



Immigration Bonds

Get bond info ready in case of detention

If you are detained or worried that you could get arrested by Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE), it is a good idea to be ready in case you are eligible for an immigration bond. Get proof together that shows you are not a danger to the community or a flight risk. Make sure there is someone who knows where to find the information if you get detained. You need to show the Judge that you qualify for a bond. Also find someone to be your bond sponsor. This person pays the bond if you get one and is responsible to make sure you get to your hearings.

See our fact sheet [Resources for People Detained or Worried About Being Detained](#).

What is an immigration bond?

A **bond** is money that someone pays to get someone else out of custody or jail. An **immigration bond** is money paid to get someone out of the custody of ICE. If you go to all of your court hearings and follow all the orders set by the Immigration Judge or ICE, the bond money is returned when your case is over. This could include leaving the country if they say so. But ICE keeps the bond money if you don't go to court or follow the orders.

Can I get released on an immigration bond?

Maybe. Some people have to be put in "mandatory detention." This means the Immigration Judge **can't** grant a bond because of what the law says.

Mandatory detention can happen if:

- You were convicted or charged with certain crimes
- You have a prior deportation order
- You are being detained on terrorism-related grounds, OR
- You were detained when you entered the U.S.



The government says if you entered the U.S. without going through an immigration office ("entering without inspection"), you have to be put in mandatory detention. They also say, you don't get a bond hearing. BUT many judges in Minnesota disagree.

This area of law is changing quickly. Talk to a lawyer to see if you can ask for a bond if you are detained by ICE.

How do I ask for a bond?

Sometimes ICE sets the bond amount. If no bond has been set, you can ask the Immigration Judge to set a bond on your case. You ask for a **bond hearing**. At a bond hearing, you can also ask the Immigration Judge to lower the bond if you think ICE set it too high. The lowest bond amount that an Immigration Judge can set is \$1,500. It is more common that the Immigration Judge sets the bond around \$4,000.

Be careful when you ask the Immigration Judge to lower your bond. The Judge could decide to raise your bond if they think it was set too low, or they could decide to deny bond completely.

Who can pay the bond?

The person paying the bond is called the bond sponsor. They are also called the “obligor.” There are rules about who can be your sponsor. If the sponsor does not follow the rules, ICE won’t release you.

- The sponsor must be a U.S. citizen, Permanent Resident, law firm, or nonprofit organization
- The sponsor must know you
- The sponsor must know how to speak, write, and read English
- The sponsor must bring a government-issued photo ID and a valid social security number with them when they go to pay

The sponsor also has to give this information:

- their name, current address, and phone number
- your name, address, phone number and immigration case file number if known



A person who is not in the U.S. legally should NOT try to pay a bond for someone else. ICE could take them into custody and try to remove them from the U.S.

A person who is in the U.S. legally but has criminal convictions or pending criminal charges should talk with an immigration lawyer before paying a bond for someone else.

What happens at a bond hearing?

When deciding about setting or lowering a bond, the Immigration Judge first looks to see if you are a danger to the community. If the judge finds you are a danger, they deny bond, and you stay locked up until the immigration court case is done. If the judge finds you are not a danger, then they look at if you are a “flight risk.” A flight risk is someone who probably won’t show up at future court hearings if released.

To prove you are not a danger to the community, mail your criminal records and any evidence of rehabilitation to the Immigration Court. Evidence of rehabilitation could be things like proof that you took classes to manage issues with drugs or alcohol, anger management classes, or therapy. It could be other proof that helps show you overcame the problems that were causing you to commit crimes in the past. You can also show letters of support from family, friends, religious leaders, or community members.

To prove you are not a flight risk, give them:

- Evidence of your family ties in the U.S. This can be things like birth certificates of a Legal Permanent Resident (LPR – has a green card) or U.S. citizen relatives.
- Evidence that you work. Like paystubs or a letter from your employer.
- Evidence you own property, have a lease agreement, or pay taxes in the U.S.
- Evidence of community ties. Like being part of a religious or community group.

It is really important to give them a notarized affidavit from your sponsor that says you are not a flight risk. The sponsor's statement should include personal information about themselves, like name, date of birth, contact information, and their relationship to you. They should also include things like:

- copies of their government issued ID
- most recent tax return
- 90 days of pay stubs or bank statements
- a lease or mortgage statement to show their fixed address.



All these things can show how they can support you to follow through with court requirements.

I am the sponsor. How do I pay the bond?

It is possible the person detained can be let out the same day that the bond money is paid. To make sure of that, it is better to pay the bond as early in the day as possible.

Online

You must pay the bond online at: cebonds.ice.gov. Scroll to the bottom and click the “Sign-in or Sign-up” button. If you don’t have an account, on the next page click “Sign Up” and create an account.

These people or organizations can pay the bond online:

- U.S. citizens
- lawful permanent residents
- law firms, and
- non-profit organizations can use CeBONDS to post a delivery bond, voluntary departure bond, or order of supervision bond.
- Noncitizens can also post a Voluntary Departure bond or Order of Supervision bond on their own behalf.



The hours for posting (paying) the bond are:

Monday – Friday 9 am to 3 pm in the time zone where the person is detained by ICE

Payment must be made from a bank account.

If you can't access the online system, you can try to pay in person.

In Person

The Minneapolis/St. Paul ICE Office only accepts in-person payments if the detained person's information is not put online for safety reasons. Call the ICE office ahead of time before trying to pay in person to check if the detained person can be found online. If someone is eligible for in-person payment, the bond amount must be paid in full, with a U.S. postal money order, or a cashier's check from a bank. **Cash, personal checks, or money orders that are not from the post office are not accepted.** The money order or cashier's check must be made out to "Immigration and Customs Enforcement." Your family or friends have to pay the bond in person, at any ICE office in the U.S. Only a U.S. citizen or permanent resident can pay the bond.

In Minnesota, there is one ICE office where a bond can be paid:

Minneapolis/St. Paul ICE Office

1 Federal Drive, Suite 1601
Fort Snelling, MN 55111

9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Monday-Friday
612-843-8600

What if I can't pay the bond?

If you can't pay the full amount of the immigration bond, you may be able to get help from a community bond fund. Most bond funds ask you to wait until your bond amount is set. Examples of community bond funds include:

Local

- [Midwest Immigration Bond Fund](#)

National

- [Contigo Immigrant Justice](#) (if detained in Colorado, New Mexico, or Texas)
- [Black Immigrants Bail Fund](#)
- [LGBTQ Freedom Fund](#)

There are also bond companies that might help. Bond companies are private businesses that pay part of the bond. You, a friend or a family member can set up an agreement with them. Be careful! Bond companies often charge high interest rates, ask for “collateral,” or keep all of the bond money when it is returned. Collateral is something of value that the person signing the papers has. They agree to let the bond company keep it if the detained person doesn’t go to their court hearings or follow the orders set by the court or ICE.

Returning the Bond Money

When your immigration proceedings are over, ICE returns the full amount of the bond money to the person who paid the bond (the sponsor). The ICE office sends paperwork for the sponsor to fill out and return. Once ICE gets the papers back, they mail the bond money to the sponsor. If the sponsor moves before the proceedings are done, they should let ICE know. ICE can’t return the money if they don’t have a current address for the sponsor.



Be Careful of Scams!

Watch out for these things:

- ICE NEVER calls, texts, or use WhatsApp to ask for your bond payment.
- Bonds can only be paid online at CeBONDS or in person by a check or money order made out to DHS or ICE. You **CAN’T** pay a bond with Western Union, MoneyGram, Zelle, or Ria.
- If someone tells you that you have an immigration hearing on Skype, it’s a scam! Virtual immigration hearings are only held on Webex.
- If someone says you can make a down payment or a partial payment, it’s a scam! Immigration bonds always have to be paid in full.

To learn more about common scams, see the [USCIS website](#).

Fact Sheets are legal information NOT legal advice. See a lawyer for advice.

Don’t use this fact sheet if it is more than 1 year old. Ask us for updates, a fact sheet list, or alternate formats.

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