



TEXAS CIVIL RIGHTS PROJECT
EQUALITY – JUSTICIA – DIVERSITY – COMUNIDAD

Know Your Rights: Immigration

The Texas Civil Rights Project
A Project of
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What are my rights as a non-citizen?

Citizens and non-citizens alike have rights under the United State Constitution. The Fifth Amendment gives every person the right to remain silent and to refuse to answer questions from police officers and government agents. The Fourth Amendment prohibits unreasonable search and seizures, and therefore limits the government's ability to enter and search your home or workplace without your consent. Additionally, the First Amendment protects your right to self-expression—to speak and write freely, to assemble, and to advocate for social, political, and economic change without punishment.

Do I have to answer questions from police officers or government agents?

No, you have a right to remain silent. You have the right to speak with a lawyer before answering any questions, and we encourage you to ask for a lawyer. You are, however, required to provide your name to police officers and government agents in some states.

- Be polite and calm.
- If you choose to answer any questions, answer only the questions asked.
- Once you have provided evidence of your immigration status (papers), you do not need to speak any more.
- Do not provide any false information.
- Do not sign any documents without first speaking with an attorney.

Do I need to carry my green card or other immigration papers with me?

Yes, if you have documents that allow you to reside and work in the U.S., you should carry those documents with you at all times. Do not carry false or expired papers because any use of those documents may lead to deportation or criminal prosecution.

Can police officers or government agents enter my home?

Immigration or police officers may enter your home if they have a warrant. A warrant is simply a document signed by a judge that gives officers permission to enter your home to arrest you (an “arrest warrant”) or to search your home (a “search warrant”).

- If an officer comes to your door, do not open it. First, ask if he or she has a warrant. Ask him or her to show you the warrant by slipping it under the door. Then check the document for your name and address as well as a signature. If, after inspecting the document, you feel that it is valid, *step outside* to speak with the officer and close the door—particularly if others in your home may face immigration problems.

Note: Officers without a warrant can still enter your home if you “consent” to their entry. For this reason, make sure not to agree to their entry or do anything that might be construed as consent—such as opening the door.

How do I find a lawyer if police officers or government agents wish to question me?

The government does not have to provide you with a free lawyer unless you are charged with a crime. There are many local organizations, however, that can help you find a free or reduced-rate lawyer to assist you. For more information, see the directory of organizations listed on this brochure.

What should I do if I am harassed or abused by a police officer or government agent?

Make sure to write down the officer or agent's badge number, name, and any other information, including witnesses' names and phone numbers. If you are injured, seek medical attention immediately and take photographs of your injuries. Once you have received medical attention, call one of the organizations listed on this pamphlet.

Can I call my consulate if I am arrested?

Yes, if you are not a U.S. citizen, you have the right to call your consulate or have the police inform your consulate of your arrest. Your consulate may decide to visit you or speak with you and may even help you find a lawyer.

Immigrant Resources in Central Texas

Catholic Charities of Central Texas

Works to reduce poverty, support families and empower communities.
(512) 836-1213

Political Asylum Project of Austin

Provides free and low-cost legal services and education to immigrants and refugees.
(512) 478-0546

REICES, Inc. (Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services, Inc.)

Provides free or low-cost immigration services including asylum, voluntary departure, cancellations in the San Antonio area.
(210) 226-7722

St. Mary's University School of Law Center for Legal and Social Justice (Immigration and Human Rights Program)

Represents individuals in removal proceedings; detained individuals; battered spouses and children; residents of Laredo Colonias.
(800) 267-4848

The Texas Civil Rights Project

Assists undocumented victims of domestic violence who are married to U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents.
(512) 474-5073

Texas RioGrande Legal Aid

Provides free civil legal assistance to low-income Texans in South, Central and West Texas as well as services to migrant farm workers in Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas and Louisiana on cases that involve issues relating to their status as migrants.
(888) 988-9996

University of Texas School of Law Immigration Clinic

Represents low-income immigrants before the immigration courts and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), including bond and deportation hearings, asylum applications, Violence Against Women's Act (VAWA) cases and applications for discretionary relief.
(512) 494-1752

Rights Card – Use this card if you are stopped and do not wish to speak with authorities beyond identifying yourself and providing evidence of your immigration status.

I am giving you this card because I have chosen to exercise my constitutional right to remain silent. I do not wish to speak with you or have any further contact with you. Should you arrest me, I will continue to exercise my right to remain silent until I speak with an attorney. Please provide me with a list of free legal services in this area, and thank you for respecting my rights.