



LOS ANGELES COUNTY
**CONSUMER &
BUSINESS AFFAIRS**



LA County Office of Immigrant Affairs

LAC4you

Your Rights. Your Resources. Your Future.



FAMILY PREPAREDNESS

Office of Immigrant Affairs

Our Mission:

To drive forward policies, strategies and programs that realize immigrant equity. We envision a County where every immigrant has the ability to equitably pursue the same opportunities available to native-born Angelenos.



3.4 million

Immigrants in LA County



Purpose

This toolkit provides information and resources to help individuals understand their rights and access support services in Los Angeles County. It is designed to connect people with reliable guidance, assistance programs, and organizations that can help in times of need.

Overview

Section 1: Your Family

- Childcare
- Pets

Section 2: Your Money

- Bank Accounts
- Final Paycheck

Section 3: Property

- Vehicles
- Rental Agreements
- Abandoned Property

Section 4: Know Your Rights

Section 5: Legal Resources





Taking care of your family often means planning for situations you hope never happen. To help, we created this toolkit offering clear, practical guidance to help immigrant families prepare ahead of time and make informed choices about their responsibilities and household needs. Having a plan in place can help reduce uncertainty and make it easier to share important information with the people you trust.

*The following information is not intended to be individualized legal advice. It is up to you to understand your rights, and your choice to exercise them or not. This guide is current as of 3/25/2026.
Information is subject to change.*

Your Family Childcare



WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW:

If you become temporarily unable to care for your child, it's important to plan ahead.

WHAT TO PREPARE:

1. Choose a trusted back-up caregiver

Pick an adult you and your child trust. Talk with them in advance about:

- How long they may need to care for your child
- Expectations and responsibilities
- How expenses will be handled

2. Decide what type of plan works for you

In California, there are a few ways to prepare:

- **Caregiver Affidavit (Informal agreement):** An informal arrangement where you share your wishes with a trusted caregiver. This option does not require going to court or notarization.
- **Guardianship (Formal Agreement):** A legal court process that allows another adult to care for your child if needed.
 - Traditional guardianship: The caregiver has full decision-making authority while the guardianship is active.
 - Joint guardianship (new CA law in 2026): You and the caregiver share decision-making, and it is easier for parents to end the arrangement when they are able to resume care.

You can prepare ahead by completing a form ([GC-211](#)) to nominate who you want as your child's guardian if needed.

Your Family Childcare



(Continued...)

Please Note: A power of attorney can help someone manage finances, but it cannot transfer custody of a child in California.

CHILDCARE PLAN CHECKLIST:

- Write down your child's medical information
 - Medical conditions or allergies
 - Medications and dosage
 - Doctor and health insurance information
 - Keep copies with important documents, at school, and with the caregiver

- Make sure your child has a passport
 - U.S.-born children: apply at travel.state.gov
 - Children born abroad: contact the appropriate embassy or consulate

- Update emergency contacts at school and childcare providers

- Talk to your children about the plan
 - Reassure them they will be cared for and explain who will help if you can't.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Immigrant Legal Resource Center - Step by Step Family Preparedness Plan](#)
- [Public Counsel - Family Preparedness Booklet](#)
- [Family Preparedness Care Package – We Are One](#)

Your Family Pets



WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW:

The Los Angeles County Department of Animal Care and Control (DACCC) is helping care for pets affected by deportation operations by providing:

- Emergency shelter for pets
- Pet food and supplies
- Medical treatment and care

These services are available in all DACCC service areas. Pets can be brought to any of the 7 Animal Care Centers by friends, neighbors, or relatives.

- locator.lacounty.gov/animal/shelters

24-Hour Support Lines

- North County: (661) 940-4191 (for Castaic, Lancaster, Palmdale ACCs)
- South County: (562) 940-6898 (for Agoura, Baldwin Park, Carson/Gardena, and Downey ACCs)

WHAT TO PREPARE:

Immigration Enforcement Checklist for Pets: 



For more information and resources:

animalcare.lacounty.gov/dacc-support-services



Your Money Bank Accounts

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW:

Deportation does not automatically result in the seizure or closure of a non-citizen's bank accounts. However, managing these accounts from abroad can be challenging.

WHAT TO PREPARE:

- **Appoint an Authorized Signer or Power of Attorney:** Designate a trusted individual to manage your bank accounts on your behalf. This person can withdraw funds, pay bills, and transfer money as needed.
- **Maintain Online Banking Access:** Ensure you have secure online access to your accounts, allowing you to monitor transactions and manage funds remotely.
- **Transfer Funds to International Accounts:** If possible, transfer your funds to a bank account in your home country. Be aware of potential fees and processing times associated with international transfers.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Appleseed's Deportation Preparation Manual for Immigrant Families](#)
- [Havenservices.org/news/deportation-and-finances](#)

Your Money

Final Paycheck

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW:

In the state of California, all employees who are fired or laid off must be paid all owed wages on their last day of work.

When an employee quits without giving at least 72-hour notice, all final wages must be paid no later than 72 hours after their last day of work.

Employees may request their final paycheck be mailed to a designated address. The date the employee's final wages are mailed will be considered the date the employee was paid.

WHAT TO PREPARE:

- **Confirm Payment Details:** Make sure your employer has your correct mailing address or direct deposit information.
- **Keep Important Information Accessible:** Share your employer's contact information and keep recent pay stubs or records of hours worked available.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Paydays, Pay Periods, and Final wages](#)
- To file a wage complaint call DCBA: 800-593-8222

Property Vehicles

A close-up, front-quarter view of a dark-colored car, likely a sedan, parked on a paved road. The car's headlights, grille, and front bumper are visible. The background shows a blurred road and green foliage, suggesting an outdoor setting.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW:

Leaving a vehicle unattended for a long period can create unexpected costs. Planning ahead can help you avoid continued loan or lease payments, insurance charges, registration fees, or parking violations.

WHAT TO PREPARE:

- Find out if you own your car, lease your car or if you own your car but have a car loan.
- If you **own your car**, you may sell it or export it. Exportation can be complicated, so it may be easier for you to sell your car and buy a new car in your destination country.
- If you **lease your car**, you may be able to end the lease, return the car, transfer the lease to someone else, or sell the car and pay off the lease.
- If you have a **car loan**, you can pay off the loan, sell the car and use the money to pay the loan, return the car to the lender, or sell it to someone who takes over the loan (with lender approval).
- If you **sell or surrender your car**, cancel your car insurance and registration and take your license plates to the Department of Motor Vehicles.
- Whether you own or lease your car consider checking with your original car dealer or another certified car dealer to see what they can do.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Checklist: Cars, Car Loans, and Car Leases](#)

Property Rental Agreements



WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW:

Deportation can affect your housing situation, especially if you are renting. It is important to understand your rental agreement and communicate with your landlord as early as possible.

WHAT TO PREPARE:

- If you have a written lease, the lease terms control how and when it can be ended and what happens to your belongings. If your agreement is not in writing, state and local laws apply.
- Most rental agreements require advance written notice, often 30 days, to end the lease. If a lease ends early, you may still be responsible for rent or finding a replacement tenant. Failing to give proper notice or pay rent can lead to eviction, court judgments, and damage to your credit or the credit of any co-signers.
- Once a lease ends or an eviction begins, your ability to return to the property may be limited. Personal belongings should be removed on time to avoid storage or disposal fees. Planning ahead by arranging for a trusted person to access the home, collect belongings, and forward mail can help prevent problems.
- If family or friends will remain in the home, the lease may be continued, transferred, or replaced with the landlord's permission.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Understanding Residential Leases](#)

Property

Abandoned Property



WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW:

If you have valuables of any kind, it is important to decide how those valuables will be handled in the event that you are detained or deported.

WHAT TO PREPARE:

- Figure out what types of valuables you have, both in your home, car and on your person. This may include: electronics, jewelry, furniture, art, clothing, appliances, identification (license, ID card, passport, birth certificate), photographs or sentimental items.
- Decide what should happen to your belongings:
 - Ship them to your home country
 - Sell them
 - Give them to someone you trust
 - Store them safely
- Share your plan with family and leave written instructions.
 - Consider giving a trusted person limited power of attorney to carry out your plan.
- Factors to keep in mind:
 - Value of item vs. cost of storage; availability of the item in home country; reliance of others remaining in the U.S. for the item; sentimental value; tax consequences of transfer or sale; whether you still owe money on the item.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Checklist: Owned Real Property](#)

Know Your Rights

YOU HAVE CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS:

- **DO NOT OPEN THE DOOR** if an immigration agent is knocking on the door.
- **DO NOT ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS** from an immigration agent if they try to talk to you. You have the right to remain silent.
- **DO NOT SIGN ANYTHING** without first speaking to a lawyer. You have the right to speak with a lawyer.
- If you are outside of your home, ask the agent if you are free to leave and if they say yes, leave calmly.
- **GIVE THIS CARD TO THE AGENT** If you are inside of your home, show the card through the window or slide it under the door.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW:

Everyone has rights, regardless of immigration status.

WHAT TO PREPARE

Talk to everyone in your family (including children) and household to make sure they all know what to do if approached by immigration officials (ICE).

If ICE is at your door:

- You have the right to not open the door for ICE or any police officer without a signed warrant.
 - Judicial Warrant vs Immigration Warrant
- You can ask ICE to slide the search warrant under the door or show it through a window. Make sure the warrant is signed by a judge and has your address on it.

If you encounter ICE:

- You have the right to remain silent and can refuse to answer questions.
- You are not required to give them any personal information about yourself or anyone in your family.
- You have the right to refuse to sign anything before you talk to your lawyer.
- You have the right to speak to your lawyer and the right to make a phone call.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- *Know Your Rights Toolkit* - oia.lacounty.gov/kyr
- Red Cards - ilrc.org/redcards

Legal Resources



- **Office of Immigrant Affairs**
 - (800) 593-8222
 - oia.lacounty.gov
- **Immigrant Defenders Law Center - Rapid Response Legal Resource Hotline:**
 - (213) 833-8283 | M-F 9am-4pm
- **Los Angeles County Public Defender, Immigration Unit:**
 - pubdef.lacounty.gov/services/immigration/
- **Detained Immigrant Bond Fund:**
 - cluejustice.org/detained-immigrant-bond-fund/
- **Los Angeles Lawyer Referral Service:**
 - SmartLaw.org



LOS ANGELES COUNTY
**CONSUMER &
BUSINESS AFFAIRS**



LA County Office of Immigrant Affairs
LAC4YOU
Your Rights. Your Resources. Your Future.



oia.lacounty.gov



320 W. Temple St. RM G-10
Los Angeles, CA 90012



800-593-8222

Follow Us



[lacountydcba](#)

Disclaimer: This guide is not intended to be individualized legal advice. You are responsible for understanding your rights and choosing whether to exercise them. The information is current as of May 13, 2026, and is subject to change