

What to Do if ICE Arrives at Your Church

Remember, while churches are no longer officially "protected," many still consider them sacred spaces. Prepare your congregation but avoid creating unnecessary panic. Always prioritize the safety and well-being of all individuals in your care.

1. Have a safe locked non-public space available (such as the pastors office) set up for vulnerable people.
2. If possible, do not open doors immediately. ICE needs a judicial warrant to enter nonpublic areas.
3. Get vulnerable people to the non-public room immediately.
4. Designate an informed and non-anxious person to be the person to interact with ICE agents and review any documents presented.
5. Do not offer ICE extra information that is not requested.
6. Leaders should not physically obstruct ICE agents or break laws, as this could endanger themselves and their congregation.
7. Ask to see credentials and a judicial warrant. A judicial warrant is a court document signed by a judge. Verify the scope and any limitations and that the warrant is signed by a valid authority.
8. If there is no valid warrant, you can refuse entry and say, "As a house of worship, we do not consent to entry without a valid judicial warrant signed by a judge, and we respectfully decline at this time."
9. If ICE agents insist on entering, let them into **public spaces**.
10. If safe, have people record interactions with ICE agents.
11. Document all details of ICE visits or actions. Request and note names and badge numbers of all agents present. Confirm whether they are from ICE or another agency. a. Example: "Officer, please give me your name and badge number and provide me with any warrant you have with you today. And are you with the police or ICE?" Post-Raid Support for Churches Report the raid to regional ad.

Key Preparedness Strategies

- **Establish Legal Protocols:** ICE agents generally cannot enter private areas (offices, parsonages) without a **judicial warrant** signed by a judge, which is distinct from an administrative warrant.
- **Signage and Access:** Clearly mark private areas with signs such as "Private: No Trespassing" or "Authorized Personnel Only".
- **Train Volunteers/Staff:** Designate specific individuals to interact with ICE agents. Train them to ask for a warrant, keep it closed, and refuse entry if it is only an administrative warrant.

- **Rapid Response Plan:** Maintain a "red folder" (or similar) in key areas with instructions, phone numbers for lawyers, and documentation forms.
- **Community Networking:** Connect with local rapid response networks and immigrant advocacy groups to stay informed about local activity.

Operational Changes

- **Secure Documents:** Ensure sensitive information about congregants' immigration status is secured or not stored on-site.
- **Pastoral Care:** Offer virtual worship options and provide support services (e.g., food pantries) for vulnerable members fearful of traveling in public.
- **Role-Playing:** Conduct drills for staff and volunteers to practice responding to ICE agents at the door.

Resources:

[National Immigration Law Center](#)