

FAMILY PREPAREDNESS PLAN

Protecting What Matters Most



AT GYH:

We understand that uncertainty surrounding immigration enforcement can create deep anxiety for families. But with knowledge, planning, and trusted legal guidance, you can take concrete steps to protect your loved ones and your future.

PLAN AHEAD

Stay informed, and assert your rights if you or someone in your household faces an immigration-related emergency. Our goal is to give you the tools and information you need to make confident, informed decisions—before a crisis occurs.

GYH KNOWS

Every family's circumstances are unique. Whether you have lawful immigration status, are pursuing a pending application, or live in a mixed-status household, preparedness is an act of empowerment. Planning now helps ensure your family's safety, stability, and access to legal protections if the unexpected happens.

WE OUTLINE PRACTICAL STEPS TO:

Create a clear childcare and guardianship plan.

Understand your legal options for immigration relief.

Learn and assert your constitutional rights.

Organize important documents and contacts.

PLANNING FOR YOUR CHILDREN'S CARE

Family security begins with knowing that your children will be safe and cared for in any situation. If you face an unexpected detention, hospitalization, or other emergency, it's important to have a clear childcare plan in place. This plan ensures your children remain with trusted adults, continue their schooling and healthcare, and experience as little disruption as possible.

WHY IT MATTERS

Immigration enforcement actions can happen with little warning. Having a written plan reduces confusion and helps caregivers, schools, and even law enforcement understand your wishes. It also gives you peace of mind knowing that your children will be protected and supported by people you trust.

Even if you never need to use your plan, having one empowers you and your family to act confidently in moments of uncertainty.



PLANNING FOR YOUR CHILDREN'S CARE

Choosing a Trusted Caregiver

Select someone you deeply trust—ideally a close friend or family member who:

- Is a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident (if possible).
- Has stable housing and the ability to care for your children.
- Can communicate effectively with your children and their schools.
- Is aware of and comfortable with your family's immigration situation.

Have an open conversation with this person about your wishes and your child's needs. Explain your expectations clearly and provide them with written instructions, key contacts, and access to necessary documents (such as health information or school forms).

Documenting Your Plan

You do not need to go to court to make your plan effective, but it should be documented and shared with the right people. Include the following details:

- Names, addresses, and phone numbers of your chosen caregivers.
- Instructions about school pickup and medical needs.
- A letter authorizing the caregiver to make temporary decisions for your child's wellbeing.
- A copy of your child's medical and school information.

Keep one copy with your important family documents and give another to your caregiver.

If your family lives in a state that offers a Caregiver's Authorization Affidavit or similar form, consider completing one. This document can give your designated caregiver limited authority to make school and medical decisions if you are unavailable.

PLANNING FOR YOUR CHILDREN'S CARE

Communicating with Your Children

Children cope better in emergencies when they know what to expect. While it can be difficult to discuss, it's important to have calm, age-appropriate conversations with your children about your plan.

- Reassure them that they will always be cared for and loved.
- Let them know who their caregiver is and where they would stay.
- Make sure older children memorize key phone numbers.
- Keep a small card in your child's backpack with emergency contacts.

Honest, caring communication strengthens trust and gives your children emotional security—even in stressful moments.

PRACTICAL STEPS TO TAKE NOW

To make your childcare plan effective:

- List your caregivers and confirm their willingness to serve.
- Prepare written instructions for childcare, school, and health needs.
- Gather and copy important documents (birth certificates, medical cards, IDs).
- Inform your child's school who is authorized to pick them up.
- Store all records in one safe, accessible place.
- Review and update your plan at least once a year.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR IMMIGRATION OPTIONS

Knowledge of your immigration options is one of the strongest forms of family protection. Even if you currently have no status, there may be legal pathways available to you or your loved ones. Consulting a qualified immigration attorney early—before a crisis—can make all the difference in securing your family’s stability and future in the United States.

WHY IT MATTERS

Immigration law is complex and changes frequently. Well-meaning advice from friends, community members, or notaries (known as notarios) can sometimes lead to serious legal consequences.

Only licensed attorneys or Department of Justice (DOJ)-accredited representatives affiliated with recognized nonprofit organizations are authorized to provide immigration legal advice.

A trusted legal professional will:

- Review your immigration history, family relationships, and prior applications.
- Identify available legal protections or forms of relief.
- Help you understand how enforcement actions could affect your case.
- Develop strategies for your long-term status and family security.

If cost is a concern, ask your attorney or local advocacy group about low-cost or nonprofit legal service providers in your area. A list of reputable organizations can also be found through the Immigration Advocates Network at immigrationadvocates.org.



UNDERSTANDING YOUR IMMIGRATION OPTIONS

Common Legal Protections and Relief Options

Depending on your circumstances, you or a family member may be eligible for one or more of the following immigration protections:

- **Asylum and Humanitarian Protection:** For individuals who fear returning to their home country because of persecution or violence.
- **Family-Based Immigration:** For spouses, children, parents, and siblings of U.S. citizens or permanent residents.
- **U Visas and T Visas:** For victims of certain crimes or human trafficking who assist law enforcement.
- **VAWA (Violence Against Women Act) Protections:** For survivors of abuse by U.S. citizen or permanent resident family members.
- **Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS):** For children in the U.S. who have been abandoned, abused, or neglected.
- **Temporary Protected Status (TPS):** For individuals from designated countries experiencing dangerous conditions.
- **Deferred Action or Prosecutorial Discretion:** For individuals who may not be deportation priorities under current enforcement guidance.

Because immigration law changes often, these programs and eligibility rules can shift quickly. Always verify your eligibility with a trusted attorney before applying or making legal decisions.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR IMMIGRATION OPTIONS

Red Flags and Warning Signs

Unfortunately, immigration scams are common. Protect yourself and your family by watching for:

- Anyone who promises a guaranteed result.
- Individuals who are not licensed attorneys or DOJ-accredited representatives.
- Requests for blank-signed forms, cash-only payments, or secrecy.
- People offering to “fix papers” without reviewing your full case history.

When in doubt, consult GYH or another trusted immigration attorney to confirm whether the advice or service is legitimate.

Building a Relationship with Your Attorney

Having an established relationship with a qualified attorney ensures that you have a legal advocate ready to act on your behalf in an emergency. Provide your lawyer with copies of your key documents and an emergency contact who can reach them quickly if needed. At GYH, we encourage clients to:

- Maintain an updated copy of their immigration paperwork (such as A-numbers, receipt notices, or work permits).
- Inform the firm of any address changes, family developments, or arrests.
- Schedule periodic consultations to stay up to date on legal options.

An ongoing relationship with your legal team creates continuity, trust, and protection for you and your loved ones.

KNOWING AND ASSERTING YOUR RIGHTS

Every person in the United States has rights protected under the U.S. Constitution. Understanding and asserting those rights can make a critical difference during encounters with immigration officials or law enforcement.

At GYH we believe that preparation is protection. Knowing what to say, what not to say, and how to respond calmly can help you safeguard yourself and your family if confronted by Immigration and ICE or other authorities.

Your Basic Rights

Whether you are at home, at work, or in public, you have the following fundamental rights:

- You have the right to remain silent.
- You do not have to answer questions about your immigration status, birthplace, or how you entered the country. Simply say: "I am choosing to remain silent and would like to speak with an attorney."
- You have the right to refuse to sign documents.
- Never sign anything you do not understand or agree with. Some forms can waive your right to see an immigration judge or seek relief.
- You have the right to an attorney.
- While the government is not required to provide one in immigration proceedings, you may hire your own lawyer or contact a nonprofit legal organization. If you are detained, ask to call your attorney immediately.
- You have the right to privacy in your home.
- ICE cannot enter your home without your consent or a valid judicial warrant signed by a judge. Administrative warrants (such as Form I-200 or I-205) do not give ICE the right to enter without permission.

If ICE Comes to Your Door

If immigration officers come to your home:

- Stay calm. Do not open the door.
- Ask to see a warrant by sliding it under the door or showing it through a window.
- Check the details.
- A valid warrant must have your correct name, address, and a judge's signature.
- Do not give personal information.
- You are not required to answer questions or identify others in the home.
- Use a "Know Your Rights" card.
- You can hand or slide a card under the door stating that you are exercising your right to remain silent and to speak with a lawyer.
- Record or document the encounter if safe to do so.
- Note names, badge numbers, and any documents shown to you.

If ICE leaves, write down what happened and contact your attorney as soon as possible.

KNOWING AND ASSERTING YOUR RIGHTS

If You Are Stopped in Public or at Work

- Ask if you are free to leave. If yes, walk away calmly.
- If you are detained, you still have the right to remain silent and to speak with an attorney.
- Do not present false documents or claim to be a U.S. citizen.

If You Are Detained

If you or a loved one is detained by ICE:

1. Stay calm and respectful.
2. Do not resist or attempt to flee.
3. Contact your attorney immediately.
4. Give your full name, A-number (if available), and detention location.
5. Your family can locate you using the online ICE Detainee Locator: [locator.ice.gov](https://locator.ice.dhs.gov).
6. Do not sign any removal documents before speaking with a lawyer.
7. Ask for an interpreter if you do not fully understand English.

Family members should be prepared to provide your attorney's contact information and copies of your important documents.

Preparing in Advance

- Every family should take a few steps to ensure they are ready to respond calmly and effectively in the event of enforcement actions:
- Memorize key phone numbers, including your attorney, emergency contact, and caregiver.
- Keep a folder with your important documents and identification in a safe but accessible place.
- Make a plan for who will care for children or dependents if you are unable to.
- Inform trusted friends or neighbors of your plan so they can assist your family if needed.

Resources for Knowing Your Rights

- You can access "Know Your Rights" materials in multiple languages from:
- Grossman Young & Hammond – www.grossmanyounghammond.com
- Immigrant Legal Resource Center (ILRC): ilrc.org/red-cards
- National Immigration Law Center (NILC): nilc.org
- Informed Immigrant: informedimmigrant.com

WHY DOCUMENT ORGANIZATION MATTERS

A well-prepared family keeps essential records organized and easily accessible. In an emergency—such as detention, hospitalization, or travel restrictions—having your key documents in order allows your loved ones, legal representative, or designated caregiver to act quickly and effectively on your behalf.

WHY IT MATTERS

Immigration, medical, and legal processes all rely on accurate paperwork. If your documents are scattered, misplaced, or unavailable, it can delay or complicate important actions such as:

- Obtaining legal representation
- Accessing your child's school or medical records
- Proving your presence or residency in the United States
- Applying for immigration benefits
- Demonstrating eligibility for relief or bond

Having your documents in one secure location ensures your family and attorney can find what they need without confusion or delay.



WHY DOCUMENT ORGANIZATION MATTERS

Your Family Preparedness File should contain copies (not originals) of the following documents, organized by family member: Identity and immigration documents, children's information, financial and legal documentations.

Identity and Immigration Documents

- Passports (U.S. and foreign)
- Birth certificates
- Marriage certificates or divorce decrees
- Social Security cards or ITIN numbers
- Work permits (EADs)
- Green cards, visas, or I-94 forms
- A-number and any correspondence from USCIS, ICE, or EOIR
- Proof of physical presence in the U.S. (lease agreements, utility bills, tax returns)

Children's Information

- School records and report cards
- Health insurance cards and medical records
- Vaccination records and prescriptions
- Caregiver authorization letter or guardianship form
- Emergency contacts and approved pickup list

Financial and Legal Documents

- Driver's licenses or state IDs
- Bank account and insurance information
- Pay stubs or proof of income
- Power of attorney (if applicable)
- Any active restraining orders, custody orders, or legal agreements

Keep a printed checklist to make sure everything stays current.

WHY DOCUMENT ORGANIZATION MATTERS

Your Family Preparedness File should contain copies (not originals) of the following documents, organized by family member: Identity and immigration documents, children's information, financial and legal documentations.

Safe Storage Tips

- Keep one master copy at home in a clearly labeled, waterproof folder or binder.
- Store digital backups on a password-protected device or secure cloud service.
- Provide copies to your attorney and your designated caregiver.
- Inform one trusted person where the documents are located in case you are unavailable.
- Avoid carrying sensitive originals, such as foreign passports or immigration notices, unless absolutely necessary.
- If your family is multilingual, consider labeling key sections (for example, "Medical Records" or "School Documents") in both English and your primary language to make them easier for others to use.

Keep Contact Information Handy

- At the front of your preparedness file, include:
- Your full name, date of birth, and A-number (if applicable)
- Names and contact information for your attorney, caregiver, and emergency contacts
- The phone number for the Grossman Young & Hammond office: (301) 917- 6900
- The ICE Detainee Locator website: locator.ice.gov
- The contact information for your country's nearest consulate

Review and Update Regularly

- Your preparedness file is a living document. Review it every six months—or sooner if something changes—to ensure:
- All forms are current and legible
- Copies match the originals
- Children's medical and school information is up to date
- New immigration filings or approvals are included
- Staying current ensures your plan works when it's needed most.



Grossman Young & Hammond can help you create or review your preparedness file. Our team can identify which immigration documents are most critical to keep accessible, advise on secure storage, and ensure that your records meet the documentation standards needed for future immigration filings or relief applications.

At Grossman Young & Hammond (GYH), we encourage every family to maintain a clear list of legal, personal, and community contacts as part of their preparedness plan.

Grossman Young & Hammond
Website: www.grossmanyouth.com

Phone: (301) 917-6900
Email: info@grossmanyouth.com

National and Community Resources

The following organizations provide free or low-cost information, advocacy, and support for immigrants and their families:

- Immigrant Legal Resource Center (ILRC) – Know Your Rights materials, red cards, and family preparedness resources www.ilrc.org
- National Immigration Law Center (NILC) – Legal updates and policy resources www.nilc.org
- Immigration Advocates Network – Directory of nonprofit legal service providers www.immigrationadvocates.org
- Informed Immigrant – Practical guides for undocumented and mixed-status families www.informedimmigrant.com
- American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) – Find a qualified immigration attorney www.aila.org

*Disclaimer: This information is presented for the purposes of general education and does not constitute legal advice.