

ICE Readiness Guide for Sessions & Councils

A concise action-oriented guide for governing bodies to prepare faithfully, safely, and responsibly for possible ICE activity in their community.

PURPOSE

This guide equips the Session/Council to act **before** a crisis—grounded in faith, committed to accompaniment, and attentive to safety, legality, and power.

1. GOVERNING COMMITMENTS (Approve These First)

- We commit to **accompaniment, not saviorism**; impacted communities lead.
- We affirm that **preparation ≠ panic**; readiness is faithful stewardship.
- We acknowledge this is **long-term work** requiring sustainability.
- We will act within **one clearly defined lane** and coordinate with others.

2. OUR CONGREGATION'S LANE (Choose ONE)

- Mutual aid (food, rent, utilities, rides)
- Space provision (meetings, childcare, storage)
- Accompaniment (with legal training only)
- Education & internal organizing
- Financial pass-through support

We will say NO to requests outside this lane to avoid harm and burnout.

3. ASSETS & LIMITS (Name Both)

Assets we can offer safely:

- Flexible funds
- Space
- Transportation
- Time/availability
- Language skills

Limits we must honor:

- Who should not be visible
- Buildings we cannot secure
- Capacities we do not have

4. SAFETY & LEGAL READINESS

Appoint a **small trained response team** (not everyone)

Identify who:

- Speaks to law enforcement
- Documents encounters
- Alerts leadership

Establish relationships with **immigration attorneys now**

Train leaders to recognize **valid vs. invalid warrants**

Approve and practice a basic ICE-response protocol

5. COMMUNICATION & DATA SECURITY

Use secure platforms (e.g., Signal) for sensitive coordination

Avoid storing sensitive personal data in shared documents

Share information on a **need-to-know basis** only

6. FINANCIAL AUTHORIZATION

- Pre-approve rapid release of emergency funds
- Reduce documentation barriers in crisis situations
- Trust relationships over excessive vetting

7. RISK & PASTORAL CARE

- Normalize varying and changing risk tolerance
- Do not pressure members into visibility or arrest
- Attend to emotional and spiritual regulation in leadership

8. FORMATION & ANTI-RACISM

- Name and resist white saviorism
- Emphasize listening, consent, and dignity
- Frame accompaniment as discipleship

FINAL WORD

- We are not called to do everything.
- We are called to be **faithful, prepared, and accountable.**
- This work is collective—and holy.

Date Approved: _____ Reviewed By: _____