



Your family member is held at MDC Brooklyn

Nine questions, answered in plain words. One question for each page.

Draft for attorney review. This guide is not to be handed out until an attorney has reviewed it. General information, not legal advice.

QUESTION 1

How do I find my family member?

Take a breath. You are doing the right thing by asking. Start here, in this order.

- 1 Get the A-number.** It is 8 or 9 digits after the letter A. It is on most immigration papers and sometimes on a wristband. If you do not have it, ask when your family member calls.
- 2 Search the ICE locator: [locator.ice.gov](https://locator.ice.dhs.gov).** Use the country of birth and the A-number. Or use the country of birth, first and last name, and date of birth, spelled exactly right.
- 3 Not there yet?** Try again in a few hours. People arrested in New York City are usually processed at an ICE office in Manhattan for about a day, then moved to a facility in New York or New Jersey, and sometimes to another state.
- 4 If they are at MDC Brooklyn:** the address is 80 29th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11232. The information line is **718-840-4200**.

Write it here

Full name	_____
A-number	_____
Date and place of arrest	_____
Where they are held now	_____
Lawyer and phone	_____
Next court date	_____

Usually the detained person calls you, and people in ICE detention generally cannot receive incoming calls. Keep your phone on and answer unknown numbers.

**QUESTION 2**

What do I do in the first 72 hours?

You cannot do everything today. Do these in order and ask for help.

- ☐ **Get the A-number** and write it down in two places.
- ☐ **Find a lawyer.** The New York City immigration legal line is **800-354-0365**, Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., free, with interpreters. Question 7 explains the free lawyers for people in detention.
- ☐ **Check the court case.** Call the court information line **800-898-7180** (English and Spanish, automatic) or search at **acis.eoir.justice.gov** with the A-number. It gives the next hearing date and place.
- ☐ **Keep copies of every paper:** passport, ID, Notice to Appear, work permit, receipts, court notices, proof of how long they have lived here. One folder, plus one copy with someone you trust.
- ☐ **Write down what happened:** date, place, who arrested them, whether they showed a warrant. Do it now, while you remember.
- ☐ **Plan for children and home:** who picks up the children, who pays the rent and the bills. Tell that person today.
- ☐ **Report the arrest** to the Immigrant Defense Project helpline: **212-725-6422**.
- ☐ **Tell one person you trust.** You can also call us: **(561) 445-6141**.

Please avoid. Do not pay anyone who promises to “fix” the case fast. A notary public is not a lawyer. Do not sign papers before a lawyer reads them. Do not post the case on social media without the person’s consent.

**QUESTION 3**

How can I visit and send money?

Visits**CONFIRM WITH MDC BEFORE YOU GO**

Who can visit. Your family member must add you to their visitor list. The Bureau of Prisons (BOP) approves each visitor with a form and a background check. Ask them to add you early. If your own immigration situation worries you, talk to a lawyer or to us before you fill in the form.

When. Visits for people held by immigration are on **Saturdays, 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.** Each housing unit has its own turn: ask for yours at **718-840-4200**. ICE's own page lists 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. by housing unit, and a congressional visit in May 2026 reported Saturdays only, so always confirm before you go.

The form (BP-A0629). Your family member fills in their part and sends it to you. You can [download it here](https://bop.gov/policy/forms/BP_A0629.pdf) (bop.gov/policy/forms/BP_A0629.pdf), fill in your part and send it to the address on the form (P.O. Box 329002, Brooklyn, NY 11232). Call 718-840-4200 to confirm where to send it.

What it is like. Visits are non-contact. Bring a photo ID if you are 16 or older. You cannot give the person anything. You go through a metal detector and may be asked to take off shoes or a belt. Under 16 must come with a parent or guardian.

Yes

Closed-toe shoes. Simple, comfortable clothes. Skirts and dresses near the knee.

No

Sandals and open-toe shoes. Sleeveless, see-through, low-cut or tight clothes. Hoodies, hats, sunglasses.

If they turn you away, stay calm, ask the reason and write it down. Come back another day. On Saturday mornings our tent can help.

**QUESTION 4**

How do money, mail and calls work?

Sending money

CONFIRM WITH MDC BEFORE YOU GO

Money is never handed over at the door. You send it to the person's account with their full name and **register number** (8 digits, different from the A-number). Ask them for it or call 718-840-4200.

Western Union

Quick Collect, code city **FBOP, DC**. Use the register number and last name together with no spaces.

MoneyGram

Company: Federal Bureau of Prisons, Washington, DC. Receive code **7932**.

By mail

Postal money order or cashier's check, **not** cash or a personal check. Send to: Federal Bureau of Prisons, [name and register number], P.O. Box 474701, Des Moines, IA 50947-0001.

The BOP never calls or texts to ask for money, and nobody can speed up a release for a payment. Keep every receipt. Deposit questions: BOP, **202-307-2712**. Commissary rules: *we are confirming them*. Ask MDC.

Letters

Address: **Name and Register Number, MDC Brooklyn, Metropolitan Detention Center, P.O. Box 329002, Brooklyn, NY 11232**. Add the last four digits of the A-number, your name and a return address. Use plain white paper. Mail is checked for contraband but not read. Never mail cash.

Calls

CONFIRM WITH MDC BEFORE YOU GO

Your family member calls you. Time on the phones can be limited, so keep calls short and kind. Lawyers can arrange legal calls through ICE at **212-863-3401**.

**QUESTION 5**

Should I sign anything?

No. Not until you have a lawyer. People held by immigration are sometimes asked to sign papers in a hurry, in a language they do not read well. Nobody should sign without all four of these:

- 1** A **lawyer** who has read the paper.
- 2** An **interpreter**, if the paper is not in the person's best language.
- 3** A **copy** of what they signed.
- 4** **Time** to decide. Pressure is a warning sign.

Very important. Some papers give up rights. Signing for voluntary departure, or any paper that gives up a hearing, can mean giving up the right to appeal and to ask for protection. Sign these only with a lawyer who explains them. If someone says the person must sign now, call the free legal line first: **800-354-0365**.

What you can do

- Tell your family member, when they call: "Do not sign anything. Ask for a lawyer and an interpreter."
- Write down who asked for a signature, what the paper was and when.
- Ask the lawyer for a copy of everything that was filed or signed.

**QUESTION 6**

How do I report a health problem or a complaint?

If your family member is sick or in pain, or something is wrong, there are places to speak up. You can also ask a lawyer to help you file.

Health

The person should ask staff in writing and say it again each time. For a medical concern about someone held by ICE, the family can call the ICE Detention Reporting and Information Line, **1-888-351-4024** (Mon–Fri, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Eastern, Spanish available).

Where to complain

Who	How to reach them
DHS Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties	Email CRCLCompliance@hq.dhs.gov (fastest). Phone 202-401-1474 or 1-866-644-8360 . Mail: Compliance Branch, Mail Stop 0190, 2707 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave. SE, Washington, DC 20528-0190.
DHS Inspector General (hotline)	Phone 1-800-323-8603 . TTY 1-844-889-4357 . You can report anonymously. Mail: DHS OIG, Attn: Office of Investigations - Hotline, Mail Stop 0305, 245 Murray Lane SW, Washington, DC 20528-0305.
Your member of Congress	Call the office of the representative for your home address. For Brooklyn, Rep. Goldman's district office: (718) 312-7575 , Industry City, 254 36 Street, B-329, Brooklyn, NY 11232. Ask for help with a federal agency.

BOP complaint process: **WE ARE CONFIRMING**

**QUESTION 7**

Where can I get a free lawyer?

The government does not provide lawyers in immigration court, but there is free help in New York.

| Free lawyers for people in detention

The **New York Immigrant Family Unity Project (NYIFUP)** gives free lawyers to people in detention who qualify. Usually:

- They do not have a lawyer yet.
- It is their first immigration court hearing, at the Varick Street court (or a New Jersey court, if they live in New York City).
- Household income is below 200% of the federal poverty guidelines.

NYIFUP does **not** cover people who already have a removal order or no pending case. They can still call the free legal line.

| Who to call

**NYC
immigration
legal line**

800-354-0365 (or 311, say “immigration”). Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Free, confidential, with interpreters.

Dignity Toolkit

(561) 445-6141. We can explain steps and connect you, but we are not a law firm.

**Immigrant
Defense Project**

212-725-6422. To report an arrest or a raid.

Beware of fraud. A notary public cannot fill in immigration forms or give legal advice. Real help is free or has clear fees in writing. Never pay someone who promises a result.

**QUESTION 8**

How do I take care of my family and myself?

This is hard, and it can last. Taking care of yourself is part of taking care of them.

- **Eat, drink water, sleep**, even if it is hard.
- When the panic rises, breathe in for 4 counts and out for 6, five times.
- Pick **one time of day** to look for news. Do not read all night.
- Write your questions for the lawyer in a notebook.
- Keep routines for the children: meals, school, bedtime. Tell them the truth in simple words and listen.
- Crying, anger and numbness are all allowed. You are not alone.

What not to post

Do not post the person's name, A-number, location or case details online without their consent, and think about your own safety before you share. Posts can be used by anyone. Do not send documents or photos of papers to people you do not know.

Support

Dignity Toolkit

(561) 445-6141, call or text

Emotional support, 24 hours

Call or text 988 (press 2 for Spanish)

**QUESTION 9**

How do I tell you what is happening?

What families see inside MDC helps us and the lawyers to speak up and to ask for change. We only use what you choose to share, in the way you choose.

Consent to share a report (read it, then tick what you agree to).

- ☐ You may use what I tell you to help my family member's lawyer or advisers.
- ☐ You may share what I tell you with oversight bodies (for example DHS Civil Rights or the Inspector General), **without my name**.
- ☐ You may share it with the media or in public reports, **without my name** or my family member's name.
- ☐ You may contact me again for more information. Best way to reach me:

I understand that I can say no to any of these, that I can change my mind at any time by telling Dignity Toolkit, and that this does not change the help I receive.

Code (not a name):

Date:

Signature or initials:

Who helped complete this form:

Use a code, not a name, on this page. Do not write your A-number here.

This consent form needs attorney review before use.