



City of Cambridge

Executive Department

YI-AN HUANG
City Manager

CMA 2025 #242
IN CITY COUNCIL
October 6, 2025

To the Honorable, the City Council:

Please find attached a response to AR #25-55 regarding guidance during ICE encounters from Executive Director of the Commission on Immigrant Rights and Citizenship, Carolina Almonte.

Very truly yours,

Yi-An Huang
City Manager





Date: October 6, 2025

To: Yi-An Huang, City Manager

Fr: Carolina Almonte, Executive Director, Commission on Immigrant Rights and Citizenship
Megan Bayer, City Solicitor

Re: Response to POR 2025 #127 of September 15, 2025, regarding the request that the City Manager work with the Commission on Immigrant Rights & Citizenship, the City Solicitor, the Police Department, the Mayor's Office, and other relevant stakeholders to evaluate and implement ICE Encounter Guidance.

This memorandum has been prepared in response to Policy Order 2025-127 dated September 15, 2025, requesting “[t]hat the City Manager work with the Commission on Immigrant Rights & Citizenship, the City Solicitor, the Police Department, the Mayor’s Office, and other relevant stakeholders to evaluate and implement ICE Encounter Guidance.”

1. Create a Designated 24-Hour Immigration Emergency Hotline

Create a Designated 24-Hour Immigration Emergency Hotline for City staff, staffed by trained professionals or contracted experts who can walk City staff through appropriate legal, communications, and support protocols.

Response:

The City does not currently operate a 24-hour immigration emergency hotline, and to our knowledge, no such 24/7 hotline exists locally or nationally. Several partner organizations, however, provide extended coverage that serves as a critical resource for residents and families. LUCE’s Defense Hotline is available daily from 5:00 AM to 9:00 PM, and BIJAN’s Family Hotline provides urgent support in detention and bond cases.

However, we will continue to explore access to additional legal services that may be able to be available past regular business hours.

2. Develop a Vetted Interpreter Network

Develop a Vetted Interpreter Network, including after-hours and weekend availability, prioritizing high-demand languages including but not limited to Spanish, Portuguese, Haitian Creole, and Amharic.

Response: The City currently operates a 24/7 interpretation hotline, coordinated by the Language Justice Division, which provides City staff with round-the-clock access to interpretation in more than 100 languages, including those noted above. These services are comprehensive and have consistently proven effective in meeting the community's core needs.

3. Assemble a Centralized Legal and Community Response Directory

Assemble a Centralized Legal and Community Response Directory of immigration attorneys, advocacy groups, and mutual aid networks prepared to assist in after-hours detention or deportation risk cases.

Response: City staff and residents are encouraged to connect with the following trusted organizations that provide legal and community support in urgent immigration situations:

- **LUCE** – **Defense Hotline** (5:00 AM – 9:00 PM daily)
- **De Novo** – City-contracted provider of immigration legal services
- **BIJAN** – **Family Hotline** – Support for urgent detention and bond cases
- **Greater Boston Legal Services (GBLS)** – Comprehensive legal support, including emergency habeas petitions
- **PAIR Project** – Legal assistance and advocacy for individuals in detention and those facing deportation risk

The City does not endorse any specific organization listed here, and other resources may also be available. This directory has been compiled for the community's convenience to highlight services known to provide this type of support. The City will post this directory to the CIRC website and continue to maintain and update to ensure staff and residents have access to timely, reliable resources during emergencies.

4. Establish Internal Protocols for Handling ICE-Related Incidents

Establish Internal Protocols for Handling ICE-Related Incidents, outlining who to notify, how to document interactions, how to communicate with affected families, and how to ensure next-day follow-up.

Response: The City has existing guidance for municipal staff regarding protocols if ICE officers arrive at City buildings. This guidance will be recirculated often to ensure consistent practices across all departments. In addition, the City is coordinating with the Massachusetts Office for Refugees and Immigrants (ORI) to provide staff training opportunities on immigration enforcement response. These efforts will complement the bystander intervention trainings being scheduled for residents, reinforcing both staff and community readiness to respond appropriately and support affected families.

With respect to documentation and the collection of personal information, the Massachusetts Office of the Attorney General (AGO) has issued guidance: in most cases, it is not necessary to collect immigration status in order to provide services. If personal information is not required, it should not be collected. When information must be collected, for example, by organizations providing immigration-related services, it is important to explain to individuals what information is being collected, why it is necessary, and how access to that information will be limited. Any personal documents containing sensitive details should be protected from view, and conversations about immigration status should be conducted in a manner that preserves confidentiality.

The AGO has also provided [guidance for immigrants, families, and communities on ICE enforcement](#). The guidance responds to questions the AGO has received about the actions of ICE, the role of local police, and what people should know when they or others are approached by immigration officers.

5. Designate an On-Call City Liaison

Designate an On-Call City Liaison to serve as a centralized point of contact and coordination during after-hours emergencies.

Response: Maintaining a City liaison on a 24/7 basis is not feasible; however, City staff remain available during normal business hours. For after-hours emergencies, residents will be directed to the above centralized directory of trusted legal and advocacy organizations with established capacity for urgent response via the voicemail of the Commission on Immigrant Rights and Citizenship.

Additionally, a habeas corpus petition is a way to challenge unlawful immigration detention in federal court. Residents without a criminal history and without a final

deportation order may be able to argue that their detention is unjustified, violates due process, and that alternatives to detention should be considered. In these cases, the petition asks the court to order release while immigration proceedings continue. It is recommended to work with an immigration attorney, such as De Novo or the PAIR Project, for assistance.

Lastly, if an individual is detained by immigration authorities, the [ICE Detainee Locator](#) can be used to confirm whether a family member has been detained and where they are being held. To use the locator, it is helpful to have the individual's date of birth, country of birth, and "A-Number" (Alien Registration Number), if available.

Stabilization Support:

Community members emphasized the importance of broader supports during emergencies, particularly when a detained or deported individual is also a caregiver or primary breadwinner for the family. In addition to legal referrals, the City can connect families to local resources that provide food, housing, and emergency aid, including:

- **Food Access:**
 - [Central Sq Food Pantry \(CEOC\)](#)
 - [Margaret Fuller House Pantry](#)
 - [East End House Food Pantry](#)
 - [Cambridge Health Alliance Food Resource Guide](#)

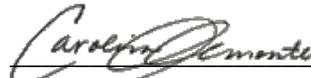
- **Housing and Eviction Preventions:**
 - [Office of Housing Liaison](#)
 - [Multiservice Center](#)

- **Emergency Family Planning:** The Massachusetts Attorney General's Office has published an [Emergency Planning Guide for Families](#). City staff can share this guide with residents to help families prepare guardianship, medical, and school-related plans in advance. This resource is also available in three additional languages.

In sum, the Commission on Immigrant Rights and Citizenship remains committed to advancing services, resources, and trainings that strengthen Cambridge as a welcoming and prepared community. We will continue offering "[Know Your Rights](#)" trainings, expanding access to multilingual information, and coordinating with legal and community partners to ensure that residents understand their rights and can access support in times of crisis. By reinforcing staff readiness, connecting families with essential services, and maintaining strong partnerships across

City departments and community organizations, Cambridge can respond to immigration-related emergencies with compassion, consistency, and clarity.

Very truly yours,



Carolina Almonte
Executive Director



Megan Bayer
City Solicitor