

As ICE raids ramp up, Contra Costa launches hotline for legal help, reporting ICE sightings

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MARTINEZ — As Northern California feels the heat from stepped up ICE raids, Contra Costa County has responded with a deportation defense hotline offering legal help, notifications and community support.

The Contra Costa Board of Supervisors unanimously approved the Stand Together Contra Costa rapid response hotline for immigrant families to access legal services or report Immigrants and Customs Enforcement raids in the county at any hour.

“Unfortunately, with the hate and threats against immigrant families, many have not been able to access legal help to ensure due process rights are protected,” said Supervisor John Gioia. “We’re standing up for all families in Contra Costa and preventing families from being split up.”

The deportation defense hotline is a free service and can be accessed by calling 925-900-5151.

The website, which can be found at StandTogetherContraCosta.org, gives advice on when to call the rapid response hotline: If ICE is at the caller’s front door, they are advised not to open the door unless officers have a Department of Homeland Security warrant; if ICE is on the streets, the group will send rapid responders to verify; if ICE detains a family member, dispatchers will send out legal representation from the Contra Costa Office of the Public Defender.

The hotline comes just days after ICE finished a multi-day sweep through the Bay Area, arresting 232 undocumented immigrants in the nation’s only sanctuary state. ICE Director Thomas Homan said in an interview with Fox News that the agency sought the arrest of 864 people, but was stymied by [an early warning](#) from Oakland’s Mayor Libby Schaaf.

“The program could not have started soon enough,” Gioia said. “I’m not concerned about retaliation. I feel we’ve done the right thing. It protects families from being torn apart. Many of the individuals that ICE has gone after are not a threat to our community. They are contributing members to our community.”

Contra Costa County’s hotline adds to [a growing list](#) of legal resources for undocumented immigrants. The county will also [host community workshops](#), legal consultations and monthly presentations to ICE detainees at the West County jail in Richmond.

Around the Bay Area, families have been gathering to [discuss emergency plans](#) – who will care for children or pets, where to hide emergency cash and important documents.

Stand Together Contra Costa next event will be a celebration at Davis Park in San Pablo on Saturday, March 10, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.