

Walking with our immigrant brothers and sisters: Support toolkit

During the first few days of his administration, President Trump has issued a slew of executive orders, many of them dealing with immigration and asylum issues. While the ability of a new administration with limited resources to implement mass deportations is unclear, what is clear is the fear and uncertainty growing among our immigrant brothers and sisters.

Regardless of what may happen, it is important to be prepared—and to stay calm. To this end, immigrants and their allies alike should know their rights under the U.S. Constitution. In addition, we should encourage our immigrant brothers and sisters to evaluate their risk of deportation, develop a family preparedness plan, and be prepared to implement it if necessary. At all times, it is critical to listen to what our brothers and sisters say they need and want and to understand the trauma that these new threats may trigger. For those of us who are not immigrants, our task is to walk with and be with those who are, not seek to control their actions or decisions.

Following below is brief guidance on [Know your rights](#), [Family preparedness](#), including [key steps](#) to take, and a list of [additional resources](#) and sources of support, including [points of contact](#) for the ministries working on these issues in the Diocese of Washington.

“Know your rights”

It is important that all concerned understand their constitutional rights and what to do in specific situations...

Citizens and non-citizens alike have certain rights under the U.S. Constitution and its amendments. These rights offer protection against unlawful search and detention and ensure a person’s rights to use a lawyer. There are “Know your Rights” cards available for download—in multiple languages—that include the information shown to the right (see <https://www.ilrc.org/red-cards-tarjetas-rojas>). They are intended for use in situations when someone tries to gain access to a private home or to detain a person when out in public.

Family preparedness: Understanding legal status and level of risk

It is important that people understand their level of risk and plan accordingly....

Those who may be at risk of deportation in the near term should be encouraged to put in place the necessary legal documents that will protect and provide for their children and allow access to their financial assets. Depending on the state, these documents may include a Power of Attorney that designates a trusted individual to care for their child(ren) and the child’s belongings, a financial Power of Attorney to designate a person able to handle their financial affairs, and an ICE (US Immigration and Customs Enforcement) waiver form that will allow a designated person to access information about someone who is detained through the “Online Detainee Locator System” (see <https://locator.ice.gov/odls/#/search>). For people living in Maryland, “Standby Guardianship” is a legal alternative to a Power of Attorney for the care of children (see further below).

What the card says to the immigrant: You have constitutional rights:

• **DO NOT OPEN THE DOOR** if an immigration agent is knocking on the door.

• **DO NOT ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS** from an immigration agent if they try to talk to you. You have the right to remain silent.

• **DO NOT SIGN ANYTHING** without first speaking to a lawyer. You have the right to speak with a lawyer.

If you are outside of your home, ask the agent if you are free to leave and if they say yes, leave calmly.

GIVE THIS CARD TO THE AGENT. If you are inside of your home, show the card through the window or slide it under the door.

What the card says to the agent:

I do not wish to speak with you, answer your questions, or sign or hand you any documents based on my 5th Amendment rights under the United States Constitution.

I do not give you permission to enter my home based on my 4th Amendment rights under the United States Constitution unless you have a warrant to enter, signed by a judge or magistrate with my name on it that you slide under the door.

I do not give you permission to search any of my belongings based on my 4th Amendment rights.

I choose to exercise my constitutional rights.

These rights are available to citizens and noncitizens alike.

Key steps in family preparedness

To support their planning, parents and families should be encouraged to:

1. **Gather or have available documents** such as birth certificates, passports, driver's licenses, identification cards, property titles (cars, house, etc.), valid work permit or permanent resident card, Know Your Right cards, and necessary medication.
2. **Gather emergency phone numbers** including family, friends, potential guardians, school, church, medical providers, employer.
3. **Gather property information** such as bank accounts, credit cards, vehicles, property.
4. **Create a care plan for their children and family.** Identify a trusted adult to care for your children. Consider standby guardianship or a Power of Attorney that will designate a person to care for children. Provide a list of important phone numbers and instructions in children's bags.
5. **Apply for a US passport AND a passport card** for any US-born child or naturalized US citizen. This will help protect them in the event of "sweeps" taking place in a particular location; they will be able to show that they were born in the United States.



Finally, families should be congratulated for taking steps to take care of their families!

You/We are not alone

It is important to communicate that our immigrant brothers and sisters are not alone; our God, our faith community, and our Bishop are walking alongside...

We have a powerful advocate in our Bishop, Mariann Edgar Budde, who directly petitioned President Trump to show mercy to immigrants in her homily at the National Service of Prayer on January 21, 2025. Ministries associated with individual churches, the Episcopal Diocese of Washington, Washington National Cathedral, and the broader Episcopal Church further demonstrate the commitment Episcopalians bring to this issue.

For additional information or support:

- See the "5 Pasos" fact sheet for a good summary of key steps for immigrants to take to protect themselves and their families.
- For residents of Maryland, learn more about Standby Guardianship and download the necessary forms at <https://standbyguardian.org>.
- If someone is detained in the DMV, the Amica Center for Immigrant Rights (AMICA) has an online form to request legal assistance; the web page also includes links to other legal and advocacy resources (see: <https://amicacenter.org/get-help/>).
- Emergency hotlines to report ICE activity and request support following an action are in place in DC, Maryland, and Virginia:
 - CASA of Maryland and Virginia: 888-214-6016
 - Immigration Rapid Response Hotline Virginia Network: 855-AYU-DAR1 (855-298-3271)
 - Migrant Solidarity Mutual Aid Network (MSMA) is also developing a Rapid Response network: 202-335-1183; see also <https://www.dcmigrantmutualaid.org>.

To reach those working on these issues in the Episcopal Diocese of Washington please contact:

- Rev. Nancy Stockbridge, EDOW Refugee Response Team: refugee.response.team@edow.org
- Dora Currea, Washington National Cathedral Sanctuary Ministry: congregation@cathedral.org
- Michelle Dibblee, Interim EDOW Missioner for Equity and Justice: mdibblee@edow.org