Making sure your family is ready if you get deported

This fact sheet can help you make sure you and your family are ready if you get deported or separated from them. It has a list of things to think about:

- Documents & Identification
- Children
- Money
- Cars & Rental Property



Talk to a lawyer!

It is always best to talk to an immigration lawyer if you are worried you could be deported. LawHelpMN has a list of lawyers who might be able to help. Scan the QR code or go to: lawhelpmn.org/providers-and-clinics.

To read this fact sheet in other languages, go to lawhelpmn.org.

Documents & Identification

Make an emergency plan.



Write down your emergency plan. Write down important contacts, immigration information, and medical information. It helps your family know what to do if you are detained. 'We Have Rights" has a blank form that you can fill out. Get it at: wehaverights.us/create-an-emergency-plan.

- **Share the plan with your emergency contact.** This should be someone you really trust. It is important that they know where to find your emergency plan in case you are detained by ICE or are deported. **Never share your emergency plan with ICE.**

- **Talk to your family about your plan.** Without worrying them, let your children know who will take care of them if for some reason you can't.
- **Make sure your emergency contact has the ICE detainee locator.** To search for someone in ICE custody, go to: locator.ice.gov/odls/homePage.do

Think about getting passports for your family, especially children.



Everyone needs a passport to travel internationally, including children. Having a passport may help families stay together if you are deported. But getting or renewing a passport from a different country can create immigration problems for some people. Before you apply for or renew a passport from a different country for yourself or your child, talk to an immigration lawyer about what is best for your situation.

- **Children born in the United States** should be eligible for a U.S. passport. LawHelpMN has a fact sheet that tells you how to apply for a U.S. passport for a child born in the United States. Scan the QR code or go to: https://www.lawhelpmn.org/self-help-library/fact-sheet/passports-children-born-us.

- **If you or your child were born in a different country,** talk to an immigration lawyer before you apply for a passport.

- **Some children may be eligible for both** a U.S. passport and a passport from their parent's country of birth.

Keep important documents in a safe place.



You should keep all your important documents in a safe place. This includes:

- Passports
- Birth certificates
- Medical records
- Immigration papers
- Court papers
- Titles to your house or car
- Bank information

Tell **someone you trust** where these important documents are in case you are detained or deported.

It might be a good idea to carry certain documents with you all the time. This depends on the type of immigration status you have. If you carry documents with you, make copies of them to keep at home. Or give copies to someone you trust. Ask an immigration lawyer if there are certain documents you should carry for your situation.

Children

Set up a caretaker for your children.



If you are worried you might be deported, set up a Delegation of Parental Authority (DOPA). A DOPA is a document that lets someone take care of your children when you can't. **You need to do a separate DOPA for each child.**

- A DOPA **gives** someone else permission to make decisions about your child's care, medical treatment, custody, and property.
- A DOPA **doesn't give** that person permission to decide things like adoption or marriage.
- A DOPA **doesn't** take away any of your rights to make decisions for your children. You can still cancel any decisions made by the person you name in the DOPA. For information about a DOPA and how to fill one out, scan the QR code or see our fact sheet *When You Need Someone to Care for Your Child or Protected Person: Delegation of Parental Authority (DOPA)*.

Things to know if you have children in school.



Education is a right and a requirement in Minnesota. All children between the ages of 7 and 17 have to go to school. This includes children who are immigrants. It can cause legal problems if your child misses too much school. Scan the QR code or see our fact sheet *Keeping Kids in School: Preventing Truancy*.

If you have a DOPA, make sure someone at the school has a copy. Then if you can't pick your children up there is a record of who can. And who can be responsible for them if you are not around.

Money



Beware of scams.

Some people reach out to immigrants pretending to offer help so they can take your money or property. Beware of anyone who calls, texts, or sends you a letter offering to be added to your bank account or car title. Don't give personal information or sign anything without talking to a lawyer.

Set up a bank account that has online banking.



You want to be able to access your money if you are deported.

- **Set up a bank account that has online banking.** This means you can look at your account and move money online. You don't have to go to a bank in person.
- **Make sure that the bank lets you log in to your account from anywhere in the world.**
- **Keep your passwords with you.** Memorize your passwords, keep them with you, or keep them in an online password manager.

Also think about a joint bank account. This is an account shared by 2 or more people. Everyone whose name is on the account can put money in the account. They can also take money out of the account. There are risks to having a joint account. The other person could take your money out of the account legally without your permission. It is important to really trust someone if you share a bank account with them.

Close or keep an eye on credit cards.



You are responsible for your credit card debt and loans no matter where you live. Legally, you still have to pay it even if you are deported.

If you leave the U.S. with unpaid debt, there are things the credit card company can do that could affect you later if you ever return.

- **If you miss a credit card payment,** there will probably be fees and penalties on your debt.
- **If the debt reaches a certain level** and you don't send a payment, the credit card company may cancel your credit card. They might sell the debt to a debt collector.
- **A debt collector** might sue you to get their money. They could garnish your bank account.

- **Missed payments can be reported to credit bureaus.** This could have a negative effect on your credit rating in the U.S. This makes it harder to get a loan, buy a car, or rent an apartment if you come back to the U.S.

Cars & Rental Property

Decide what to do with any cars you own.



If you own a car, you can add a second person to the title. This means that they own it equally with you. If you are detained or deported, they can make decisions about the car. Like keeping up auto insurance or renewing the registration. It can also help if you need the car sold. But adding someone else to the title of your car is also a risk. If someone else is on the title to your car, they can legally sell it or take it even if you don't want them to.

If you have to leave your rented apartment quickly.



If you are detained or deported suddenly, you may not be able to pay your rent on time. Your lease might also expire while you are gone. Your landlord can file papers in court to evict you if you are late on rent or your lease has ended. If the court agrees to evict you, your personal belongings can be given away if you or your family are not there to take them. Scan the QR code or see our fact sheet *Getting Property Back After You Move Out* to learn more about what you can do to get your things back after you move out.

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