



**ICNY**  
Interfaith Center of New York

# Community Response to ICE Arrest: A Step-by-Step Guide

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*Paul Visiting St. Peter in Prison*, by Filippino Lippi (1482),  
at Santa Maria del Carmine ([Wikimedia Commons](#))

Friends, families, and faith leaders face the increasingly urgent **need to respond to ICE arrest and detention** of **community members**. Documented and English-speaking allies (like many clergy) often play a crucial role in coordinating support.

Access to clergy and religious services—like access to lawyers—is a **codified legal right**, making it especially valuable for engaged faith leaders to work or **volunteer in ministries** serving detained immigrants, who might otherwise have little access to support or information for seeking release.

This guide walks through some key steps for faith leaders assisting community members in immigration detention, including locating a detained member, coordinating assistance, and supporting applications for release like bail, parole, and habeas corpus.

Please see below for step-by-step guidelines and links to additional information on the following topics:

1. **Locating the member's place of detention** (pg. 3)
2. **Helping secure legal representation** (pg. 4)
3. **Starting a community fundraiser to cover costs** (pg. 5)
4. **Supporting bail applications** (pg. 6)
5. **Exploring release through habeas corpus** (pg. 6)
6. **Seeking humanitarian parole** (pg. 7)
7. **Arranging visits** (pg. 8)
8. **Depositing money in detainee commissary funds** (pg. 9)

The guide also discusses **advance preparation** (pg. 9) communities should consider in anticipation of potential ICE arrest of at-risk members.

*This is a part of a larger guide for faith communities striving to be **sanctuaries for immigrants**. Consult the full guide for adjacent issues like **how to manage congregational spaces and deliver religious and social services a manner that minimizes the risk of ICE raids** or other immigration enforcement actions; as well as **how to more effectively advocate for policies that keep communities safe from ICE**.*

# 1. Locate the member using the ICE detainee locator

ICE operates a [website](#) through which you can identify a detainee's location, based either on their A-number or biographical information.

### Search by A-Number

If you know the detainee's A-Number, ICE recommends you use the A-Number search. The A-Number must be exactly nine digits long. If the A-Number has fewer than nine digits, please add zeros at the beginning. You are also required to select the detainee's correct Country of Birth. (\* Required Field)

A-Number: \*

  

Country of Birth: \*

### Search by Biographical Information

When searching by name, a detainee's first and last names are required and must be an exact match (e.g., John Doe will not find Jon Doe or John Doe-Smith). When inputting a hyphenated last name into the Online Detainee Locator System, please include hyphen in order for the locator to find the individual (e.g., Doe-Smith). You are also required to select the detainee's Country of Birth. (\* Required Field)

First Name: \*

  

Last Name: \*

  

Country of Birth: \*

  

Month:  Day:  Year:

<https://locator.ice.gov>

Once you've identified the location, search for the detention center in the [ICE facilities directory](#). The page for each site should outline access rules for lawyers, clergy, and other visitors, as well as instructions for how to send messages to detainees, post bonds, or deposit money into their commissary accounts.

(Access rules for ICE detention facilities are fragmented partly because most are run by [private, for-profit prison companies](#). [More on this in future guides.](#))

## 2. Help secure legal representation

Ideally, the community will have access to a lawyer who can either directly assist the detained member or make a referral.

However, finding lawyers servicing locations in which the member is being detained may be challenging, as ICE detention centers tend to be quite remote. Immigration Advocates Network hosts a **directory through which users can search for legal service providers that serve specific facilities.**

**IMMIGRATION ADVOCATES NETWORK**

Choose Language ▾

### National Immigration Legal Services Directory

Welcome to the National Immigration Legal Services Directory. Use the options below to search for immigration legal services providers by state, county, or detention facility. Only nonprofit organizations that provide free or low-cost immigration legal services are included in this directory. If you have questions, please see our list of [frequently asked questions](#) or email us at [directory@immigrationadvocates.org](mailto:directory@immigrationadvocates.org).

+ Add Organization | Print

Search by Zip Code  **Go**      Search by Detention Facility  **Go**

#### Search by State

<https://www.immigrationadvocates.org/legaldirectory>

Many pro bono immigration lawyers are currently operating at capacity, which means that immigrants often have to pay for private legal representation. Immigration-legal scams are extremely common, making it crucial to confirm whether someone holding themselves out to be a legal service provider is actually an attorney. You should always conduct a basic google search for the lawyer's name to ascertain their role and organizational affiliation before hiring them. Also consider using resources like [American Immigration Lawyers Association search engine](#) , [National Immigration Project Members Directory](#), and [Refugee and Immigrant Fund List of Legal Providers](#).

The offices of many elected representatives have dedicated caseworkers who can provide some legal support. Try reaching out to the offices of any pro-immigrant [Senator](#) or [House Representative](#), as well as [city- and state-](#) level electeds, to seek assistance. Consider calling and writing to them with the following script:

My name is [name], a [position] at [community], a [congregation or organization type] of [number of people served] in your district. One of our members was taken by ICE on [date] while [occasion], and we would like immediate assistance. Please reach us at [contact].

New York residents can use the [mygovnyc.org website](#) to identify all of their city, state, and federal representatives.

### **3. Start a community fundraiser and circulate offering plates for the member**

Supporting members in immigration detention can be an expensive undertaking that requires the community to pull together its resources. The fund could go to hiring a lawyer, posting bond, depositing money for the community member to use in the detention center commissary, or providing care after release. Consider using not just a [GoFundMe](#) but alternatives for nonprofit causes like [GiveButter](#) or [Chuffed](#).

#### 4. Help the member seek release on a bail bond

Most immigrants who entered the United States on a visa or a parole program and have no criminal records should be eligible to seek **release on a bail bond**. If you can communicate with the detained member, tell them about this right.

The **initial request for bond** should be made made to an ICE detention officer.

If ICE denies bond or sets the amount too high, the detainee can request a **bond hearing** from an immigration judge. You can identify the immigration court and judge with jurisdiction a case by plugging in the noncitizen's "A-Number" and country of origin on the Executive Office of Immigration Review **Automated Case Information website**.

Ideally, a lawyer can represent the detainee at the bond hearing. Many immigration lawyers will charge between \$1,000 to \$3,000 to draft and submit a bond request, as well as to represent the detainee at the hearing.

Bond eligibility and amount are assessed based on whether the detainee poses a "flight risk" or "danger to the community." Family and faith communities can often offer **compelling testimony about the member's connection to the community and good moral character** as evidence against these risks, which can help secure release.

The required bond amount can vary widely, typically between \$1,500 to \$25,000.

#### 5. Explore petitions for a writ of habeas corpus

If the government is detaining the member illegally, they may be eligible for release on a **writ of habeas corpus**.

For instance, the Trump Administration has directed Immigration and Customs Enforcement ("ICE") and Immigration Courts to **deny bond to all undocumented immigrants who entered the country without visa or parole**, including millions who have been living in this country for years without any criminal record. **This policy clearly violates the law, as confirmed by a vast majority of federal courts that have reviewed it in habeas proceedings.**<sup>1</sup> However, legal technicalities often require noncitizens detained

and denied bond under this unlawful policy to file a writ of habeas corpus in federal courts, because administration employees who staff ICE and Immigration Courts will deny bond even to detainees who are legally entitled to it.

Other noncitizens have secured release on habeas after ICE arbitrarily revoked their supervised release agreements during a check-in and re-arrested them, or when noncitizens were arrested in retaliation for exercising constitutionally protected right like free speech.

The writ of habeas corpus must be filed with the federal court of the jurisdiction in which the member is currently being detained. (You can use the [ICE detainee locator](#) to identify where). If the arrest took place in a more immigrant-friendly jurisdiction like New York City, it can be helpful to move quickly to file *before* the detainee is transferred to much more hostile jurisdiction. Conversely, if the detainee has already been moved to Texas, Louisiana, or Mississippi, hiring a lawyer to file a habeas case may be less fruitful.

The lawyer you hire to file the habeas petition should be admitted in the federal court of the jurisdiction where the detention center is located. Many federal litigators will charge between \$5,000 and \$10,000 to file a writ of habeas corpus on behalf of a detainee and represent them in subsequent proceedings.

If it is impossible to retain a lawyer, the [detainee can attempt to make a “pro se” \(self-represented\) filing, and the family/faith community member may be able to file a “Next Friend” petition](#). If you need to do this, you should contact the clerk of the relevant federal district court or the offices of pro-immigrant elected representatives to [seek their assistance](#).

## **6. Consider applying for humanitarian parole**

Detainees with acute humanitarian needs like an urgent medical crisis may be eligible for release on [humanitarian parole](#). As with bond applications, humanitarian parole determinations involve questions about whether detainees might pose a flight risk or danger to the community—something families and faith leaders [can help vouch against](#).

## 7. Arrange for a visit

Visitation can be an invaluable source of both moral support and vital information for someone in immigration detention. Visits from clergy and friends who are American citizens may be the only friendly human contact many detainees have with the outside world, especially if their family members are undocumented or abroad.

Identify the facility at which the member is being held using the [ICE detainee locator](#), then check the visitation rules for the particular detention center on the [ICE website directory](#). Typically, there are different rules for how lawyers, clergy, and family can visit, listed under “Hours of Visitation” tab.

The screenshot displays the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement website. The header includes the agency logo, a search bar, and a "Report Crime" button. The main navigation bar contains "About Us", "Enforcement and Removal Operations", "Homeland Security Investigations", and "Newsroom". The breadcrumb trail shows "ICE > DETAIN > DETENTION FACILITIES". The page title is "Orange County Jail" with "New York City Field Office" on the right. A secondary navigation bar includes "Contacting a Detainee", "Legal & Case Information", "Hours of Visitation" (highlighted), "Sending Items to Detainees", "Press & Media", and "Feedback or Complaints".

**Friends and Family Visits**  
The Orange County Sheriff's Office is pleased to offer pre-scheduled contact visits at the Correctional Facility. Friends and family can register online to arrange their contact visits at the facility. From there, visitors can enter their information and schedule their visit. Once at the facility, check in is expedited and their seat in the visiting room is already reserved. Pre-schedule your visit online.  
Visits can be scheduled by visiting the [Orange County Jail website](#).  
Video visit: Visitors will need to [register for an account](#).

**Attorney Visits**  
Legal representatives of detainees are authorized to visit their clients  
7 days a week, in person between 8 a.m. and 10 p.m. or  
Via video visiting <https://ocjailvisit.orangecountygov.com/app>

A list of pro bono (free) legal organizations will be posted in all detainee housing units and other appropriate areas. This list shall be updated quarterly. If a detainee wishes to see a representative or paralegal from that organization, it is the detainee's responsibility to contact them for an appointment.

**Legal Calls or Video Teleconferencing**  
Legal Calls or video visits can be scheduled by contacting the Orange County Jail Visiting Officer at (845) 291-4033 or via email at [jaivisiting@orangecountygov.com](mailto:jaivisiting@orangecountygov.com).

**Consular Visits**  
Consular officials may meet with their detained nationals at any time. It is requested that prior arrangements be made with the ICE Supervisory Deportation Officer to the extent possible, and that consular officials bring appropriate credentials when they come to the facility. The ICE Supervisory Deportation Officer for this facility can be reached at (845) 291-7515.

**Clergy Visits**  
Clergy may visit detainees at any time but must make prior arrangements with the Chaplain's Office.

### [Visitation rules for Orange County Jail in New York](#)

## 8. Send Commissary funds

Conditions in ICE detention facilities are generally **inhumane, and many detainees are forced to purchase basic necessities like meals, soaps, and painkillers from the commissaries** operated by the for-profit prison companies which typically run the detention centers themselves. Instructions on how to deposit money into detainees' commissary funds can be found on the page for the detention center on the **ICE website directory**, typically under the "Sending Items to Detainees" tab.

The screenshot shows the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement website. The header includes the U.S. Department of Homeland Security logo, the text "U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement", a search bar, and a "Report Crime" button. The navigation menu includes "About Us", "Enforcement and Removal Operations", "Homeland Security Investigations", and "Newsroom". The breadcrumb trail is "ICE > DETAIN > DETENTION FACILITIES". The main heading is "Delaney Hall Detention Facility" with "Newark Field Office" on the right. A tabbed interface shows "Sending Items to Detainees" as the active tab. The content area contains the following text:

Letters sent to detainees must include the last four digits of the detainee's A-number (File Number), plus the sender's name and address. To enhance the safety of the facility, all incoming mail is subject to screening for contraband. The mail is not read upon opening, only inspected by the delivery officer. Detainees may send mail from the facility. Detainees may seal their outgoing letters and place them in the provided receptacle. All incoming mail will be delivered to the detainee, and outgoing mail will be routed to the proper postal office within 24 hours of receipt by facility staff. A mail pick-up and delivery schedule are posted in all housing units.

Detainees are allowed to purchase stamps for use. Generally, there is no limit to the amount of correspondence detainees may send at their own expense. Indigent detainees (those who have no means of financial support and no funds in their facility account) will be provided postage allowance at government expense.

When detainees depart the facility or are transferred to another facility, only their legal mail will be forwarded to them. General correspondence will be endorsed "Return to Sender" and returned to the post office.

Money is not to be given directly to the detainee. Money can be placed on the detainee's account by calling Access Corrections at 1-866-345-1884, or via the [Access Corrections website](#) and reference detainee name and A number. Detainees are cautioned not to have cash sent to them in the mail.

Detainees may submit a request to receive property at the facility for release. Once approved, drop-off times for property are as follows:

- Monday, Wednesday, Friday - 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.
- Saturday, Sunday, and Holidays - 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The total amount of property in storage may not exceed 40 lbs. The facility will only accept personal clothing items for the detainee. No items of value or clothing for anyone other than the detainee will be accepted. The following items will not be accepted during property drop-off: Electronic devices (cell phones, laptops, tablets, etc.), Jewelry, or any item considered to be contraband.

### **Fund deposit instructions for Delaney Hall in New Jersey**

## Emergency Planning

It may be helpful for communities to engage in emergency planning in anticipation of ICE detention, even before any arrests takes place. This can be particularly important for immigrants facing high arrest risks, like those **who were recently fingerprinted after a**

**police arrest** or have immigration court hearings and ICE check-ins at **federal buildings in which ICE has been conducting a disproportionate number of arrests**. In such circumstances, you should encourage the member to:

- Memorize at least one phone number—ideally of a lawyer who can represent them in immigration proceedings, but at least of a documented family member, friend, or faith leader who can help coordinate support. ICE typically confiscates personal phones, so being able to recall a phone number can be crucial for reaching the outside world.
- Download the **ReadyNow app**, which helps noncitizens at the risk of ICE detention with emergency planning, including outreach to emergency contacts, connection to legal support, and advance instructions for childcare, finances, and personal safety.
- Make **child custody arrangements** as necessary, prioritizing the designation of emergency guardians.
- Consider getting in touch with a pro-immigrant elected representative, especially if the person at the risk of detention does not have legal representation. The noncitizen can also pre-fill a **privacy waiver** that authorizes caseworkers from the office to access any legal information that might be helpful.

American citizen clergy should also consider:

- **Accompanying immigrants to court** and ICE check-ins.
- Registering themselves as a minister or chaplain at nearby ICE detention centers for conducting pastoral visits, even if none of their own community members are currently detained. Catholic Prison Ministries coordinates **immigration detention ministries**, and members of other faith traditions should consider starting similar programs within their own denominations.

**Questions? Please contact ICNY Chief Counsel Eugene Nam at [eugene@interfaithcenter.org](mailto:eugene@interfaithcenter.org).**