

Family Preparedness Plan

Learn how you and your family can prepare in case you are arrested or deported

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What is a Family Preparedness Plan? Why do I need one?

A family preparedness plan is a list of relevant information, preferences regarding the care of children or property, and other relevant information and choices of a family member in case they are detained or deported.

Laying out a family plan gives you and other family members certainty about how to respond in case of an arrest or deportation. It also helps reduce stress when making hard choices.

This document lays out steps to make a childcare plan and a financial plan and provides you with information about consulates and low-cost or pro-bono, reliable legal service providers in El Paso (Texas).

Childcare plan

If you have children, you should make a childcare plan to ensure they will be welcomed and cared for by a designated guardian. These are some steps you can take:

1. Choose a guardian for your children



“Guardian” is a word often used in the United States to describe a person who may be asked to care for your children if something happens to you.

Think of a possible guardian for your children. That person may be your partner, parent, aunt/uncle, brother/sister, or another relative, friend, or neighbor.

2. Make sure the guardian you have chosen is willing and able to care for your children

Once you have decided who you want to ask to be a guardian for your children, the next step is to have a conversation with that person. There are many important things to discuss with the guardian to ensure that you both feel comfortable with the plans and that the guardian understands the kind of commitment that caring for your children entails if you are arrested by ICE. Here are some questions you should review:

Questions to consider for the potential guardian to ensure that he or she is willing and able to care for your children

1. How long will they be able to care for your children?

You both might think that the situation will last only a few days or weeks, but unfortunately, immigration and dependency processes can often last months or, in some cases, more than a year. If you are deported, your children may have to remain in the care of the guardian for an even longer time. To be fully prepared, it is best to assume that your guardian will have your children for a long time.

2. How much will it cost to care for your children?

Every day, your children will need food, shelter, transportation, medical care, and personal items like books and clothing. Does the guardian have the financial means to support your

children? Can you set aside money and resources to help the guardian support your children? Is there another person, relative, friend, or pastor who can contribute money to purchase your children's needs?

3. Who else lives in the guardian's home? Do you know everyone who lives in the house?

You need to make sure you are comfortable with everyone who will have daily contact with your child. If an adult household member has a criminal record and Child Protective Services (CPS) gets involved in your case, they may not let your children stay in the home.

4. Is there adequate supervision?

You need to make sure that your child will be supervised. Think about who will be watching your children at home and whether the children will be in daycare or school when they are away from home. You should also make sure that the guardian's home is safe for your children.

5. Is your guardian aware of your child's special medical needs?

Does your child have a doctor or health care provider and some type of health insurance? If your child is taking medications, does the guardian have the prescriptions and know where to fill them? Make sure to write down any medical conditions or allergies your child has and any medications that your child takes.



IMPORTANT: Add your chosen guardian to your children's school registration list as an adult who can pick up and enroll your children.

3. Have a Power of Attorney Agreement



A power of attorney is a document that temporarily authorizes another person to make decisions for your children. It is a private agreement between you and another person, NOT a court order.

You should consider establishing a power of attorney with your chosen guardian as a way to prevent your children from being placed in foster care if you are apprehended by ICE. In the power of attorney agreement, you can provide the guardian with general authority over all parenting decisions or you can list specific things that you are giving the guardian temporary authority to decide.

You decide how long the document is valid for, and as a parent, you can revoke it at any time.

You must sign the power of attorney document in front of a witness (another person) and a notary. You must complete two original copies, each with an original signature. Give one copy to the guardian and keep one for yourself in a safe place.



NOTE: Power of Attorney Letters are usually respected, but since they are not a judge's order, there is no law requiring institutions to honor them. Please consult an attorney if you would like to discuss other options.

4. Make sure all your children have passports

If your child was born in the United States, visit www.travel.state.gov for more information on obtaining a U.S. passport for them. A U.S. passport will allow your children to travel to and from the United States. It will also help them provide proof of their citizenship.

If your child was born in a different country, a passport is still needed to travel. Check with your embassy or consulate for more information on obtaining a passport (more information on consulates is below).

5. Inform your family and emergency contacts about how to find you if you are detained by ICE

Family members can use the ICE detainee locator <https://locator.ice.gov/odls/#/search> to find someone in ICE custody. They can find you either by providing your full name, date of birth,

and country of origin, or by providing your A-number, a registration number that you will find on your immigration documents from ICE. Share that number with your family and emergency contacts during your first call from detention whenever possible.

6. Talk to your children and relatives about your plan

Without worrying them, assure your children that they will be taken care of if, for some reason, you are unable to care for them, even for a short time. Let them know who will care for them until you can. Let other close relatives know about your plans.

7. Make an emergency contact list

Since most parents may be arrested by ICE unexpectedly, you should create an emergency contact list. You should write down the names of any relatives or friends whom you want to designate as guardians or emergency contacts, along with their phone number, email address, and street address, if available. The people on this list should be able to provide some form of emotional and practical support for your children. Everyone on the list should know about your children's emergency care plans in the event that you are arrested by ICE.

8. Keep important documents in one place

You should keep a small box or file for each child and keep all important documents in this file in a safe place in your home. These documents include:

1. any guardianship or power of attorney documents for your children that have been signed and notarized,
2. your emergency contact list,
3. children's birth certificates and passports,
4. other appropriate identifying information, such as your children's medical and school records.



TIP. Make extra photocopies to keep on file so you do not lose the original ones. Your guardian or other people in your home should know exactly where this file is kept so that the guardian can find it quickly if you are arrested by ICE.



Financial and property plan

1. Payments information

Leave detailed written instructions about your payments for your housing, vehicle (if you own one) and other property.

2. Power of Attorney for financial matters

Consult with an expert about whether to grant a loved one power to access your finances and make financial decisions if you are detained.

There is a special power of attorney form for financial matters. This legal document allows a loved one to do things like access your bank account, pick up your paycheck, pay bills and use your money to pay bond.

3. Save money for an ICE bond

If you are arrested and detained by ICE, you may be eligible to post a bond to be released into the community to care for your children. The lowest possible bond ICE or the immigration court can give you is \$1,500, but most people without criminal records receive bonds of \$5,000 to \$10,000 or even more. It is a good idea to plan ahead and think about how you or your

family members might pay bond if you are detained. Many people save money and pay cash, while others guarantee with bond payments.

Join a community group!

Now more than ever, it is extremely important to belong to and contribute to a local group and create networks of mutual support! You can start by calling or emailing your parish to find out what groups and ministries are available!

Find your parish contact information by scanning this QR code:



Consular contact information

Country	Address	Phone Number
Mexico	910 E. San Antonio Ave. El Paso, TX 79901	(915) 533-4082
El Salvador	400 W San Antonio Ave Suite B	(915) 600-5423

	El Paso, TX 79901	
Guatemala	Consulate of Guatemala in Del Rio 106 Foster Dr. Del Rio, TX 78840	(830) 422-2230
Honduras	Consulate of Honduras in Houston 3100 Wilcrest Drive, Suite 110-125 Houston, TX	(470) 571-9077
Colombia	Consulate of Colombia in Houston 5599 San Felipe Street, Suite 600 Houston, TX 77056	(346) 204-4664
Ecuador	Consulate of Ecuador in Houston 2603 Augusta Drive, Suite 810 Houston, TX 77057	(713) 572-8731

For consulates for other countries, please visit:
<https://www.sos.state.tx.us/border/intlprotocol/embassies/index.shtml>

 **Legal service providers' contact information**

Estrella del Paso

2400 Yandell Drive
 915-532-3975

Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center

1500 Yandell Drive
 915-544-5126

This document from the Immigration Legal Resource Center was modified by the Hope Border Institute on December 30, 2024, to meet the needs of the El Paso community. This is not legal advice, nor is it intended to be legal advice. Please consult a lawyer if you have specific questions.

