

## Preparedness Plan for Immigrant Families with Children

These are extraordinary times, and many immigrants feel vulnerable. ICE raids and targeted arrests have increased, making it essential to have a family preparedness plan in place in case of an emergency or separation from children or other loved ones. Because child custody and guardianship laws vary by state, it is important to understand the rules that apply in your state.

If you are concerned about securing access to your property, including bank accounts and other tangible assets, be sure to check with your bank, mortgage lender, auto lender, etc., for best practices on accessing your money and property from abroad.

This guide is not a substitute for legal advice. If you have specific questions about your case, contact an attorney. Our goal is to help families in Oklahoma begin important conversations about how to respond in the event of an immigration emergency.

### Things to Consider:

#### I. Make a Child Care Plan

1. If you have children under 18, choose a guardian to care for them. This person does not need to be a U.S. citizen, but having legal status is recommended. The guardian must be 18 or older.

If you live in Oklahoma, complete and notarize a **Standby Guardianship** form. Rivas and Associates offers this service free of charge—no client relationship required. This document is valid for one year.

The Standby Guardianship form gives your chosen caregiver temporary authority to make decisions about your child's education and medical care and to respond to inquiries from Child Protective Services.

You should also notarize a **Travel Authorization** form giving your caregiver permission to travel with your minor children (under age 16) to reunite with you if you are deported. Rivas and Associates can assist with this as well, free of charge.

Make sure your children have valid passports. The Community Advocate at Rivas and Associates can help you apply for a U.S. passport for your U.S. citizen children. Both

parents typically must sign the application for children under 16; additional documentation may be required if one parent is absent. Passports are required for international travel.

- Write down any medical conditions and medications your child has.
- List key emergency contacts, such as your pediatrician, school counselor, and close relatives, including their phone numbers and other contact information.
- Store all important documents—passports, birth certificates, notarized forms, attorney contact info, Social Security cards, and medical records—in a secure place your caregiver can easily access.

## II. Concerning Property and Other Assets

If your bank offers online banking, download the mobile app now so you can access your funds from abroad. Most banks offer this option. Keep the international customer service number for your bank handy.

For tangible property—such as a home, vehicle, or other physical assets—we can help you complete a **notarized Power of Attorney (POA)** form. This allows you to designate someone you trust to act on your behalf.

A POA authorizes your designated agent to manage:

- Real property
- Tangible personal property
- Stocks and bonds
- Bank accounts and other financial institutions
- Business operations
- Insurance and annuities
- Estates, trusts, and other beneficial interests
- Claims and litigation
- Personal and family maintenance
- Government benefits (including military or civil service)
- Retirement plans and taxes

Reach out to the Community Advocate at Rivas and Associates if you need help preparing a notarized POA for property-related matters.

