



## **Steps I Can Take to Be Prepared for Immigration Enforcement**

*This information is a general guide; it is not legal advice. Many laws and law enforcement practices are different in different states. Please talk to a lawyer for more information about your options.*

### **Know My Rights**

- Try to learn as much about your rights as possible. Go to local community Know Your Rights trainings or help set up a training in your community through your church, school, or other supportive organizations.
- Get or make a copy of a “Know Your Rights” card reminding you about your rights. If you are stopped by law enforcement you can give them this card instead of answering questions. Remember that in some states you may need to give your name (but nothing else).
- Talk to your family and co-workers about what to do if they encounter law enforcement officials and remind them of their right to remain silent no matter what their immigration status is.
- Role-play what to do or say with family members (not young children). Although it can be a very scary experience, knowing your rights and reminding yourself of what to do will make it easier to stay calm and take the right steps to protect yourself, your co-workers and your family.
- Reach out to other members of the community (such as church members and neighbors) and let them know your concerns. This way the whole community can come together to support you and your family when needed.

### **Make Sure I Have All of My Important Information and Documents**

- Make a list of important contact information, such as telephone numbers for family members or friends, legal services, and your local consulate. Keep a copy of the list with you, at home, and with emergency contacts. Memorize key phone numbers if you can.
- Know Your Rights card
- Make copies of all important legal and I.D. documents and keep them in a safe place, preferably where a friend or family member knows where to find them. Some examples:
  - Driver’s license (remember that it is a violation of state law to drive without a valid driver’s license)
  - Visa or work authorization (make sure it is valid and not expired)
  - Passport (for children who are dual citizens make sure you have passports for both the U.S. and your home country)
  - Birth certificate(s)
  - Marriage certificate
  - Child custody or guardianship papers (for example, a Power of Attorney)
  - School records
  - Medical records (if you have a chronic illness or serious medical condition, plan for how to continue getting medications and medical care)
  - Bank records/access to bank accounts

### **Find Immigration Legal Help**

- Identify an immigration lawyer or a BIA (Board of Immigration Appeals) accredited representative. You should look for a lawyer or BIA representative that specializes in immigration law and who has information, such as a bar number, to prove that they are authorized to practice immigration law. It is even better if others have used the lawyer or BIA representative and can tell you whether or not they had good experiences.

- Remember that a *notario* is not authorized to practice immigration law in the United States. If the lawyer or BIA representative makes promises that seem too good to be true or their services seem too expensive, get a second opinion.
- Meet with the immigration lawyer or BIA representative to see if you can improve your immigration status.
- Memorize or maintain copies of your immigration lawyer's or BIA representative's phone number in case you are detained.

### **My Family and Children**

- If you have family in the U.S., make a plan about what do if you are detained. Use a family emergency response plan to make sure you address all of the needs your children and family will have. Make sure everyone, including the children themselves, knows what the plan is.
- Make arrangements for who will take care of your children. Contact a local community organization or a family law attorney to help you make the necessary legal arrangements. Make sure you have a legal document that says who you would like to have custody and a legal document giving them authority to make decisions about the children.

### **My Work**

- If possible, have a designated person at your worksite with legal status that can get in touch with emergency contacts if a worksite raid happens.
- If you belong to a union, you should talk to your union representative about having a plan in place for worksite raids.

### **What if I am Detained?**

- Try to contact key people as quickly as possible once you are detained, including your attorney, your loved ones and your local consulate.
- Make sure your loved ones and others know how to look for you if you are detained. They should have a list with phone numbers of local detention centers or a community organization that can help them if you don't have an immigration lawyer.
- If you have an "A" number (alien registration number), make sure your emergency contact has it. This number may appear on your work permit, green card, or other documents you have received from immigration authorities. If you are detained, you will be given an "A" number and your family can get it with the help of your local consulate.
- Do not be intimidated. Assert your rights by saying you do not want to answer any questions until you can talk to your lawyer. Do not sign any papers until you can talk to your lawyer.