

INTERSECTION OF IMMIGRATION & DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

[A TOOLKIT FOR ADVOCATES]

July 2023

SECTION 1: About this Toolkit

Everyone in the U.S. has the right to live a life free from abuse.

Domestic violence is illegal in the United States under all circumstances. All people, regardless of national origin or immigration status, are guaranteed protection from abuse under U.S. law. Any victim/survivor can seek help, including help from the police and/or legal system. An immigrant victim/survivor of domestic violence may be eligible for certain immigration relief options.

Domestic violence is a pervasive, life-threatening pattern of domination, intimidation, and control that one intimate partner wages against another. Domestic violence affects millions of people in the United States and is widespread in every population regardless of age, economic status, race, religion, sexual orientation, or education. Often, victims/survivors feel scared, confused, and insecure about their ability to survive on their own. Being an immigrant or refugee can impose additional challenges when seeking safety from abuse.

This toolkit outlines concrete steps a victim/survivor and their family members can take to protect themselves. It is intended to help you inform a client about domestic violence, their rights, legal options, how to stay safe, and available resources. Sections of this toolkit can be printed and shared with clients. The QR codes throughout this document can be used to conveniently share resources with clients as well.

BEFORE GETTING STARTED: SOME WORDS OF CAUTION

The information in this toolkit is intended to provide general information and resources and is not legal advice. If immigration status and domestic violence is a concern for a victim/survivor, it is important to speak with an immigration law expert to determine the safest and best course of action.

This toolkit was last updated in 2023 and information may have changed since its drafting. We have included links to outside resources that you should consult for the latest information.

Please be aware that clients may be paying for services from someone who they believe is an attorney and/or an immigration law expert but who is fraudulent. People who are scammed lose money and can have serious problems with their immigration because of the fraudulent assistance. A scammer may call themselves a “**notario público**,” or notary public, which has a different meaning in other countries than it does here. [Click here](#) for more information about avoiding fraud and what clients should expect from their attorney or DOJ-accredited representative.

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Each section was developed to identify a victim's/survivor's needs, options, and rights, and provide some of the necessary tools to ensure that a victim/survivor and their children are safe.

Section 1: About This Toolkit outlines the purpose of this toolkit and how to navigate it.

Section 2: Domestic Violence defines domestic violence, discusses the various types of domestic violence, and explains warning signs and risks.

Section 3: The Intersection of Immigration and Domestic Violence explains how immigration issues can affect domestic violence, including how a person's immigration status can be leveraged by an abuser in coercive relationships.

Section 4: Know Your Rights - Law Enforcement reviews the constitutional rights that apply to all people regardless of immigration status, as well as a victim's/survivor's statutory rights as a victim/survivor of domestic violence, and how to exercise those rights.

Section 5: Legal Options is an overview of various options that victims/survivors of domestic violence have when facing immigration proceedings or when affirmatively applying for immigration status without the cooperation of the abuser. This section covers who can apply for each, what they will need, and resources for additional information.

Section 6: Safety Planning reviews helpful information that will help you work with a victim/survivor to make a safety plan for themselves and their children. This section explains both legal and practical measures a victim/survivor can take and includes safety planning for encounters with immigration enforcement officers.

Section 7: Public Benefits and the Public Charge Rule provides information and resources that are important to review prior to applying for any public benefits to understand whether receiving public benefits may impact a victim's/survivor's immigration status.

Section 8: Housing provides an overview of how immigration impacts housing stability, resources for learning more about tenants' rights, and contact information for helpful programs including rental assistance, legal assistance, and social services.

Section 9: Resources provides a directory of resources that may be useful to clients with immigration concerns, including resources specific to your area.

Section 10: Frequently Asked Questions provides answers to frequently asked questions about immigration and domestic violence.

Section 11: Safety Planning Templates provides multiple safety planning templates to be completed by a victim/survivor and kept in a secure place. These templates allow a victim/survivor to plan for their own safety and that of their children and can be provided to a designated caregiver in the event that the victim/survivor is detained by immigration officials.

How to use this Toolkit

This toolkit provides information relevant to clients with various immigration statuses. We recommend that you save and/or print this toolkit so it may serve as a reference to revisit as needed.

How to toggle between sections: To easily navigate this toolkit from your computer, you can use the blue hyperlinks in the Table of Contents at the top of the document to click to each section or use the hyperlinked “Jump to [content]” links that appear throughout the document.

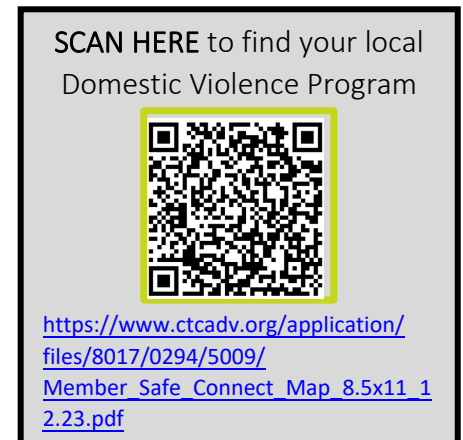
Accessing additional resources: There are many guides and resources you can access directly from this toolkit. These resources can be accessed by entering the URL into your internet browser address bar, by clicking the hyperlink, or by using a smartphone to scan the QR code.



Quick escape symbol: A green exit symbol inside a QR code, or near a hyperlink indicates that the linked or scannable resource has a “quick escape” feature that will take the user to a neutral website.

Try it now!

Using the camera on your mobile device, such as a cell phone or tablet, point your camera lens at the QR code and hold it in that position. Within seconds, your device should automatically recognize the QR code and redirect you to the website. If your device is not recognizing the QR code, try either positioning your camera closer to or further away from the QR code, or try tapping where the QR code appears on your device’s camera view to refocus your camera lens on the QR code. If QR codes don’t work on your device, simply click on the hyperlink that appears below the QR code to navigate to the resource.



Using QR Codes Securely

- **None of the enclosed QR codes will direct you to websites that request your personal information or any electronic payments.**
- **Check that the website you are directed to matches the URL indicated under the QR code.**
- **Do not download a QR code scanner app. Instead, use the camera on your mobile device.**

Acknowledgments

We would like to express our appreciation to the following individuals who contributed to the planning, research, writing and formatting of the toolkit:

- Schaene Shatto, formerly Family Violence Victim Advocate of New Horizons
- Katie Hieatt, CCADV AmeriCorps VISTA Member

Thanks also to the following for their legal expertise and feedback during the development of this toolkit:

- Attorney Steven Eppler-Epstein
- Attorney Tess Reagan, Esperanza Attorneys at Law

We would also like to thank and acknowledge the following individuals for their experience working with survivors, feedback, and participation in focus groups:

- Attorney Kara Hart, Law Office of Kara Hart, LLC
- Attorney Enelsa Diaz, Greater Hartford Legal Aid
- Attorney Joanne Lewis, CT Legal Services
- Attorney Maureen Abeil, New Haven Legal Assistance Association, Inc.
- Attorney Alicia Kinsman, CT Institute for Refugees and Immigrants
- Geetha Prabha, CCADV Safe Connect Coordinator
- Xavier Merchan, CCADV Safe Connect Program Manager
- Diane Carneiro, The Center for Empowerment and Education Adult Advocate
- Nazmie Ojeda, Safe Futures Director of Education & Community Engagement
- Laura McGuire, United Services Domestic Violence Program Advocate
- Alessandra Popolizio, Interval House Advocate
- Graciela Penalva, The Umbrella Center for Domestic Violence Services Advocate
- Leonela Cruz-Ahuatl, CT Institute for Refugees and Immigrants Director of Project Rescue
- Mary Smith, Make the Road CT Senior Development and Programs Manager

We would like to acknowledge the authors of the “Supporting Housing Stability for People Who are Undocumented” document, who allowed us to adapt their language for this toolkit. This document was drafted by a CCADV housing task force, whose members included:

- Annie Stockton Sabrowski, CCADV Director of Housing Advocacy
- Wanda Gaines, CCADV Director of Diversity and Accessibility
- Margaret Waweru, CCADV Safe Connect Coordinator
- Leonela Cruz-Ahuatl, CT Institute for Refugees and Immigrants Director of Project Rescue
- Lori Ayotte, Safe Haven of Greater Waterbury Adult Advocate
- Jane Dowd, Center for Family Justice Adult Advocate
- Lina Agudelo, Safe Futures Residential Coordinator
- Mayra Duran, Domestic Violence Crisis Center Advocate
- Gabriela Parada-Bravo, YWCA Greenwich Domestic Abuse Services Advocate

We would also like to acknowledge the work of the following organizations from which we adapted safety planning language and templates for use in this toolkit:

- Immigration Legal Resource Center (ILRC)
- Immigrant Services Network of Austin

SECTION 2: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

What is Domestic Violence?

Domestic violence is defined by Connecticut law (§46b-1) as a pattern of abusive behaviors that can include physical harm, threatening, stalking, or coercive control. It is an insidious, life-threatening crime that can be perpetrated against anyone regardless of age, gender, economic status, race, religion, sexual orientation, or education. Victims/survivors are often left feeling scared, confused, and insecure about their ability to survive on their own. Below are several types of abuse.

Coercive control is defined by Connecticut law (§46b-1) as a “pattern of behavior that in purpose or effect unreasonably interferes with a person’s free will or personal liberty,” which can include (but is not limited to):

- Isolating victim/survivor from family, friends, or other sources of support
- Material deprivation
- Forcing a victim/survivor to do something, or preventing them from doing something
- Releasing sexual images without consent, or threatening to do so
- Controlling, monitoring, or regulating movement, daily activities, communications, or access to finances or services
- Threatening harm to pets
- Sexual assault, sexual harassment, or threats of sexual assault or sexual harassment
- Revealing someone’s sexual orientation without consent, or threatening to do so

Physical Abuse is probably the easiest kind of behavior to recognize and understand as violent. It can be directed toward a victim/survivor or those they care about, including pets. Aggressive physical contact should always be considered abusive and serious even if it does not leave marks or permanent injury. Some examples of physical abuse include:

- Hurting or threatening to hurt a victim’s children and/or pets
- Scratching, biting, grabbing, or spitting
- Shoving and pushing
- Slapping and punching
- Throwing objects to hurt or intimidate the victim/survivor
- Destroying possessions or treasured objects
- Disrupting a victim’s/survivor’s sleep patterns to make them feel exhausted
- Burning
- Strangling
- Attacking or threatening to attack with a weapon
- Threats or attempts to kill the victim/survivor

Financial Abuse: Abusers often use money to establish control in their relationships. An abusive partner might take measures to ensure that a victim/survivor is financially dependent on them to prevent them from leaving or feeling like they have power in the relationship. Financial abuse can take many forms, including the following:

- Forbidding the victim/survivor from working or attending school
- Sabotaging employment opportunities
- Jeopardizing employment by stalking or harassing the victim/survivor at the workplace
- Denying access to a vehicle so the victim/survivor cannot work
- Sabotaging educational opportunities by destroying class assignments
- Withholding money or giving an “allowance”
- Restricting access to bank accounts
- Holding family assets
- Running up debt in the victim’s/survivor’s name

Emotional Abuse/Psychological Abuse is any behavior, verbal or non-verbal, that an abuser uses to control their victim and/or damage their emotional well-being. Below are some examples of emotional abuse:

- Name-calling and mocking
- Intimidating the victim/survivor when they are upset
- Yelling in the victim's/survivor's face or positioning their body in a menacing way
- Interrupting, changing topics, not listening or responding, twisting a victim's/survivor's words
- Manipulating a victim's/survivor's children
- Telling the victim/survivor what to do and/or where they can and cannot go
- Placing little value on what a victim/survivor says
- Cheating or being overly jealous
- Monitoring use of phone, computer, or car
- Making humiliating remarks or gestures
- Insulting the victim/survivor in front of other people
- Saying negative things about a victim's/survivor's friends and family
- Preventing or making it difficult to see friends or relatives
- Shifting responsibility for abusive behavior by blaming the victim/survivor or others

Sexual Abuse is any sexual encounter that happens without the victim's/survivor's consent. Victims/survivors of domestic violence should know that sexual abuse that is perpetrated by a partner is just as unacceptable as sexual abuse that is perpetrated by a stranger. Being in a relationship, no matter how long, does not give someone the right to demand any sexual activity without their partner's consent. Sexually abusive behaviors include, but are not limited to, the following examples:

- Taking sexual pictures or video without consent
- Rape: unwanted vaginal, oral, or anal penetration by an object or body part
- Taking advantage when a victim/survivor is under the influence of alcohol or drugs or otherwise not in a position to give consent
- Denying contraception or protection against sexually transmitted diseases
- Unwanted touching
- Forcing a victim/survivor to perform sexual acts on film or in person for money
- Forcing or manipulating a victim/survivor into doing unwanted, painful, or degrading acts during intercourse
- Threatening to break up with and/or hurt a victim/survivor if they refuse sex

Stalking and Harassment: An abusive partner or ex-partner might inappropriately demand a victim's/survivor's time even when the victim/survivor makes it clear that they do not want contact with them. Stalking and harassment can include the following:

- Making unwanted visits or sending unwanted messages
- Checking up on the victim/survivor constantly
- Refusing to leave when asked
- Embarrassing the victim/survivor in public
- Following or remotely tracking the victim/survivor, including by installing GPS tracking software on their car or cell phone without their knowledge or consent

Litigation Abuse is the misuse of the legal system and court proceedings to harass, intimidate, coerce, and/or impoverish the victim/survivor. Court proceedings can provide a means for an abuser to exert and reestablish power and control over a domestic violence victim/survivor long after the relationship has ended. Some examples of litigation abuse include but are not limited to:

- Filing excessive motions to bring the victim/survivor back to court several times
- Filing unnecessary motions, appeals, motions for modification or motion for reconsideration forcing the other party back into court with intent to harass or cause harm financially
- Dragging out court hearings or judicial processes with intent to cause financial harm and/or emotional harm

Connecticut Law Regarding Abuse of Legal System in Family Matters

In any family relations matter in Connecticut, if “the court finds that a pattern of frivolous and intentionally fabricated pleadings or motions are filed by one party,” then “the court shall sanction such party in an appropriate manner so as to allow such matter to proceed without undue delay or obstruction by the party filing such pleadings or motions.” *Connecticut Public Act 21-78 §10*.

Technology Abuse: People use technology to harass their victims. Familiar kinds of abuse (such as emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and stalking) are perpetrated in the digital world.

- Telling a victim/survivor who they can or cannot connect with on social media
- Sending insulting or threatening messages
- Using social media to track a victim’s/survivor’s activities
- Insulting or humiliating a victim/survivor in posts online, including by posting unflattering photos or videos
- Sending or pressuring a victim/survivor to send unwanted explicit photos or videos, sexts, or otherwise compromising messages
- Stealing or demanding account passwords
- Making a victim/survivor feel like they can’t be away from their phone for fear of angering them
- Looking through a victim’s/survivor’s phone or checking their texts, photos, and phone records
- Using smart home technology, smart speakers, or security cameras to track a victim/survivor’s movements, communications, and activities
- Creating fake social media profiles in a victim’s/survivor’s name or sending messages from their phone or email pretending to be them as a way to embarrass or isolate them

Examples of technological abuse courtesy of the National Domestic Violence Hotline.

Warning Signs: Domestic violence is not just about being physically hit, it's also about patterns of coercion and control that may be emotional or financial. You can review this checklist with a victim/survivor if they think they may be in a coercive relationship. For help making a safety plan with a client, see the [Safety Planning Section](#) of this toolkit.

Does your partner...

- Stalk or harass you, such as follow you or show up at your home or place of employment uninvited?
- Get suddenly angry, refuse to compromise, and constantly blame you for their mistakes?
- Act overly jealous about your relationships with others and prevent you from seeing family and friends?
- Control your means of communication, such as your phone and computer?
- Humiliate or embarrass you in front of your friends and family?
- Hit, push, slap or act in an otherwise violent manner towards you?
- Threaten to hurt you, your children, your family members or your pets?
- Force you to have sex or perform other sexual acts when you do not want to?
- Threaten to withdraw papers to legalize your immigration status?
- Threaten to have you deported?
- Threaten to take your children?

Risk Factors: You can review this checklist with a victim/survivor to identify whether there are factors in their relationship that indicate a higher risk of serious injury or death:

- Has your abuser ever used a weapon against you or threatened you with a weapon?
- Has your abuser ever threatened to kill you or your children?
- Do you think your abuser might try to kill you?
- Has the physical violence increased in frequency or severity in the past 6 months?
- Does your abuser have a gun, or can they easily get one?
- Has your abuser ever tried to choke you?
- Have you recently left, separated from, or divorced your abuser?

SCAN HERE to take an interactive danger assessment quiz. This quiz will not store responses or ask for identifying information.



dangerassessment.org/DA.aspx

The interactive quiz is only available in English. To access PDFs with translations in 3 languages, select "View the Instrument" from the menu on the left-hand side.

Looking for the next step?

- [Jump to: Safety Planning](#)
- [Jump to: Resources](#)
- [Jump to: Safety Planning Templates](#)

SECTION 3: INTERSECTION OF IMMIGRATION & DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

In addition to the various and compounding challenges that domestic violence victims/survivors generally face, immigrant victims/survivors are more likely to be challenged by immigration questions and cultural and language barriers. These barriers may not only make it harder for a noncitizen victim/survivor to seek help but can also make it more challenging to work toward solutions once they are identified.

The following sections are designed to assist victims/survivors facing such challenges, including:

- Cultural acceptance or background
- Inability to navigate systems due to language barriers
- Lack of knowledge about systems due to language and cultural barriers
- Lack of support systems

Immigration in Power and Control Cycles

Emotional abuse and coercive control are compounded in many situations in which domestic abuse and immigration issues intersect. Examples include:

Isolation

- Restricting or eliminating contact with family and friends in a victim's/survivor's home country
- Preventing establishment of community relationships to limit knowledge and access to resources
- Preventing a victim/survivor from learning English to restrict their access to community resources and information or to prohibit them from developing relationships in the U.S.

Threats

- Threatening deportation of victim/survivor (in some cases, in order to separate the victim/survivor from their children)
- Threatening to not file an application or to stop an application process for immigration status or permanent residence
- Threatening to tell a victim's/survivor's employer that they are undocumented, regardless of actual status

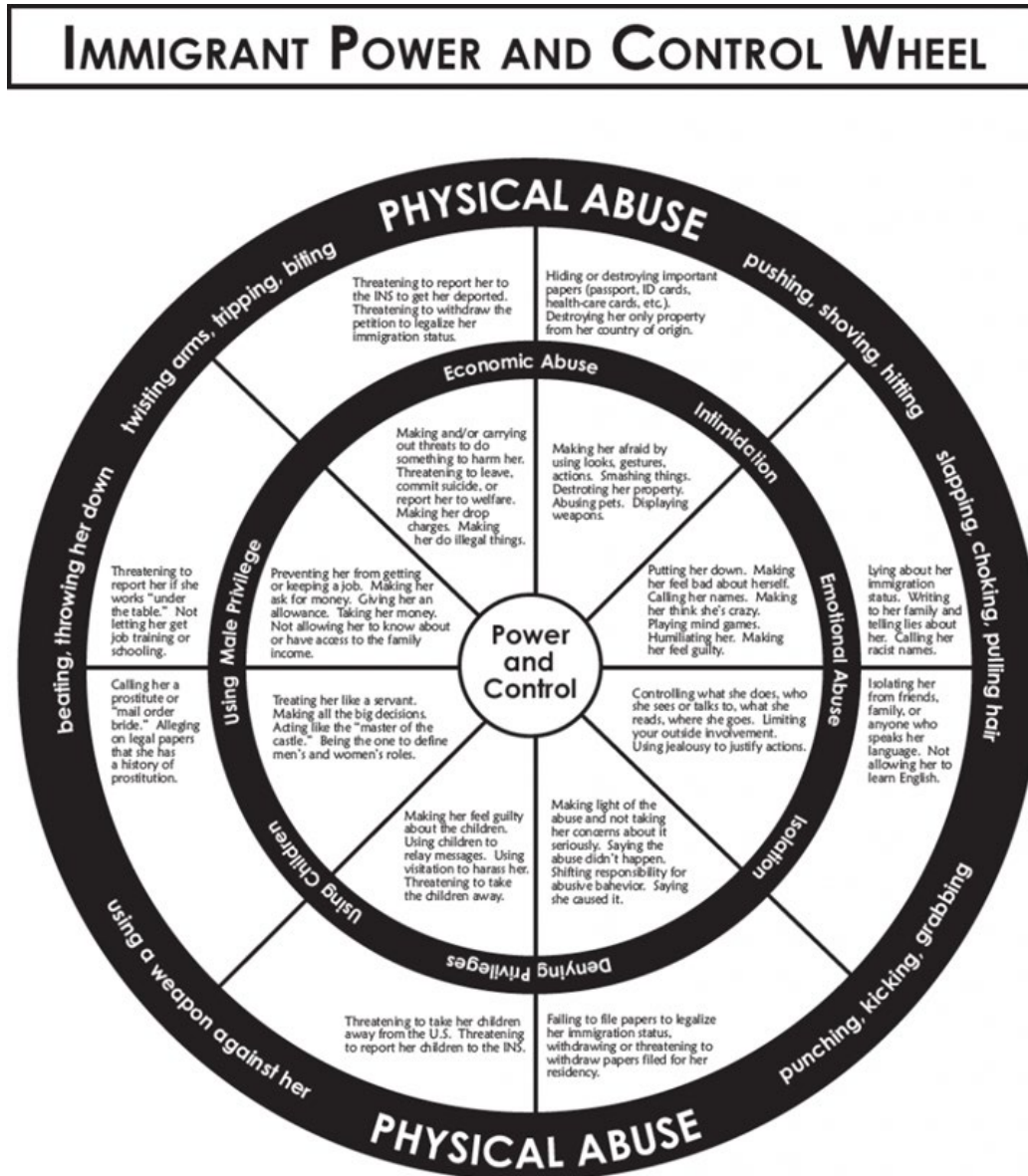
Manipulation and/or control

- Hiding or destroying important or legal documents
- Providing a victim/survivor with false information regarding law enforcement, DCF, doctors, or other potential reporting services knowing the victim/survivor may be unfamiliar with these agencies
- Withholding application paperwork to prohibit a victim/survivor from seeking or obtaining employment to further their financial dependence on the offender and to continue isolating the victim/survivor
- Perpetuating the belief that abuse is acceptable as part of person's culture/home country

Systemic challenges for immigrant victims/survivors

- Heightened risk of domestic financial abuse if victim/survivor lacks permission to work in the U.S.
- Distrust of police, government agencies, and medical providers based on practices in country of origin
- Risk of partner deportation
- Heightened risk of disrespect
- Potential for abusers/landlords/judges/police to threaten deportation

This version of the Power and Control Wheel depicts the unique challenges immigrant victims/survivors face.



Know The Terminology

Not everyone who enters the U.S. falls into one category and has the same legal rights or protections. It is important to take the time to understand each situation and know where to find information. Below is a list of common terms that come up when talking about immigration status or the immigration process. An extensive list can be found at the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services website at: <https://www.uscis.gov/tools/glossary>.

CONTINUED PRESENCE provides temporary immigration relief to individuals who are identified by Federal, State, local, tribal, or territorial law enforcement as victims of human trafficking. This allows victims to remain in the US temporarily during the ongoing investigation and prosecution.

T VISA or the T nonimmigrant status provides immigration protection to victims of trafficking. The T visa allows victims to remain in the United States and help law enforcement authorities in the investigation or prosecution of human trafficking cases.

U VISA or U nonimmigrant status provides immigration protection to crime victims who have suffered substantial mental or physical abuse as a result of the crime. The U visa allows victims to remain in the United States and help law enforcement authorities in the investigation or prosecution of the criminal activity.

IMMIGRANT is a person who migrates to another country, usually for permanent residence. Immigrants are motivated to leave their countries of citizenship, or habitual residence, for a variety of reasons including a desire for economic prosperity, to change one's quality of life, better job opportunities, family reunification, retirement, environmentally induced migration, exile, escape from prejudice or persecution, conflict, or natural disaster.

LAWFUL PERMANENT RESIDENT is any person not a citizen of the United States who is living in the U.S. under legally recognized and lawfully recorded permanent residence as an immigrant. Lawful Permanent Residents are commonly referred to as permanent resident aliens, resident alien permit holders, and Green Card holders.

ASYLEE is any person outside their country of nationality who is unable or unwilling to return to that country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution based on the person's race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. ***Asylees arrive in the U.S. before they claim asylum and are given legal permission to stay.***

REFUGEE is any person outside their country of nationality who is unable or unwilling to return to that country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution based on the person's race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. ***Refugees are given admission before entry into the U.S.***

Recommendations for Advocacy

Client-centered trauma-informed care will help to build trust. A trauma-informed approach requires a basic understanding of trauma and designing services to acknowledge the impact of trauma on survivors' lives and behavior. It is sensitive, respectful, and consciously avoids re-traumatization. Trauma-informed approaches include safety, choice, collaboration, trustworthiness, and client empowerment. It also requires cultural competency—understanding how cultural context influences one's perception of and response to traumatic events and the recovery process—and respecting differences, understanding fears, and being empathetic are all critical to providing service.

Know what the policies, confidentiality protections, and required mandated reporting are within the organization. Know when it is safe to ask for or share information, and what questions, such as legal status, should not be asked or written down. Know where your knowledge ends and when it should come from someone with specific skills or expertise in a specific area (e.g.: social worker, immigration attorney).

It is important to continuously remind clients who may be undocumented what information will stay confidential and what confidentiality means. Be open and honest; explain why you are asking the questions you are asking and how the information will be used. ***For providers who do not have confidentiality protections, know that records can be subpoenaed.*** Remind people that they can stop the conversation at any point if they feel uncomfortable. As a provider, you are there to support, not judge, their choices. There are times where a provider might say something wrong. When this happens, it is important to be sincere and to apologize.

Portions of this section were adapted from the best practices fact sheet, "Supporting Housing Stability for People Who are Undocumented," which was authored by a CCADV housing task force. See [acknowledgments](#) for more information.

Looking for the next step?

→ [Jump to: Safety Planning](#)

→ [Jump to: Resources](#)

→ [Jump to: Safety Planning Templates](#)

SECTION 4: KNOW YOUR RIGHTS - LAW ENFORCEMENT

This information is intended to give general information and is not legal advice. If immigration status is a concern, it is important to speak with an immigration law expert to determine the safest and best course of action. Last updated 2022.

Everyone in the U.S. has rights guaranteed under the U.S. Constitution, regardless of immigration status. It is important for any undocumented person to know and practice exercising those rights so that they can respond appropriately if they encounter the police or immigration enforcement. Professionals who work with noncitizens should be aware of these rights as well.

Understand Your Rights

- You have the right to remain silent
- You have the right to demand a warrant signed by a judge before letting anyone into your home
- You have the right to speak to a lawyer and the right to make a phone call
- You have the right to refuse to sign anything before you talk to a lawyer
- You have a right to refuse to show any documents, however, you may choose to do so if that is helpful to your case

SCAN HERE for videos that show how a person can assert their rights with ICE agents.



<https://www.aclu.org/issues/immigrants-rights/ice-and-border-patrol-abuses/we-have-rights>

Red Cards

Red Cards are formatted as business cards that a person can show to an officer if approached in public or slide under the front door if an officer knocks and begins to ask questions. They display a statement that the holder of the card is exercising their right to remain silent.

1. Print out the Red Card
2. Place Red Card in your wallet or purse
3. If approached by an officer in public, ask to remove the card from your wallet and show it to the officer
4. If an officer approaches your home, slide the card to the officer under the front door or hold it against a window for them to read

Advocates may find it helpful to have a stock of Red Cards sitting visibly in their waiting room and/or on hand to give to clients who have concerns about immigration enforcement. Red Cards were developed by the Immigrant Legal Resource

Center and are available on their website in 15 languages. To print your own, or to place an order for printed Red Cards to be sent to your organization free of charge, [click here](#).

Usted tiene derechos constitucionales.

-NO ABRA LA PUERTA SI UN AGENTE DEL SERVICIO DE INMIGRACION ESTA TOCANDO LA PUERTA.

-NO CONTESTE NINGUN PREGUNTA DEL AGENTE DEL SERVICIO DE INMIGRACION SI EL TRATA DE HABLAR CON USTED
Usted tiene derecho a mantenerse callado.
No tiene que dar su nombre al agente.
Si esta en el trabajo, pregunte al agente si esta libre para salir y si el agente dice que si, váyase.
usted tiene derecho de hablar con un abogado.

ENTREGUE ESTA TARJETA AL AGENTE. NO ABRA LA PUERTA

I do not wish to speak with you, answer your questions, or sign or hand you any documents based on my 5th Amendment rights under the United States Constitution.

I do not give you permission to enter my home based on my 4th Amendment rights under the United States Constitution unless you have a warrant to enter, signed by a judge or magistrate with my name on it that you slide under the door.
I do not give you permission to search any of my belongings based on my 4th Amendment rights.

I choose to exercise my constitutional rights.

These cards are available to citizens and noncitizens alike.

SECTION 5: LEGAL OPTIONS

Victims of abuse are eligible for some immigration relief options based on the abuse they have suffered, including the VAWA Self-Petition, the Battered Spouse Waiver, the U Visa, the T Visa, Asylum, and Special Immigrant Juvenile Status. Although it is not specific to victims/survivors of abuse, Temporary Protected Status is another humanitarian option that may be relevant to clients from designated nations. Advocates should know how to spot whether someone could potentially be eligible for these immigration benefits.

This information is intended to give general information and is not legal advice. If immigration status is a concern, it is important to speak with an immigration law expert to determine the safest and best course of action. This document was last updated in 2022.

If you do not have permanent legal status, there is always a risk of being removed. There are risks and benefits to any potential immigration case. In some cases, filing can increase the risk, and in some cases, it can decrease the risk. For this reason, it is critical for clients to weigh these risks with an immigration attorney or DOJ-accredited representative, and it is important for advocates to be aware of the following risks when discussing legal matters with clients with immigration concerns:

- It is common for immigration remedies, including several of the remedies mentioned here, to have long waitlists – this could mean several years or more. It is important to be knowledgeable and transparent about the status of waitlists when discussing the following legal options with a client.
- People who have a case in immigration court should only take legal advice from a licensed attorney or an accredited representative recognized by the Department of Justice. There are scammers who lie about their ability to provide legal advice so they can take money from immigrants. These scammers often call themselves “Notarios.” [Click here for more information about immigration fraud.](#)

Jump to:

1. [VAWA Self-Petition](#)
2. [VAWA Cancellation of Removal](#)
3. [Battered Spouse Waiver](#)
4. [U Visa](#)
5. [T Visa](#)
6. [Asylum](#)
7. [Temporary Protected Status \(TPS\)](#)
8. [Special Immigrant Juvenile Status \(SIJS\)](#)
9. [Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals \(DACA\)](#)

VAWA Self-Petition

A VAWA self-petition allows a spouse, parent or child of a U.S. citizen or the spouse or child of a lawful permanent resident who has been abused by their U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident family member to apply for immigration relief without the involvement of the abuser. There are various relationships eligible for VAWA Self-Petitions (for example, parental abuse and child abuse), however, the most common is spousal abuse. A spouse can apply if they or their child have suffered abuse.

A successful petition may provide a victim/survivor with permanent residence and permission to work in the U.S. Some may qualify during the application process for certain public benefits.

For VAWA Self-Petitions involving spousal abuse, a victim/survivor can apply if their abuser is a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident. If the survivor's abuser used to have permanent residence but has been deported because of the abuse, or if they have divorced within the last two years, they may still qualify.

For a spousal VAWA Self-Petition, the abuse must have occurred during the marriage, the victim/survivor and the abuser must have resided together, and the victim/survivor must have gotten married in "good faith" and not just for immigration purposes. There is also a "good moral character" requirement (see below).

The public charge test does not apply to the VAWA Self-Petition or to applications for a green card based on the VAWA Self-Petition. Jump to the [Public Benefits Section](#) for more information about the public charge test.

Helpful documentation:

Note: some examples of evidence that may help (but are not necessarily required) may include but are not limited to:

- Proof of identity and status of the applicant (birth certificate, passport, I-94 card, etc.)
- Proof of spouse's or former spouse's immigration status (birth certificate, passport, naturalization certificate or permanent resident card, etc.)
- Proof of a good faith marital relationship (marriage certificate, children's birth certificates, wedding photos, etc.)
- Documents establishing residence with spouse (joint lease, bank statements, car and medical insurance, taxes, joint bills, etc.)
- Proof of good moral character (no criminal record, statements from community members, etc.)
- Proof of abuse (police reports, medical records, court documents/orders, letters of support from doctors, advocates, social workers, etc.)

You should work with an attorney to examine the documents you may have and assess the need for other documents.



Your child(ren) can apply with you and may also qualify on their own if their U.S. citizen or permanent resident parent abused them.

Under this provision, in order for a child to qualify as a "child", the child must be unmarried and under the age of 21. If the child is over the age of 21, they may be able to qualify up to age 25 if the abuse was a central reason for not filing by age 21. This definition of a child also includes stepchildren if the relationship was established prior to the child's 18th birthday and adopted children if the adoption was finalized before the child's 16th birthday. The requirement for adopted children to be the adoptive parent's physical and legal custody for two years is removed for abused adopted children.

SCAN HERE for more information on VAWA Self-Petitions



<https://www.uscis.gov/green-card/green-card-eligibility/green-card-for-va-wa-self-petitioner>

VAWA Cancellation of Removal

Under VAWA (Violence Against Women Act), certain victims of domestic violence who *are already in removal proceedings* can apply to the immigration judge for legal permanent resident status (“green card”) to remain in the United States. The following people may qualify for VAWA Cancellation:

- The abused spouse, child or parent of a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident (“LPR”);
- The non-abusive parent of a child who was abused by a U.S. citizen or LPR parent (Note: The non-abusive parent does not need to have been married to the abusive parent).

Unlike a regular VAWA Self-Petition, VAWA Cancellation of Removal can apply to an abused spouse who was divorced or whose abusive spouse died more than two years ago.

To apply for VAWA cancellation, the applicant must show:

- They have been subject to battery or extreme cruelty
- They have been in the U.S. more than three years before they were put in removal proceedings
- They have had good moral character for at least the past three years
- The removal would cause extreme hardship to them, their children, or their parents
- Their marriage to the U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident was a good faith marriage (if applicable)
- They do not fall under certain grounds of inadmissibility

The documentation one must present to an immigration judge under cancellation of removal is similar to the documentation one would need to submit to USCIS for an affirmative VAWA Self-Petition.

The public charge test does not apply to an applicant for VAWA Cancellation of Removal. Jump to the [Public Benefits Section](#) for more information on the public charge test.

Battered Spouse Waiver

Immigrants who obtained their lawful permanent resident (LPR) status through marriage and were married less than 2 years at the time of approval, are issued a conditional green card, valid for 2 years. Typically, the conditional LPR must then apply to remove the conditions on their green card with their spouse 3 months before their green card expires. However, individuals who can demonstrate that they married in good faith and were subjected to battery or extreme cruelty by their spouse may be able to file the required petition to remove the conditions without their abusive spouse's assistance (the "Battered Spouse Waiver"). Although it is generally preferable to file the petition to remove conditions before the expiration of the green card, applicants for the Battered Spouse Waiver may file at any time, before or after their green card has expired.

The public charge test does not apply to the Battered Spouse Waiver. Jump to the [Public Benefits Section](#) for more information about the public charge test.

Helpful documentation:

Note: some examples of evidence that may help (but are not necessarily required) may include but are not limited to:

- Proof of good faith marital relationship (marriage certificate, children's birth certificates, joint lease, bank statements, joint bills, joint car or medical insurance, wedding photos, etc.)
- Proof of abuse (police reports, medical records, court documents/orders, letters of support from doctors, advocates, social workers, etc.)

Please Note: Applicants filing a petition to remove conditions on their 2-year green card, may also apply without their spouse if they can demonstrate that their marriage was in good faith and the marriage ended in divorce (no showing of abuse required) or that their removal from the U.S. would result in extreme hardship. An applicant may file for all exceptions that apply (ex. may request a waiver for both abuse and divorce).

You should work with an attorney to examine the documents you may have and assess the need for other documents.

SCAN HERE for more information on Battered Spouse Waiver



Follow link and then expand: "How to Get a Waiver of the Requirement to File a Joint Petition"

<https://www.uscis.gov/green-card/after-we-grant-your-green-card/conditional-permanent-residence/removing-conditions-on-permanent-residence-based-on-marriage>

U Visa

Note: The wait time for a U Visa can be significantly long – at times more than a decade.

Undocumented persons who are victims/survivors of certain crimes, have cooperated in a law enforcement investigation to help government officials, and have suffered substantial harm as a result of their victimization may be eligible for a U Visa. A person who is granted a U Visa is authorized to work in the U.S., and after 3 years in U Visa status may apply for lawful permanent residence.

The public charge test does not apply to the U Visa or to applications for a green card based on the U Visa. Jump to the [Public Benefits Section](#) for more information about the public charge test.

Situations when U Visa might apply:

- When a person or their child is a victim/survivor of certain crimes, including domestic violence, abusive sexual contact, stalking, etc. For a list of all qualifying crimes on the USCIS website: click [here](#).
- The person suffered substantial physical or emotional abuse as a result of their victimization.
- When the police, a district attorney, state's attorney, Department of Children and Families or some other law enforcement agency involved in the case believes that the applicant has information about the crime and is being, has been, or would be helpful with the investigation or prosecution.
- The criminal activity took place in the U.S. or violated U.S. law.



An applicant's children can apply with them and/or may also qualify on their own if the child is the victim/survivor of certain crimes. U Visa applicants may also be able to get visas for their parents, spouse, siblings, and children depending on their age, relationship, and situation.

Please Note:

- A person may still be able to apply for a U Visa even if the police do not press charges or if the accused is not convicted.
- A person can still apply for a U Visa if the abuser or perpetrator is undocumented.

Helpful documentation:

Note: some examples of evidence that may help (but are not necessarily required) may include but are not limited to:

- Copy of police reports
- Copy of any/all Protection Orders or court documents
- Name and contact information of law enforcement involved
- Proof of harm (police; court documents/orders; letters from doctors, advocates, and social workers; hospital records; DCF documentation; orders of protection; evidence of medical treatment for injuries, etc.)

SCAN HERE for more information
on U Visa



<https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/victims-of-human-trafficking-and-other-crimes/victims-of-criminal-activity-u-nonimmigrant-status>

You should work with an attorney to examine the documents you may have and assess the need for other documents.

T Visa

Noncitizens who are victims/survivors of human trafficking may be eligible for a T Visa. A person who is granted a T Visa is authorized to work in the U.S., and after 3 years in T Visa status (or earlier depending on the circumstances surrounding reporting to law enforcement), may apply for lawful permanent residence.

Human trafficking includes instances where:

- Force, fraud, or coercion is used to subject an individual to forced labor (including involuntary labor or debt bondage, or slavery)
- Force, fraud, or coercion is used to obtain commercial sex acts (commercial sex acts occur where anything of value was exchanged).
- An individual under the age of 18 performs commercial sex acts (where minors are involved, no force, fraud or coercion needs to be demonstrated).

T Visa applicants who are 18 or older and are emotionally able to do so must be willing to cooperate with law enforcement investigations.

A person who is granted a T Visa is eligible for some public benefits.

A noncitizen victim/survivor of human trafficking may need to meet other requirements, such as:

- Being physically present in the U.S. on account of the trafficking
- Having reported the trafficking to a law enforcement agency
- Would suffer extreme hardship if removed from the U.S.

The public charge test does not apply to the T Visa or to applications for a green card based on the T Visa. Jump to the [Public Benefits Section](#) for more information about the public charge test.

Helpful documentation:

Note: USCIS (immigration) will consider any credible evidence in adjudicating the T Visa, including the declaration of the victim/survivor. Other helpful evidence may include:

- Evidence of trafficking – police reports, medical records, psychological evaluations, pay stubs, evidence of “debts,” media articles, airplane tickets, text messages, emails, photographs, contracts, letters from social workers, arrest records, etc.
- Evidence of harm they would suffer if returned to home country – including threats to family members, presence of traffickers in home country.

You should work with an attorney to examine the documents you may have and assess the need for other documents.



Your child(ren) can apply with you and may also qualify on their own if the child is the victim/survivor of a severe form of trafficking in persons. If a child (person younger than 18) is applying on their own, the requirement that they assist investigations or prosecution does not apply.

T Visa holders may also be able to get visas for their parents, spouse, siblings, and children depending on their age and situation.

SCAN HERE for more information
on T Visa



<https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/victims-of-human-trafficking-and-other-crimes/victims-of-human-trafficking-t-nonimmigrant-status>

Asylum

Asylum protects noncitizens who are afraid of returning to their country of origin. If granted asylum, asylees can stay in the U.S. indefinitely, apply for their spouse and children, and may be eligible for permanent residency one year after approval. Asylees may be eligible for work authorization through the course of the application process.

If a person loses their asylum case, they will be placed in removal proceedings, and they may be returned to their origin country.

Even if a person is afraid to return to their country of origin, a judge will not grant them asylum unless they meet the definition of asylum eligibility. A person is eligible if:

1. They have faced or they fear they will face “persecution:” a serious harm or threat to life or freedom
2. Either they are persecuted by the government, or the government is unable/unwilling to protect them
3. The persecution is due to race, nationality, religion, political opinion, or being in a particular social group

The analysis may include not only whether it is unsafe to return to a country of origin, but also why the individual initially left the country of origin. If the individual left their origin country due to domestic violence, it is especially important to discuss this with an attorney to determine whether the victim/survivor may use this as a basis for an asylum claim.

The public charge test does not apply to asylum or to applications for a green card based on asylum. Jump to the [Public Benefits Section](#) for more information about the public charge test.

It is extremely helpful to have evidence to support an asylum case, for example:

- Documents showing identity (birth certificate, marriage license, etc.)
- Evidence of attempt(s) to seek help from authorities (police report)
- Documentation of injuries (medical records, photos, recordings, etc.)
- Documentation of threats
- Text messages, journals, or letters written around time of incident(s)

You should work with an attorney to examine the documents you may have and assess the need for other documents.

SCAN HERE for more information on Asylum

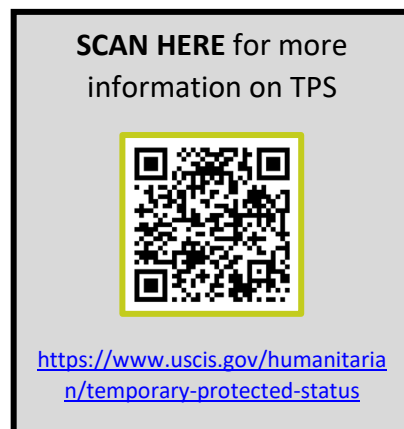


<https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/refugees-and-asylum/asylum>

Temporary Protected Status (TPS)

Temporary Protected Status (“TPS”) provides for *temporary* permission to remain in the U.S. for nationals from certain countries with a current TPS designation who were present in the U.S. on the date designated by the US government. The current list of eligible countries can be found on the USCIS website (click on hyperlink on QR code in the box to the right).

The public charge test does not apply for TPS designation as it is *not* a permanent adjustment. However, if you are concerned about receipt of benefits and its impact on your ability to obtain lawful immigration status other than TPS, you should speak with an immigration attorney or specialist about public charge questions as it may impact further applications. Jump to the [Public Benefits Section](#) for more information on the public charge test.



Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS)

Children who are under the age of 21 and have been abandoned, abused, neglected or denied care by one or both of their parents may be eligible to apply for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (“SIJS”). SIJS allows the child to remain in the U.S. and eventually obtain lawful permanent residency.

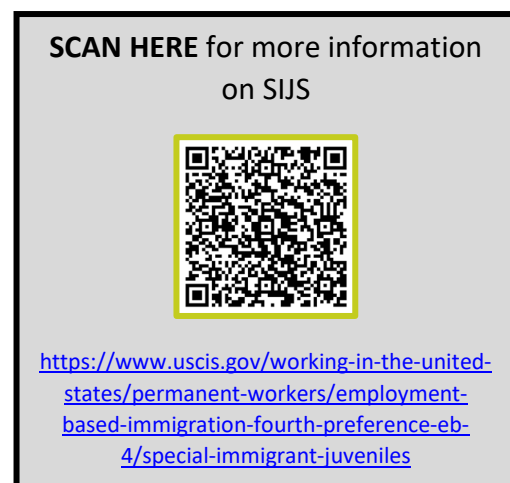
To apply for SIJS, an applicant must obtain an order from a state court establishing that the minor child is:

- Unmarried and younger than 21;
- Dependent on the state court for determinations about the child’s care or custody;
- Reunification with one or both parents is not viable due to abandonment, abuse, neglect, or denial of care by that parent; **AND**
- It is not in the child’s best interest to be returned to their country of nationality

Please Note: In the State of Connecticut, children are able to seek the required court order up to age 21. However, in many other states, the child must be under 18. For a list of states and their age requirements, please click here: <https://projectlifeline.us/resources/predicate-order-state-bystate-age-out-analysis/>. (Note: As of April 2023, Project Lifeline is updating the state-by-state analysis and anticipates reposting shortly.)

After receiving the required state court order, the child will then apply for SIJS with USCIS. An application for SIJS (regardless of which state the child lives in) **must be filed before the child turns 21**.

The public charge test does not apply for SIJS or for a green card application on SIJS status. Jump to the [Public Benefits Section](#) for more information about the public charge test.



Note: At the time of this publication, there is a wait time for all countries to apply for permanent residence status.

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals or “DACA” is a policy that allows individuals who meet certain requirements to be granted administrative relief from deportation and be granted work authorization. Due to an injunction, USCIS can accept new DACA applications but is currently prohibited from granting new DACA applications. Those individuals who have already been granted DACA may continue to renew their cases. If a client shares with you that they have DACA status, it is urgent to have a conversation with them to learn more about their plan to renew their status, renewing on time, and to help them discuss this with an attorney if appropriate.

This is a rapidly changing area of immigration law. Please go to the federal government website to get the most up to date information on DACA.



SECTION 6: SAFETY PLANNING

This information is intended to give general information and is not legal advice. If immigration status is a concern, it is important to speak with an immigration law expert to determine the safest and best course of action. Last updated 2022.

A “safety plan” is a term that describes a plan of actions that can help keep a victim/survivor safe from their abuser. It is a personalized and practical plan that is fluid and flexible and should be reviewed on a regular basis. There are several measures that an undocumented person can take both involving and not involving the legal system to prevent domestic violence perpetrated against them. The staff and member programs of the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence provide safety planning and other services regardless of immigration status, sexual orientation, religion, and gender.

One important step is to memorize important information, including phone numbers of your attorney, standby guardian, family members, your account numbers, etc. You may not have access to your phone or written documentation to retrieve this information.

Family and Children’s Safety Planning

Make a Child Care Plan

Help a victim/survivor make a plan for a trusted adult to care for their child if they cannot, including standby guardianship. This plan should include a list of important contact information, a file with important documents, and emergency contacts. This toolkit includes templates to put together these documents ([jump to templates](#)). Go over the following steps with a victim/survivor to help them plan for their child’s safety. Each safety plan is unique, so not all steps may be applicable.

Step 1: Decide Who Can Care for Your Child if You Are Unable and Talk with That Person

Identify a responsible adult that you trust and that your child knows and is comfortable around. Ideally, this individual is someone with lawful immigration status. Be sure to talk to this individual in detail about your desires and expectations for the care your child will receive. Make sure that the person knows they will be listed as an emergency contact and knows where and how to access all of your important documents and information. You and your children should memorize this person’s telephone number and address. Sign a **Standby Guardian Designation** to give this person formal legal authority to care for your children if you are not able to.

A **Standby Guardian Designation** is a way to give formal recognition to a trusted person to take care of your children if you cannot. It gives that person more legal authority than an informal agreement would – such as the ability to make educational and healthcare decisions and to apply for social services on behalf of your child.

For more information about standby guardians and a step-by-step process to sign a Standby Guardian Designation, [see pages 5, 9-14 of the Family Preparedness Packet from the Connecticut Governor’s office by scanning below.](#)



<https://portal.ct.gov/Office-of-the-Governor/Immigration-Resources-Family-Preparedness-Plan>

Step 2: Create a File of Important Documents ([jump to templates](#))

Gather into one file the important documents that your designated caregiver would need in order to care for your child in your absence. Include information about your child's medical history, school, and contact information. Be sure your designated caregiver knows where this file is in case they need to access it. Suggested documents to include, as well as a useful template to gather your child's information are provided in the templates section of this toolkit. If your children don't have a passport, now may be a good time to discuss with an attorney the pros and cons of getting a passport. ([Link to template](#))

Step 3: Talk to Your Child About Your Plan

In an age-appropriate way and without worrying them, let your child(ren) know who will pick them up and care for them in the event that you are unable to for some reason. Reassure your child that they will be taken care of and that they will be safe. Ensure that your children know the contact information of the designated caregiver as well as important contacts and where to locate the file of documents.

Step 4: Update Emergency Contact Information at Your Child's School

Once you have made a plan and discussed it with your child(ren), be sure to provide your designated caregiver's contact information at your child's school or daycare provider. This will ensure that if the school is ever unable to reach you, they will call this person.

Family Communication Plan

In times of emergency, it is likely that family members will not be in the same place. Use this resource to discuss with a victim/survivor how their family members would communicate with each other in the event of an emergency.

In case of an emergency...

1. Do you know all of the full names, birth dates, and social security numbers or [A-numbers](#) for everyone in your family? Do you have this information memorized or written down somewhere safe? ([link to template](#))
2. Where would you find all of your family members in an emergency? Do you know how to find them or contact them at home, work, school, or other places where your family spends time? ([link to template](#))
3. If you could not meet at home, where could your family meet in an emergency? Does everyone in the family know this meeting spot? ([link to template](#))
4. If you cannot get in touch with each other, is there someone outside of the family whom you could contact? Does everyone in the family know this person and how to reach him/her? ([link to template](#))

Financial Safety Planning


In an emergency, a victim/survivor and their family could encounter various financial issues. It may be important to set up their own bank account and/or set money aside in a protected and safe place in the event that they have to flee. Utilize the questions and linked worksheets below to discuss financial matters with a client.

1. Who has Power of Attorney in case of an emergency? Does everyone in the household know who this person is and how to contact them? ([link to template](#))
2. Where does everyone in the household work? Does everyone know how to reach them at work? ([link to template](#))
3. If someone is unable to pick up their paycheck due to an emergency, who could pick up their paycheck for them? Does this person know how to pick up the paycheck? ([link to template](#))
4. Does everyone in the family know which bank the family uses? Who has access to financial information such as the checking account or savings account number, PIN number, etc.? If this person is unavailable, who else can access the bank? ([link to template](#))
5. What monthly bills does your family have to pay? Who usually pays them? If this person is unavailable, who else could make sure that the bills are paid during an emergency? ([link to templates](#))

Why is it important to have a bank account? A bank account provides a safe place to store money. You can open a bank account at some banks regardless of immigration status.

A “**Power of Attorney**” is someone whom you give the right to act on your behalf regarding financial, medical, and legal matters during a temporary period of time that you are unavailable. This could be a trusted family member or friend.

Technology

- Save all electronic documents in a secure location
- Store passwords in a secure location
- Make sure GPS and location sharing is turned off on phone, computers, tablets, and apps – do this for your devices and children’s devices
- Utilize apps to disguise documents
 - Recommended example: [Gallery Vault](#)
 - Resource: [App Safety Considerations](#) 
- Change phone numbers, passwords, and pins

For additional resources on tech safety planning, visit www.techsafety.org or visit the members-only page of the CCADV website.

Safety Planning In the Home

Safety measures you can review with a client *before* leaving a relationship

1. Create a safety exit from your place of residence. Practice a safety escape plan with your children: what doors, windows, elevators, and stairwells to use, location of safe neighbors' home, and phone calls to make.
2. Plan the safest time to get out.
3. Set money aside and/or open a separate bank account that your abuser is not aware of.
4. Make an extra set of keys and keep them in a safe place or give them to a trusted person.
5. Tell a safe and trusted person what is happening to you. If possible, inform your neighbors of your situation. Have a code word with your children or friends so they can call for help.
6. Know where you can go for help. Check with close friends and/or relatives if you could stay with them in the event of an emergency until you can find a more permanent residence or return home
 - a. **Keep at their Home:** Jump to the [Templates Section](#) to document important information)
 - i. A spare set of house keys
 - ii. A set of clothes for you and your children
 - iii. Prescriptions
 - iv. Some money
 - v. Important documents (Social Security Cards, Birth Certificates, Court records, Marriage license/certificates, divorce decrees, photographs of injuries, police reports, medical records, etc.)
 - vi. Important Immigration documents (i.e., I-94, green cards, copies of visa applications, work permits, photographs proving good-faith marriage, etc.)
 - vii. Children's school records
 - viii. Children's immunization records
 - ix. Phone numbers of friends and relatives
 - x. Children's passports. If your children don't have passports, now is a good time to discuss with an attorney the benefits and risks of getting them passports.
 - xi. Phone numbers of domestic violence programs that you can call for help
 - xii. Any other important materials for you and your children's daily activities
7. If it will be impossible to stay with a friend or relative, find out where you can call when you must flee to obtain emergency refuge at a shelter.
8. Teach your children to dial 911 in an emergency
9. Safety plan with your children – identify a safe place for them to go if another incident should occur (i.e., a room with a strong lock or a neighbor's house where they can go for help. Reassure them that their job is to stay safe, not protect you.
10. Have an easily accessible place to keep car keys, purse/wallet, and any other essential items should you have to leave in a hurry.
11. Take photographs of any injuries you sustain. Take photographs of torn clothing, broken property, and the home in disarray.
12. Keep any evidence of abuse – should you ever decide to take legal action against your abuser, you will need these documents. Remember to keep this evidence and photographs in a safe place where your abuser cannot find them!
13. Learn about the cycle of violence and learn to recognize when a violence incident may occur.

14. If you are able, try to move away from weapons and to a low-risk place from which you can easily exit. Avoid any areas that leave you trapped between a wall and your abuser.
15. Use your judgment and intuition – Remember, you are ALWAYS safety planning whether you realize it or not!
16. If you are injured, go to a hospital emergency room or doctor and if you are comfortable, report what has happened to you. Ask that they document your visit. Remember to speak to your advocate about whether and how the information may be released.
17. Contact your local domestic violence hotline to find out about laws, shelters, and other resources available to you before you need them in a crisis.

Safety measures you can review with a client *after* leaving a relationship

Although the victim/survivor may no longer be in the abusive relationship, it is important to continue to take safety measures that ensure their continued safety and freedom.

NON-LEGAL MEASURES:

- Change the locks on your doors and windows. If possible, install a security system and lighting outside of your place of residence
- Inform neighbors, close friends, relatives, and co-workers that you are about to or have separated from your partner and ask if they will notify you if they see your partner around your home, car, and/or workplace
- Take all important documents with you and ensure that you keep them in a safe place
- Inform your employer/supervisor that you are or are about to separate from your partner and that you do not want to receive any phone calls from them nor want them to be allowed into your workplace
- As much as possible, try to change your daily routine, i.e., your route to and from school or work, the times and places you do your shopping, the times you pick up your children from school or day care, the day and time you have regular appointments, etc.
- If you currently rent, work with your local domestic violence program to assist in potentially arranging a transfer of residence. If this is not possible, arrange for important mail to be sent to a safe location (i.e. friend's or relative's home, P.O. Box, etc.)
- Work with your local domestic violence program to discuss the Address Confidentiality Program
- Provide childcare workers with a list of the only people who are designated to see and/or pick-up your children from their care. Inform them of the terms of any court orders of protection.

SCAN HERE to download a pdf to locate your local domestic violence program.



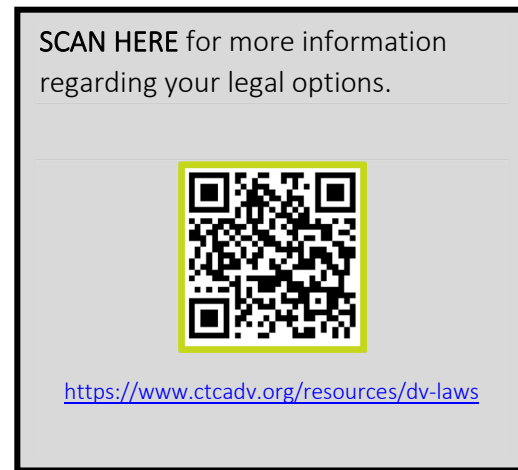
https://www.ctcadv.org/application/files/8017/0294/5009/Member_Safe_Connect_Map_8.5x11.12.23.pdf

LEGAL MEASURES:

Criminal Protective Orders: A criminal protective order is a court order issued by a judge in Criminal Court following an arrest.

Temporary Restraining Orders: A restraining order is a court order issued by a judge in Civil Family Court to a victim/survivor of domestic violence after they file an application, which includes an affidavit describing the abuse, and after a hearing on that application.

Filing a petition under VAWA (see [Section 5: Legal Options](#) for more information)



Immigration Enforcement

Sanctuary Cities, Counties, and States

Different cities, counties, and states all have different policies governing the level of assistance that local law enforcement provide to ICE. Some places that have strictly limited the assistance their police provide to ICE are called “sanctuaries.” However, the level of local police involvement with ICE is a spectrum that can vary greatly even among the “sanctuary cities/states.”

Connecticut has imposed limits on the local resources that can be used to assist ICE, including limits on ICE notification, limits on ICE interrogations in jail, and limits on when the police may hold people in jail for ICE (see discussion on “**civil detainer**”). However, Connecticut law does not prohibit police from asking about immigration status, and its restrictions on police assistance to ICE are not as stringent as such restrictions are in some other “sanctuaries.”



A **civil detainer** is an order from an immigration official that has not been reviewed by a U.S. District Court judge, magistrate, or Connecticut Superior Court judge that can be used by ICE to gain custody of noncitizens for deportation. In Connecticut, police may comply with civil detainers under two circumstances: when the person in question is on a federal watch list or when the person in question has been convicted of a major felony. Otherwise, police in Connecticut may not comply with civil detainers to hold a noncitizen for ICE.

Find A Legal Services Provider to Help with Immigration

It is important to talk to a trusted legal service provider to see if there is a way for a client to get immigration status or, if they already have some type of temporary immigration status, to get legal permanent resident status (“green card”) or U.S. citizenship. Go to the [Resources Section](#) for important warnings and information about finding legal assistance.

SCAN HERE to find someone who is in ICE custody.



<https://locator.ice.gov/odls/#/index>

Online Detainee Locator System:

If you know the alien registration number (aka “A-number” or “USCIS-number”) of the person who is detained, ICE recommends you use the A-Number search. If the A-Number has fewer than nine digits, add zeros at the beginning. [What is an A-number?](#) [Where does someone find their A-number?](#)

Immigration Case Status Information:

To ask about a court date or case status with immigration court, you can dial 1-800-898-7180 (toll-free) to obtain information in English or Spanish 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The information available includes:

- Next hearing date, time, and location
- Case processing information
- Immigration judge decision outcome and date
- Department of Justice (DOJ) case appeal information, including appeal due date, brief due date, decision outcome and date, and
- Filing information

To access case information, callers must use the alien registration number (aka “A-number” or “USCIS-number”) which begins with the letter A and is followed by 7 to 9 digits. If the A-Number has fewer than nine digits, add zeros at the beginning. [What is an A-number?](#) [Where does someone find their A-number?](#)

SCAN HERE to find a trusted and reliable legal services provider in your area.



<https://www.immigrationlawhelp.org>

SCAN HERE to search for Detention Facilities by state



<https://www.ice.gov/detention-facilities>

SCAN HERE for Immigration Case Status Information:



<https://www.justice.gov/eoir/customer-service-initiatives>

Parts of the Safety Planning section of this toolkit were adapted from the following outside resources:

- Family Safety Planning Toolkit, Immigration Services Network of Austin
- Family Preparedness Plan – 3/1/17 – Immigration Legal Resource Center

See [acknowledgments](#) for more information about the individuals and organizations whose work contributed to this toolkit.

Looking for the next step?

→ [Jump to: Resources](#)

→ [Jump to: Safety Planning Templates](#)

SECTION 7: PUBLIC BENEFITS AND THE PUBLIC CHARGE RULE

This information is intended to give general information and is not legal advice. If immigration status is a concern, speak with an immigration law expert to determine the safest and best course of action. Last updated 2022.

In general, people should not be alarmed about applying for immigration relief or public benefits based solely on the concern about the public charge test. However, when applying for any public benefits it is important to understand how or **if** receiving public benefits may impact any current or future applications for immigration status, for legal permanent residence (“green card”), or for citizenship. It is important for advocates to know what the “public charge test” is, that it applies to some public benefits and not others, and that it applies to some immigration applications and not others. Importantly, it does not apply to most of the options outlined in the [Legal Options Section](#) of this toolkit (see also bulleted list below).

Public charge or the “public charge test” refers to an evaluation by an immigration officer to determine whether an applicant is likely to utilize a significant amount of public assistance in the future. As part of the assessment, the immigration officer will look at an applicant’s age, health, income, historic/current use of certain, designated public benefits, and other factors. If the immigration officer decides that the applicant will need significant government support in the future, the immigration application can be denied.

If a client is submitting an immigration application, then public charge may apply depending on what type of application they are submitting.

A public charge test generally does NOT apply in most situations when submitting the following visa applications (however, depending on the immigration status and the situations, public charge may be a factor to consider now and when applying for permanent residence):

- application for special immigrant juvenile status
- application for a U visa or T visa
- applications for asylee or refugee status
- application for VAWA self-petition
- application for DACA, whether an initial application or an application for DACA Renewal
- application for Temporary Protected Status (TPS)
- application to *renew* your green card application or an application for US citizenship

Public charge policy tends to change substantially depending upon government administrations. Please see below for resources to help navigate whether public charge might apply, to find immigration assistance, and to learn more about how public charge rules changed between administrations.

Public benefits and immigration can be confusing – but benefits can help!



Scan here (left) to see if public benefits could affect a client’s immigration options

([Public Charge Test and Guide | Keep Your Benefits](#))

Scan here (right) for a list of public benefits that are safe to use (do not apply to public charge).
([April 2021 The Trump Public Charge Rule is No Longer in Effect! \(ilrc.org\)](#))



Get help from an immigration law expert.

→ [Jump to: Resources – Finding Legal Help](#)

SECTION 8: HOUSING

This information is intended to give general information and is not legal advice. If immigration status is a concern, it is important to speak with an immigration law expert to determine the safest and best course of action. Last updated 2022.

Immigration, Domestic Violence, & Housing Stability

Social injustice coupled with cultural misconceptions and bias around domestic violence create compounded barriers for victims/survivors who are immigrants. Below are examples of what factors could be considered when assessing housing stability, and how those factors could be impacted by immigration status.

Affordability	Undocumented individuals may not have access to gainful employment. Solutions include presenting options around work that are available, where to look for work, and what federal, state, local, or private resources are available to people who are undocumented as well as having conversations around shared living.
Having Identifying Documents <i>(passports, birth certificates, tax ID, license, ID from their country of origin)</i>	Undocumented persons may enter the country without passports or identifying documents. This can hinder obtaining birth certificates for U.S. born children or obtaining a U.S. license. Documents may be confiscated when entering the country without a visa. This can prevent filing taxes, filing for benefits via U.S. born children, or otherwise accessing financial resources.
Access to Transportation	Easy access to transportation, via bus/train, and/or other communal resources can empower the client to seek independence. Through CT's "Drive-only License" program, those who are undocumented also can register and insure a vehicle.
Stable Employment	Literacy on what part-time & full-time positions can offer building up their resume; meaningful employment, and volunteer opportunities.
Financial Literacy	Financial literacy helps to build the skills and knowledge needed to become housing stable. Education around the benefits of having a bank account, monitoring finances, budgeting, how to apply for a tax ID and how to file taxes using a tax ID are example of financial skills that will move a person towards stability.
Access to Medical Resources	Connections to medical health is important to maintain health while also lowering or preventing long-term healthcare costs. In addition, stable housing and healthcare can better position someone to pursue educational opportunities and employment. Hospital bedside funds or sliding scale services at Federally Qualified Health Centers may be options to those who are undocumented.
Safety	People need to feel safe in their homes. Safety is a critical component of housing stability. Domestic violence is one of the leading causes of homelessness for women and children. Safety is a self-defined concept. Safety can mean being free from violence, but it also could be living in a clean apartment, living in a small apartment to ensure family members are close, or understanding rights when calling 911.

Below are some informational resources and services that can help immigrant clients stay in their home or improve their housing situation. For a more comprehensive list of legal services, nonprofit and/or public assistance, and informational resources, go to the [Resources](#) section.

Understanding Housing Rights

Make sure that you understand the housing rights of immigrants and of people who are undocumented. The following are resources that domestic violence and human trafficking advocates have found useful as they navigate this process with victims.

Fair Housing Act –SCAN RIGHT for federal website

This act prohibits discrimination in housing because of race, color, national origin, sex, familial status, or disability. Every person in the United States is protected by the Fair Housing Act regardless of immigration status. The Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO) does not inquire into the immigration status of those who file fair housing complaints.

https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/fair_housing_equal_opp/fair_housing_act_overview



Tenants' Rights –SCAN LEFT for ctlawhelp.org

Understanding the rights of tenants will help in securing housing and maintaining stable housing. Some rights include knowing when a landlord can enter an apartment, when a landlord can raise rent, what a landlord can legally charge for a security deposit, and when a landlord can evict. Information on tenants' rights can be found at ctlawhelp.org, a website created by several nonprofit legal aid organizations whose shared mission is to improve the lives of CT residents by providing free legal help to people with very low income.

<https://ctlawhelp.org/en/tenants-renters-rights-laws>



Immigrants' rights when looking for an apartment

The CT Fair Housing Center developed has developed moving guides in English and Spanish for Connecticut renters which are available at <https://ctfairhousing.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Moving-Forward-Connecticut-Renters-Guide-Accessible.pdf> - **SCAN RIGHT**

Below are pertinent details included in the guide for renters who are immigrants:

- Most rentals do not inquire about citizenship. If a client was asked to provide a green card or birth certificate, they might be a victim of discrimination. In this situation, clients can contact the Connecticut Fair Housing Center.
- A Social Security Number is not always needed to run a background check. Many places accept an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) from the IRS and anyone, regardless of immigration status, can obtain one. For the request form, click here: www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw7.pdf



Getting Help



2-1-1 | 211ct.org – SCAN LEFT

People can call 2-1-1 or visit www.211ct.org to learn what rent and housing assistance is available in their area.

Rental assistance for undocumented migrants

<https://cirict.org/rental-assistance-program/> - **SCAN RIGHT**

To access Connecticut's rental assistance program for undocumented migrants, people should contact Connecticut Institute for Refugees and Immigrants (CIRI) at 1-203-612-5464 or rentalassist@cirict.org.



EvictionHelpCT.org - Right to Counsel – SCAN LEFT

In 2021, the Connecticut legislature passed a law giving low-income tenants a right to a lawyer when faced with eviction or subsidy termination. People can call 1-800-559-1565 or go to EvictionHelpCT.org (QR code, left) to find out if they qualify for a free lawyer to help fight an eviction or keep their housing subsidy.

Portions of this section were adapted from the best practices fact sheet, "Supporting Housing Stability for People Who are Undocumented," which was authored by a CCADV housing task force. See [acknowledgments](#) for more information.

SECTION 9: RESOURCES

IN THIS SECTION:

- [Finding Legal Help](#): avoiding fraud, national directories of legal services providers, list of Connecticut legal services providers
- [Other Services](#): contact information for state agencies, rental assistance, domestic violence and human trafficking assistance, housing legal help
- [Informational Resources](#): print and online resources available for: safety planning, know your rights, fraud, detention and removal, legal remedies, public benefits, housing, Connecticut judicial branch, and CCADV

Finding Legal Help: Warnings, Resources, and Referrals

BEFORE TAKING LEGAL ADVICE: PROTECTING AGAINST IMMIGRATION FRAUD

In the U.S., notaries cannot provide legal advice and cannot assist with filing immigration documents. The duties and authority of a “notary public” or “notario público” are a source of confusion for immigrants to the U.S. Notaries have more legal authority in many countries in Latin America and in Europe. In the United States, they mainly acknowledge signatures on important documents and administer oaths - they cannot provide legal immigration help of any kind. Immigration consultants, tax preparers, and travel agents also cannot give legal advice or provide legal services.

Warning signs:

- **Websites that look like U.S. government sites but are not.** Make sure “.gov” is included in the website address.
- **People who are charging for government forms.** There is never a charge to *obtain* blank immigration forms. They can be accessed online or in the nearest immigration office. However, there may be a charge to *file* completed immigration forms.
- **People who want to keep their client’s original documents, like a passport or birth certificate.** People seeking immigration help should never give their original documents.
- **People who ask their clients to sign a blank/incomplete form.**
- **People who advertise guaranteed results,** such as getting an application approved.

SCAN HERE for more information
- protecting yourself from fraud.



https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/pages/attachments/2016/01/14/are_you_the_victim_of_fraud.pdf

Individuals who have a case in immigration court should take legal advice only from a licensed attorney or an accredited representative recognized by the Board of Immigration Appeals.

ORDER RESOURCES FOR YOUR OFFICE

Advocates and member organizations can call the Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection at (860) 713-6021 to request copies of a Spanish language graphic novel created by the FTC that warns about notario fraud – [check it out here](#).

To find out if someone who claims to be an attorney is allowed to represent clients in immigration court, ask in what state(s) they are licensed to practice law and call the office that licenses attorneys in that state to ask if the attorney has a bar number and is in “good standing.”

To find out if someone who claims to be an accredited representative is allowed to represent clients in immigration court, go to <https://www.justice.gov/eoir/recognition-accreditation-roster-reports> and select “Accredited Representatives List” or call (703) 305 9029.

Immigration scams are illegal. Victims of immigration fraud can contact the following organizations to report the scam:

- EOIR Fraud and Abuse Prevention Program at EOIR.Fraud.Program@usdoj.gov or (703) 305-0470. [Click here for more instructions](#).
- Federal Trade Commission (FTC) at 1-877-382-4357 or [file your complaint online here](#)
- Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection (DCP): [click here for instructions about filing a complaint](#)

National Directories for Immigration Legal Help

[National Immigration Legal Resources Directory | Immigration Advocates Network \(click here\)](#)

A nationwide directory of pro bono legal services. You can run an initial search by state, zip code, or detention center and refine the search by other fields, including areas and types of immigration legal assistance provided, languages spoken, and more.

[List of Pro Bono Immigration Legal Services | Department of Justice \(click here\)](#)

Searching by state or region, pull a pdf document with a list of pro bono legal service providers organized by immigration court locations. The non-profit organizations and attorneys included have committed to providing at least 50 hours per year of pro bono legal services before the immigration court location where they appear on the list. Updated quarterly (January, April, July, and October).

Connecticut Immigration Legal Resources

Many resources below were pulled from the [IAN's National Immigration Legal Resources Directory](#) and checked for accuracy in 2022. Click the underlined headings below to go to the IAN directory entry for further information, including languages spoken, whether a nominal fee is charged, non-legal services provided, and more.

[Apostle Immigrant Services](#)

Areas of legal assistance:	Adjustment of Status, Consular Processing, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), Employment authorization, Family-based petitions, Naturalization/Citizenship, Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS), T visas, Temporary Protected Status (TPS), U visas, Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) petitions
Types of legal assistance:	Help completing forms, filings with USCIS, representation before the Immigration Court, representation before the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA)
Location:	115 Blatchley Ave., New Haven, CT 06513
Contact:	(203) 752-9068; ais.fairhaven@gmail.com
Website:	http://www.apostleimmigrantservices.org

[Building One Community](#)

Areas of legal assistance:	Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), Family-based petitions, Naturalization/Citizenship, Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS), T visas, Temporary Protected Status (TPS), U visas, Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) petitions
Types of legal assistance:	Help completing forms, filings with USCIS, representation before the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA)
Location:	75 Selleck Street, Stamford, CT 06902
Contact:	(203) 391-4084; (203) 674 8585 Ext. 109; legal@b1c.org
Website:	https://www.building1community.org/legal/

Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Bridgeport

Areas of legal assistance:	Adjustment of Status, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), Family-based petitions, Naturalization/Citizenship, Temporary Protected Status (TPS)
Types of legal assistance:	Help completing forms, filings with USCIS
Location:	238 Jewett Ave, The Catholic Center, Bridgeport, CT 06606
Contact:	(203) 416-1322; (203) 416-1311 (English); (203) 416-1306 (Spanish)
Website:	http://www.ccfairfield.org

Center for Children's Advocacy

Areas of legal assistance:	Asylum applications, Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS)	
Types of legal assistance:	Help completing forms	
Locations/ Contact:	2074 Park St, Hartford, CT 06105	(860) 570-5327
	211 State St, Bridgeport, CT 06604	(203) 335-0719
Website:	http://www.cca-ct.org	

Center for Latino Progress

Areas of legal assistance:	Adjustment of Status, Consular Processing, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), Family-based petitions, Naturalization/Citizenship, Change of Address (USCIS), Removal of conditions on permanent residency, employment authorization renewal, Renew/replace permanent resident card
Types of legal assistance:	Help completing forms, filings with USCIS
Location:	95-97 Park St, 2 nd Floor, Hartford, CT 06106
Contact:	(860) 247-3227; LatinoProgress@ctprf.org ; Nancy_perez@ctprf.org
Website:	http://www.ctprf.org

Connecticut Institute for Refugees and Immigrants, Inc.

Areas of legal assistance:	Adjustment of Status, Asylum applications, Consular Processing, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), Employment authorization, Employment-based immigrant and non-immigrant petitions, Family-based petitions, Habeas Corpus, NACARA, Naturalization/Citizenship, Removal hearings, Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS), T visas, Temporary Protected Status (TPS), U visas, Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) petitions	
Types of legal assistance:	Help completing forms, filings with USCIS, representation at Asylum Interviews (Credible Fear Interviews, Reasonable Fear Interviews), representation before the Immigration Court, representation before the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA)	
Locations / Contact:	670 Clinton Ave, Bridgeport, CT 06605	(203) 336-0141
	75 Charter Oak Avenue, Hartford, CT Suite 2-180 06106	(860) 692-3085
	34 Woodland Ave, Stamford, CT 06902	(203) 965-7190
	233 Mill Street 3 rd Floor (Riba Aspira Building), Waterbury, CT 06706	(860) 692-3085
Website:	http://www.cirict.org	

Connecticut Legal Services (Bridgeport Office)

Areas of legal assistance:	Adjustment of Status, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), Employment authorization, Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS), T visas, U visas, Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) petitions
Types of legal assistance:	Help completing forms, filings with USCIS, representation at asylum interviews (Credible Fear Interviews, Reasonable Fear Interviews), representation before the Immigration Court
Location:	1000 Lafayette Blvd., Suite 950, Bridgeport, CT 06604
Contact:	(203) 336-3851
Website:	https://ctlegal.org/get-help/

Connecticut Legal Services (New Britain Office)

Areas of legal assistance:	Adjustment of Status, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), Employment authorization, T visas, U visas, Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) petitions
Types of legal assistance:	Help victims of domestic violence and unaccompanied minors stabilize their immigration status, help completing forms, filings with USCIS
Location:	16 Main St., 2 nd Floor, New Britain, CT 06051
Contact:	(860) 225-8678
Website:	https://ctlegal.org/get-help/

Connecticut Legal Services (New London Office)

Areas of legal assistance:	Adjustment of Status, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), Employment authorization, Temporary Protected Status (TPS), U visas, Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) petitions
Types of legal assistance:	Help victims of domestic violence and unaccompanied minors stabilize their immigration status, help completing forms, filings with USCIS
Location:	125 Eugene O'Neill Dr., Suite 20, New London, CT 06320
Contact:	(860) 447-0323
Website:	https://ctlegal.org/get-help/

Connecticut Legal Services (Stamford Office)

Areas of legal assistance:	Adjustment of Status, Consular Processing, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), Employment authorization, Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS), T visas, Temporary Protected Status (TPS), U visas, Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) petitions
Types of legal assistance:	Help victims of domestic violence and unaccompanied minors stabilize their immigration status, help completing forms, filings with USCIS
Location:	1177 Summer St., 4 th Floor., Stamford, CT 06905
Contact:	(203) 348-9216
Website:	https://ctlegal.org/get-help/

Connecticut Legal Services (Waterbury Office)

Areas of legal assistance:	Adjustment of Status, Consular Processing, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), Employment authorization, Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS), U visas, Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) petitions
Types of legal assistance:	Help victims of domestic violence and unaccompanied minors stabilize their immigration status, help completing forms, filings with USCIS
Location:	85 Central Ave., Waterbury, CT 06702
Contact:	(203) 756-8074
Website:	https://ctlegal.org/get-help/

Connecticut Legal Services (Willimantic Office)

Areas of legal assistance:	Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), U visas, Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) petitions
Types of legal assistance:	Help victims of domestic violence and unaccompanied minors stabilize their immigration status, help completing forms, filings with USCIS
Location:	1125 Main Street, Willimantic, CT 06226
Contact:	(860) 456-1761
Website:	https://ctlegal.org/get-help/

Greater Hartford Legal Aid, Inc.

Areas of legal assistance:	Adjustment of Status, Consular Processing, Employment authorization, Naturalization/Citizenship, U visas, Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) petitions
Types of legal assistance:	Filings with USCIS
Location:	999 Asylum Avenue, 3 rd Floor, Hartford, CT 06105
Contact:	(860) 541-5000
Website:	http://www.ghla.org

Hartford Public Library - The American Place

Areas of legal assistance:	Naturalization/Citizenship
Types of legal assistance:	Citizenship education, interview preparation, help completing forms (citizenship application completion and green card renewals), filings with USCIS
Location:	500 Main Street, Hartford, CT 06103
Contact:	(860) 695-6337
Website:	https://tap.hplct.org/immigration/

Immigration Advocacy & Support Center (IASC)

Areas of legal assistance:	Adjustment of Status Petitions, Petition to Remove Conditions on Residence, Citizenship/Permanent Residence, DACA, TPS, VAWA, Time Waivers/Forgiveness, Work Permit, U Visas, Re-entry permit/Advance Parole, Referrals to asylum and deportation specialists
Types of legal assistance:	Consultations (\$25 fee), case management for filings (sliding scale fee)
Location:	8 Washington Street, New London, CT 06320
Contact:	(860) 629-7758
Website:	https://www.iascct.org/

IRIS - Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services

Areas of legal assistance:	Adjustment of Status, Consular Processing, Family-based petitions, Naturalization/Citizenship
Types of legal assistance:	Deportation defense, help completing forms, filings with USCIS
Location:	235 Nicoll St, 2 nd Floor, New Haven, CT 06511
Contact:	(203) 562-2095
Website:	http://www.irisct.org

Jewish Family Service of Greenwich

Areas of legal assistance:	Adjustment of Status, Consular Processing, Family-based petitions, Naturalization/Citizenship
Types of legal assistance:	Help completing forms, filings with USCIS, translations of legal documents
Location:	1 Holly Hill Ln, Greenwich, CT 06830
Contact:	(203) 622-1881; mknee@jfsgreenwich.org
Website:	http://www.jfsgreenwich.org

New Haven Legal Assistance Association, Inc.

Areas of legal assistance:	Removal defense including asylum, Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) petitions, and other defensive humanitarian application like VAWA petitions, U Visas, and T Visas with a focus on victims/survivors of domestic violence and detained individuals
Types of legal assistance:	Help completing forms, filings with USCIS
Location:	205 Orange St, New Haven, CT 06510
Contact:	(203) 946-4811
Website:	http://www.nhlegal.org

University of Connecticut School of Law - Asylum and Human Rights Clinic

Areas of legal assistance:	Asylum applications, removal hearings
Types of legal assistance:	Every aspect of representation in cases that determine whether a client will be granted asylum
Location:	65 Elizabeth St, Hartford, CT 06105
Contact:	(860) 570-5165; carmen.arroyo@uconn.edu
Website:	http://www.law.uconn.edu/academics/clinical-education/asylum-human-rights-clinic

Yale Law School - Jerome N. Frank Legal Services Organization

Areas of legal assistance:	Asylum applications, removal hearings
Types of legal assistance:	Representation at asylum interviews (Credible Fear Interviews, Reasonable Fear Interviews), representation before the Immigration Court
Location:	133 Wall St, Ruttenberg Hall, New Haven, CT 06511
Contact:	(203) 432-4800
Website:	http://www.law.yale.edu/academics/JeromeNFrankLSO.htm

Other Services

Non-Legal Services

Department Social Services 1-855-6-CONNECT 1-800-842-4524 (TTD/TTY) <https://portal.ct.gov/DSS>

Department of Housing 860-270-8262 <https://portal.ct.gov/doh>

Dept of Children & Families 860-550-6300 <https://portal.ct.gov/DCF>

National Human Trafficking Hotline

Call 1-888-373-7888 | Text BeFree (233733)

Connecticut Institute for Refugees and Immigrants

Project Rescue, the Anti-Human Trafficking Program | 203-336-0141 | <https://cirict.org/project-rescue/>

Rental Assistance Program | (203) 612-5464 | rentalassist@cirict.org | <https://cirict.org/rental-assistance-program/>

DCF HART (Human Anti-Trafficking Response Team)

1-800-842-2288

Safe Connect – Connecticut’s Statewide Domestic Violence Communication Hub

Safe Connect is a confidential way for victims of DV to access information, resources and assistance.

888-774-2900 | <https://ctsafecconnect.com/> | safecconnect@ctcadv.org

2-1-1 of Connecticut

2-1-1 is a one-stop connection to the local social services.

Dial 2-1-1 | 1-800-203-1234 (outside of Connecticut) | <https://www.211ct.org/>

Legal Services – Housing

Connecticut Fair Housing Center

860-247-4400 | 888-247-4401 (toll free) | www.ctfairhousing.org | info@ctfairhousing.org

EvictionHelpCT.org - Right to Counsel

In 2021, the Connecticut legislature passed a law giving low-income tenants a right to a lawyer when faced with eviction or subsidy termination. People can call 1-800-559-1565 or go to EvictionHelpCT.org to find out if they qualify for a free lawyer to help fight an eviction or keep their housing subsidy.

Informational Resources

Safety Planning	Know Your Rights	Fraud	Detention, Removal
Immigration Legal Info	Public Benefits	CT Judicial Branch	Housing



= Order Free Print Copies for Your Office



= "Quick Escape" Button to Redirect to Neutral Website

SAFETY PLANNING



[Techsafety.org \(blog - click here\)](#)

Managed by the Safety Net Project at the National Network to End Domestic Violence, this blog discusses technology, privacy, and safety in the context of intimate partner violence, sexual assault, and violence against women.

[Gallery Vault \(app – click here\)](#)

One example of an app that can help clients discretely save photos and videos on their phone. There are many different apps that provide this service. This Techsafety.org article can help a client weight their options when deciding whether to use an app for this purpose and which one to use: [App Safety Considerations for Survivors of Abuse](#).



[Danger Assessment \(click here\)](#)

20-question danger assessment for intimate partner violence developed by Dr. Jacquelyn Campbell and the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing.

[Family Preparedness Plan | State of Connecticut \(click here\)](#)

A guide to help a client make arrangements so that in the event of removal or detention, the family members of the person who has been removed/detained will be taken care of. Available in Arabic, English, French, Haitian Creole, Mandarin, Polish, Portuguese, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

[Templates for Safety Planning \(internal link – click here\)](#)

In this toolkit are several worksheets to use when safety planning with clients, including a family communication plan template, a financial safety planning template, and much more.

Digital Safety Planning (Spanish and English)

Seven simple safety measures that clients should follow if they are concerned someone may be surveilling their internet use or logging into their accounts without their consent. *This is a CCADV member-only resource. Please access this resource by visiting the member-only page of the CCADV website.*

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS – LAW ENFORCEMENT

[We Have Rights | ACLU \(click here\)](#)

View videos that show ways a person can assert their rights with immigration enforcement against unlawful search, arrest, detention, or removal.



[Red Cards | ILRC \(click here\)](#)

Wallet-sized cards that can facilitate a client in asserting their rights with immigration enforcement. Print your own or request bulk orders from the ILRC at their website. [What are red cards?](#)

FRAUD

[Are You A Victim of Fraud? | Department of Justice \(PDF - click here\)](#)

Information sheet from the federal government that covers how to protect yourself from immigration fraud and what you should expect from your legal representative.



[Estafas de Notario \(“Notario Scams”\) \(click here\)](#)

Spanish-language informational comic about notario fraud created by the Federal Trade Commission. You can request copies from the Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection by calling (860) 713-6021. [What is notario fraud?](#)

IMMIGRATION DETENTION AND REMOVAL

[Online Detainee Locator System \(click here\)](#)

Find someone who is currently in ICE custody. The A-number search is recommended for best results. [What is an A-number? Where does someone find their A-number?](#)

[Detention facilities \(click here\)](#)

Get information about individual detention center locations, including visitation, sending packages, posting departure/delivery bond, contacting people in detention (if permitted), FOIA requests, and submitting complaints about ICE misconduct/mistreatment.

[Immigration and BIA Case Status Information \(click here\)](#)

Get information about a BIA or Immigration Hearing, including the date of your next hearing or judge decisions. Callers must use their A-number. [What is an A-number? Where does someone find their A-number?](#)

IMMIGRATION LEGAL INFORMATION

[Department of Justice Self-Help Materials \(click here\)](#)

The Department of Justice has a collection of self-help guides on immigration removal proceedings and common forms of relief from removal, many of which are translated into Spanish, Portuguese, and Haitian Creole.

Please note: These materials should be used by in tandem with representation by an immigration attorney or BIA-accredited representative. Clients should not attempt to represent themselves in immigration hearings.

Information about Immigration Benefits on the USCIS (Federal Government) Website – Eligibility, How to Apply:

- [VAWA Self Petitions: Federal Website \(click here\)](#)
- [Battered Spouse Waiver \(click here\)](#)
- [U Visa, Resources for Victims of Human Trafficking \(click here\)](#)
- [T Visa \(click here\)](#)
- [Asylum \(click here\)](#)
- [TPS \(Temporary Protected Status\) \(click here\)](#)
- [SIJS \(Special Immigrant Juvenile Status\) \(click here\)](#)

PUBLIC BENEFITS

[**Public Charge Information, Resources, FAQs and Test Guide | Keep Your Benefits \(click here\)**](#)

Here you can learn more about what the public charge rule is, get the latest updates on public charge, and access a guide to learn whether public benefits could affect different immigration options. *This resource provides information for both a national and a California-specific audience – make sure that you toggle to “National” in the orange ribbon on the top.*

[**Public Charge Information update – Trump Rule No Longer In Effect | ILRC \(pdf- click here\)**](#)

Click here for a helpful explainer from April of 2021 about what the public charge rule does and does not do, especially in light of a significant shift in policy that occurred that year. *This area of immigration law changes often, so make sure to use keepyourbenefits.org (above) to find the latest information and updates.*

[**The National Immigrant Women’s Advocacy Project \(NIWAP\) \(click here\)**](#)

Public benefits maps by state based on immigration status.

CONNECTICUT JUDICIAL BRANCH

[**Information for Victims/Survivors \(click here, THEN click on the “Victims” tab on the top and center of the page\)**](#)

Here you can find forms and informational resources related to restraining orders, criminal protective orders, the Office of Victim Services, the Victim Compensation Program, notifications, helplines, and more.

[**Interpreting and Translation Support \(click here\)**](#)

From here you can find instructions on requesting a judicial interpreter and find judicial forms translated into Spanish, Portuguese, and Polish.

[**Family Court - Divorce, Custody, Visitation, Family Relations Counselors, and Temporary Restraining Orders \(click here\)**](#)

Here you can find information, forms, and resources relative to child support, relief from abuse (TRO); parenting time; court service centers; case look-up, and more.

[**Filing an Application for a Restraining Order \(click here\)**](#)

Click the link to jump to informational resources and court forms that are useful for filing a for a restraining order.

HOUSING

[**Fair Housing Act – HUD Overview \(click here\)**](#)

This act prohibits discrimination in housing because of race, color, national origin, sex, familial status, or disability. Every person in the United States is protected by the Fair Housing Act regardless of immigration status. The Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO) does not inquire into the immigration status of those who file fair housing complaints.

[**Tenant’s Rights – CTLawHelp \(click here\)**](#)

Information on tenant’s rights can be found at ctlawhelp.org, a website created by several nonprofit legal aid organizations whose shared mission is to improve the lives of CT residents by providing fee legal help to people with very low income.



[**Moving Forward Guide | Connecticut Fair Housing Center \(click here\)**](#)

The Connecticut Fair Housing Center has developed moving guides in English and Spanish for Connecticut renters.

SECTION 10: FAQs

This information is intended to give general information and is not legal advice. If immigration status is a concern, speak with an immigration law expert to determine the safest and best course of action. Last updated 2022.

Can an undocumented person get help dealing with domestic abuse?

Local level: **YES** - CCADV and all its member organizations are non-discriminatory and provide services regardless of immigration or citizenship status.

State level: **YES** - Eligibility to file an action in state court, including family court, is not dependent on immigration status. This includes, but is not limited to: orders of protection, custody, child support, and dissolution actions.

Federal level: **YES** - *“Under all circumstances, domestic violence, sexual assault and child abuse are illegal in the United States. All people in the United States (regardless of race, color, religion, sex, age, ethnicity, national origin or immigration status) are guaranteed protection from abuse under the law. Any victim of domestic violence – regardless of immigration or citizenship status – can seek help. An immigrant victim of domestic violence may also be eligible for immigration related protections”* ([U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services](#)).

If a person is undocumented, will they risk deportation by reporting the abuse?

Law enforcement officers in Connecticut are strongly discouraged from requesting information about or otherwise investigating or assisting in the investigation of citizenship or residency status of any victim, unless such an inquiry or investigation is required by statute, ordinance, federal regulation, or a court decision. Although Connecticut officers are not restricted by law from asking about immigration status, noncitizens have rights regarding disclosure of immigration status. Please see [Section 4](#) for further information about noncitizens’ rights in interactions with law enforcement.

Family court judges do not generally ask about immigration status, but if they do, a victim/survivor can request to consult with an attorney before answering (although this in and of itself may be “an answer”).

If the abuser is an immigrant, will they be deported if the victim/survivor reports the abuse?

If the aggressor is an immigrant, there are several factors that may impact whether or not deportation will be an issue. An immigrant who is convicted of a crime may be deported depending on the type of crime and the length of the prison sentence. Clients with this question should consult an attorney who is knowledgeable about immigration and criminal law.

What if a client is in deportation proceedings?

Advise the client to speak with an attorney **immediately** if they (1) have a deportation order or (2) have an appointment at immigration court.

What if the abuser is the victim’s/survivor’s sponsor or if the victim/survivor is the abuser’s sponsor?

Clients should consult with an attorney who is knowledgeable about immigration law about potential legal remedies that may apply to their situation.

How can a victim/survivor secure immigration status without their abuser's help?

Federal law allows for victims of domestic violence to apply for permanent residence based on the abuse. Some of the available options are:

1. **VAWA Self-Petition** allows an abused person to apply for permanent residence without needing their abusive relative to file a petition on their behalf. A successful petition may provide the person with permanent residence and permission to work in the U.S. It is possible to qualify during the application process for certain public benefits.



SCAN LEFT or click the hyperlink below to go to the federal website and learn more about who can apply, how to apply, and which documents are helpful

<https://www.uscis.gov/green-card/green-card-eligibility/green-card-for-va-wa-self-petitioner>

[SEE SECTION 5 FOR MORE INFORMATION](#)

2. **VAWA Cancellation:** for certain victims of domestic violence who are in removal proceedings and have been in the U.S. for at least 3 years.

[SEE SECTION 5 FOR MORE INFORMATION](#)

3. **Battered Spouse Waiver:** for conditional permanent residents with 2-year permanent residence limitation.



SCAN LEFT or click the hyperlink below to go to the federal website and learn more about who can apply, how to apply, and which documents are helpful. *Expand: "How to Get a Waiver of the Requirement to File a Joint Petition."*

<https://www.uscis.gov/green-card/after-we-grant-your-green-card/conditional-permanent-residence/removing-conditions-on-permanent-residence-based-on-marriage>

[SEE SECTION 5 FOR MORE INFORMATION](#)

4. **U Visa:** a visa for victims of certain crimes

SCAN RIGHT or click the hyperlink below to go to the federal website and learn more about who can apply, how to apply, and which documents are helpful

<https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/victims-of-human-trafficking-and-other-crimes/victims-of-criminal-activity-u-nonimmigrant-status>



[SEE SECTION 5 FOR MORE INFORMATION](#)

5. **T Visa:** a visa for victims of trafficking



SCAN LEFT or click the hyperlink below to go to the federal website and learn more about who can apply, how to apply, and which documents are helpful

<https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/victims-of-human-trafficking-and-other-crimes/victims-of-human-trafficking-t-nonimmigrant-status>

[SEE SECTION 5 FOR MORE INFORMATION](#)

6. **Asylum:** based on being a victim/survivor of domestic violence in your home country.



SCAN HERE or click the hyperlink below to go to the federal website and learn more about who can apply, how to apply, and which documents are helpful

<https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/refugees-and-asylum/asylum>

[SEE SECTION 5 FOR MORE INFORMATION](#)

How does immigration define “domestic violence”?

The immigration system doesn't have a single definition of domestic violence. The way the immigration system takes domestic violence into account depends on the kind of immigration case and the laws that apply to those kinds of cases.

What if the abuser is withholding the victim's/survivor's passports or their child(ren)'s passport(s)?

There are several options for dealing with this problem. One option is to utilize the federal government's process for reporting and replacing a stolen passport: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports/have-passport/lost-stolen.html> Clients may find it helpful to talk to an attorney about other options that may be available in this scenario.

Are there options to protect children/their status?

Children may benefit from different options depending on the type of relief sought. The age and definition of “child” may be different depending on the type of relief or application. Children may also have options under their own individual application. See [Section 5: Legal Options](#) for more information.

Are there resources for immigrant populations who are uninsured and/or with immigration challenges?

Yes, there are organizations dedicated to obtaining medical services for the uninsured, as well as resources for those members of the population with immigration concerns. The resources include sliding scale medical service providers, as well as information on CHCACT (Community Health Center Association of Connecticut) and the services they provide. All of the resource information can be found at: [Undocumented Supports \(ct.gov\)](#)

Can you get Medicaid insurance (HUSKY) if you are pregnant?

Yes, in CT you qualify for HUSKY for 1 year following childbirth.

Can you get Medicaid insurance (HUSKY) if you are pregnant even if you do not qualify for Medicaid due to immigration statuses?

Starting April 1, 2023, woman who do not qualify for Medicaid due to immigration status will also be eligible for 1 year of coverage. The recently passed American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 allows states to extend this postpartum coverage from 60 days to 12 months post-birth beginning April 1, 2022 in both Medicaid and CHIP. Additionally, the Act requires DSS, beginning April 1, 2023, to provide state-funded medical assistance within available appropriations for postpartum care for 12 months after birth to women who (1) do not qualify for Medicaid due to immigration status and (2) have household incomes up to 263% of FPL.

SECTION 11: SAFETY PLANNING TEMPLATES

Note to Advocates

In this section, you will find several helpful templates to complete with a client when planning for emergencies, including deportation or detainment. You can print off this section in full or in part to assist a client in planning for their family's safety and wellbeing in the event that they or another family member are detained or if some other emergency occurs.

As you review this section with a client, please keep in mind:

- Working with clients to complete this safety planning packet can mean facing some upsetting potential realities. Be sure to check in with them often and to take breaks when needed.
- You will learn more about the client's situation as you complete this packet with them. It is important to be attentive to signs that they may need to be connected with other services (for instance, if the "doctor" field is left blank).
- In order for this packet to be useful, it must be continually updated. It may be helpful to make plans with the client for the next time they should revisit this packet to make updates.

This Immigration Safety Planning Packet is not a substitute for legal advice. Individuals are urged to seek legal counsel for customized advice regarding their personal situation. Depending on individual needs, forms may be edited, modified, and expanded.

The Safety Planning Templates section of this toolkit was adapted from the following outside resources:

- *Family Safety Planning Toolkit, Immigration Services Network of Austin*
- *Family Preparedness Plan – 3/1/17 – Immigration Legal Resource Center*

See [acknowledgments](#) for more information about the individuals and organizations whose work contributed to this toolkit.

PERSONALIZED IMMIGRATION SAFETY PLAN

This Immigration Safety Planning Packet is not a substitute for legal advice. Individuals are urged to seek legal counsel for customized advice regarding their personal situation. Depending on individual needs, forms may be edited, modified, and expanded.

These templates have been created to be a part of your safety plan. If you choose to, you can write down information using these templates. If you write information on any of these forms, it is important to keep it in a safe and private place. It is also important to ensure that a designated safe and trusted family member or friend has a copy of these forms and, if appropriate, that your children know where to locate these documents in the event that you are detained.

These forms are not an exhaustive list of information; however, they can help you plan for your and your children's safety and to engage in other emergency preparedness in the event you are removed or detained.

Below is a list of suggested forms/documents as well as useful templates to gather information. These documents and forms should be filed together and kept in a safe location. This packet will need to be updated on a regular basis. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list and that you may have other documents and other information that are important.

NAME: _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____

ADDRESS: _____

File of Important Documents

Keep a file of all of these documents or a copy of these documents in a safe place. Tell your children, family members and designated caregiver where to find this file in an emergency.

- ☐ Passports for yourself and your children
- ☐ Birth Certificates for yourself and your children
- ☐ Marriage License (if applicable)
- ☐ Divorce Decree (if applicable)
- ☐ Court Orders (Temporary Restraining Orders, Criminal Protective Orders, Custody Orders, etc.)
- ☐ A-Number and any immigration documents (work permit, green card, visa, applications you have filed, immigration decisions or orders, etc.)
- ☐ Documents demonstrating your residence in the United States and amount of time you have been physically present in the United States.
- ☐ Photographs of wedding, family vacations, etc.
- ☐ Photographs of any harm/abuse (injuries, home in disarray, screenshots, etc.)
- ☐ Driver's license and/or other identification cards
- ☐ Social Security Card(s) or ITIN Number
- ☐ Important children's information (school, medical, insurance, etc.) (see templates below)
- ☐ Emergency numbers and important contact information (see templates below)
- ☐ Important information regarding finances and bills (see templates below)
- ☐ Important information regarding family members (see templates below)
- ☐ Any other documents you would want to be able to quickly find

Family Information

Keep this information so your designated caregiver will have all the information they need.

NAME	DOB	Social Security No.	Passport No.	Passport Date	A No.

Where to Find Family Members during an Emergency:

Places Where Family Spend Time (home, work, school, etc.)	Address	Phone

Our Non-Family Emergency Contact:

Name of Non-Family Contact	
Phone Number	
Alternate Phone Number	
Email Address	

Emergency Meeting Place (if we cannot meet at home)

Family Meeting Place	
Address	
Phone Number	

Family and Pet Medical Information

Keep this information so your designated caregiver will have all of the information they need.

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	MEDICAL CONDITIONS	PRESCRIPTIONS	REFILLS	DOCTOR	PHARMACY	INSURANCE

Family Communication Plan

You can cut out these cards and carry them with you in your wallet.

Family Communication Plan	Family Communication Plan	Family Communication Plan	Family Communication Plan
In an emergency, I can contact:	In an emergency, I can contact:	In an emergency, I can contact:	In an emergency, I can contact:
Contact Name: _____	Contact Name: _____	Contact Name: _____	Contact Name: _____
Phone Number: _____	Phone Number: _____	Phone Number: _____	Phone Number: _____
Contact Name: _____	Contact Name: _____	Contact Name: _____	Contact Name: _____
Phone Number: _____	Phone Number: _____	Phone Number: _____	Phone Number: _____
Use this space to write down any other important information for emergencies (such as other people to contact, family, meeting spot, etc.)	Use this space to write down any other important information for emergencies (such as other people to contact, family, meeting spot, etc.)	Use this space to write down any other important information for emergencies (such as other people to contact, family, meeting spot, etc.)	Use this space to write down any other important information for emergencies (such as other people to contact, family, meeting spot, etc.)
FOR EMERGENCIES CALL 9-1-1!	FOR EMERGENCIES CALL 9-1-1!	FOR EMERGENCIES CALL 9-1-1!	FOR EMERGENCIES CALL 9-1-1!
Family Communication Plan	Family Communication Plan	Family Communication Plan	Family Communication Plan
In an emergency, I can contact:	In an emergency, I can contact:	In an emergency, I can contact:	In an emergency, I can contact:
Contact Name: _____	Contact Name: _____	Contact Name: _____	Contact Name: _____
Phone Number: _____	Phone Number: _____	Phone Number: _____	Phone Number: _____
Contact Name: _____	Contact Name: _____	Contact Name: _____	Contact Name: _____
Phone Number: _____	Phone Number: _____	Phone Number: _____	Phone Number: _____
Use this space to write down any other important information for emergencies (such as other people to contact, family, meeting spot, etc.)	Use this space to write down any other important information for emergencies (such as other people to contact, family, meeting spot, etc.)	Use this space to write down any other important information for emergencies (such as other people to contact, family, meeting spot, etc.)	Use this space to write down any other important information for emergencies (such as other people to contact, family, meeting spot, etc.)
FOR EMERGENCIES CALL 9-1-1!	FOR EMERGENCIES CALL 9-1-1!	FOR EMERGENCIES CALL 9-1-1!	FOR EMERGENCIES CALL 9-1-1!

Local Domestic Violence Program

Domestic Violence Program and Advocate Name	
Phone Number	
Email	
Family Violence Victim Advocate (court advocate)	
Court House and Address	
Phone Numbers	
Email	

Local Police Department

Police Department	
Address	
Phone Number	

Attorney's Information

Name of Attorney	
Phone Number	
Alternate Phone Number	
Address	

Power of Attorney Information

Name of Power of Attorney	
Phone Number	
Alternate Phone Number	
Address	

Consulate's Information

Name of Consulate	
Phone Number	
Alternate Phone Number	
Address	

Employer Information

Employer Name	Employer Address	Employer Phone Number

Paycheck Information – Who can pick up my paycheck in case of an emergency?

Name	
Phone Number	
Alternate Phone Number	
Address	

Banking Information

Name	
Who has access to the banking information?	
Checking Account Number	
Savings Account Number	

Monthly Bills Information

Who usually pays our monthly bills?	
Who else can make sure bills are paid in an emergency?	

Financial Planning Information

Expense	Name & Address	Telephone Number	Amount	Due Date
Rent/Mortgage				
Electric				
Gas				
Water				
Trash				
Telephone / Cell Phone				
Cable				
Car Payments				
Medical				

Important Children's Information

Keep this information so your designated caregiver will have all of the information they need.

Child's Name	
Date of Birth	
Child's Cell Phone Number	
School	
School Address	
School Phone Number	
Teacher's Name	
Classroom Number	
Afterschool Program	
Afterschool Program Phone Number	
Other Camp/Sports/Program	
Other Camp/Sports/Program Phone Number	
Allergies	
Medical Conditions	
Medications	
Doctor's Phone Number	
Doctor's Address	
Health Insurance	

Emergency Numbers and Important Contact Information

Keep this information in one place so that you and your family can access it easily.

Emergency Numbers	
Immediate Emergency	911
Police Department	
Fire Department	
Poison Control	
Family Contacts	
<i>Parent/Guardian</i>	
Home Phone	
Cell Phone	
Work Address	
Work Phone	
<i>Parent/Guardian</i>	
Home Phone	
Cell Phone	
Work Address	
Work Phone	
<i>Other Emergency Contact and Relationship</i>	
Cell Phone	
<i>Other Emergency Contact and Relationship</i>	
Cell Phone	
<i>Other Emergency Contact and Relationship</i>	
Cell Phone	

Miscellaneous Contacts	
<i>Doctor</i>	
Phone Number	
Health Insurance Company	
Policy Number	
Group Number	
Policy Holder/DOB	
<i>Pediatrician</i>	
Phone Number	
Health Insurance Company	
Policy Number	
Group Number	
Policy Holder/DOB	
<i>Dentist</i>	
Phone Number	
Health Insurance Company	
Policy Number	
Group Number	
Policy Holder/DOB	
<i>Care Make/Model</i>	
License Plate Number	
Car Insurance Company	
Insurance Policy Number	
Phone Number	
<i>Consulate</i>	
Address	
Phone Number	
<i>Attorney</i>	
Address	
Phone Number	
Email	
<i>Church/Temple/Mosque/Place of Worship</i>	
Address	
Phone Number	

Safety Plan

[illegible]

Notes

This image shows a full page of blank, lined paper. It features approximately 20 horizontal blue lines spaced evenly across the page, typical of standard notebook paper. The lines are thin and light blue, set against a plain white background. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the page.