not instill fear in our communities and deter our children to attend school is one that is fair and prioritizes the well-being of its citizens.
- 3. Undocumented workers are active members in our society. They too form part of our economy and work just as hard to support their families.
- 4. We need comprehensive immigration reform that restores and respects civil rights and due process protections for immigrants, reunifies families in a timely manner and protects our community members instead of targeting them.

Religious Outreach Committee

Primary (Chair): Name & contact information (& name of congregation or dioceses they are with)

Members: Name & contact information (& name of congregation or dioceses they are with).

It is important to develop an interfaith contact list for the rapid response team. Here is an example:

Org Name	Name	Phone	Address	Email	Notes

Labor Liaison

Name of Liaison:

Contact Information:

Liaison Backup: name and contact information

Develop a labor contact list in event of a raid.

- Does your community have a labor council?
- Do you have any contacts with any unions in your city?
- Does SEIU or AFL-CIO have an office near you? You should develop contacts with them if there are local branches in your area.

Interpreter Liaison

Name of Liaison:

Contact Information:

Liaison Backup(s): name and contact information

The primary liaison will be the point person to reach out to other interpreters willing and able to provide their services on a volunteer or low-bono basis. This person knows the interpreting community and will know how to find an interpreter for the dominant languages in your community.

It would be helpful to note the follow details on the contact list: the language, availability and if they are interpreters for presentations like Know Your Rights or for interviews or if they are able to assist those in ICE custody.

ICE Liaison

Name of Liaison:

Contact Information:

Liaison Backup(s): name and contact information

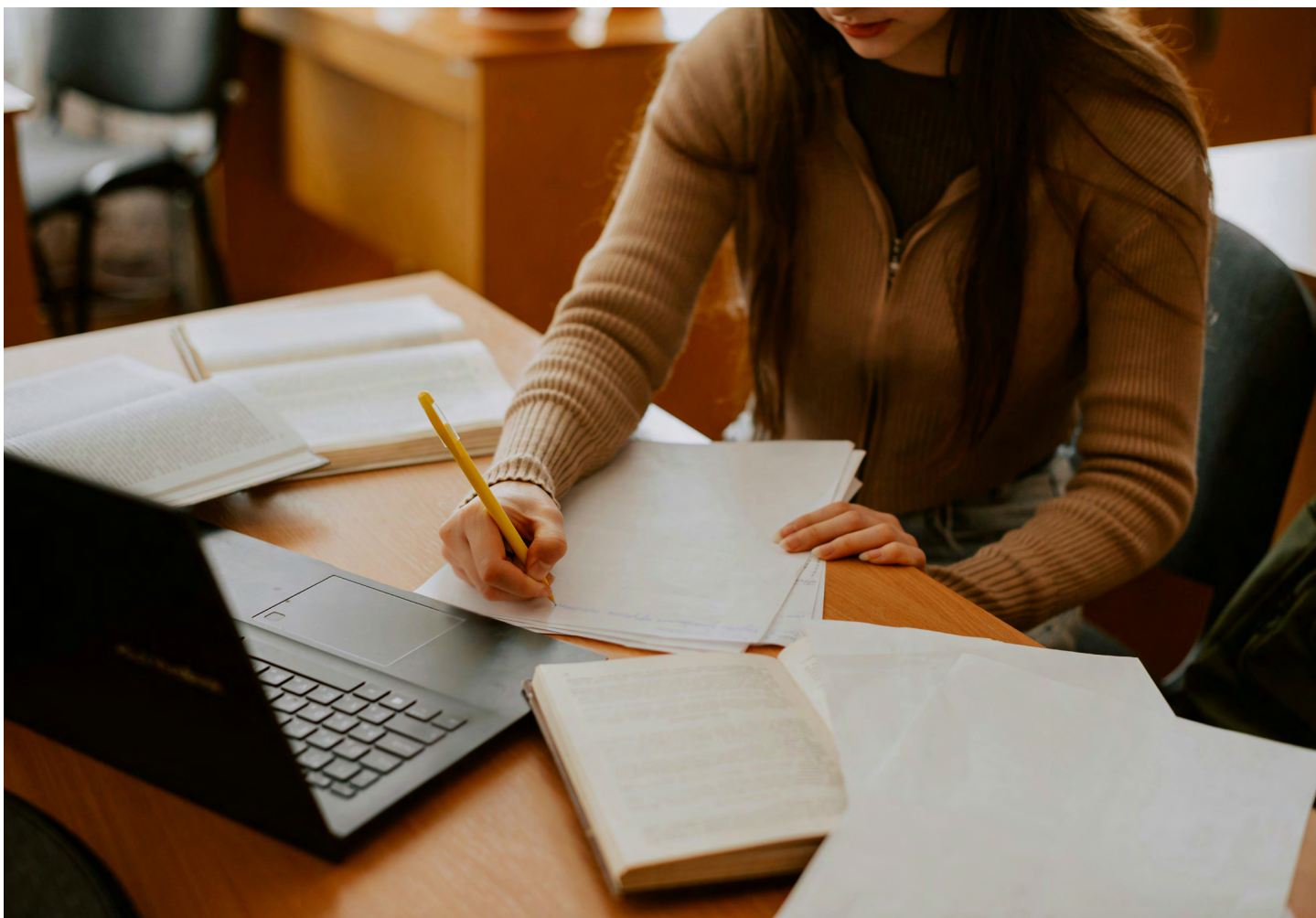
Address of local ICE Field Office:

Phone number:

Contact information of point person within ICE:

An introduction meeting between the ICE liaison, a Rapid Response team representative and the local lead ICE officer would be helpful to introduce the liaison, but the team as well to Local ICE office and ask them for any relevant information they are willing to share.

Questions regarding 287(g) officers in your community would be pertinent or if they would be willing to contact the team or liaison as soon as they learn of any raid might occur.



Other Important Information

- Contact information of **foreign consulates** relevant to community members. Visit CLINIC's resource to find consulate information: cliniclegal.org/emergency-planning-for-immigrant-families
- List of **Immigration Courts in your area**: justice.gov/eoir/find-immigration-court-and-access-internet-based-hearings
- List of detention facilities in or near your community: ice.gov/detention-facilities. If a person is detained, where was that person taken to and who can you talk to?
- Information for visitation and process would be good of the RRT to be aware of. It might make sense for your team to have a conversation about creating a liaison position for detention facilities.
- Keep contact information of all private attorneys and NGOs in the area who are willing to collaborate as well as contacts of people within National orgs you can touch base with.
- Remember to **keep additional key community contacts** who should be alerted in all cases and of people not on the phone tree who have agreed to serve as back-up helpers on particular issues in the event of committee chair or liaison is unavailable.



Emergency Planning Guide

Emergency Plan For:

Make sure each family member carefully reviews this guide and has their own emergency plan in place. Once completed, place this guide on top of your important documents and/or share copies with a trusted family member, friend, or community member.

- ☐ **Identify an attorney or Accredited Representative** who will help you in the event of an emergency. Be sure to speak with them directly. Do not simply write down their phone number without confirming that they will be available and able to help you when needed.
- ☐ **Obtain a legal screening** from an attorney or Accredited Representative to determine whether you qualify for any type of immigration status.
- ☐ **Register with your local consulate.**
- ☐ **Register and build a relationship** with your local church, parish, or other religious or community organization.
- ☐ **Create a family plan** so everyone knows what to do if a family member is arrested, detained, or goes missing.
 - Decide who will be called and in what order.
 - In some states, individuals are legally required to provide their name to law enforcement. Find out whether this rule applies where you live and decide in advance how you will respond if asked for your name. Be aware that refusing to give your name may lead to arrest or detention and could make it difficult or impossible for your family to locate you while in police custody or detention. Speak with your legal representative for advice based on your specific situation.

- ❑ Make copies of all immigration-related and other important documents for every family member and store them in a safe place. Make sure that a trusted family member, friend, or community member who does not live with you knows where these documents are kept. You may also consider giving this trusted person a copy of the documents.

Examples of important documents to copy include:

- Work authorization documents.
 - Identifications cards.
 - Passports.
 - Social Security cards.
 - Immigration documents, such as receipt notices for pending cases and approval notices for previously filed cases.
 - Birth certificates with English translations.
 - Marriage certificates with English translations.
 - Documents related to any criminal arrests or cases.
 - Names and contact information for any attorneys who have previously represented you.
 - Other important records, such as lists of medications family members take or known health conditions.
- ❑ **Choose someone to take care of your children** in an emergency and give them important information, like any medications your children need. Talk to an attorney to see if you should sign legal documents, like a power of attorney, to make sure your children are properly cared for in an emergency. Make sure children born in the United States have passports.
 - ❑ **Talk with an attorney about signing a power of attorney.** This legal document lets someone you trust make decisions about your finances, children, and other important matters if you are ever detained or deported.
 - ❑ **Save money** for rent, food, medications, and other essential needs in case you are detained. Speak with your attorney or employer about signing a document that lets a family member collect your paycheck if you are detained. If you have money in a bank account, decide whether a trusted person should be able to access it if you are detained.
 - ❑ **Gather documents for potential release** from detention on bond detention. Whether someone qualifies for release under bond is determined on a case-by-case basis and is not guaranteed. Regardless, it's important to have some of the required documents ready in advance to save time if you are ever detained. Make sure that the trusted person you choose (spouse, family member, or friend) knows where you keep these documents as well. Remember, these are only some of the documents needed for bond requests. The trusted person you assign will be responsible for collecting the rest.



Collect and safely store the following documents:

- **Proof of time living in the United States:** Gather documents that show your name and date for the years you have lived in the country. Include as many years as possible, not just the last year or two. Examples include rent receipts, utility bills, and your children's birth certificates with your name on them.
 - **Proof of property ownership in the United States:** Make copies of deeds, car titles, or any other property you own.
 - **Photos of you and your family:** These help show ties to your community.
 - **Proof of employment:** Collect recent paystubs to demonstrate financial ties in the country.
 - **Criminal history, if applicable:** If you have ever been arrested or convicted, write a personal letter explaining what happened and how you have changed. Include supporting documents.
- ☐ **Arrange for a relative, friend, or community member to pay a bond for you if you are detained.** This person must be a U.S. citizen or a Lawful Permanent Resident (green card holder). A judge sets the bond amount, and it can vary for each case.
- ☐ **Review this guide and your emergency plan with your entire family**, including children who are old enough to understand. Review this guide and your emergency plan every 6–12 months and update them as needed.
- ☐ **Make sure everyone in your family knows their rights.** Consider practicing exactly what to say and do if you have contact with law enforcement, including police officers, sheriffs, ICE, CBP, HSI, or ERO.

Memorize the Following Information:

- ☐ Your attorney or Accredited Representative's phone number. Always carry a copy of that phone number with you.
- ☐ The phone number of your consulate. Always carry a copy of that phone number with you.
- ☐ Phone numbers for your family.
- ☐ Your Alien Registration Number/A#, found on your immigration documents, if you have one.
- ☐ Your date of entry into the United States.
- ☐ Your immigration status when you entered the United States.
- ☐ Your current immigration status.
- ☐ Your criminal history, including any arrests, dates, charges, and the outcome (guilty or innocent).

Emergency Contact Sheet

Once filled out, place this sheet on top of your important documents and/or share copies with a trusted family member, friend, or community member. Make sure all members of your family have access to this information.

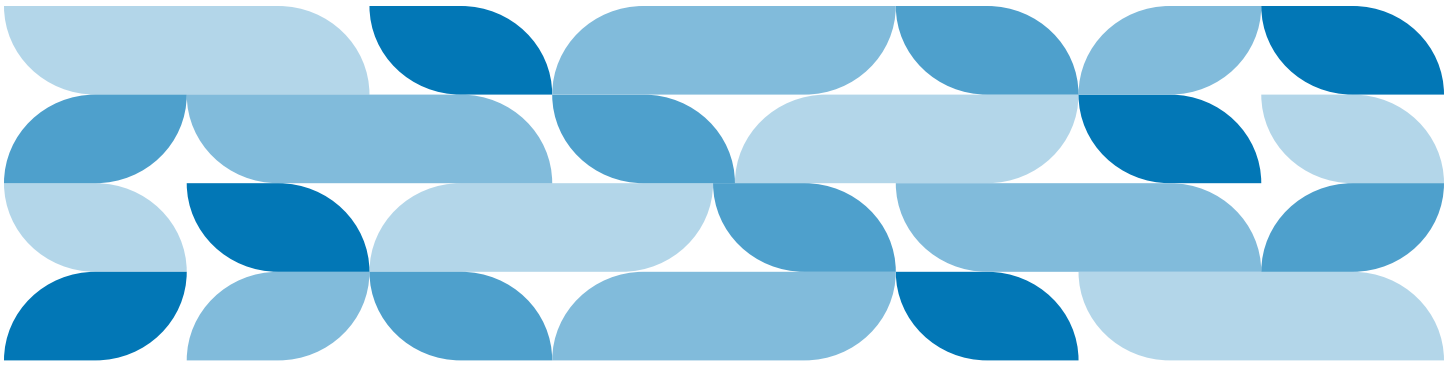
Attorney/Accredited Representative	Name:
	Phone Number:
Consulate	Name:
	Phone Number:
Religious or Community Organization	Name:
	Phone Number:
Other:	Name:
	Phone Number:
Other:	Name:
	Phone Number:
Other:	Name:
	Phone Number:

Detention Centers and Police Stations

Once filled out, place this sheet on top of your important documents and/or share copies with a trusted family member, friend, or community member. Make sure all members of your family have access to this information.

- Immigration Court Information System (for information about hearings and court dates): 1-800-898-7180 and through acis.eoir.justice.gov/en/.
- ICE Detainee Locator system: locator.ice.gov/odls/#/search.

Local Immigration Detention Center	Name:
	Phone Number:
Local Immigration Detention Center	Name:
	Phone Number:
Local Police Station	Name:
	Phone Number:
Local Police Station	Name:
	Phone Number:



Questions To Ask If a Loved One Calls You From Detention or Police Custody

1. Where are you?
2. Do you need medical attention?
3. What law enforcement agency arrested or detained you?
4. What is the largest city or town near you?
5. What papers have you been given and what do the papers say?
6. Have you signed any papers you have been given?
7. Do you have a court date or hearing scheduled?
8. Have you spoken with your attorney or accredited representative?
9. Are there any important documents you have collected at home or in a safe place that I should be aware of?
10. Do I need to get in touch with anyone to assist with your children?



Educational and Prayer Resources for Supporting Immigrants in Your Parish

1. Please see here for some sample [prayer intentions](#) on the subject of immigration justice developed by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)
2. Here is a sample [prayer service outline](#) from the USCCB. Here is [another one](#).
3. From Jesuit Refugee Service, here is a [toolkit](#) for planning a prayer vigil or rally for immigrants.
4. Educational Resources on Catholic teaching on migration:
 - [CLINIC's Q&A on CST and Immigration](#)
 - [The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' 2025 Special Message on Immigration](#) and new campaign, "[You Are Not Alone](#)"
 - [Migration and Catholic Social Teaching](#) – USCCB
 - [The Cabrini Pledge](#) (English and Spanish) - USCCB
 - [Interview With Bishop Brendan Cahill on Catholics' Critiques of USCCB's Position on Immigration](#)
 - CLINIC's [Modern Catholic Social Teaching on Immigration](#) Resource
 - [Catholic Charities' Collection of Church Teaching on Immigration](#)
5. CLINIC's Rosary Guide (2025), "[Praying the Rosary With the Stories of Immigrants: The Sorrowful Mysteries](#)."
6. CLINIC's Stations of the Cross: [Walking With Immigrant Stories](#) (2026)