

Immigrant Resource Binder

Southwest California Synod, ELCA
www.socalsynod.org

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Southwest California Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Law Enforcement Response Policy: Places of Worship

Please note: Immigration policies and enforcement practices change frequently. This document provides general guidance only and **does not serve as a substitute for professional legal advice**. Churches and individuals are encouraged to consult with qualified legal counsel, as applicable laws and protections may vary by state and local jurisdiction.

SECTION 1: PROCEDURES

Important Legal Context: Churches are private property, even when open to the public. Law enforcement (including Immigration and Customs Enforcement) may enter **public areas** (e.g., lobby, sanctuary during services) without a warrant, but **cannot enter private areas** (e.g., offices, classrooms) without a valid judicial warrant signed by a judge. Always remain calm, polite, and non-confrontational. Do not touch officers or physically resist.

If law enforcement officers arrive at the church **without a prior emergency call** (e.g., for a reported crime in progress), follow these steps:

- **Do not open doors to private areas** unless presented with a **valid judicial search warrant** signed by a judge. Administrative warrants, deportation orders, or ICE warrants (e.g., Form I-200 or I-205) are **not** judicial warrants and do not authorize entry into private areas.
- Ask to see it through a window or door and **do not accept a verbal or photocopied version**. Verify that it describes the exact location, is signed by a judge, and is within the dates specified.
- Request officers wait outside while you contact authorized church representatives. You may state, “I need to contact our church leadership and legal counsel before proceeding.” Do not admit them into private spaces while verification is pending.
- Authorized contacts may include:
 - Pastor
 - Council President
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____

When available, the above identified church officer will respond to law enforcement inquiries and review any warrants or subpoenas. However, if none of these individuals are present, the person first approached — whether staff, volunteer, ministry leader, renter, congregant- will follow the procedures outlined in this policy to the extent reasonably possible and will not consent to any search of church property.

- Do not engage: Never touch an officer. Do not chat casually. Do not volunteer information about church members, guests, or their immigration status. You are not required to answer questions
- Notify appropriate nonprofit support hotlines that coordinate information about enforcement activity:
 - CHIRLA: 213-353-1333
 - TRUST Hotline: 844-878-7801
 - ACLU Southern California Rapid Response: 888-624-4752
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____

Documentation of the Encounter:

- We will exercise our right to video, photograph, and document everything that happens and announce that we are doing so clearly and slowly, from several feet away so as not to interfere.
- We will note vehicle license plate numbers, officer names and badge numbers if identifiable, and compile a full report within the first hour after law enforcement has left.
- We will retain our right to remain silent. We will not lie. We will reply with “I’m not authorized to answer questions” or “I decline to answer questions.”
- We will never resist with physical force, lest that be interpreted as pretense for severe action.
- We will closely accompany any law enforcement agents to supervise that they are adhering only to the legal warrant boundaries. (If they take something vital, explain why it is vital, and ask to make photocopies before they take it, document anything they take.)
- We will review any warrants or documents or contact authorized individuals who can respond to law enforcement. (Remember: law enforcement officers are allowed to lie and trained to do so.)
- We will request that officers leave if law enforcement does not have a judicial search warrant. (Warrants must be signed and dated by the appropriate authority.)
- We will only comply with legally issued orders, we will not comply with illegal requests and we will state our denial of consent openly and recorded on video.

If someone is arrested:

- We will ask where they are taking the person.
- We will compile a full report of the entire incident, noting any details, times, license plate numbers.
- We will try to request the name and contact information for the person’s attorney and we will contact them.
- We will follow up on their well-being through their attorney.
- Ensure that an authorized individual is taking notes during or immediately after the interaction. The notes should include: the date and time, vehicle information, any identifying information about the law enforcement officials, a detailed description of the activity, documents, orders, and what happened. The notes should also include a co-signer.
- Take a photo of the notes (to help provide a timestamp.)

Types of Legal Documents:

- You are encouraged to familiarize ourselves with the various types of documents usually invoked.
- **Subpoenas:**
 - Immigration Subpoenas: usually sent in the mail. Consult with an immigration lawyer (Public Counsel 213-385-2977) to decide if and when to respond. This document does not require you to allow an officer onto the premises or to search the premises.
 - Judicial Subpoenas: issued by a court, can be legally challenged. Consult with an immigration lawyer to decide if and when to respond.
- **Warrants**: differ depending on who issued them and what they authorize. Two general types:
 - Warrants: depend on the type and who is issuing the warrant.
 - Search Warrant: searching for something/someone specifically named.
 - Arrest Warrant: for taking an individual into custody, does not authorize entry to make an arrest unless there is reason to believe the person is inside. (We will remain silent beyond what is legally required.)
 - Potential Issued Forms: depend on the type and who is issuing the warrant.
 - Immigration Administrative Warrants (Search and Arrest): authorized by a federal agency, signed by an immigration official or department, like DHS. These only apply to public spaces. You can refuse entry or attempts to obtain evidence.

- We will say *“I’m sorry, but this is a private property and we do not consent to search of this property without a warrant signed by a judge.”*
- **Judicial Warrants (Search and Arrest):** issued by a “COURT” and signed by a “JUDGE” must be executed within 14 days of the date issued. Must be complied with if valid. Note what it authorizes and where.
 - If it feels safe, church representatives will accompany law enforcement officers at all times and will clearly state that the church does not consent to any search beyond the areas and scope expressly authorized in the warrant.

Public and Private Areas:

Church spaces are categorized as public or private to guide interactions with law enforcement. We will keep any private areas (Church office, Sacristy, Bathrooms) doors closed and not propped open at any time. Law Enforcement officers are not supposed to enter spaces that are not specifically named in a judge-signed search warrant.

- **Private Areas:** Offices, Sacristy, Bathrooms, and other areas designated by church leadership. These areas may **not** be entered by law enforcement without a valid, judge-signed judicial warrant.
- **Public Areas:** Spaces such as the Sanctuary and parking lot during congregational functions are accessible to the public. Officers may see people in these areas, which may constitute probable cause in some situations.

Church staff and volunteers will:

- Keep private area doors closed and not propped open.
- Post know-your-rights information in bathrooms and the Sacristy.
- Treat the Fellowship/Parish Hall as private except during designated congregational events.

Handling Advance Requests

If the church receives any subpoenas, warrants, or other information requests in advance:

- Notify a designated local advocacy agency or legal contact.
- Inform individuals and families who may be affected, providing a description of the request.
- Document all verbal or written requests from law enforcement.
- Provide affected individuals with copies of any documents issued by enforcement authorities.

SECTION 2: BACKGROUND

PURPOSE

This policy addresses all law-enforcement activities at the campus of (CHURCH NAME) _____. It identifies private areas, defines rights, and provides guidance for staff, volunteers, congregants, and renters.

UNLAWFUL SEARCH

(CHURCH NAME) _____ recognizes our fourth-amendment protection against unlawful search and seizure.

Designated “Private” areas that may not be entered without specific approval from officers of the church include.

- Sacristy
- Church Office
- Bathrooms
- _____
- _____
- _____

On Sunday mornings, the parking lot and Sanctuary become accessible to the **public**. All church office areas are always designated as private spaces.

RIGHTS

Every person is entitled to worship without fear of retribution, regardless of their immigration status, pregnancy status, LGBTQIA+ identities, or the identities of their family members. Our church is dedicated to being a safe, inclusive space for all people.

Know Your Rights When Confronted By Law Enforcement Officers:

1. You have the right to ask for identification and ask that officers leave.
2. You have the right to record any interactions.
3. You have the right to ask for a judge-signed judicial warrant.
4. You have the right to deny entry without a valid warrant signed by a judge.
5. You have the right to remain silent.
6. You have the right to speak with a lawyer.
7. If law enforcement shows up to your house, **DO NOT OPEN THE DOOR**. Ask them to slide the warrant under the door. The warrant must be signed by a judge, include your name or address, and be valid within the time period specified before its expiration.
8. Never carry false documentation with you (It's a crime)
9. If detained, only say your name and date of birth.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND RECORDS

Protecting member and guest privacy is a top priority.

- The church does not collect or share immigration status, pregnancy status, or LGBTQIA+ identity information.
- Social Security numbers are **never** collected.
- Voluntarily provided contact information is stored in a password-protected database.
- Prayer requests and pastoral care notes are confidential.
- Personal information will be deleted or shredded upon request.

Federal law prohibits knowingly harboring or transporting people to avoid immigration enforcement. For this reason, the church does not collect immigration status information.

COMMITMENT

We commit to providing guidance, support, and resources to help individuals and families navigate challenging life decisions around migration issues.

We will practice our responses and follow this policy to prepare for potential encounters. This Policy was adopted on (DATE)_____.

SECTION 3: RESOURCES

Immigration Enforcement Action: What Churches Need to Know (United Church of Christ)

<https://www.ucc.org/immigration-enforcement-action-what-churches-need-to-know/>

Role playing these policies and conversations can be helpful. Here is a guide from the Immigrant Rights Resource Center to practice this policy in action in English :

https://www.ilrc.org/sites/default/files/resources/2017.11.05_kyr_skits-eng.pdf and in Spanish

https://www.ilrc.org/sites/default/files/resources/2017.11.05_kyr_skits-spn.pdf.

The ACLU has also created a series of videos to demonstrate these interactions, which can be found at

<https://www.aclumaine.org/know-your-rights/know-your-rights-video-series-interacting-immigration-agents/>.

Family Safety Plan: if someone in a family is at risk of deportation, their parents or guardians should complete a Safety Plan. This plan can be kept at a trusted friend or family member's house.

https://secure.ifssd.org/site/DocServer/Safety_Planning_Guide_and_Bond_Shorten_Version.pdf?docID=6981

Local Non-Profit Organizations like [CHIRLA \(https://www.chirla.org\)](https://www.chirla.org) can help with deportation defense.

Public Counsel is a local non-profit that works with LA Voice to help organizations prepare policies.

<https://publiccounsel.org/>

Federal [HIPPA](#) Privacy Law permits but does not require disclosure of reproductive information in certain legal proceedings. It does not permit information to be disclosed to Law Enforcement officials except by certain parameters, and never without a signed warrant. Additional resource: <https://reprolegalhelpline.org/>

Protocols for Staff and Volunteers Engaged in Mission and Ministry by Rev. Minna Bothwell (ELCA pastor in Des Moines, IA <https://chlcdesmoines.org/>)

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Vg2h1h6f3uJFz_Sk-tjuMJJU3MnNCNXvJOmEQEbVQRw/mobilebasic

IMMIGRATION RESOURCES

Immigrant rights are human rights! We have the right to defend a future where we keep our families together.

Know Your Rights -When Approached by ICE

- Do Not Open the Door (to your house or car)
- Do Not Answer Questions - Simply say: "I will be exercising my 5th amendment right to remain silent."
- Do Not Sign Anything - Simply say: "I need to speak with my attorney"
- Never give them false information. This is a crime.

Resources **ADVANCING JUSTICE**
CHIRLA English: 888.349.9695
 888-624-4752 Vietnamese:
 714.477.2958

Report ICE Raids: **Locate ICE Detainee:**
 1.844.878.7801 locator.ice.gov

IMMIGRATION RESOURCES CONT.

Spread Power Not Panic

When you share unconfirmed ICE raids, you are spreading panic, preventing directly affected people from living their lives. Please follow these best practices:

- Take pictures and include the time and date stamp to help us keep track of when ICE shows up and leaves.
- U.S. citizens - here are some ways to stand up for our immigrant neighbors:
 - Voice out that ICE is present so others around you are aware.
 - If you are witnessing a possible ICE arrest, remind those that are being impacted about their rights to remain silent and request an attorney.
 - Document the interaction with your phone, record badge number, license plates, etc. & contact your local immigration advocacy group (see previous page).

INMIGRACIÓN

Los derechos de los inmigrantes son derechos humanos. Tenemos derecho a defender un futuro en el que nuestras familias permanezcan unidas.

Conozca sus Derechos

- No abra la puerta (de su casa o de su carro)
- No responda a las preguntas. Solamente diga: "Me reservo el derecho según la 5a enmienda a permanecer callado"
- No firme nada - Solamente diga: "Necesito hablar con mi abogado"
- Nunca proporcione información falsa. Sería un delito

Recursos: **ADVANCING JUSTICE**
CHIRLA Inglés: 888.349.9695
 888-624-4752 Vietnamita: 714.477.2958

Reporte Redades: **Localizar personas detenidas por ICE:**
 1.844.878.7801 locator.ice.gov

INMIGRACIÓN

Difunda el poder, No el pánico

Cuando reporta redadas de ICE sin confirmar, está difundiendo el pánico y asustando a las personas más afectadas. Por favor proceda de la siguiente manera cuando nota actividad de ICE:

- Tome fotos y nota de la fecha y hora de la redada para que sepamos cuando llega ICE y cuando se va
- Los ciudadanos estadounidenses pueden proteger a sus vecinos inmigrantes:
 - Alerta a los vecinos de que ICE está presente para que todos se den cuenta
 - Si es testigo de un posible arresto por parte de ICE, Recuérdeles a quienes estén siendo arrestados de sus derechos a permanecer callados y de solicitar la presencia de su abogado.
 - Filme videos con su teléfono y anote números de placas y de credenciales de los oficiales. Contacte a su grupo local de defensa de inmigrantes



wearecalifornia.org

MUST GIVE ACCESS

AO 93 (Rev. 12/09) Search and Seizure Warrant

This is a judicial search warrant. It DOES authorize agents to enter your home.

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT < Issued by a COURT.

for the
Eastern District of California

In the Matter of the Search of
(Briefly describe the property to be searched
or identify the person by name and address)

540 Oak Avenue
Davis, California 95616

Case No.

SEARCH AND SEIZURE WARRANT

To: Any authorized law enforcement officer

2:11-SW-0161 EFB

An application by a federal law enforcement officer or an attorney for the government requests the search of the following person or property located in the EASTERN District of CALIFORNIA
(Identify the person or describe the property to be searched and give its location):

SEE ATTACHMENT A. ATTACHED HERETO AND INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE

Read attachments to make sure they are regarding YOU and YOUR address, not someone else's.

The person or property to be searched, described above, is believed to conceal (Identify the person or describe the property to be searched):

SEE ATTACHMENT B. ATTACHED HERETO AND INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE

I find that the affidavit(s), or any recorded testimony, establish probable cause to search and seize the person or property.

Date for warrant, not
to exceed 14 days

YOU ARE COMMANDED to execute this warrant on or before

5-9-2011
(not to exceed 14 days)

☒ in the daytime 6:00 a.m. to 10 p.m. ☐ at any time in the day or night as I find reasonable cause has been established.

Unless delayed notice is authorized below, you must give a copy of the warrant and a receipt for the property taken to the person from whom, or from whose premises, the property was taken, or leave the copy and receipt at the place where the property was taken.

The officer executing this warrant, or an officer present during the execution of the warrant, must prepare an inventory as required by law and promptly return this warrant and inventory to United States Magistrate Judge

(Name)

☐ I find that immediate notification may have an adverse result listed in 18 U.S.C. § 2705 (except for delay of trial), and authorize the officer executing this warrant to delay notice to the person who, or whose property, will be searched or seized (check the appropriate box) ☐ For days (not to exceed 30).

☐ Until, the facts justifying, the later specific date of .

Date and time issued: 4-25-2011
9:10:00 AM

Signed by a JUDGE.

City and state: SACRAMENTO CALIFORNIA

EDMUND E. BRENNAN U.S. MAGISTRATE JUDGE
Printed name and title

This is issued by DHS, NOT a court

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Warrant for Arrest of Alien

**ONLY APPLIES TO
PUBLIC SPACES**

File No. _____

Date: _____

To: Any immigration officer authorized pursuant to sections 236 and 287 of the Immigration and Nationality Act and part 287 of title 8, Code of Federal Regulations, to serve warrants of arrest for immigration violations

I have determined that there is probable cause to believe that _____
is removable from the United States. This determination is based upon:

- ☐ the execution of a charging document to initiate removal proceedings against the subject;
- ☐ the pendency of ongoing removal proceedings against the subject;
- ☐ the failure to establish admissibility subsequent to deferred inspection;
- ☐ biometric confirmation of the subject's identity and a records check of federal databases that affirmatively indicate, by themselves or in addition to other reliable information, that the subject either lacks immigration status or notwithstanding such status is removable under U.S. immigration law; and/or
- ☐ statements made voluntarily by the subject to an immigration officer and/or other reliable evidence that affirmatively indicate the subject either lacks immigration status or notwithstanding such status is removable under U.S. immigration law.

YOU ARE COMMANDED to arrest and take into custody for removal proceedings under the Immigration and Nationality Act, the above-named alien.

Signed by an immigration
officer, NOT a judge

(Signature of Authorized Immigration Officer)

(Printed Name and Title of Authorized Immigration Officer)

Certificate of Service

I hereby certify that the Warrant for Arrest of Alien was served by me at _____
(Location)

on _____ on _____, and the contents of this
(Name of Alien) (Date of Service)

notice were read to him or her in the _____ language.
(Language)

Name and Signature of Officer

Name or Number of Interpreter (if applicable)

CHECKLIST

What to Do if ICE Agents Arrive at Places of Worship

Use this checklist to ensure your faith community responds effectively, legally, and compassionately if U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents – or law enforcement officers who may work with ICE – arrive. Train staff and volunteers on these steps to ensure everyone is prepared.

PREPARE BEFORE ICE ARRIVES

- ☐ **Establish a response team** with assigned roles (e.g., spokesperson, legal liaison, recorder).
- ☐ **Train all staff and volunteers** on legal rights, protocols, and de-escalation techniques.
- ☐ **Learn the difference** between an administrative and judicial warrant.
- ☐ **Partner with legal counsel** and immigrant advocacy organizations for support.
- ☐ **Designate public and private areas** within the building and clearly communicate these boundaries to staff.

WHEN ICE AGENTS ARRIVE

- ☐ **Your trained spokesperson** should approach the agents respectfully to de-escalate tensions.
- ☐ **Ask for identification** (name, badge number, and agency affiliation).
- ☐ **Request a warrant** then verify that it is signed by a judge (not just an ICE official) and specifies the name(s) of the individual(s) and area(s) to be searched.
- ☐ **Verbally deny access** to private areas – politely but firmly – unless a judicial warrant explicitly permits entry.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS DURING THIS PROCESS

Do not obstruct agents

Avoid actions that could be interpreted as interfering. Never provide false information.

Ensure privacy

Protect the confidentiality of individuals and do not share personal information.

Document everything

Log all communications and actions taken during the incident.

Maintain composure

Respond with compassion and dignity, reflecting your community's values.

WARRANT TYPES

Judicial warrant

VALID – If the warrant is signed by a Judge or Magistrate Judge, review it carefully and consult legal counsel before granting access.

Administrative warrant

NOT VALID – If the warrant is signed by an officer, director, or anyone else other than a judge, politely explain that ICE cannot enter private areas without a judicial warrant.

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Legal counsel

Immigrant advocacy partner

Local media contact

Response team leader

Spokesperson

Recorder

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



aclufl.org/kyr-immigrants

✓ DURING THE ENCOUNTER

- ☐ **Remain calm** and try to de-escalate despite being harassed or intimidated. Do not run or resist.
- ☐ **Inform affected individuals of their rights** to remain silent, to decline to answer questions without a lawyer, and to sign nothing without legal advice.
- ☐ **Contact your legal counsel** immediately for guidance.
- ☐ **Activate your response team** for coordination, inform senior leadership, and alert local immigrant advocacy organizations and community networks.
- ☐ **Avoid providing any information** to ICE about individuals unless legally required.
- ☐ **Document details of the interaction** including date, time, and location, names and badge numbers of agents, and any documents presented or actions taken.
- ☐ **Take photos or videos** without interfering with agents. Stay at least 25 feet/8 meters away from agents.

✓ AFTER ICE LEAVES

- ☐ **Support affected individuals** by offering emotional, spiritual, and legal support to anyone targeted.
- ☐ **Connect immigration attorneys** or legal aid organizations with affected individuals.
- ☐ **Provide a safe space** for those impacted to recover and regroup.
- ☐ **Debrief with staff and volunteers** to review the incident and identify areas for improvement.
- ☐ **Update the response plan** based on lessons learned.
- ☐ **Share the incident** (with consent) with the congregation and trusted media to raise awareness.
- ☐ **Mobilize advocacy efforts** for immigrant rights and policy change.

PREPARE FOR POSSIBLE ARREST

People at risk of arrest should **memorize the phone numbers** of their family and lawyer. They should also share their **immigration number** ("A Number") with their family to help them find each other. It's important to **make emergency plans** if they have children or take medication.

This is not intended as legal advice. Please seek your own legal counsel.

Resources to Support Immigrant Communities/ Recursos para Apoyar a las Comunidades Inmigrantes

Southwest California Synod, ELCA

Several resources are available to support immigrant communities in Southern California, including **legal assistance, social services, and community-based organizations**. These resources offer a range of services, from immigration legal help to culturally responsive social support programs and community-based programs.

Hay varios recursos disponibles para apoyar a las comunidades inmigrantes en el sur de California, incluyendo asistencia legal, servicios sociales y organizaciones comunitarias. Estos recursos ofrecen una variedad de servicios, desde ayuda legal en temas de inmigración hasta programas de apoyo social culturalmente apropiados y programas comunitarios.

Legal Assistance/ Asistencia Legal:

- **National Immigration Legal Services Directory:** Welcome to the National Immigration Legal Services Directory. Only nonprofit organizations that provide free or low-cost immigration legal services are included in this directory. If you have questions, please see our list of frequently asked questions or email us at directory@immigrationadvocates.org.
<https://www.immigrationadvocates.org/legaldirectory/>
- **Immigrant Defenders Law Center (ImmDef):** Provides legal representation to immigrants, including those facing deportation. <https://www.immdef.org/>
- **Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA):** Offers immigration legal services, political organizing, and community engagement programs.
<https://www.chirla.org/>
- **RepresentLA:** Provides free immigration legal services to LA County residents.
<https://www.representla.org/>
- **Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles County:** Offers a range of legal services, including immigration, to families in Los Angeles County, with a special emphasis on the low-income communities of the San Fernando, San Gabriel, Pomona and Antelope Valleys, as well as the central county cities of Glendale, Burbank and Pasadena. <https://nls-la.org/>

- **Immigrant Center for Women and Children:** Focuses on providing legal and social services to women and children affected by immigration. <https://www.icwclaw.org/>

Social Services and Community-Based Organizations/ Servicios Sociales y Organizaciones Comunitarias:

- **LA County Office of Immigrant Affairs:** The Office of Immigrant Affairs (OIA) Know Your Rights Resource Hub is an access center for immigrant communities and providers to understand their rights and identify important local resources, such as workshops, events, and preparedness toolkits. <https://oia.lacounty.gov/kyr/>
- **211:** A resource line that provides information on a wide range of social services, including resources for immigrants. [Search resources | 211LA](#)
- **Central American Resource Center (CARECEN):** Provides services to Central American immigrants, including legal assistance, education, and community engagement. <https://www.carecen-la.org/>
- **Council on American-Islamic Relations-CA (CAIR-LA):** Advocates for the rights of Muslim immigrants and provides legal services and community outreach. <https://ca.cair.com/>
- **International Rescue Committee-Los Angeles:** Offers a range of services to refugees and immigrants, including resettlement services, job training, and education. <https://www.rescue.org/united-states/los-angeles-ca>
- **Organizing Rooted in Abolition, Liberation, and Empowerment (Órale):** (Long beach) ÓRALE works to ensure that immigrants, and especially, impacted immigrants of color have access to life affirming programs and services that support dignified health justice and care while mobilizing and organizing for widespread transformative and systemic change locally and nationally. <https://www.orable.org/>

Other Resources/ Otros Recursos:

- **Immigration Resource Center of San Gabriel Valley:** Provides legal services to immigrants in the San Gabriel Valley. <https://ircsgv.org/>
- **Esperanza Immigrant Rights Project:** Focuses on providing legal and community-based services to immigrants in the San Gabriel Valley. <https://www.esperanza-la.org/>

- **TransLatin@ Coalition:** Advocates for the rights of transgender and gender non-conforming immigrants. <https://www.translatinacoalition.org/>
- **Los Angeles LGBT Center:** Provides a range of services to LGBTQ+ immigrants. <https://lalgbtcenter.org/services/legal-services/immigrant-legal-services/>
- **National Immigration Law Center (NILC):** A national support center focused on protecting and promoting the rights of immigrants, refugees, and asylees. <https://www.nilc.org/>
- **National Immigrant Justice Center:** A national organization that advocates for immigrant rights and provides legal assistance. <https://immigrantjustice.org/>
- **Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice (CLUE):** As Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice, we educate, organize, and mobilize faith leaders and community members to accompany workers in their struggle for good jobs, dignity, and justice. They offer workshops and opportunities to get involved with advocacy work. <https://www.cluejustice.org>

Know Your Rights/ Conozca Sus Derechos:

- **Example of a court warrant vs. ICE warrant:** [Court Warrant and ICE Warrant - Resources for Asylum Seekers](#)
- **Immigrant Legal Resource Center:** All people in the United States, regardless of immigration status, have certain rights and protections under the U.S. Constitution. The ILRC's red cards give examples of how people can exercise these rights. However, they do not provide individualized legal advice. Community members are encouraged to check in with a trusted legal service provider for questions about their situation. Click the link below to learn how to order red cards, print your own in many languages and effectively use them. <https://www.ilrc.org/red-cards-tarjetas-rojas>
- **Conoce Tus Derechos:** ¿Qué hacer si te encuentras con ICE o la policía? Estos son materiales esenciales para aprender y defender nuestros derechos: el material a continuación es fácil de leer y comprender, así que podemos compartirlo con nuestras familias y comunidad, aprender juntos y organizarnos juntos. Queremos que todos se sientan empoderados, comprendan sus derechos básicos y sepan cómo ejercerlos. <https://conocetUSDerechos.org/>
- **What do you do if you encounter ICE or the police?** Many different types of rights protect all people in the U.S., some rights protect us at work, other rights protect us from unlawful arrests or searches, and still others protect our ability to speak out at

a march or to look for work in a public place. Here we will focus on certain LEGAL RIGHTS that we ALL have, regardless of immigration status, to protect us when faced with ICE or police. This is not legal advice, it's just information we should all have. <https://conocetusderechos.org/eng/>

- **10 Things Noncitizen Protestors Need to Know/ 10 Cosas Que Deben Saber Manifestantes Sin Ciudadanía Estadounidense-**
<https://www.ilrc.org/resources/10-things-noncitizen-protestors-need-know>

Plan De Preparación Familiar/ Step-by-Step Family Preparedness Plan (ilrc.org)

- Cada familia debe tener un Plan de Preparación Familiar en caso de una emergencia. Es fundamental que las familias inmigrantes piensen en el futuro y establezcan planes más concretos para las emergencias que puedan surgir. Para asistir con eso, creamos este paquete para detallar las diferentes opciones de cuidado infantil disponibles en caso de que un padre este ausente, dónde encontrar servicios de inmigración de confianza en su comunidad, y cuáles son sus derechos constitucionales en presencia de un oficial de inmigración. Descargue la versión rellenable e imprimible de este kit de herramientas a continuación. También tenemos una [versión abreviada](#):
https://www.ilrc.org/sites/default/files/2024-12/Plan%20De%20Preparacio%C2%B4n%20Familiar_Nov%202024.pdf
- Every family should have a Family Preparedness Plan in case of an emergency. It is equally critical for immigrant families to think ahead and set more concrete plans for immigration emergencies that can arise. To assist in this, we've provided a toolkit below that goes into detail about different childcare options available in case of an absent parent, where to find trusted immigration services in your community, and how to prepare to assert your constitutional rights in the presence of an immigration officer. Download the **fillable and printable** version of this toolkit:
<https://www.ilrc.org/sites/default/files/2025-03/Step-by-Step-Family-Preparedness-Plan-Abridged.pdf>

ACLU Protestors' Rights/ Derechos de los manifestantes:

- The First Amendment protects your right to assemble and express your views through protest. However, police and other government officials are allowed to place certain narrow restrictions on the exercise of speech rights. Make sure you're prepared by brushing up on your rights before heading out into the streets.
<https://www.aclu.org/know-your-rights/protesters-rights>

- La Primera Enmienda protege su derecho a reunirse y expresar su opinión a través de las protestas. Sin embargo, la policía y otros oficiales del gobierno pueden imponer ciertas restricciones estrictas al ejercicio de los derechos a la libertad de expresión. Asegúrese de estar preparado y repase sus derechos antes de salir a manifestar a la calle. <https://www.aclu.org/know-your-rights/derechos-de-los-manifestantes>

California Rapid Response Networks- <https://caimmigrant.org/>

Immigrant Defenders Law Center Rapid Response Legal Resource Hotline (Los Angeles, San Bernardino, Orange, Riverside, San Diego, and Imperial counties)

- Hotline: (213) 833-8283
- Hours of Operation: Monday through Friday from 9AM-4PM PST
- Website: <https://www.immdef.org/blog/immdefrrhotline>

Northern California

- Central del Pueblo Rapid Response Network (Humboldt County) – 707-200-8091
- Sacramento Rapid Response Network – Hotline: 916-382-0256

Bay Area

- Alameda County Immigration Legal and Education Partnership (ACILEP) – Hotline: 510-241-4011
- Marin Rapid Response Network – Hotline: 415-991-4545
- North Bay Rapid Response Network (Sonoma, Napa & Solano Counties) – Hotline: 707- 800-4544
- San Francisco Rapid Response Network – Hotline: 415-200-1548
- San Mateo County Rapid Response Network – Hotline: 203-666-4472
- Santa Clara County Rapid Response Network – Hotline: 408-290-1144
- Stand Together Contra Costa – Hotline: 925-900-5151

Central Coast & Central Valley

- Kern County Rapid Response Network – Hotline: 661-432-2230
- Monterey County Solidarity Network – Hotline: 831-204-8082
- Santa Cruz County Your Allied Rapid Response Network – Hotline: 831-239-4289
- 805 Immigrant Rapid Response Network (Santa Barbara, Ventura & San Luis Obispo Counties) – Hotline: (805) 870-8855

- Valley Watch Rapid Response Network (San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Tulare, Kings, Kern) – 559-206-0151

Southern California

- Long Beach Community Defense Network – Hotline: 562-245-9575
- Los Angeles Rapid Response Network – Hotline: 888-624-4752
- Orange County Rapid Response Network – Hotline: 714-881-1558, Email: casereferral@ocrapidresponse.org
- (San Bernardino & Riverside Counties) Inland Coalition For Immigrant Justice's Resource – Hotline: 909-361-4588
- Southern California Bilingual Rapid Response Legal Resource Hotline (if detained by ICE) – Hotline: 213-833-8283

San Diego

- (North County San Diego) Alianza Comunitaria – Text Alerts for Checkpoints: Envía “Alianza” al 33733 para español / Send “Alianza2” to 33733 for English
- San Diego Rapid Response Network – Hotline: 619-536-0823



IMMIGRANT RIGHTS

Resources for Individuals and Families Affected by Increased ICE Activity in Los Angeles

Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles has put together a list of resources to help with issues caused by the increased ICE activity in Los Angeles.

If you or someone you know has been impacted, please look below to find information about legal resources.



(800) 433-6251



nlsla.org

Legal Resources

Know Your Rights

All people in the United States, regardless of immigration status, have certain rights and protections under the U.S. Constitution. It is important that community members, regardless of their immigration status, understand their rights. The resources below outline the basic rights and protections everyone is afforded under the constitution.

Digital Resources for more information about “Know Your Rights”

- [LA County Office of Immigrant Affairs](#)
- [Asian Americans Advancing Justice Southern California \(AJSOCAL\)](#)
- [The Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights \(CHIRLA\)](#)
- [Council on American-Islamic Relations \(CAIR\)](#)
- [Comunidades Indigenas En Liderazgo \(CIELO\)](#)
- [THAI Community Development Center](#)
- [We Have Rights](#)

Know Your Rights Videos From NLSLA

- [English Immigration Know Your Rights Training](#)
- [Spanish Immigration Know Your Rights Training](#)

Red Cards

Red Cards are credit card sized fact sheets that have basic information about your rights and how to use them. It is helpful to have them with you in case of an emergency. [Red Cards can be viewed and printed here.](#)

Rapid Response Networks

- Los Angeles: CHIRLA 24/7 Rapid Response Hotline: (888) 624-4752
- Orange County: Rapid Response Hotline: (714) 881-1558
- [Additional networks can be found on the CIPC website](#)

Legal Resources

Information for detained individuals and how to locate detained individuals

If someone is detained, it can sometimes be difficult to locate them to assist with the proper legal representation. If you or someone you know has been detained, the following resources can be used to help locate them or help with legal representation:

- ImmDef hotline to locate a detained family member: (213) 833-8283
- [ICE detainee locator](#)

Removal Defense Attorneys

These private attorneys charge for their services. NLSLA is not affiliated with them or responsible for their work.

Inna Parizher, Esq.

PO Box 10340, Glendale, CA 91209 | (310) 630-9499
InnaParizher@ParizherImmigration.com

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(213) 802-0633 | info@lucasandbarba.com

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(213) 417-5169 | achen@clarkhill.com

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(562) 462-1424 | rfjimmigration@gmail.com

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(213) 351-6500 | office@mcleanlawaz.com

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(818) 986-1079 | monica@monicamansourilaw.com

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(323) 213-3004 | info@lawofficeofdjwt.com

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(213) 788-7834 | admin@cpimmigration.com

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(310) 713-2334 | info@thegrandelawfirm.com

Monica Ann Kane, Esq.

PO Box 41466, Los Angeles, CA 90041
(323) 908-9464 | Monica@kaneimmigration.com

FOR ASSISTANCE LOCATING YOUR DETAINED LOVED ONE:

Immigrant Defenders Law Center

Rapid Response Legal Resource Hotline: (213) 833-8283

Legal Resources

Free or Low-Cost Immigration Legal Referrals

Immigration Defenders

Community resources and attorneys for immigration assistance

Phone: 213-634-0999 | immdef.org/resources

NLSLA

Free legal assistance with U-Visa, VAWA, T-Visa, and other cases for domestic violence and sexual assault survivors

Phone: 800-433-6251 | nlsla.org/services/immigration

Community Legal Aid SoCal

Free legal aid assistance

Phone: 714-571-5200 | communitylegalsocal.org

CAST LA

Free legal assistance and other services to human trafficking survivors

Phone: 888-539-2373 | castla.org

Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles (LAFLA)

Free legal aid assistance with asylum applications, affirmative applications for U-Visas and T-Visas, and adjustment of status and naturalization

Phone: 800-399-4529 | lafla.org

Central American Resource Center (CARECEN)

Phone: 213-385-7800 | carecen-la.org

Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Los Angeles

Phone: 888-349-9695 | advancingjustice-la.org

Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)

Phone: 213-353-1333 | chirla.org

Esperanza Immigrant Rights Project

Phone: 213-251-3505 | esperanza-la.org

Loyola Immigrant Justice Clinic

Phone: 213-252-7400 | lsu.edu/academics/clinics/immigrantjusticeclinic

Legal Resources

Free or Low-Cost Immigration Legal Referrals

Public Counsel

Phone: 213-385-2977 | publiccounsel.org

Survivor Justice Center

Assistance for domestic violence survivors facing immigration issues

Phone: 323-980-3500 | survivorjusticecenter.org

Children's Law Center

Assistance for children in foster care

Phone: 323-980-1700 | clccal.org

Thai Community Development Center

thaicdc.org

RepresentLA

Free immigration legal services

representla.org

Immigrant Center for Women and Children

Legal and social services to women and children affected by immigration

hicwclaw.org

Los Angeles LGBT Center Immigrant Legal Services

Provides legal consultations and representation to protect members of the LGBTQ+ community fleeing persecution and torture in their countries of origin

Phone: 323-993-7670 | Email: legalservices@lalgbtcenter.org | lalgbtcenter.org

Family Planning in ICE Detention

In the event that you or a family member are detained by Immigration services, it is important to have a plan for how to respond and how your children will be taken care of. Below are guides to help prepare on your own:

- Family Preparedness Guide
 - [English](#)
 - [Spanish](#)

Legal organizations providing assistance with family preparedness:

- [Bet Tzedek](#): 323-939-0506
- [Survivor Justice Center](#): 323-980-3500
- [Levitt & Quinn](#): 213-482-1800
- [Community Legal Aid SoCal](#): 800-834-5001

General Need Resources

Food

If you or someone you know is dealing with food insecurity or is afraid to leave their homes due to the increased ICE presence here are some organizations that can help with groceries:

YMCA of Metropolitan Los Angeles

Email socialimpact@ymcala.org or call 323-244-9077 to request a care package or grocery delivery

Not Us Without You LA

You can apply for assistance [here](#)

211 LA

[Up-to-date information about resources in the community](#)

Raíces con Voz

Request support with groceries and essentials by directly messaging the group on Instagram:

[@raicesconvozph](#)

Aqui Para la Comunidad

Provides services for shopping and delivering groceries to people afraid to be out in public. You can request assistance through the group's form [here](#), also available in [Spanish](#)

El Monte Cares

Provides providing food distribution and baby product delivery to people affected by the ICE activity in the San Gabriel Valley. Residents interested in receiving support can call (800) 622-4302

Project Food Box

Delivers free grocery boxes to some Medi-Cal members. Those interested need to file an online application and speak with the intake team. The program is designed to support people with diabetes, cardiovascular disorders, HIV, cancer, and other conditions. More information [here](#).

Stephanie Turcios and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints

Provides free groceries to families in Bell, Downey, Huntington Park, Maywood, and South LA. Request support by calling 323-486-6282

General Need Resources

Food

La Mano Extendida

Provides providing weekly food and essential goods (hygiene items, baby items, school supplies) deliveries in the San Fernando Valley and Orange County. Contact: [@lamanextendida](#) on Instagram

Thai Community Development Center

Provides food distribution for residents of Hollywood and Downtown Los Angeles who cannot leave their homes. Find more info [here](#).

Los Angeles General Medical Center

Provides a mobile food pantry for individuals dealing with food insecurity. Find dates and info [here](#).

LA Regional Food Bank

Provides groceries to homebound or undocumented clients regardless of their income or immigration status. To schedule a delivery, call (323) 234-3030 x170

Pomona Economic Opportunity Center

Delivers groceries and diapers. Call (909) 397-4215

Interfaith Refugee & Immigration Service (IRIS)

Provides food assistance - no questions asked. Call (323) 667-0489

Catholic Charities of Los Angeles

Offers in-home food deliveries by volunteers. Call 213-251-3411

Raices con Voz

Provides food and essential items. Contact [@raciesconvozph](#) on Instagram

La Puente Mutual Aid

Provides support to working class families. Contact [@pmututalaid](#) on Instagram

Pomona Fridge

Provides groceries. Contact them on Instagram to sign up: [@pomonafridge](#)

General Need Resources

Health

If you are seeking home healthcare, look to the below resources:

LA Care

Patients can access healthcare remotely through virtual visits, on the phone and on video call appointments. Visit their [site to find care](#)

Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

For immediate mental health emergencies, call or text 988 or [visit their website](#) to chat online.

NLSLA

Created videos about coping with political stress and talking to children about what is happening during this time. Available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#)

El Monte Cares

Provides medical services and mental health resources to those who are affected by the increased ICE activity in the San Gabriel Valley. To get help, call 1-800-622-4302

Clinica Romero

Offers family-focused in-home visits to individuals affected by the ongoing ICE presence in LA. Visits provide a wide range of care including pregnancy care, therapy and checkups with no questions regarding immigration status. To get help, call 213-989-7700

El Rescate Legal Services

Offers family-focused in-home visits to individuals affected by the ongoing ICE presence in LA. Provides in-home or low profile health referrals with no questions regarding immigration status. Call 213-387-3284

The Archdiocese of Los Angeles

Provides help with prescription deliveries for immigrant parishioners who are affected

General Need Resources

Shelter and Financial Assistance

The following organizations provide assistance with housing related needs:

Thai Community Development Center

Provides cash aid for those who are sheltering in place due to the increased ICE activity in LA. Find more information [here](#)

Pomona Economic Opportunity Center

Provides aid for rent payments to individuals with housing insecurity as a result of ICE activity. Call 909-397-4215

City of Anaheim

Offers emergency grants to city residents affected by the recent ICE presence. Families must contact the city's Family Resource Centers. Contact them [here](#)

Housing Rights Center

Offers free housing counseling, discrimination investigation, and education. FCall 1-800-477-5977 or [visit their website](#)

Stay Housed LA

Helps tenants in LA County understand and protect their rights. Find online resources [here](#). Join a legal rights workshop [here](#). Get legal help for evictions [here](#)

Immigration Enforcement— Guidance for Places of Worship



Relevant Laws

The federal criminal harboring law prohibits concealing, harboring, or shielding from detection (or attempting to conceal, harbor, or shield) an undocumented immigrant, when done with knowledge or reckless regard of the immigrant's unlawful status.

The federal criminal transporting law prohibits transporting or moving (or attempting to transport or move) an undocumented immigrant from one place to another, with knowledge or reckless disregard of the fact of the immigrant's unlawful status, where the transportation helps the immigrant remain in the United States unlawfully.

FAQs

Are places of worship required to enforce immigration laws?

- No. Places of worship are not required and cannot be forced to enforce immigration laws.

Can immigration officials enter my house of worship without a warrant?

- ICE agents and others may enter the public spaces of a church or other place of worship without a warrant, but not private areas.
- If an ICE agent or other law enforcement officer wants to enter those private spaces, they must present a hard copy of a warrant signed by a federal judge.

- It is strongly recommended that places of worship identify and distinguish (ideally with legal advice) their private spaces from their public ones, if any. This can be done by placing signs identifying private areas, or by placing security guards tasked with signing in visitors at main entrances.

Can an immigration agent access a non-public area in a place of worship?

- No. Only if they have a valid judicial warrant, which should be reviewed and validated by legal counsel before decisions about access are made.
- A deportation order or arrest order is not the same as a judicial warrant and does not permit an agent to enter.

What if a judicial warrant is presented?

- Staff should consult with legal counsel before taking any action.

Am I required to talk to a police officer or ICE agent if they enter the congregation and ask questions?

- No. You are not required to answer any questions and you should seek advice from a lawyer before answering any questions from law enforcement authorities. You are not required to tell them anything about anyone's immigration status.

Can immigration officials be stationed outside or near a place of worship?

- Yes. If there are ICE agents outside or near your establishment, you can send a designated, well-trained staff member outside to ascertain the identity of the individuals. If they are able to confirm that they are immigration agents, that person can reenter and remind people of their rights or prepare should the agents attempt to gain entry.

If a faith group publicly declares its place of worship as a “sanctuary” for immigrants, can that provide any additional legal protection to the congregation or to immigrants?

- No. The concept of “sanctuary” in a place of worship is not recognized by federal law and it provides no protection from prosecution for members of the congregation.

Are there any risks that could result if a faith group makes a public declaration as a “sanctuary” for immigrants?

- It depends. A declaration itself probably would not justify a prosecution, but it may put the congregation on the government’s radar.
- Importantly, most courts have found the federal harboring and transporting statutes have an “intent” requirement, which means that to convict someone, the prosecutor must prove that the person or organization providing shelter to or transporting an undocumented immigrant intended to help the immigrant to remain unlawfully in the United States.

Recommendations for Places of Worship

- 1. Learn the implications related to harboring and transporting laws and conduct activities based on perceived risk factors.**
 - [Sanctuary congregations and harboring FAQs \(ACLU\)](#)
- 2. Prepare and implement an internal policy to protect congregants from immigration enforcement.**
 - Internal policies should include:
 - A written policy designating private areas;
 - Internal protocol on the procedure to interact with immigration agents, including protocol for handling law enforcement requests;
 - Designation of a well-trained individual or immigration advocacy group personnel to approach ICE agents outside or near the property.
- 3. Adopting a policy of nondiscrimination at your place of worship and of welcoming and helping persons in need.**
 - Policy should state that all people are welcome regardless of immigration or citizenship status, race, ethnicity, gender identity, or sexual orientation, etc.
- 4. Create and disseminate educational materials and “Know Your Rights” trainings for congregants and community members.**
 - [ACLU Know Your Rights: Immigration Enforcement](#)
 - [KYR graphics and wallet cards \(ACLU\)](#)

5. **Host or provide emergency safety planning for immigrant families.**
 - Family Safety Plan (ILRC)
6. **Compile and provide contact information for local organizations providing free legal assistance for families.**
 - Immigration Advocates Network

Resources

- ACLU Know Your Rights: Immigration Enforcement
- KYR graphics and wallet cards (ACLU)
- Sanctuary policies fact sheet (ILRC)
- Family Safety Plan (ILRC)
- Sensitive locations toolkit (El Centro de la Raza)
- Warrants and subpoenas guidance (NILC)
- Sanctuary congregations and harboring FAQs (ACLU)
- What is Section 1324? Understanding the Harboring/Smuggling Federal Crime (National Immigration Project)
- Immigrant welcoming congregations (Church of Christ)



IMMIGRANTS ARE WELCOME HERE



I.C.E. WILL NOT BE ALLOWED ENTRY INTO PRIVATE SPACES WITHOUT SHOWING A JUDICIAL WARRANT SIGNED BY A JUDGE

The judicial warrant must be signed by a judge and say "U.S. District Court" or a State Court at the top. We will ask you to slide the judicial warrant under the door or hold it up to the window for us to verify. Administrative warrants do not allow you access to enter our private spaces without permission.



YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REMAIN SILENT

You can lawfully refuse to speak with an I.C.E. agent and not answer any questions—especially about your birthplace, immigration status, or how you entered the U.S.



YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO SPEAK TO AN ATTORNEY

You have the right to refuse to sign any documents without speaking to a lawyer first.



EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO RECORD ICE and POLICE IN PUBLIC

Allies, such as U.S. citizens, can help by writing down names, badge numbers, and witness contacts. Do not interfere with any arrests.

SHARE ACCURATE, VERIFIED INFORMATION (NOT RUMORS) WITH LOCAL RAPID RESPONSE NETWORKS

If you see immigration enforcement, call Los Angeles Rapid Response Hotline: 888-624-4752



INMIGRANTES SON BIENVENIDOS AQUÍ



I.C.E. NO PODRÁ INGRESAR A ESPACIOS PRIVADOS SIN PRESENTAR UNA ORDEN JUDICIAL FIRMADA POR UN JUEZ

La orden judicial debe estar firmada por un juez y decir "U.S. District Court" o el nombre de una corte estatal en la parte superior. Pediremos que deslicen la orden judicial debajo de la puerta o que la sostengan frente a una ventana para poder verificarla. Las órdenes administrativas no le dan permiso para ingresar a nuestros espacios privados.



TIENES EL DERECHO DE PERMANECER EN SILENCIO

Puede negarse legalmente a hablar con un agente de I.C.E. y no responder a ninguna pregunta, especialmente sobre su lugar de nacimiento, estatus migratorio o cómo ingresó a EE. UU.



TIENES EL DERECHO DE HABLAR CON UN ABOGADO

Usted tiene el derecho de negarse a firmar cualquier documento sin antes hablar con un abogado.



TIENES EL DERECHO DE GRABAR A I.C.E. Y A LA POLICÍA EN PÚBLICO

Aliados, como ciudadanos, pueden ayudar anotando nombres, números de placa y contactos de testigos. No interfieran con ningún arresto.

COMPARTE INFORMACIÓN VERIFICADA Y PRECISA (NO RUMORES) CON REDES LOCALES DE RESPUESTA RÁPIDA

Si ve presencia de inmigración, llame a la Línea Directa de Respuesta Rápida de Los Ángeles: 888-624-4752

AMMPARO

Accompanying Migrants with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities

Briefing Points

WHAT IS AMMPARO?

AMMPARO stands for Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities. It is a commitment by the ELCA, as a church in the world, to accompany vulnerable children today and in the future.

HOW AMMPARO STARTED

Although children began coming in increasingly large numbers much earlier, in 2014, as media coverage of the plight of unaccompanied children arriving from Central America began to garner attention, ELCA leaders traveled to the U.S.–Mexico border to see first-hand what children faced. In government shelters, they saw the faces of children who were seeking protection in the U.S.

In early 2015, an ELCA delegation visited El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras to listen to, pray with the Lutheran churches the ELCA accompanies, and further understand why people are fleeing their communities. Through these visits to Central America, it became apparent that the ELCA has valuable and unique connections in the region that allow the church to view the migration of children and families in a holistic way.

AMMPARO is an answer to the discovery of the church's valuable and unique perspective.

With the expertise and perspective of companion churches and connections to other ministries in the region, together with our connections in the U.S., we can spiritually walk together with unaccompanied children. Through AMMPARO, we will work to change the root causes that force children to flee their homes and communities. If they must leave their home country, however, the church will be there in their journey and welcome them as our own in the U.S.

WHAT IS OUR STRATEGY?

The strategy was drafted with input from Lutheran and ecumenical companions and partners, the ELCA bishops in October 2015, and others.

AMMPARO seeks to provide a whole church response that will:

- Uphold and guarantee basic human rights and safety of migrant children and their families;
- Address the root causes of migration in countries from Central America's Northern Triangle and Mexico and the treatment of migrants in transit;
- Work toward just and humane policies affecting migrants in and outside the U.S.; and
- Engage as a church body with all of its companions, affiliates and partners to respond to the migration situation as a whole context and to advocate for migrant children and their families.

The guiding principles of accompaniment, awareness building and advocacy will orient our work, which will include action around protection, advocacy, representation and opportunities.

In order to fulfill these commitments, the ELCA will work purposefully with companions and partners, through strategies for ministry with:

- Those in the countries of origin: Sinodo Luterano Salvadoreño (Salvadoran Lutheran Synod) in El Salvador; Iglesia Cristiana Luterana en Honduras (Lutheran Christian Church in Honduras) Comisión de Acción Social Menonita (Mennonite Social Action Committee) and Lutheran World Federation/World Service (LWF/WS) in Honduras; and Iglesia Luterana Agustina de Guatemala (Lutheran Augustinian Church in Guatemala) and LWF/WS in Guatemala
- Those in countries of transit: Iglesia Luterana Mexicana (Mexican Lutheran Church), AMEXTRA
- Those in the U.S.: through synods and congregations, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS), Lutheran Social Services organizations, Church World Service (CWS)

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Approximately, 70,000 children and another 70,000 women with their children, most from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, arrived in the U.S. in fiscal year (FY) 2014. Although this number decreased by 42 percent in FY 2015, numbers began increasing again in August 2015.

The reasons why these vulnerable populations must flee are complex and interrelated. They include violence, insecurity, lack of opportunity and environmental displacement.

Violence, insecurity and the inability of governments to protect their citizens play a significant role in the displacement of children and families. The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) found that approximately 58 percent of children have a potential need for international protection. This includes asylum or other forms of protection outside of their country. In addition, UNHCR also recently recorded the abuse that women asylum seekers face and the incredible impunity that leads to their forced displacement.

- Other sources that cite violence and insecurity as principal in the migration: The American Immigration Council, which interviewed Salvadoran children, and the U.S. Government Accountability Office, which interviewed government staff with knowledge of what is happening in the region.

The conditions that lead to children and families being displaced has not changed. In 2015, violence in El Salvador reached levels not seen since its civil war, with murder rates increasing approximately 70 percent from the year before. In addition, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras have some of the highest rates of female homicides globally. However, in these three countries, the conviction rate for crimes committed is 5 percent or less.

Children, then, are victimized before leaving a community and continue to face violence during their journey to safety. In Mexico, they face traffickers, corrupt officials, drug cartels and criminal actors.

Human trafficking in Latin America is the third-largest illicit industry, with women and children being especially vulnerable. Nevertheless, Mexican officials do not properly screen children and actively deter them from applying for protection. In the U.S., political efforts to address the number of children that arrived in the country center on changing a trafficking bill that improved the screening of Central American children.

Instead of thinking of ways to prevent children from seeking safety or weakening screenings that could make a difference for a child in need of safety, the only humane and effective way to deal with this humanitarian crisis is by addressing the roots causes that force people to flee in the first place.