

**In collaboration with YMCA International Services and
Catholic Charities St. Frances Cabrini Center for Immigrant Legal Assistance**

# **What should immigrants know and how should they prepare for a natural disaster?**

1. **Always secure immigration documents.** Immigration documents are difficult to replace, so they should always be kept safe and accessible. If you must evacuate or move to a new address, always take these documents with you. It is also recommended to keep digital copies of these documents. Scan or take pictures in case they are lost or destroyed.
2. If you are scheduled to have an appointment during a natural disaster, **check online or call the office to check if the appointment is cancelled**. USCIS and the immigration court will announce closings on their websites and social media platforms. Usually, you do not have to reschedule an appointment. The immigration office and immigration court will reschedule the appointment.
3. If you are forced to change addresses after a natural disaster, it is important that you **update your address with immigration agencies as soon as possible**. This includes USCIS, ICE, and the immigration court. These agencies may send new notices, and those notices will be sent to the address they have on file.
4. **You may be eligible for disaster assistance.** Many times, immigrants do not apply for emergency assistance because they believe they do not qualify. That is not always true. Many immigrants, regardless of status, may be eligible for assistance. It is important to ask.
5. **Asking for emergency assistance after a disaster will not affect your immigration status.** Emergency assistance does not affect your immigration status or the eligibility to apply for permanent residency or citizenship in the future.
6. **Please check these websites for information during a natural disaster:**
	1. Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston: [www.CatholicCharities.org](http://www.CatholicCharities.org)
	2. YMCA International Services: [www.ymcahouston.org/locations/ymca-international-services](http://www.ymcahouston.org/locations/ymca-international-services)
	3. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services:
		1. [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov)
		2. <https://twitter.com/USCIS>
	4. U.S. Department of Justice
		1. <https://www.justice.gov/eoir/eoir-operational-status-during-coronavirus-pandemic>
		2. <https://twitter.com/DOJ_EOIR>
	5. Houston Immigration Legal Services Collaborative ([www.houstonimmigration.org](http://www.houstonimmigration.org))
	Immigrant Rights Hotline: 1-833-HOU-IMMI (468-4664)

If you have been affected by a natural disaster and need immigration legal assistance, please reach out for assistance.

Roberto Flores Maria Vazquez

Equal Justice Works Disaster Resilience Fellow Equal Justice Works Disaster Resilience Fellow

YMCA International Services Catholic Charities

713-758-9280 713.595.4100