

Advocating for your Rights in the Immigration Process



This guide was prepared and updated by the staff of the Florence Immigrant & Refugee Rights Project and was written for immigrant detainees in Arizona who are representing themselves pro se in their removal proceedings. This guide is not intended to provide legal advice or serve as a substitute for legal counsel. The Florence Project is a nonprofit legal services organization and does not charge for its services to immigrant detainees in Arizona. This guide is copyright protected but can be shared and distributed widely to assist indigent immigrants around the country. All of our guides are available to download on our website: www.firrp.org. We kindly ask that you give credit to the Florence Project if you are adapting the information in this guide into your own publication.

Important Words to Know

Immigration Law has a lot of technical words. Here's a list of some of the words you'll see a lot in this guide and an short explanation of what they mean.

- **Immigration Judge (“Judge”):** this is the person who will make a decision about your case. He or she holds hearings in the courtroom and wears a black robe. This person doesn't work for ICE. It's her job to look at the facts of your case and apply the law fairly.
- **Immigration and Customs Enforcement (“ICE”):** this is the agency that has put you in deportation proceedings and is in charge of detaining you. ICE is part of the Department of Homeland Security, or “DHS.”
- **Government Attorney:** this is the lawyer who represents ICE when you go to your court hearings. He or she sits at the table next to you and also talks to the Judge. It's usually this attorney's job to ask the Judge to order you deported.
- **Deportation:** ICE has put you in deportation proceedings, which are also called “removal proceedings.” If the Judge orders you deported or “removed” from the United States, you will be sent back to the country where you are a citizen and will not be able to return legally to the U.S. for at least ten years.
- **The Florence Project:** this is a group of lawyers and legal assistants who provide free legal help to people without lawyers. The Florence Project wrote this guide to help you understand your case.

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Overview

Many people who have been in immigration detention or who have loved ones who have been detained or deported are angry about their experience and want to speak out. This may happen by contacting the media, government representatives, or advocacy organizations in Washington DC. For example, you may want to speak out about your treatment when you were arrested by the police and transferred to ICE, about the conditions of the detention center where you were held, or about your experience in immigration court. This guide was written to give you some resources and ideas for how you can speak out about your experience.



One question you may be asking is “***could speaking out hurt my immigration case?***” We cannot give you any guarantees either way on this question but there are some potential risks to speaking out while your immigration case is still pending, especially if you are detained.

Your deportation case is a court process where the Immigration Judge will look at the merits of your application and decide if the law allows you to stay in the United States. So, sharing things like the details of how you came to the United States or your criminal history could affect your immigration case if the story is different than what you told the judge or if it reveals information you did not tell the judge previously. It is best to seek the advice of an attorney if you want to publicize things about your immigration case before doing so. However, speaking out about conditions in detention may have fewer risks and should not affect your immigration case. It is unlikely that the judge will know about any complaints you or loved ones have made about your detention unless you inform him.

The rest of this guide gives you resources you can use to speak out about abuses, concerns, or your experience in immigration detention.

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES & OFFICIALS

ICE Community Hotline

ICE recently created a telephone hotline for detainees or loved ones to call to report abuses or concerns about treatment. You can call **1-888-351-4024**, Monday through Friday between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM and there is an English or Spanish option. Information about this hotline should also be posted in your housing unit.



Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties

The Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties or (“OCRCL”) is a division of the Department of Homeland Security (“DHS”) that is in charge of investigating complaints of civil rights violations, racial profiling or abuse. Filing a complaint with OCRCL is a good way to report abuse to hold the government more accountable and try to change their practices. If you have experienced some form of abuse while arrested, detained, or in court you can file a complaint with OCRCL yourself or have another person send it on your behalf.



Once your complaint is received, OCRCL may refer the case to another agency or may launch an investigation, which can take several months and will depend on how much information you provide with your complaint and how serious it is. They may follow up with you to ask for more information and should respond to you with the outcome of their investigation if you provide your contact information.

The form for filing an OCRCL complaint is attached at the end of this guide and should also be available at your detention center. The form asks you to give a detailed description of what you are complaining about and to attach any documents you have to support your complaint. The form can be mailed, faxed, or emailed to:

Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties
245 Murray Lane, SW
Building 410, Mail Stop #0800

Washington, DC 20528
Phone: (866) 644-8360
Fax: (202) 401-4708
Email: civil.liberties@dhs.gov

You can also make similar complaints to two other departments that do internal investigations of ICE. You can mail or email a letter describing your complaint and call their complaint hotlines:

DHS Office of Inspector General

Attention: Office of Investigations Hotline
245 Murray Drive SW
Building 410/Mail Stop 2600
Washington, DC 20528
Telephone: 1-800-3230-8603
Email: DHSOIGHOTLINE@dhs.gov



ICE Office of Professional Responsibility

Department of Homeland Security
Immigration and Customs Enforcement
Office of Professional Responsibility
P.O. Box 14475
Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Telephone: 1-877-246-8253
Email: Joint.Intake@dhs.gov

Executive Office for Immigration Review



If you have a complaint about your treatment in court by the Immigration Judge, you may want to write a letter to the Executive Office for Immigration Review (“EOIR”) so they are aware of what occurred and can investigate the issue. You should write a letter and include your name and A#, your contact information, a summary of what happened including the date and time, and any other helpful information. The Assistant Chief Immigration Judge will start by listening to the recording of your hearing to see whether there was abuse or mistreatment of

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you. Note, this is NOT a way to have another review of your immigration case! Do not send a compliant if you just disagree with the judge's decision or think you were treated unfairly. This is the address for the current Assistant Chief Immigration Judge overseeing the Florence and Eloy Courts.

Assistant Chief Immigration Judge Jack H. Weil
5107 Leesburg Pike,
Suite 2500
Falls Church, VA 22041
Email: EOIR.IJConduct@usdoj.gov

Members of U.S. Congress

If you are a permanent resident or you or your family has lived in the United States for a long time you may want to contact your local members of Congress to tell them about abuse you suffered or your experience in immigration detention so your representatives in Washington D.C. are



informed about what is happening to detained immigrants in the United States. Among other duties, Congress writes our federal immigration laws and has the power to hold public hearings to oversee the operation of detention facilities. If you are a US citizen or have a US citizen family member who has been impacted by your situation they may be in the best position to contact Congress because of their voting power.

You can contact the US Representative or Senator where you live, even if this is not where you were detained. If you are new to the U.S. you may want to contact the Representative or Senator in the state where you are detained.

Since this information changes every few years, it is best to lookup who your Representative or Senator is by using the telephone book, by calling the U.S. Capital Switchboard at 202-224-3121, or by looking on the internet or having a family member friend look on the internet for you. The internet directories searchable by state are:

- <http://www.house.gov/representatives/>
- http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm

Members of State Legislature

While the State Legislature does not write federal immigration laws, state laws do impact immigration enforcement and state legislators should be informed about your experience, especially in a state like Arizona where the state legislature is very active on immigration issues. You may wish to contact your State legislator, either where you live or where you are detained.

Arizona

- Senate: 1-800-352-8404 / House: 1-800-352-8404
- <http://www.azleg.gov/alisStaticPages/HowToContactMember.asp>
- <http://www.azleg.gov/MemberRoster.asp>

California

- <http://www.legislature.ca.gov>

Arizona Governor

Like the State Legislature, you may want to inform the Governor's office of Arizona about your experience in immigration detention here. Remember it is always good to emphasize if you or your loved ones are US Citizens.



The Honorable Jan Brewer (current Governor)
Governor of Arizona
1700 West Washington
Phoenix, Arizona 85007
Telephone (602) 542-4331
Toll Free 1-(800) 253-0883



NON-GOVERNMENTAL ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS

Along with contacting government officials, you may also want to reach out to organizations that specialize in advocating on behalf of vulnerable groups and work toward

changes in immigration policy and law at the national level. Many of these organizations are looking for stories from people who have been impacted by detention and would appreciate hearing the story of you and your loved one to raise awareness about the system. Below we have listed some organizations in Arizona as well as national organizations.

ARIZONA

American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) – Arizona Chapter

The ACLU of Arizona is always very interested in reporting civil rights violations, racial profiling, or abuses you may have experienced when arrested or while in detention. Depending on their staff resources they may set up an in person visit with you while you are detained or meet with your family member in Phoenix. You can write them a letter at the address below.



American Civil Liberties Union of Arizona
Attention: Immigration Detention Attorney
P.O. Box 17148
Phoenix, AZ 85011
Telephone: 602.650.1854
602-773-6001

Coalición de Derechos Humanos

If you have complaints relating to your treatment by Border Patrol or have a civil rights violation or abuse to report relating to your arrest then you may want to make a report to the Coalición de Derechos Humanos, based in Tucson, Arizona. This organization may also be able to assist you with locating family members who may be in ICE custody or who may have been lost crossing the border.

Coalición de Derechos Humanos
P.O. Box 1286
Tucson, AZ 85702
Telephone: 520.770.1373
Email: coalicion@derechoshumanosaz.net

PUENTE

The PUENTE Movement based in Phoenix, Arizona is interested in receiving complaints relating to civil rights abuses, especially if they involve your arrest in Phoenix by police or ICE.

Telephone: 602.252.1283
Email: info@puenteaz.org

National

Detention Watch Network

The Detention Watch Network is a national coalition of organizations, advocates, former detainees, and impacted family members working to limit the use of immigration detention and ensure the humane treatment of detained immigrants. You can write to them to share your story and also seek help locating a local organization where you live.



Detention Watch Network
1325 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington DC 20005



Women's Refugee Commission

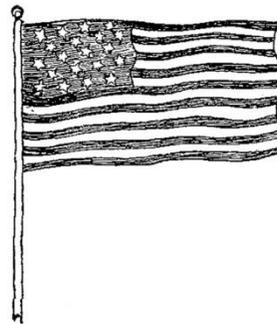
The Women's Refugee Commission works with immigrant women and children and asylum seekers impacted by immigration enforcement policies and detention. They work with government officials and advocates in Washington DC to create better policies and treatment of people in detention. If you are a woman or parent and want to report a complaint relating to your treatment or experience of your family or children you can write to them at the address below to share your story. Please

include in your letter whether they have your permission to use your story to advocate for better policies. They will change your name and any part of your story that would identify you unless you tell them that they can use your personal information. Even if you do not receive a response, your information will be very helpful to the work that they do in Washington, DC.

Women's Refugee Commission
Attention: Detention and Asylum Program
1730 M Street NW
Suite 505
Washington, DC 20036

American Bar Association – Commission on Immigration

The American Bar Association (ABA) Commission on Immigration sometimes tours detention centers to inspect their conditions and recommend improvements to ICE. If you have complaints about abuses or poor conditions you or a family member experienced in detention you can write them a letter and request an investigation.



Commission on Immigration
American Bar Association
740 Fifteenth Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005
Telephone: 202/662-1005
Fax: 202/638-3844
E-mail: immcenter@americanbar.org

Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS)

The Lutheran Immigrant and Refugee Service (LIRS) works with immigrants and refugees in detention and lobbies for better immigration policies in Washington DC with a special focus on releasing people to community programs instead of putting them in detention. You can write them a letter to share your story at:

The Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service
Advocacy Office

122 C St NW #125
Washington, DC 20001
Telephone: 202-783-7509
Email: DC@lirs.org

United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees

The U.N. High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR) assists asylum seekers and refugees around the world. If you are an asylum seeker or survivor of torture or a refugee they may be interested in hearing your story and investigating a claim of abuse in detention.

UNHCR Field Office
1775 K Street NW
Suite 300
Washington, DC 20006



Families For Freedom



Families for Freedom is an organization based in New York City that works with former detainees and family members to change detention and deportation policies. Many former detainees are active in Families for Freedom. They operate a hotline you can call from detention to record your story or complaint. They will use this recording for their advocacy purposes and may share it with the media to raise awareness about detention.

Families for Freedom
Pro Bono telephone code from detention: 1707#

MEDIA AND NEWS OUTLETS



You may want to reach out to the media to see if they will run a story about your experience in immigration detention. Working with the media can be hard and usually reporters work on a very tight schedule with strict limits on what they can write about. They have many pressures pulling at them and may choose not to tell your story even if they sympathize with you personally. Don't be discouraged if your request goes unanswered because it is a big step just to try.

If a reporter does contact you and is interested in your story, it is best to get the advice of an immigration attorney if your immigration case is still pending. Sometimes news articles don't turn out how you wanted them to so it's also a good idea to do your homework about the reporter and make sure she is going to be sympathetic to your case and not cast you or your family in a bad light.

Below are some newspapers in Arizona that sometimes cover immigration detention issues and other newspapers and media outlets that may be good for a story. You should write "Attention Immigration Reporter" as the addressee on the envelope.

Arizona Republic
P.O. Box 1950
Phoenix, AZ 85001
Fax: (602) 444-8933
Email:
newstips@arizonarepublic.com

Arizona Daily Star
4850 S. Park Ave.
Tucson, AZ 85714

Phoenix New Times
PO Box 2510
Phoenix, AZ 85002



Phone: 602-271-0040
Fax: 602-340-8806

Tucson Weekly
P.O. Box 27087
Tucson AZ 85726-7087

Univision Network
50 Fremont Street
41st Floor
San Francisco, CA 94105

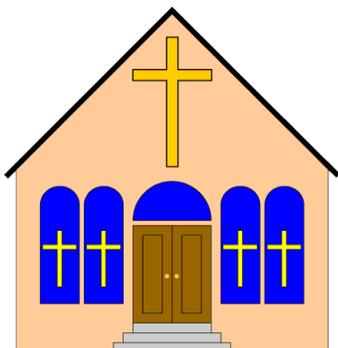
Letter to the Editor

If a reporter isn't interested in your story, you may also want to write a "Letter to the Editor" to the newspaper where you live or a newspaper in Arizona. Usually these are in response to a specific article and give your opinion based on your experience. A Letter to the Editor should be short (less than 200 words) and well written and should say who you are and where you are. If you are currently detained you should make this clear. Your Letter to the Editor may get published in the newspaper. You can start with the papers listed above and put attention "Letter to the Editor" above the address.



PERSONAL CONTACTS & THE INTERNET

Often the best way to speak out about your experience is to look to the contacts and networks you already have. If you or your family is involved in a church or faith community this is a natural place to rally support and tell your story. Most local churches are connected to a national branch that may be very active on immigration issues. Is there a community organization you or your family members are involved with? Do you have friends or an employer who may be connected to organizations or other people who may be influential?



You or your family members may also want to use the Internet to tell your story, either through a blog posting on your own website, making a video to post onto You Tube, or using social media like Facebook or Twitter. Information that is forwarded through email, social media, and the internet can move very fast and reach a lot of people.

