

# Emergency Preparedness for Those at Risk of Deportation

For advocates working with people at risk of deportation, encourage community members to do the following:

1

## Organize your personal documents.

- Keep original identity & personal documents in a safe place. Make and store copies where someone you trust can access them if you are detained.
- Gather immigration and criminal history documents. These will help a lawyer screen you for any legal defenses against deportation (“relief”).
  - **Immigration documents:** any applications submitted to immigration or any documents showing your A# (alien number), if you have one.
  - **Criminal documents:** certificates of disposition from courts and/or rap sheet

2

## Get screened by a lawyer as soon as possible to see if you are eligible for any legal defenses against deportation (“relief”).

Many nonprofits offer free legal screenings across the country. Be careful of scams!

- Always keep your original documents.
- If hiring a lawyer to represent you, always have a signed contract and make sure to review the document in your preferred language. Make sure both of you sign the contract and you get a copy.
- If hiring a private lawyer, always get a second opinion before paying and get a receipt for payment (ideally paying by check or money order instead of cash).

3

### Plan for medical needs.

- Write down crucial medical information to carry with you, including contact information for your doctors and any medications you take with names and dosages.
- Identify someone you trust and arrange for them to have access to your medical information in case they need to provide it in support of your legal case or so you have proper medical care if detained.
- To do this, consider signing a HIPAA form, giving them access to your medical files and allowing your doctors to communicate with them about your medical needs.

4

### Plan for childcare needs.

- Write down crucial contact information for childcare to carry with you.
- Identify someone who can care for your children if you are detained. Make sure that person agrees to act as a caretaker and has the following information:
  - School location and contact information
  - Any medical conditions your child has and how to address their needs, including contact information for doctors and information on medications and/or allergies.
  - Emergency contact information for other loved ones
- Put important documents for each child in a safe place accessible to your emergency caretaker. This may include your child's medical/school records, birth certificate, and any legal agreements you have made with your emergency caretaker.
- Consult with a lawyer about whether to grant a loved one power to make legal decisions for your child if you are detained. Some options include:
  - **Special Power of Attorney:** This is a legal document in which a parent authorizes another adult to act temporarily in the parent's place on behalf of the child. It is a private agreement and can be cancelled at any time.

- **Guardianship:** This is a more formal arrangement than Power of Attorney and typically involves Family Court. This allows your loved one to make medical, educational or other decisions while you are detained. It is harder to reverse and can mean giving up some of your power to make decisions for your child. So it is important to talk to an expert before doing this.

## 5

## Plan for financial needs.

Consult with an expert about whether to grant a loved one power to access your finances and make financial decisions if you are detained. There is a special power of attorney form for financial matters. This legal document allows a loved one to do things like access your bank account, pick up your paycheck, pay bills, and use your money to pay bond.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Families for Freedom "Financial Handbook for Families Facing Detention + Deportation" April 2008, see [http://familiesforfreedom.org/sites/default/files/resources/FFF%20\\_Financial%20Handbook%20for%20Families%20Facing%20Detention%20and%20..pdf](http://familiesforfreedom.org/sites/default/files/resources/FFF%20_Financial%20Handbook%20for%20Families%20Facing%20Detention%20and%20..pdf)

## Carry crucial information on your person at all times.

This should be written down—not relying on access to your phone—and includes:

- **Medical information:**
  - Contact information for your doctors
  - A list of any medications you take, including the names and dosages
- **Childcare information:**
  - Contact information for school and point of contact in case of detention
- **Contact information for lawyers who have represented you or agreed to represent you**
- **Contact information for loved ones**

**For resources on emergency preparedness, go to:**  
<http://www.immdefense.org/emergency-preparedness>