

**GILA RIVER INDIAN
COMMUNITY PRESS
RELEASE:**

**UPDATED STATEMENT OF GOVERNOR
STEPHEN ROE LEWIS ON ENHANCED
FEDERAL IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT**

January 23, 2026

Gila River Indian Reservation, Arizona

The Community has received information and heard reports that tribal members in Arizona are being questioned and detained by federal immigration officials. So far, there has been one report that a Community member has been stopped by enhanced federal immigration enforcement in Chandler, AZ. These stories of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids and detentions are concerning and may have created distress, especially for Community members who may not have Tribal IDs, or who live in urban areas. Community Departments and the Gila River Police Department continue to monitor and investigate these concerns and any possible impact to Community members.

In addition to carefully monitoring developments, the Community proactively took steps to understand the potential for problems and contacted ICE directly to ensure that any enforcement efforts remain respectful of tribal members. Governor Lewis and Community Council members met with DHS/ICE in September 2025. ICE heard the Community's request to honor tribal IDs as proof of U.S. citizenship, and to coordinate with GRPD on any ICE related activities on Reservation. The Office of General Counsel has developed a protocol to track U.S. Immigration stops and detentions of Community members and the Community Council approved a plan to amend the Enrollment Department's Policies and Procedures to facilitate the availability of Tribal identification cards for minors.

We urge all members to remain calm in this time of uncertainty. As a reminder, please be careful, and if traveling, carry valid forms of identification such as a valid tribal enrollment card or Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB), valid Arizona driver license, or a valid U.S. federal, state, or local government issued identification.

In the meantime, if you do observe any federal officials on Reservation seeking to enforce the federal immigration laws, please report it immediately to OGC. 520-562-9765



Gila River Indian Community

**Enhanced Federal
Immigration
Enforcement**

**KNOW
YOUR
RIGHTS**

**Helpful Resources
and Numbers**

ICE Detainer Locator:
locator.ice.gov/odls/#/search
Office of Defense Services:
(Available 24/7) 520-562-5700
**The Native American rights Fund
(NARF):**
303-447-8760
narf.org/ice-resources-2026
**Gila River Police Department non-
Emergency line:**
520-562-4511
Office of General Counsel:
520-562-9765

WHAT TO DO IF MISTAKENLY STOPPED FOR QUESTIONING BY ICE OR FEDERAL AUTHORITIES FOR IMMIGRATION STATUS

- **Remain calm and respectful.** Don't run, argue, resist or engage in escalating behavior. Provide accurate and truthful information in response to any questions posed.
- Have your tribal ID, State-issued ID, or U.S. Passport on you to confirm your U.S. citizenship.
- **Identify Yourself:** Clearly state, "I am a U.S. citizen and a member of the Gila River Indian Community" Present your current Tribal ID or state-issued ID.
- If stopped, you can call Gila River Police Department non-Emergency line to verify your tribal enrollment at: **520-562-4511**.
- **Right to ask, "Am I being detained?"** Before answering any questions or providing personal information, you can ask, "Am I being detained?" If they say no, you have the right to leave. If they say yes, you may assert your right to remain silent.
- While it is not likely that you will be arrested after being stopped, if you are, you have rights that must be respected, including the right to be silent after you are arrested, State clearly: "I am exercising my right to remain silent." Tell ICE if you have medical issues or need to arrange for childcare.
- If you are arrested, do not resist. You have the right to a lawyer. You can contact the Office of Defense Services for assistance in finding representation to assist you at the following number 24/7: **520-562-5700**. The Native American rights Fund (NARF) can also assist you if you are detained: **303-447-8760**.
- If it is safe to do so, record the interaction or ask someone else to record it. Do not physically resist or obstruct the operation

WHAT TO DO CONTINUED:

- Do not consent to a search: If agents request to search your personal belongings, (e.g., car, phone, backpack), you have the right to refuse unless they have a valid warrant or probable cause to search. You can politely say, "I do not consent to a search."
- Remember the details and report them to the Office of General Counsel as soon as you can after the encounter by calling the following number: **520-562-9765** Ask for the identification of the immigration or other law enforcement personnel who stopped you, and note the person's name, agency, and badge number, if possible, and include this information to OGC.
- Community members who believe ICE violated their rights, contact the Native American Rights Fund. Find more information at **narf.org/ice-resources-2026**
- **Right to Refuse Entry:** Immigration agents cannot enter your home or private property without a warrant signed by a judge. If they come to your home, you have the right to request to see the warrant and verify its authenticity.
- If you are driving and are pulled over, the officer can require you to show your license, vehicle registration and proof of insurance.

IF YOU ARE APPROACHED BY ICE AND YOU ARE A MINOR:

- Minors have the same protections as adults. You have the right to remain silent and not answer questions about:
 - ✓ Your immigration status or your parents' immigration status
 - ✓ Where you were born or your address
- Say: "I choose to remain silent. I want to speak to a lawyer."
- Minors are not legally required to carry identification unless operating a vehicle.
- Carry a copy of your Tribal ID, passport, or CDIB if necessary and with safeguards (e.g., in a sealed envelope labeled "Confidential: Legal Documents – Access Only by Guardian").
- If you and/or your parent are detained, you have the right to be near and in-touch with your parent

PROTOCOL FOR FAMILY MEMBER IF A LOVED ONE IS DETAINED BY ICE

If a loved one is detained by ICE, use the ICE Detainee Locator to find them, gather important documents like their IDs, contact the specific detention facility for visitation/phone rules, and immediately seek legal counsel for guidance,

Immediate Steps (After Detention)

1. **Locate Your Loved One:** Use the ICE Detainee Locator with their full name, date of birth, and country of birth: ICE Detainer Locator: **locator.ice.gov/odls/#/search**
2. **Gather Information:** Collect important documents for potential legal help, including their IDs, medical records, stop and arrest details, and any criminal or immigration filings.
3. **Contact the Facility:** Once located, call the detention center directly for their specific rules on visitation, phone calls, and sending money.
4. **Find Legal Help:** Contact the Office of Defense Services for assistance in finding representation to assist you at the following number 24/7: **520-562-5700**. The Native American rights Fund (NARF) can also assist you if you are detained: **303-447-8760**. Call the Office of General Counsel as soon as you can by calling the following number: **520-562-9765**. Provide the details of the stop, the identification of the immigration or other law enforcement personnel who stopped or arrested your loved one, and provide the person's name, agency, and badge number, if possible, and include this information to OGC
5. **Contact Family/Friends:** Inform trusted contacts and arrange for child/dependent care, as children's needs are a priority.

Family Preparedness (Before an Incident)

- **Create a Plan:** Prepare a binder with documents (IDs, medical info, birth certificates, financial details) and share it with trusted family/friends.
- **Designate Caregivers:** Authorize specific people in writing to make decisions for your children or dependents if you're detained.
- **Memorize Numbers:** Key contacts and numbers should be memorized, not just stored digitally.