

ARCHDIOCESE OF SEATTLE - IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE MINISTRY

Ideas for Parish Families on How to Respond to Local Immigration Raids

How ICE enforcement activity occurs

Immigration enforcement activities, often called raids or sweeps, can occur in multiple ways. The most common activity is when Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has identified a specific individual or family to detain. ICE will often detain other immigrants when looking for someone specific. A less common activity is when ICE conducts a community sweep during which they seek to detain a large number of specific individuals. In January 2025 in Chicago, a community sweep resulted in approximately 1,000 immigrants being detained. A third type of immigration enforcement activity is a raid, usually at a workplace. In April 2025, ICE conducted a workplace raid at a roofing company in Bellingham and detained 37 workers. Family members may not return to their homes following a raid since home addresses are updated during raids for all those being detained. This increases the level of immediate support families need. ICE often collaborates with federal and local agencies during raids and sweeps.

The following are ideas for responding when your parish community has been impacted by an ICE raid.

Planning for a potential raid

Making plans now for what your parish family could do when parents are detained helps to be prepared as well as alleviate some of the anxiety and fear in our immigrant communities.

- Talk to parishioners ahead of time about the need for the parish family to know how to stay in contact with impacted families to help to ensure you can support family members left behind. Encourage parishioners to contact the parish family immediately if they experience a raid.
- Get updated contact and emergency contact information. It can be difficult after a raid has happened to connect with affected families. Parishes should encourage parents to list alternative adults who have their permission to pick up children from parish activities.
- Encourage the creation of family safety plans and host a Safety Plan workshop from CCS. Gathering important documents is the first step to creating a plan for emergencies like this. For parents, now is the time to consider childcare and guardianship options. Contact your CCS Network Builder to arrange a workshop and/or share the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc's Emergency Planning Guide at <https://www.cliniclegal.org/resources/protecting-your-community/help-immigrants-protect-their-families-clinics-emergency>

On the day of a raid

- Raids can take hours to complete. If you are aware of a raid happening, the presence of a priest or deacon can help console the family. Saying a prayer over the detained family members would mean a great deal to the families. ICE is unlikely to grant access to detained individuals, even for a short prayer.
- Share parish contact information and encourage families to connect as soon as possible with the parish.
- If there are any local secular non-profits or groups present, connect with them and exchange contact information.

In the aftermath of a raid, possible responses include:

- Hold a prayer service or dedicate a Mass for the community affected, even though we should not expect that impacted families will attend.
- Offer a homily on the need for humane treatment of immigrants.
- Take time before or after Masses to speak directly to your immigrant communities.
- Read the WSCC immigration letter published by the bishops at Masses and/or share in your bulletin.
- Visits to families by the pastor or deacon for pastoral support.
- Call on parishioners to accompany people as needed. The Immigrant and Refugee Ministry staff can provide support to your parishioners in doing this.
- Identify any parish family ministries that could help affected families including SVdP Conferences, PREPARES, Welcome Circles, Hispanic Ministry, EMs for the homebound, food banks or meal programs, prayer partners, mental health ministry, etc.
- Coordinate with your Catholic schools. How have their families been affected and what resources and programs do they have in place that could help?
- Coordinate with your CCS Network Builder regarding what support CCS can offer as well as knowing what support is being provided by local nonprofits and other churches, etc. Partner with local nonprofits and organizations that are helping the affected families.
- Consider providing rental and other financial assistance if they lose their jobs because they are afraid to leave their children, or due to the loss of income from a detained parent.
- Contact the Archdiocese's Immigrant and Refugee Ministry and/or Hispanic Ministry for other support:
 - The Hispanic Ministry can offer support to connect with consulates and the support they can provide.
 - Our chaplain at the Tacoma detention center can make connections with family members detained there.
 - There may be some funding available to help parishes respond.
 - There's a variety of resources on our website at <https://archseattle.org/ministries/outreach-ministries/immigrant-refugee-ministry/> for immigrants including your rights when encountering ICE at home, work or elsewhere, talking with kids about deportation, family safety plans, locating someone who is detained, taking care of yourself when family members have been pick up by ICE, etc.

Archdiocese's Immigrant and Refugee Ministry and Hispanic Ministry

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