

What to Do if ICE Agents Arrive at Our Place of Worship

Use this checklist to ensure your faith community responds effectively, legally, and compassionately if U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents – or law enforcement officers who may work with ICE – arrive. Train staff and volunteers on these steps to ensure everyone is prepared.

PREPARE BEFORE ICE ARRIVES

- Establish a response team** with assigned roles (e.g., spokesperson, legal liaison, recorder).
- Train all staff and volunteers** on legal rights, protocols, and de-escalation techniques.
- Learn the difference** between an administrative and judicial warrant.
- Partner with legal counsel** and immigrant advocacy organizations for support.
- Designate public and private areas** within the building and clearly communicate these boundaries to staff.

WHEN ICE AGENTS ARRIVE

- Your trained spokesperson** should approach the agents respectfully to de-escalate tensions.
- Ask for identification** (name, badge number, and agency affiliation).
- Request a warrant** then verify that it is signed by a judge (not just an ICE official) and specifies the name(s) of the individual(s) and area(s) to be searched.
- Verbally deny access** to private areas – politely but firmly – unless a judicial warrant explicitly permits entry.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS DURING THIS PROCESS

Do not obstruct agents
Avoid actions that could be interpreted as interfering. Never provide false information.

Ensure privacy
Protect the confidentiality of individuals and do not share personal information.

Document everything
Log all communications and actions taken during the incident.

Maintain composure
Respond with compassion and dignity, reflecting your community's values.

WARRANT TYPES

Judicial warrant
VALID – If the warrant is signed by a Judge or Magistrate Judge, review it carefully and consult legal counsel before granting access.

Administrative warrant
NOT VALID – If the warrant is signed by an officer, director, or anyone else other than a judge, politely explain that ICE cannot enter private areas without a judicial warrant.

Go to [ACLU-WI.org/Warrant](https://www.aclu-wi.org/Warrant) to view examples of a judicial warrant and administrative warrant.

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Legal counsel

Immigrant advocacy partner

Local media contact

Response team leader

Spokesperson

Recorder

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

ACLUWI



ACLU-WI.org/KYR

DURING THE ENCOUNTER

- Remain calm** and try to de-escalate despite being harassed or intimidated. Do not run or resist.
- Inform affected individuals of their rights** to remain silent, to decline to answer questions without a lawyer, and to sign nothing without legal advice.
- Contact your legal counsel** immediately for guidance.
- Activate your response team** for coordination, inform senior leadership, and alert local immigrant advocacy organizations and community networks.
- Avoid providing any information** to ICE about individuals unless legally required.
- Document details of the interaction** including date, time, and location, names and badge numbers of agents, and any documents presented or actions taken.
- Take photos or videos** without interfering with agents.

AFTER ICE LEAVES

- Support affected individuals** by offering emotional, spiritual, and legal support to anyone targeted.
- Connect immigration attorneys** or legal aid organizations with affected individuals.
- Provide a safe space** for those impacted to recover and regroup.
- Debrief with staff and volunteers** to review the incident and identify areas for improvement.
- Update the response plan** based on lessons learned.
- Share the incident** (with consent) with the congregation and trusted media to raise awareness.
- Mobilize advocacy efforts** for immigrant rights and policy change.

PREPARE FOR POSSIBLE ARREST

People at risk of arrest should **memorize the phone numbers** of their family and lawyer. They should also share their **immigration number** (“A Number”) with their family to help them find each other. It’s important to **make emergency plans** if they have children or take medication.

This is not intended as legal advice. Please seek your own legal counsel.