

# The Impact of Federal Immigration Policy Changes on Transgender Survivors

## Immigration is a transgender issue. Immigration is a survivor issue.

There are around 175,000 transgender immigrants in the United States according to research from the [Williams Institute](#). Estimates of transgender asylum seekers are not available.

- Learn more about [the experiences of transgender and LGBTQ+ Refugees and Asylum seekers in this report](#) from the Williams Institute.

LGBTQ+ immigrants are 97 times more likely to experience sexual assault in detention than other detainees, based on a [2022 study](#).

- Immigrant detention facilities foster sexual violence and abuse. This [study by Tahirih Justice Center and Oxfam](#) shows the rampant violence built into the US immigration and refugee systems. The ACLU compiled [this information on sexual abuse in detention facilities](#).
- In Colorado, a group of transgender and nonbinary detainees reported on [the mistreatment they experienced](#).

**Strict immigration policies, detention, and deportation do not make anyone safer.**

Transgender people, no matter their national origin, immigration status, or economic resources, should have access to gender affirming care, however [that is not the case](#) in the United States.

## 2025 Executive Orders and Immigration Policy Changes

The Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency (ICE) was formed in 2003. From that time until 2025, some places were protected from immigration raids and arrests – courthouses, shelters, hospitals, churches, and schools. Following the executive orders in 2025, ICE has started raiding and arresting people from these previously protected spaces. Immigration raids, deportation, and detention have always caused extreme harm to communities and individuals, including transgender individuals, many of whom are survivors of violence. The amount of harm is increasing as there are fewer restrictions on ICE.

Note: Federal policies are changing rapidly in 2025. Content related to current events may change post-publication.

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As of March 2025 multiple US citizens and green card holders have been detained and are facing deportation. All people are at risk, regardless of immigration status; though people of color are most likely to be targeted and detained due to the racism of the immigration system. Executive orders in 2025 have focused on targeting people of color, transgender people, people with disabilities, and other marginalized communities, further increasing the aggressive deportation and violence towards these communities. These EOs compound with executive orders targeting transgender communities to create additional risks for trans and nonbinary people.

**To stay up to date on executive orders impacting immigrant communities see the Alliance for Immigrant Survivors.**

Some of the major impacts on transgender immigrant survivors could be:

- Increased rates of deportation
- Loss of “protected spaces” (such as churches, hospitals, and schools) that were safer from ICE
- Inability to get or use affirming identification or have identification be withheld or destroyed.
- Service providers being afraid to serve or pressured not to serve trans immigrants
- Increased racism and anti-immigrant sentiments, leading to increased violence
- Travel into and around the United States becoming more difficult

## What can service providers do?

Understand Deportation Risks and Harms

- Prepare your agency and staff for ICE encounters.
  - ICE Raid resources for homeless shelters, which can be helpful for domestic and sexual violence shelters as well.
- Share information about legal rights with survivors.
- Offer “Know Your Rights” information in multiple languages.
- Let survivors know what information is protected and what is not, so they can make safety choices. Remind all staff about applicable state and federal confidentiality and privilege laws.

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## What can service providers do?

### Maintain Survivor Services

- Use interpreters when staff do not speak the survivor's language. Work with local agencies to find people who are trans competent and knowledgeable of language related to trauma and victim's services.
- Recognize the harm caused by investigations, detention, and deportations.
- Provide services to the whole person. Listen to survivors about their needs around health, relationships, emotions, food, trauma, safety, and past/present experiences of violence.

### Provide Staff Education

- Partner with local immigrant organizations.
- Learn more about the experiences and history of transgender immigrants and refugees.

### Engage in Systemic Change

- Work to change harmful immigration systems and policies.
- Recognize the trauma of the US immigration and refugee systems.
- Advocate for safety and respect for all transgender people.
- Change policies to increase the safety of immigrants.
- Connect with mutual aid efforts to support immigrant survivors.

## Learn more:

### Resources for Survivors:

[Immigration Equality](#)

[Rainbow Railroad](#)

[Know Your Rights as a Transgender Immigrant](#)

[Know Your Rights: Passports](#)

[Know Your Rights: Airport Security](#)

[Self Help Asylum Guides](#)

### Resources on Immigration

[The Black LGBTQIA+ Migrant Project](#)

[Housing Not Handcuffs](#)

### Articles on Current Events in Spring 2025

[Trump's Executive Actions: Impact on Immigration Benefits and Processing](#)  
[Trump's policies on gender identity and immigration have trans immigrants worried about their future](#)

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[Impact of Mass Deportations on LGBT People](#)

[ICE is erasing rules that protected trans immigrants](#)