



# THE IMMIGRATION FAMILY READINESS CHECKLIST

*Build the folder today that protects your family tomorrow.*

An action-checklist companion to the main guide. Read it, mark it, share it.

**YO PELEO® POR TI**

CHARLOTTE · RALEIGH · SMITHFIELD · ORLANDO

AVAILABLE 24/7 · 1-844-YO-PELEO (1-844-967-3536) · [vasquezlawfirm.com](http://vasquezlawfirm.com)

**ACTION WORKSHEET** · PRINT IT · FILL IT IN · CARRY IT

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# THE FAMILY READINESS CARD

*Print this. Tape it inside a kitchen cabinet. Everyone in the house should know it.*

## EMERGENCY CONTACTS — FILL IN NOW

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Our immigration attorney: \_\_\_\_\_

Attorney phone (24/7): **1-844-967-3536** \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency caregiver (full name): \_\_\_\_\_

Caregiver phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Caregiver address: \_\_\_\_\_

Children's school + main #: \_\_\_\_\_

Family doctor / pediatrician: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary bank + account holder: \_\_\_\_\_

## IF ICE KNOCKS — THE FIRST 10 MINUTES

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### The 5 Steps

1. DO NOT OPEN THE DOOR. Speak through it.
2. Ask: "Do you have a judicial warrant signed by a judge?"
3. If yes: ask them to slide it under the door so you can read it.
4. If no: "I do not consent to entry. I am invoking my right to remain silent."
5. Call our attorney. Then call the caregiver. Stay calm. Children stay inside.

## THE 7 DOCUMENT FOLDERS — TICK AS YOU BUILD

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1. Identity: passports, birth certificates, marriage cert, Social Security cards
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- 2.** Immigration: I-94, prior petitions, EAD, visa stamps, A-numbers, decisions
- 3.** Proof of presence: utility bills, leases, tax returns (last 5 yrs), school records
- 4.** Children: birth certs, school records, medical records, emergency contacts
- 5.** Finances: bank statements (6mo), pay stubs (12mo), assets list
- 6.** Medical: prescriptions, conditions, doctor info, insurance cards
- 7.** Power of attorney + Emergency Caregiver Authorization (notarized)

USE TODAY · NO ATTORNEY REQUIRED

# Use This Today

*Verbatim language you can sign and send — no attorney required.*

If a parent is detained, a notarized caregiver authorization is what stops a child from going into foster care. This is the template I use. Fill it in, sign it before a notary public (~\$5-15 at any bank or UPS Store), and keep two originals: one with the caregiver, one in your sealed home folder.

## Emergency Caregiver Authorization (Power of Attorney for Minor Child)

### POWER OF ATTORNEY FOR THE CARE OF A MINOR CHILD

I, [PARENT FULL LEGAL NAME], residing at [PARENT FULL ADDRESS, CITY, STATE, ZIP], being the natural parent and legal guardian of the minor child named below, do hereby knowingly and voluntarily grant this Power of Attorney to:

Caregiver: [CAREGIVER FULL LEGAL NAME]

Relationship to child: [RELATIONSHIP]

Address: [CAREGIVER FULL ADDRESS, CITY, STATE, ZIP]

Phone: [CAREGIVER PHONE]

Minor child: [CHILD FULL LEGAL NAME], date of birth [MM/DD/YYYY], place of birth [CITY, STATE/COUNTRY].

SCOPE OF AUTHORITY. The Caregiver named above is authorized to act on my behalf in all matters concerning the care, custody, and welfare of my child, including but not limited to: (a) enrolling the child in and withdrawing the child from school; accessing and signing all school records, IEPs, and permission slips; (b) consenting to all routine, urgent, and emergency medical, dental, mental health, and surgical care, including authorization of medications, vaccinations, and hospitalization; (c) providing housing, food, clothing, and daily supervision; (d) managing the child's financial affairs, including receiving funds on the child's behalf and paying child-related expenses; and (e) communicating with government agencies, social services, and law enforcement on the child's behalf.

EFFECTIVE DATE. This Power of Attorney becomes effective on [START DATE] and remains in effect until [END DATE] — not to exceed 12 months], or until I revoke it in writing, whichever occurs first. I may revoke this authority at any time by signing a written revocation and delivering it to the Caregiver.

PARENT SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed name: [PARENT FULL LEGAL NAME]

CAREGIVER ACCEPTANCE: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed name: [CAREGIVER FULL LEGAL NAME]

NOTARY ACKNOWLEDGMENT

State of \_\_\_\_\_ County of \_\_\_\_\_

On this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_, before me personally appeared [PARENT FULL LEGAL NAME], known to me (or satisfactorily proven) to be the person whose name is subscribed to the foregoing instrument, who acknowledged that he/she executed the same for the purposes therein contained.

Notary Public signature: \_\_\_\_\_

My commission expires: \_\_\_\_\_



FROM THE FOUNDING PARTNER

## This is the action checklist. Use it like one.

I'm William Vásquez. I served as a soldier in the United States Air Force before law school, and today I lead Vasquez Law Firm — bilingual, working-family-focused, answering the phone 24/7. We've handled over 30,000 cases in 15 years.

This companion is shorter than the main guide on purpose. It's the part you actually do this week — folders to build, words to memorize, mistakes to avoid. Print it. Mark it up. Share it with anyone you love who's in the same fight.

If something in here gives you pause, that's the call to make. We answer in English and Spanish, day or night, no fee unless we win.

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*YO PELEO® POR TI — I fight for you.*

— **William J. Vásquez**

*Founding Attorney · NC + FL Bar · USAF Veteran*

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

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*What to remember from this checklist — the 5 things that change cases.*

- 01** Every immigrant family needs seven document categories assembled before a crisis — not after ICE knocks on the door.
- 02** A signed Power of Attorney for child custody is the single most important paper a mixed-status family can prepare today.
- 03** Filing taxes with an ITIN every year is one of the strongest pieces of good moral character evidence USCIS accepts.
- 04** An ICE administrative warrant (Form I-200 or I-205) does not require you to open your door — only a federal judge's warrant does.
- 05** The first 48 hours after a family member's detention decide the case — locate them on [locator.ice.gov](https://locator.ice.gov), hire counsel, protect the children.



## 01 SECTION

# The 7 Document Folders to Build This Week

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This is the same folder I ask every client to bring to our office. Build it before you need it.

1. Personal ID — passport (unexpired), birth certificate, marriage/divorce records, consular card, ITIN or SSN, driver's license, EAD or green card if you have one.
2. Continuous physical presence — utility bills, leases, pay stubs, W-2s, bank statements, school records, tax returns. One document per month if possible.
3. Good moral character — tax returns (ITIN counts), employer and pastor letters, course certificates, clean DMV record, certified court dispositions for any arrest.
4. A-Number and immigration history — your A-Number, every NTA, every I-797, every EOIR notice, prior visas, prior attorney correspondence.
5. Children's documents — birth certificate, passport (renew before age 5 expiration), Social Security card, school records, vaccines, guardianship designation.

6. Marriage and family evidence — joint leases, joint accounts, joint tax returns, dated photos, insurance with spouse as beneficiary, written testimonies.
7. Medical and safety records — full medical history, police reports for any crime you suffered, VAWA evidence, country conditions if you fear return.

Store originals in a fireproof safe. One certified set with a trusted person outside the home. One encrypted digital copy in the cloud. Share the password with ONE person.



## 02 SECTION

# Name Your Emergency Caregiver Today

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If you are detained tonight, who takes your children tomorrow? If you can't answer in one sentence with a name and a phone number, the state answers for you.

Do this today:

1. Pick the adult who will care for your kids. Talk to them. Get a yes.
2. Pick a backup caregiver. Talk to them. Get a yes.
3. Pick a Next of Kin — the person who decides medical and legal questions for you.
4. Pick a Financial Power of Attorney — the person who pays rent, lights, and the pediatrician.
5. Call an immigration attorney and sign a formal Power of Attorney. A handshake won't hold up in family court. A notarized POA does.

Put their full names, relationships, phone numbers, and addresses on one sheet. Keep it with your documents. Give a copy to the caregiver. Without this, state courts decide where your children sleep — not you, not your family.





### 03 SECTION

## If ICE Knocks — The First 10 Minutes

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This is the protocol I teach every client. Print it. Post it near your door. Practice it with your family.

1. DO NOT open the door.
2. Speak through the door. Ask who they are and why they are there.
3. Ask them to slide the warrant under the door.
4. Only a warrant signed by a FEDERAL JUDGE — header reads UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT — requires you to open. An ICE administrative warrant (I-200, I-205) does NOT.
5. Say out loud: "I want to speak to my attorney. I do not want to answer questions."
6. DO NOT sign anything in English you don't understand. Never sign a voluntary departure or stipulated removal.
7. Call Vasquez Law: 1-844-967-3536. We answer 24/7.
8. If they enter anyway, repeat out loud: "I do not consent to this search." That sentence is evidence for your defense.

9. Do not run. Do not lie. Do not show false documents.

10. Stay calm. Don't sign. Call your attorney.



#### 04 SECTION

## If a Family Member Is Detained — The First 48 Hours

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The first 48 hours decide the case. Move in order:

Step 1: Locate them. Use [locator.ice.gov](https://locator.ice.gov). You need the A-Number, or full name plus date of birth and country of birth. ICE can take 24 to 72 hours to update.

Step 2: Pull their folder. A-Number, passport, prior notices, evidence of time in the U.S., medical record, medication list. If you built the readiness folder, you already have it.

Step 3: Hire an immigration attorney IMMEDIATELY. Do not wait for the first hearing. Call us: 1-844-967-3536. The bond hearing has short deadlines.

Step 4: Do NOT pay anyone who promises cash-for-release. Notarios and fixers are fraud. Real attorneys have written contracts, receipts, and a bar number you can verify.

Step 5: Protect the children. Activate the Power of Attorney. If you don't have one, call us today to designate a temporary caregiver in writing.

Step 6: Document everything. Every call with ICE, every form, every contact — with date and time. This is evidence.



## 05 SECTION

# 7 Mistakes That Lose Cases

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I have seen thousands of cases lost not because of the law, but because of these mistakes. Avoid them.

1. Using a notario. In the U.S., a notary public certifies signatures. They cannot give legal advice. Notario fraud destroys more cases than any other cause.
2. Waiting too long. Families wait for an NTA, a detention, a deadline. By then options have closed.
3. Not filing taxes. No SSN? Get an ITIN. Tax returns are some of the strongest moral character evidence USCIS will see.
4. Signing English documents you don't understand. A signed voluntary departure can bar you from returning legally for 10 years.
5. Talking to ICE without an attorney. You have the right to remain silent. Use it.
6. Paying for free information. Your A-File, USCIS forms, case status — all free at [uscis.gov](https://uscis.gov) and through FOIA.
7. Not updating your address. Form AR-11 is required within 10 days of any move. Missing it can freeze your case for months.



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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*Real questions from our intake line — answered in plain English.*

### **Q. What documents do undocumented parents need to protect their children?**

Undocumented parents need a notarized Power of Attorney naming an emergency caregiver, plus each child's birth certificate, passport, Social Security card (if applicable), school records, vaccine record, and medical history. Without a written POA, state courts decide who cares for U.S.-citizen children if parents are detained.

### **Q. Do I have to open the door if ICE knocks?**

No. Only a warrant signed by a federal judge — with UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT in the header — requires you to open. An ICE administrative warrant (Form I-200 or I-205) is an internal agency document and does not require you to open. Ask them to slide the warrant under the door first.

### **Q. Can I file taxes without a Social Security number?**

Yes. The IRS issues ITINs (Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers) for exactly this purpose. Filing taxes every year with an ITIN is one of the strongest pieces of good moral character evidence for any immigration case. A tax preparer can help you file up to three years of back taxes.

### **Q. What is an A-Number and how do I find mine?**

Your A-Number (Alien Registration Number) is an A followed by 8 or 9 digits. It appears on every USCIS notice (I-797), every NTA, your EAD, and your green card. It is the master key to your immigration file. If you can't find it, file a FOIA request (Form G-639) with USCIS — it is free and takes 3 to 6 months.

### **Q. What should I do in the first 48 hours after a family member is detained?**

Locate them on [locator.ice.gov](https://locator.ice.gov) using their A-Number or full name plus date of birth. Gather their documents. Hire an immigration attorney immediately — do not wait for the first hearing. Activate your Power of Attorney to protect the children. Document every call, every form, every contact with date and time.

### **Q. Does VAWA protect men, and do I need my spouse's permission?**

Yes, VAWA protects victims of domestic violence regardless of gender and regardless of immigration status. You do NOT need your abuser's permission, signature, or knowledge to apply. If your U.S.-citizen or LPR spouse is abusing you, VAWA can give you independent immigration status. Call us — your safety comes first.

FREE HELP IN NC + FL · PUBLIC, VETTED, ANSWERS 24/7

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# Free Help You Can Trust

*When you can't afford an attorney — these organizations help for free or low cost.*

I would rather you call one of these tomorrow than do nothing. Every one of these is real, vetted, and answers in Spanish.

## 01 CAIR Coalition

Free legal representation for detained immigrants in the DC/VA/MD region; national resource hub and Know Your Rights materials.

202-331-3320 · <https://caircoalition.org>

## 02 RAICES

Free and low-cost immigration legal services, family reunification, and detention representation; bilingual staff, headquartered in San Antonio with national reach.

210-226-7722 · <https://www.raicestexas.org>

## 03 National Immigrant Justice Center (NIJC)

Free legal services for low-income immigrants — asylum, detention, family-based petitions, and removal defense.

312-660-1370 · <https://immigrantjustice.org>

## 04 Charlotte Center for Legal Advocacy (NC)

Free immigration legal help for low-income residents of North Carolina — family petitions, U-visas, naturalization, and removal defense.

704-376-1600 · <https://charlottelegaladvocacy.org>

## 05 Carolina Migrant Network (NC)

Rapid-response legal help for detained North Carolinians and their families; bond hearings, post-detention support, Know Your Rights training.

704-499-9000 · <https://carolinamigrantnetwork.org>

## 06 Americans for Immigrant Justice (FL)

Free legal services for low-income immigrants in Florida — children, families, detainees, and survivors of crime and trafficking.

305-573-1106 · <https://aijustice.org>

## 07 Catholic Legal Services, Archdiocese of Miami (FL)

Free and low-cost immigration legal services across South Florida — family petitions, asylum, TPS, naturalization, and removal defense.

305-373-1073 · <https://cclsmiami.org>

### **08 USCIS Customer Service**

Free official line for case status, form questions, and InfoPass appointments. Have your A-Number and receipt number ready.

800-375-5283 · <https://www.uscis.gov/contactcenter>

### **09 ICE Online Detainee Locator**

Free public tool to locate a detained family member. Search by A-Number, or by name + date of birth + country of birth.

Not applicable — online tool · <https://locator.ice.gov>

### **10 DHS Office of Inspector General Hotline**

Report ICE or CBP misconduct, abuse, civil rights violations, or fraud. Anonymous reports accepted.

1-800-323-8603 · <https://www.oig.dhs.gov/hotline>

BEFORE YOU CALL US · PREP IN 30 MIN · ANSWERS IN 15

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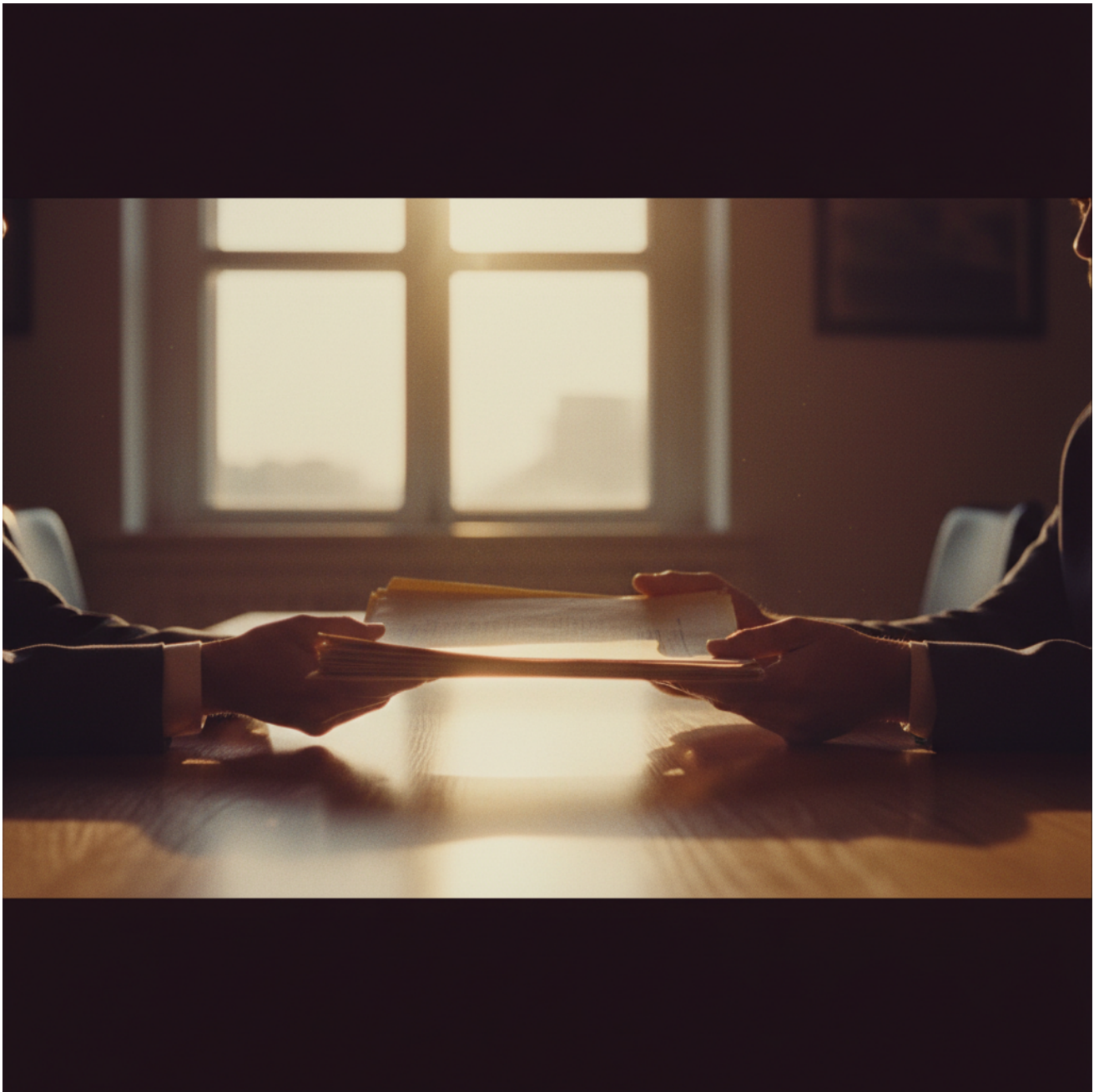
# Before You Call Us (or Anyone Else)

*15 minutes of prep saves 60 minutes of fumbling. Bring this.*

When clients walk in with this list filled out, we can give them real answers in the first 15 minutes — not in week three. Print this. Fill it in. Bring it to whoever you call.

- 1.** Every entry and exit date your family has had with the U.S. — best estimate, written out month by year. Don't guess on day; year and month are what matter.
- 2.** Marriage certificate (with English translation if foreign) and the immigration status of your spouse — USC, LPR, undocumented, TPS, DACA, asylum pending, or other.
- 3.** Birth certificate and citizenship status of every child — U.S. citizen, LPR, undocumented, or status pending.
- 4.** List of every prior immigration form filed (I-130, I-485, I-589, I-765, I-601, I-212, etc.), the date filed, and the outcome — approved, denied, withdrawn, or pending.
- 5.** Complete criminal history for every adult in the household — including traffic tickets, dismissed charges, and expunged cases. Bring certified court dispositions if you have them.
- 6.** Current immigration status documents — TPS approval notice, DACA approval, EAD card, advance parole, or any parole document — even if expired.
- 7.** The A-Number (Alien Registration Number) of every family member who has one. Write it on a single page next to each person's name.
- 8.** Last 5 years of address history — every place you have lived, with month and year ranges. Include addresses in your home country if you have moved since arriving.
- 9.** Tax filing history for the last 5 years — whether you filed with SSN or ITIN, which years you filed, and any years you missed. Bring transcripts if you have them.
- 10.** Names, addresses, and dates of employment for every employer in the last 5 years — including cash jobs and self-employment.

- 11.** Names and phone numbers of two U.S. citizens or LPRs who can sign affidavits about your good moral character and time in the U.S.
  
- 12.** Any police reports, restraining orders, or hospital records if you have been a victim of a crime, domestic violence, or trafficking — even if the case was never prosecuted.



# If ICE knocks tomorrow, you'll be ready.

Get a free 15-minute case evaluation in English or Spanish. We answer 24/7.

## 1-844-YO-PELEO

(1-844-967-3536) · [vasquezlawfirm.com/contact](https://vasquezlawfirm.com/contact)

### GO DEEPER — THE FULL GUIDE

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This is the action checklist. For the full strategy — every form, every deadline, every rule — read the comprehensive guide:

### **Family Immigration Guide**

<https://www.vasquezlawnc.com/guides/immigration-family>

### CITE THIS GUIDE

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<https://www.vasquezlawnc.com/guides/immigration-family-companion>

*This guide is educational only and is not legal advice. Every case is different. Reading it does not create an attorney-client relationship. For advice on your specific situation, call us for a free 15-minute evaluation.*