

Safety Planning with Immigrant Survivors

January 2025





The information shared is not legal advice or authority. It is for informational purposes only.



Who We Are

The Tahirih Justice Center is a national nonprofit organization serving immigrant survivors of gender-based violence.

Our interdisciplinary, trauma-informed model of service combines free legal services and social services case management with advocacy, training, and education. We partner with the best law firms in the country, deepening and expanding our services using our unique pro bono model.

By amplifying survivors' experiences in communities, courts, and Congress, Tahirih's mission is to create a world in which all people share equal rights and live in safety and with dignity.

Our Services



Legal Services

We represent immigrant women and girls who we believe have a legitimate claim to legal status under U.S. immigration law as survivors of gender-based violence.

Social Services

We connect our clients to shelter, health services, food pantries, and other services so they can gain greater control over their lives.

Forced Marriage Initiative

We provide confidential support to individuals with lawful status to the U.S. who are facing or who have faced a forced marriage in this country or abroad.



Tahirih's three-pronged approach builds a world in which women and girls live in safety and with dignity by:

- Enabling individuals to transform their lives;
- Reframing the issue of violence against women in communities; and
- Changing the law.

ALLIANCE FOR IMMIGRANT SURVIVORS



Coordinators of the Immigration Subcommittee

National Task Force to End
Sexual & Domestic Violence



In times of increased fear and uncertainty our greatest gift to those we serve will be our honesty. Our role is to provide support, work to overcome barriers to accessing rights and resources, and help everyone be prepared.

**Understanding the impact of
fear of deportation on
survivor help seeking behavior.**

Mental & Social Impact



- ‘Chilling effect’ and negative impact on immigrant communities, survivors of crime and their help seeking behavior
- Survivors of crime are at higher risk of harm during and after escaping abusive environments:
 - anxiety and risk that comes from leaving abusive situations,
 - safety of children and families,
 - need to address the short- and long-term negative health outcomes resulting from the abuse
- ‘Chilling effect’ increases a sense of isolation and adds another layer of trauma

Mental & Social Impact



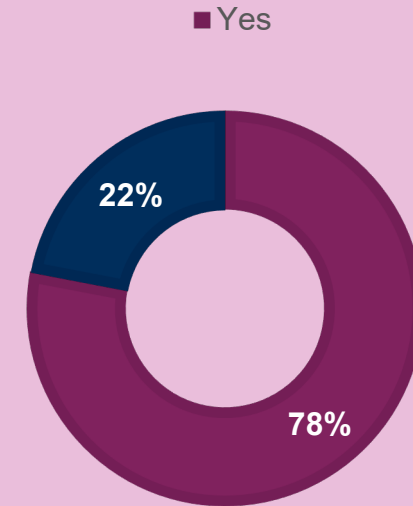
- Advocate and Legal Services Survey regarding immigrant survivors' increased fear and concern about reaching out for help:
 - 715 advocates and attorneys
 - 46 states and the District of Columbia
 - Advocates reported a decrease in immigrant survivors contacting their agencies for assistance
 - Attorneys and advocates working with survivors reported feeling uncertain on how to advise immigrant survivors about what will happen if they call the police or go to court

Mental & Social Impact



Are immigrant survivors sharing with your agency that they have concerns about contacting police?

NUMBER OF SURVIVORS



Mental & Social Impact



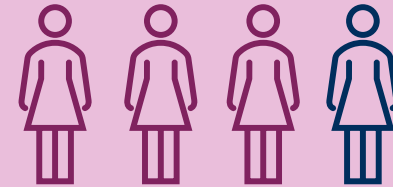
43%

of advocates worked with immigrant survivors who dropped civil or criminal cases because they were fearful to continue with their cases

Mental & Social Impact



3 OUT OF 4 ADVOCATES



**report that immigrant survivors
have concerns about going to court
for a matter related to the
abuser/offender**

Source: [Key Findings: 2017 Advocate and Legal Service Survey Regarding Immigrant Survivors](#)

Safety Planning



Get Legal Advice!



- **Expert Legal Advice from a licensed immigration attorney should be a TOP PRIORITY for all survivors.**
 - The answers to questions like “What should I do?” or “What will happen to my application” or “Could I lose my legal status?” vary widely from person to person because immigration law is complex, and immigrant survivors have additional considerations to take into account.
 - Have local immigration legal resources on hand and at the ready. For help:
 - Reach out to AIS
 - Refer to National Immigration Legal Services Directory

Get Legal Advice Continued



- Advise all immigrant survivors to carry the contact information of their attorney with them at all times.



Share Know Your Rights Info



- Provide Know Your Rights “Red Cards” and advise survivors to familiarize themselves with their rights.
- Go over it with them so they get practice asserting their rights confidently if stopped in public or visited at their home or place of work.
- The Immigration Legal Resource Center (ILRC) provides the [printable “Red Cards”](#) in 14 languages and these can be carried and shown to law enforcement. Advise survivors to carry this at all times.

Know Your Rights Info Continued



➤ KYR highlights include:

- You have the right to remain silent when stopped by police (though some states require you provide your name when asked to identify yourself);
- If you do speak, never lie about your status – anything you say can be used against you;
- If an immigration officer asks to see your papers, you must provide them if you have them with you.
- You have the right to call a lawyer or your family if you are detained, and you have the right to be visited by a lawyer in detention.
- You have the right to have your attorney with you at any hearing before an immigration judge.

Carry Paperwork



- Advise survivors to carry ID or papers at all times.
- If they have a green card, they should already be carrying it with them at all times. *Keep a photo copy at home.
- If they have a pending application for asylum or another form of status or relief advise them to carry their application receipt with the application number on it at all times. *Keep photo copies at home.
- If none of the above apply or they do not yet have a receipt or application number, direct them to legal support ASAP.

Make a plan for property & finances



- Discuss “Power of Attorney”
 - Too often, some or all of a detainee’s belongings are lost, destroyed, or confiscated. Creating a power-of-attorney document allows a trusted designated person to legally take responsibility for and access a survivor’s property and finances when they are unable to. That way, if they are detained or deported, their money and belongings can remain safe.
 - This power can be abused, so work with survivors to choose carefully who they might designate with “Power of Attorney” if this is something they want to do.

Make a plan for children



- This can be an emotional and sensitive topic. But it is an essential part of safety planning with immigrant survivors.
- Discuss who they would trust as legal guardian of their children in the event that they are detained or deported.
 - Step-by-Step Family Preparedness Plan/ Caregiver affidavit:
<https://www.ilrc.org/resources/step-step-family-preparedness-plan>
- Ensure children have passports:
<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel.html>

Contact sheet & ICE Locator



- Advise survivors to create a “key contacts sheet” for their children and other appropriate folks so they have contact information for one another in case the survivor is detained or deported and cannot be reached. This should include the contact information of their attorney and any designated guardian and/or individual with POA.
 - Recommend they share this with their attorney.
- Share the ICE Detainee Locator link with survivors and advise them to include this link on the contact sheet, along with pertinent details, and share with those they trust.



Deep breath.

Remember taking care of yourself is as important as taking care of and advocating for others.

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Córazon Norte: Toolkit for Immigration & Human Rights Advocates

As part of their motto, "Healing Systems, Supporting Hearts", Corazon Norte created a free downloadable toolkit featuring an Emotional Self-Preservation Guide to support you and your wellness through political and policy changes impacting the communities you serve.

Resources

- [Alliance for Immigrant Survivors](#)
- [Advocate and Legal Service Survey](#)
- [National Immigration Legal Services Directory](#)
- [Know Your Rights “Red Cards”](#)
- [Family Preparedness Plan \(ILRC\)](#)
- [ICE Detainee Locator](#)
- [Corazon Norte Toolkit for Immigration and Human Rights Advocates – A Self-Preservation Guide](#)



Thank you!

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