



Impact of Changing Immigration Policies on IRC Clients: Frequently Asked Questions

*The IRC has created resources for clients in the U.S. We hope this helps people better understand their rights and the immigration process. However, this information is not a substitute for legal advice from a qualified attorney or accredited representative. This information is accurate as of **February 10, 2026** and may change rapidly due to further policy changes and/or court decisions.*

How will new immigration policies affect me?

Immigration policies are changing rapidly and are impacting nearly all noncitizens in the United States. Each person's situation is unique and only an immigration lawyer or Department of Justice-accredited legal representative can advise you on your personal situation and options. Below is some general information that may help point you in the right direction. But most importantly, always ask a licensed legal practitioner for advice about your personal situation.

I am a refugee. Am I at risk of losing my protection or being deported based on new immigration policies?

Refugee status is permanent. However, on November 21, 2025, the US government issued a new policy that requires review and potential reinterview of refugees who were admitted to the US between January 20, 2021, and February 21, 2025. If you entered the US as a refugee during this time frame, it is recommended you consult with an immigration lawyer about your case and how to prepare for a potential interview. You can find more information [here](#).



I am from one of the countries on the “travel ban” list. Am I at risk of losing my protection or being deported based on new immigration policies?

On December 2, 2025, the US government issued a new policy that requires review and potential reinterview of all individuals who entered the US on or after January 20, 2021 from one of the 19 “travel ban countries.” The policy was expanded on January 2, 2026 to include an additional 20 countries. If you are a national of one of these countries and entered the US on or after January 20, 2021, you may wish to consult with an immigration lawyer about your case. You can find more information [here](#).



I have Temporary Protected Status (TPS) or Humanitarian Parole (Parolee). Am I at risk of losing my protection or being deported based on these new policies?

The US government has terminated TPS for many countries that were previously designated. If TPS is terminated, those who currently have TPS will not be able to renew their TPS or work authorization and may be subject to detention and/or removal. Please check [here](#) to review an up-to-date list of countries that remain designated for TPS and the applicable dates of validity for each.



Parole has been terminated for many individuals who entered the US with humanitarian parole. If you currently have parole status you should urgently seek legal assistance to assess whether you can seek re-parole or explore alternative legal options and protection from deportation.

What documents should I carry with me?

Note: It is recommended to always carry original documents or paper copies with you. Make sure you have extra copies in a safe place at home.

Status	Documents to Carry
If you have <u>current immigration status</u>	<p>Always carry documentation that provides proof of your immigration status in the US, such as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. <u>I-551</u> proof of Lawful Permanent Residence (Green Card)2. <u>I-94</u> proof of lawful entry or stamped passport or other travel document with visa/entry stamp3. <u>Employment Authorization Card</u> (work permit)4. <u>I-797</u> Approval Notice for your immigration status5. <u>State Issued driver's license</u>—only if your state requires current immigration status to obtain a driver's license
If your <u>status is pending</u> (meaning you have applied for an immigration benefit or protection but do not yet have an outcome in your case)	<p>Carry <u>copies of receipts from USCIS (I-797)</u>.</p> <p>Note: having a pending application for status may not protect you from detention or removal.</p>
If you are <u>in removal proceedings and do not have an employment authorization card</u>	<p>Carry a copy of your <u>Notice of Hearing</u>, any <u>receipt</u> you may have for applications you have filed, or <u>parole notice</u> (if applicable).</p>
If you are <u>undocumented</u>	<p>DO NOT carry copies of your national identification or national passport as they can be used against you in immigration court.</p> <p>Note: You should not carry any false documents or documents that belong to someone else.</p>
If you are <u>undocumented</u> or your <u>status is pending</u> , you are <u>not in removal proceedings, AND you have been in the U.S. for 2 years or longer</u>	<p>Carry <u>proof of your physical presence</u> in the U.S. for 2+ years to protect yourself from expedited removal.</p> <p>Note: this does not fully protect you from detention or deportation but might protect you from expedited removal.</p> <p>This could include copies of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proof of filing taxes for the last three years (only if valid ITIN or Social Security # used)• Lease or rental documents• Utility bills• Your or your children's school records• Any other documents you may have that prove you have been in the U.S. for over 2 years

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS!

All people living in the United States, regardless of immigration status, have rights under the U.S. Constitution.

If you are stopped or questioned by the police or by an immigration officer, remember that **you have the following rights:**

- **You may refuse to speak with them.** You do not have to say where you were born or how you entered the U.S.
- If you are not a U.S. citizen and an immigration officer requests your papers, you must show them if you have them with you. Always carry your immigration documents with you. **If you do not have immigration papers, say you want to remain silent.**
- If you are in your home, **you do not need to allow law enforcement agents in unless they present a judicial warrant, signed by a judge or magistrate.**
- You have the **right to speak with a lawyer.**
- **Before you sign anything, talk to a lawyer.**
- **Carry a Know Your Rights Red Card in your language** and show it if an immigration officer stops you.

Please use the links below to **find more information** on how to protect your rights:



[ILRC Red Cards](#)



[Wehaverights.us](#)

To prepare for emergencies, including detention or separation from family and loved ones:

The [**ReadyNow!**](#) app is a free and secure mobile app designed to help immigrants prepare for possible detention and act quickly in moments of crisis by quickly alerting friends and family with important information they need to act fast and help you if you are detained by immigration authorities. The app is available in multiple languages.

1. **One-click emergency alert system.** The Alert Button instantly notifies your designated emergency contacts and legal aid provider with your emergency plans in the event you are detained by immigration authorities.
2. **Simplified emergency planning.** Your Emergency Plan is a series of custom messages to send to your support network in the event you are detained by immigration authorities.
 - First, create a legal support message. This will be sent to your immigration attorney if you have one. If you do not have one, you can opt in to share your information with a pro bono network of attorneys.
 - Second, create a personal safety message for close friends and family. This will contain the information they need to locate and advocate for you. ReadyNow! recommends you include the name and contact information of your lawyer (if you have one), your A-number and link to the ICE online detainee locator so your loved ones can find you, any critical health information, and the location of your important documents.
 - Third, create additional separate messages for childcare, elderly care, pet care, and unexpected work absences. Each of these messages, if you select to create them, will be sent to specified contacts.

Note that you may wish to share your emergency plans with family and friends before hitting the Alert Button. The ReadyNow! app provides an option to share a copy of the emergency plans with key contacts in advance.

3. **Connection to legal support.** When setting up your emergency plan, you will have the option to give your permission to share your information with a national network of immigration legal service providers and advocates who are responding to emergencies. If you choose this option and you activate the Alert Button, your information will instantly be shared with the national legal support network, which will attempt to connect you with a trusted legal representative. Please note that choosing this option does not guarantee that you would be placed with a lawyer in the event of detention, as it will depend on availability, your location, and the specific legal need.

Privacy and security protections. All data is encrypted, stored only on the user's device, and deleted after an alert is sent, preventing access by government officials if the phone is seized.

ReadyNow! is available now for free download on both the [Apple App Store](#) and [Google Play](#).

Additional information and resources you may wish to share with your family and friends to prepare for potential detention and help them respond effectively can be found in "[5 Things You Can Do if Loved One is Detained by ICE or Border Patrol](#)".



How Can I Get Legal Assistance and Other Support?

Speak to an immigration lawyer or Department of Justice-accredited representative about your options as an immigrant in the United States. Contact a private immigration attorney or a non-profit immigration legal service provider to understand your options.

You can search for a private immigration attorney in their area through the [American Immigration Lawyers Association](#) or the [Asylum Seeker Advocacy Project \(ASAP list of private attorneys\)](#). The [National Immigration Legal Service Directory](#) also has a list of nonprofit immigration legal service providers nationwide searchable by area. Due to high demand, finding help quickly from a legal service provider right away can be challenging.

You might also reach out to your local [Rapid Response Network of Hotlines](#) for emergency support, as these networks often **include broader range of community supports**.

Avoid Immigration Scams!

Request the qualifications of the immigration attorney or DOJ accredited representative who is helping you.

- Remember that only immigration lawyers and accredited representatives can provide you with legal advice. Beware of *notarios* or public notaries who are not authorized or qualified to provide immigration advice. They will waste your time and money and can put you and your case at great risk.
- Before you hire someone to help you with your case, ask the professional for their qualifications. Is the person an attorney or accredited representative? How much experience does the person have in immigration law? Click this link for more information on [Immigration Scams](#).



Please use the links below to find **legal assistance** in your city:

Immigration Advocates Network	American Immigration Lawyers Association	ASAP list of private attorneys	Rapid Response Network of Hotlines	ImportaMi (for youth who entered the US without a parent or legal guardian)
				