



Sobrevivir en **ESTADOS** **UNIDOS**

Manual para Inmigrantes

Ramón Escalante





HOW TO SURVIVE IN THE UNITED STATES

A handbook for immigrants

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A handbook for immigrants

By Ramón Escalante

Practical tips for building citizenship
in the U.S.

HOW TO AVOID EXTREME
SITUATIONS AND AVOID THE WORST
RISKS FOR IMMIGRANTS

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Your big goal:
ACHIEVING LEGAL STATUS!

Somehow you have come to the United States, the leading country in the Western world, and now your main goal should be to establish your priority goals. What do you think should come first for you?

Making money? Enjoy yourself? Compensating with an acceptable standard of living for the hardships of the past? Celebrating every day the achievement of having arrived here?

Well, you arrived and you are here but your first priority should be the possibility of staying longer, and for that the key is to achieve as soon as possible to LEGAL STATUS!

LEGAL STATUS is not only a status, nor just a benefit received - it is also a process in permanent construction. Whatever your situation, even if

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you do not have legal immigration status, even if you do not have documents, you should try to get legal status as soon as possible - which means normalcy.

In fact, there are people who have achieved legal status, even nationality, but for different circumstances they have bordered illegality and sometimes end up losing their status -what they had achieved after several years.

From your first step in the USA you have to take care of yourself scrupulously, your habits, your driving, your expenses, your personal performance, even your family life, because everything will be key in the future.

WARNING

Living in full compliance with the law, without violating the rules of civic coexistence, with an exemplary life in morality and privacy, you are not guaranteed any immigration status, you can still be stopped in a raid, but the news are that were detained are immigrants who have had criminal records, who have a history of driving under the influence or domestic violence, or those who have a pending deportation order.

If you don't have immigration status, if you are undocumented or illegal, you have to take good care of yourself by avoiding all possible sources of problems.

So, when you are in full compliance with the law, away from violence, problems with justice, traffic

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violations, any cause for police requisition, you are acting intelligently and responsibly, betting on your peace of mind and that of your family.

Every detail counts

In today's United States, every immigrant has to earn every day the right to stay here. Like it or not, Donald Trump won by interpreting a national sentiment that demanded greater restrictions on immigration and greater control over the general population. As immigrants, it is not up to us to formulate, decide or exercise the political power of this country that has welcomed us, but to try to adapt ourselves to exist peacefully and overcome the challenges that this new situation implies.

Am I proposing a fatalistic, resigned or defeatist vision of reality? No, on the contrary, I suggest you face this new situation as a set of goals to achieve, and dare to live day by day trying to achieve that goal.

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Let us say that now you must live a new life here. If in your country of origin you enjoyed liquor freely or drove absent-mindedly; if in the past you used to meet with someone who did not care about anything; if you would run carefree, it is good for you to know that none of that can remain the same. Everything has changed.

To put it in perspective I'm going to plot some of the worst risks you run, in seemingly simple and inconsequential situations, but you must anticipate the worst consequences of everything.



Liquor can be your worst enemy, irreversibly damaging your future at the slightest oversight.

HYPOTHETICAL SITUATION, THE UNKNOWN FRIEND

It's late at night, you've worked all day or all week, you deserve and want some relaxation, a distraction, and you really would like to some beers. Then a neighbor, a countryman, a roommate or a workmate invites you to go with him to a nearby store to buy some liquor -what do you think?

It may be that everything goes well, you go and come back without mishap, but it may also be that at that moment you are going to run a terrible risk of perhaps fatal consequences. First, if that person whose life you don't know well drove under the influence (in the past or recently) or has a criminal record, a deportation order or any other legal problem, if they run into the

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police he will probably be arrested but you will also be detained for a long time, having to spend a lot of money in the payment of lawyers, clarifying your situation, even if at the time of arrest you hadn't taken a drop of liquor and never had any problems at all.

Believe me, the best thing for you, for your family, for everyone's future, is that you stay at home. An innocent distraction, a nearby walk can bring you closer to hell.

Someone would have to tell you: Your life as you knew it in your country of origin is over. American society has scandalous figures of death in transit, horrible accidents that have cost the lives of thousands of innocent people, pedestrians, passengers, and therefore the punishment due to the consumption

of liquor at the wheel is increasingly draconian. They have assumed DUI as a social defense measure and by only approaching that barrier of illegality, even being innocent, you could be condemned for life to a clause of exclusion of citizen benefits.

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DUI: The test of your life

From the very first moment you drive in the United States, prepare yourself for the unpredictable, eventual but unavoidable moment when you will be submitted to a DUI test.

That moment can be day or evening, at night, or very early in the morning. On weekdays or holidays, on the corner of your house or on an interstate highway. Wait for that day knowing that you are gambling with your future and the future of your whole family. So, avoid the worst case scenario that would be to test positive for an illegal substance.

Even a little amount of liquor in your blood system can lead you to cross that threshold of maximum illegality. A minimum consumption is enough since all organisms do not assimilate liquor equally -and you will have a miserable life from then on. It could even happen that you had drank hours ago, the night before, and very early the next day, going to work, even without a hangover, but with traces of alcohol running through your body you would test positive.

Certain narcotic substances, even without being drugs, could cause a positive DUI test result. Also amphetamines. Certain medications for certain emotional or sleep problems may even fall within substances categorized as illegal. Check with your doctor before driving under a medication that could fit into this category.

When is DUI “erased” from your record? To tell you the truth, never. You can pay the fine, go to court and get probation, but the result of that test will appear in your record forever and will affect you greatly in your effort to regularize your situation.



HYPOTHETICAL SITUATION: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Under no circumstances must you be involved in a case of domestic violence, not even apparent, much less real.

If in the home where you are staying there is a couple arguing and the tone of the discussion rises to the level of physical violence, or there is noise produced so that a neighbor may call the police, the wisest thing to do is that you distance yourself immediately from that environment –leave the home. If you don't do this you will be compromised in a

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police action.

The ideal image of yourself is that you never get involved in any episode of domestic violence or neighborhood disorder. In the likelihood that you will ever have a temperamental partner who gets aggressive or wants to get to the physical level, the safest thing is for you to get away, keep quiet, and step away while their mood calms down.

If you are facing problems with your partner, seek help. Pastors of souls are usually a good beginning to open a spiral of relief and catharsis between both of you. More complicated cases can be treated by specialized professionals, counselors, or psychologists.

If you have already bordered the area of physical violence, it is essential to look for help. Sometimes a couple love each other a lot, but

for temperamental reasons they cannot avoid the extremes and after reaching that level it is very difficult to turn back.

Keep in mind that the American society is very traumatized by cases of violence against women and children. So, no matter how big may your discomfort or explosive your temperament be, you must avoid at all costs an excess in your acts or words that can give rise to police intervention.

AND IF THEY OFFER YOU AN
ARRANGED MARRIAGE
TO GET CITIZENSHIP...

Under no circumstances, not even by audacity do you explore the possibility of a forged marriage, arranged by money to obtain your citizenship... If that was ever possible in the United States, today it is definitely impossible...

What's more, if someone offers you that possibility, by just exploring it you are already getting involved in a conspiracy to commit a crime.

Consider all the scenarios:

1) That the person offering you the forged marriage is an undercover immigration agent.

2) That whoever offers you the forged marriage then will intend to extort you for life, because by knowing such a terrible secret they will in fact own your assets, your

money, your freedom, and you will not be able to escape.

3) That the individual who has agreed to the forged marriage could change their mind later and report you to justice, leaving you as the felon, after their betrayal.

4) There is also the possibility that in the interviews and verifications after the supposed marriage, the lie will be exposed. To hide something so delicate and transcendent or distorting it, simply is impossible. Immigration officials have forensic psychological training, the verifications are increasingly thorough, including precision details that only a real couple can adequately respond to.

The American police chronicle is overflowing with people who have been discovered trying to achieve their citizenship after a forged

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marriage. Then not only would you lose the money and time spent in setting up the trap, but also the likelihood of naturalization, the right to remain in the United States, and your freedom, because before you are deported you will most likely spend a long time in detention for such a crime.

Definitely, don't even let them tell to you about it.

YOU MUST BE THE PERFECT DRIVER

It is necessary to remind you that when you are behind the wheel you are gambling with your very life. You must drive very well, paying attention to every detail, scrupulously respecting the traffic signs, rigorously stopping before each STOP, complying with the minimum and maximum speed allowed, avoiding undue turns; in short, avoiding any abnormalities that may lead a police officer to put their eyes on you.

Keep in mind that traffic lights now include recording equipment that records your performance. Even at dawn, even if the street is deserted, even if it's raining, or if there's fog or snow, someone will be watching you. Don't forget this.

I emphasize the following recommendations:

1) On rural roads, secondary roads, where there are apparently no police, the maximum speed allowed is usually lower than that of highways and highways. You have to scrupulously abide by this regulation because sometimes in the forest there are local police waiting to detect infractions.

2) There are cities where talking on the phone texting or simply having a phone in your hand while driving may bring heavy fines. In any case, for reasons of essential security, it is better to use a hands-free device when you need to communicate while driving.

3) Driving without a seat belt is the fastest way for the police to notice you.

4) Never move your vehicle even a few inches without having the

Vehicle Registration up to date and the liability insurance.

**IF YOU DRIVE YOU HAVE
TO DO IT PERFECTLY.
ESSENTIALLY, CHECK YOUR CAR
EVERY DAY**



Your car should be in optimal working conditions every day. All it takes is a defective taillight, a low beam or a stoplight that doesn't work, for any police officer to stop you; and if you have problems with your driving license, you may face the catastrophe of being summoned to Immigration.

TRAFFIC LIGHTS AND STOPS SIGNALS SHOULD BE SACRED TO YOU

Drive perfectly respecting traffic signs, speed limits, stopping rigorously at every stop and every light. Never interrupt traffic or commit any infraction.

When you get behind the wheel, everything is at stake.



SAVING IS PART OF YOUR DEVELOPMENT

If you spend everything you earn and do not save, you are simply compromising your future. Start saving immediately, in a parsimonious, methodical way, never waste money or incur superfluous expenses, keeping in mind that every dollar saved is a guarantee for your future.

You will ask me how to save if you barely have enough. I tell you this: It is always possible to make savings. You save penny by penny, dollar by dollar –eventually you will be able to gather a significant amount of money.

Not only do you save on what you buy or stop buying, but also on what you stop consuming. You save by consuming less electricity, gas, water, eating out fewer days, asking on the menu only what you are really going to eat, and avoiding

buying what you don't need.

If your car is in good condition, do not fall into the temptation of replacing it just for pride. Give yourself the satisfaction of keeping it longer, and the money you were going to use by changing your vehicle simply deposit it in your bank.

Save for specific purposes -to pay for studies, to own your own home, to be safe in case of medical emergencies- but save anyway just for precaution.

A growing bank account is a guarantee of stability.

Don't get into unnecessary debt. The credit card can be your best friend in a case of emergency, but also your worst mistake if you use it unwisely and get into debt beyond what you can actually pay.



PAY EVERY BILL ON TIME AND SAVE!

Each bill has a due date; so, never let it expire. A percentage of unpaid balance will be added after the expiration date.

RETURN THIS PORTION WITH YOUR PAYMENT

TOTAL AMOUNT DUE	BY DUE DATE	04/04/19	\$96.19
	AFTER DUE DATE	04/04/19	\$102.35

ACCT NO: 082-0231.315



3 SIMPLE WAYS TO AVOID PROBLEMS!

1) Fasten your seat belt while driving... even if you think that no one is watching you, there are no cops around, you go only to the corner –do use your seat belt... In addition to saving your life in an accident, it saves you from a traffic ticket and from going before a judge.



2) Avoid “flattery” or unwanted “compliment”. When you see a pretty woman, beware of overwhelming her with “compliments” or trying to get her friendship or phone number if she person doesn’t offer it to you. They can report you for sexual harassment and the police can



go looking for you for that. And especially, do not approach young girls in school uniforms.

3) Do not enter the premises of a house without proper authorization. Many neighborhoods are full of signs that say: “No trespassing, Private Property.” “Do not enter, private property” A residence, condominium, urbanization, club, even a business are here exclusive access preserves for their owners.

Under no circumstances should you approach unless you have been called.



GOOD CREDIT IS AN ESSENTIAL RESOURCE FOR CITIZENSHIP BUILDING

Personal credit is a comprehensive record of all the economic activities of a person, their bank debts, the payments of their financial obligations (home, vehicle, appliances, etc.). A single unpaid medical bill is enough to damage your credit, not to mention forgetting to pay off a credit card –all this can affect forever your credit standing. A person's good credit is as important as their visa, their immigration status, and your first goal should be not to get into debt beyond what you can pay with your resources.

Any probable fabulous gain that includes the probability of losing what you do not have or leaving you bankrupt, can compromise your good credit in such a way that

the best thing to do is to scrupulously measure each possibility, get advice for any investments, weigh the different scenarios, and exert caution for any financial adventure. Don't use several credit cards at the same time -the best thing is to manage only one daily and keep it up to date. You can have an additional card as an extraordinary resource for emergencies, but without falling into the temptation to misuse it.

If your credit is GOOD, you will pay less for your car insurance, you will pay less for each financial transaction you make, because the financial system will accept that the risk around you is lower and costs less.

If your credit is BAD, you will pay double for the insurance of your car, much more for each initiative you undertake, because the system

assumes you as a person of doubtful responsibility.

Put into operation a strict planning of your family economy, income and expenses, and stick to it conscientiously. Make weekly, monthly and annual savings goals.

A solid bank account is an indispensable ally for your future and that of your family.

TIPS FOR BUILDING A GOOD CREDIT

1. Open a bank account. All the banks have particular stipulations for opening accounts. A savings account, pure and simple, is the right beginning.

2.- Use your debit card carefully. This will help you to be able to get you a backed credit card, that is, with your same available savings you can technically make purchases on credit. Some banks offer this modality. You pay with your own back-up money, but you create a credit reference that will later be valuable.

3.- Keep in mind that due to the wonder of computing all information here is interrelated -the system knows what your payment habits are for your service bills, your commercial credit accounts. If you take a vehicle on credit you should never fall behind in payments because that is reflected in

your credit record. Everything you buy on credit -from pots to books- counts.

4.- The principle of a good debtor is that they have the capacity to pay off. Acquire a debt only up to the limit of what you can normally pay. Never go into debt trusting hypothetical income, for example, overtime work hours that you don't know for sure whether you will have them or not.

5.- The worst mistake you can make is to finance old debt with more new debt. The idea of activating more credits (other credit cards, debts in shops or credits on checks and future earnings) to pay what you owe now, always ends up being fatal. There comes a time when the bubble bursts, you cannot pay, and you go bankrupt, wherewith you've already lost everything.

6.- You must get information about the lending rates that every loan generates. Generally, banks lend at

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a lower rate than the pawn titles or title loan (pawnshops) where you technically deliver the ownership of your vehicle or house and receive a loan that you have to pay with interest.

PREVENTATIVE MEDICINE - THE BEST WAY TO SAVE AND AVOID UNNECESSARY EXPENSES

The regular medical checkup of you and your family is an excellent way to save and avoid unnecessary expenses. For example, if your cholesterol and triglyceride levels are rising you will surely end up in a hypertensive crisis with unpredictable consequences. Much cheaper is to take your medicine on time, stay on a diet and so will be saving.

You shouldn't wait until you feel bad to go to the doctor. Your family doctor or health system doctor will indicate the timing and frequency of your routine exams based on your family history and general conditions.

If you don't have medical coverage (Medicaid or Medicare), you should

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consider the convenience of getting family health insurance.

Remember that an exceptional resource is given in the Applications for Financial Assistance that some hospitals and health sector institutions offer for families that cover certain parameters, income level, and eligibility conditions.

KNOCK ON THE DOOR OF
PHILANTHROPY AND BENEFIT...

Many non-profit, churches and civil associations offer free medical days in certain towns. You should you inquire, sign up, meet their requirements, and show up on time for the appointment once you get it.

So, near you are organizations like the Salvation Army and churches that distribute free food, clothing, and other aids. It's a matter of

approaching, registering, and receiving that blessing for you and your family.

**ENGLISH - THE ESSENTIAL
(AND UNAVOIDABLE)
TOOL TO GROW HERE.**

You have to learn English, whatever your age.

The preferential criterion of admission for immigrants promoted by the current U.S. administration assumes English as a sine qua non condition for all new applicants to live in this country.

How can you learn English?

There are different ways. The most economical is taking the free courses that many churches, non-profit organizations and Hispanic associations offer in many cities of the country.

Also, Internet offers you immediate, practical, gradual and totally free courses to learn English. You can start with the most essential ones:

100 Words to Learn English

1000 Phrases

Basic English

And from here you evolve as you progress in the mastery of the language.

Television usually offers the option of subtitles in languages. When you have learned a minimum vocabulary, I recommend you to watch news and series in English, with subtitles in Spanish, so you will adapt your hearing to the pronunciation, and get used to idioms and most frequent phrases. You can also listen to music with subtitles and watch movies that help a lot in your learning process.

Do not hesitate. To safely remain here, you must handle English. The better you manage it, the more

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likelihood of better and migration
stability for you and your family.

AGAIN, YOUR CARD IS REALLY A TREASURE... TAKE GOOD CARE OF IT

Your credit or debit card is invaluable. They are essential for shopping, paying, eating, making and receiving transfers... In summary, for so many economic and logistical dealings, or just for mere survival.

- 1.- Take care of the card password, don't write it down, just memorize it and change it regularly.
- 2.- Personally, I do not recommend you to pay for purchases online with your normal card. It is better to buy a prepaid card and use it only for those electronic purchases -because sometimes even the most powerful corporations make charge you fees that you have not authorized and which are not necessary. Then to get the refund you waste a lot of time on phone calls.

In case you pay by phone, I recommend that no one foreign to the transaction listen to the accessory information, that is, expiration date, three numbers on the back and zip code. Someone could use it in your name and then it's a problem to get the reimbursement.

3.- It is necessary that you have an online account with your bank and so you can verify every day by your phone or PC the transactions charged to your card.

4.- Never hand your card to anyone, not even your most trusted people.

5.- Your card must always remain with you, in a closed place, with no access for others.

6.- If you use your credit card as a mechanism to improve your credit, it is essential that you pay before the expiration date at least the minimum amount of the month. A smart card management allows you to pay the purchases of the month with it and if

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you pay the full amount daily, they do not charge interest.

REMEMBER, NOT ALL EXPENSES ARE EQUAL

Essential expenses. You cannot escape them, that is, those indispensable, compulsory ones referred to food, education of children, transportation, rent of house, and services.

Sumptuary expenses. Those that you can do without, for example, beach vacations, luxurious rims for the vehicle, high-sounding equipment for the house, Iphone instead of a regular cell phone, eating outside in expensive restaurants, and so on.

Investment expenses. These are those you make thinking about the future, such as full cover insurance, vehicle insurance, hospitalization, surgery and maternity policy, burial costs, etc...

Make a rigorous spending plan with your spouse. I do not recommend that you stop eating out, only that according to your budget you will know how many times a month you will be able to do so. It is important to say that women tend to be better managers of the home than men. Your victory will be to conquer the impulse to make unnecessary purchases. If Black Friday arrives and you don't really need anything, just don't buy anything. The same can be said for December and every special occasion. Don't spend just to spend and never fall into the temptation of wanting to appear what you are not. Teach your children that their human worth never has to do with the brand name clothes they wear or the car they ride, or any other sign of perceived bonanza.

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**NEVER GIVE UP, SOMETIMES
THERE MIGHT BE ANOTHER
CHANCE**



Photo: President Reagan signing the IRCA law in 1986.

Even if your immigration status today is totally irregular, even if you lack documents at all, even if you do not see a single probability of regularizing your situation for now, do not give up, perhaps in the future there may be another opportunity. In 1986, a Republican President, Ronald Reagan, signed the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA), an ambitious program to regularize the status of millions of immigrants in the United States. 2,700,000 previously illegal

immigrants were benefited with the Green Card, among them more than 1,000,000 agricultural workers. After that, many of them became U. S. citizens.

That legal instrument was a blessing for a significant portion of the foreign population in the United States, as it pointed to the regularization of forms of hiring for labor, so discouraging labor exploitation.

It is impossible to know if in the future another administration will offer an equivalent instrument that regulates the status of many illegal immigrants, but that must not be ruled out either, that is to say, hope must be kept.

And in that not discounted hypothesis – i.e., that there will may be another collective opportunity for regularization of status, you have to stay fit, in the best conditions, ready to qualify in any program of

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selection of good candidates for regularization.

What could disqualify you? Basically, a violation of the law, a criminal process for domestic violence, a positive DUI test, or any relation to drug trafficking or possession of illegal substances, defrauding the government for not paying promptly your taxes. In short, any failure in the goal of building citizenship.

Take care of yourself, work hard, manage your affairs wisely, save, cultivate your learning of English, and excel in your job and your quality of life. And if it is God's will, one day you will have a concrete opportunity to regularize your status, and must always be prepared for it.

PAY YOUR TAXES - THE FIRST VOLUNTARY STEP



As soon as you start working, be prepared to pay your taxes. It doesn't matter if you are paid in cash or by check, or if your salary is very low, or if you only work a few days a week, or if you work piecework (finished work), or if you earn your living selling products without any fixed salary. The important thing is that you set aside what you owe the government.

You might think that if you do not have an identity card or visa or migratory stability you are not obligated to pay taxes, but the government has opened a window

for you, for your convenience, by giving you the possibility of receiving a Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) that does not give you any legal status nor give you any benefit. It only opens a way for you to comply with the country that hosts you, paying your contributions of law.

Whoever does not pay taxes does not deceive the government, he hurts himself. An immigrant who pays rent, who has a vehicle, who is progressing in life will never be able to make anyone believe that he or she doesn't have a job.

For this procedure the most advisable thing is that you go to an office of accountants (Tax Prep), where a qualified professional will direct your process of tax return. In some states and cities, there are non-profit foundations that provide free advice to taxpayers, helping

them prepare their income tax return and guiding them on how to pay their taxes, and how to obtain a Taxpayer Identification Number. Such as Save First in Alabama, which is a Division of Impact America. They have a personalized attention module in charge of professionals in the area for preparing taxes, totally free.

The ideal date to organize your income tax return is the beginning of the year, and the deadline for payment is April. Of course, you can go to your local Social Security Administration to get your Taxpayer Identification Number. In these offices there is usually bilingual attention, specifically in Spanish for the large Hispanic community of certain areas

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HOW TO DEAL WITH UNPAID BILLS

One of the worst risks you may face is that you or someone in your family gets sick. The services of a clinic generate a large bill of several thousand dollars, which probably you will not be able to pay on time. Hence the importance of preventive medicine, that is, anticipating situations that could hypothetically generate health crises. Actually, by controlling your weight, your levels (of cholesterol, triglycerides, bilirubin, etc.) you are not spending but saving, investing in yourself, betting on staying healthy to save on medicines and medical fees.

Specialized consultations, for example, cardiology, urology, pediatrics, are much less expensive if you plan them ahead and request an appointment in time, instead of having to call the specialist for the

emergency of a hospital. In order to practice preventive medicine, you have to be very aware of your and your family's backgrounds, and how your family is doing. An important fact is that if you go to your county's Health Department ahead of time, where you can get an appointment at a good price with a specialist with a referral the primary physician who treats you.

Of course, sometimes there are emergency situations, crises, accidents, unexpected infections, and then you have to prepare yourself to face the new debt you have incurred.

When an unpayable bill arrives, don't hide, don't forget it, don't ignore it, don't sneak out or claim that you didn't know or that you had changed your address or moved. That unpaid bill ends up terribly damaging your credit record, and

I have explained how important is good credit to live in the United States.

Present yourself at the health center's administration or payment collection office and clearly explain your financial situation.

Generally, you can make a payment plan. As long as you honor those payments methodically and regularly, your credit will not be affected. Some debt collection offices offer discounts for prompt payment, give you a deadline to cancel the entire debt, and if you manage to do so in the time agreed, you will pay less than what you originally owed.

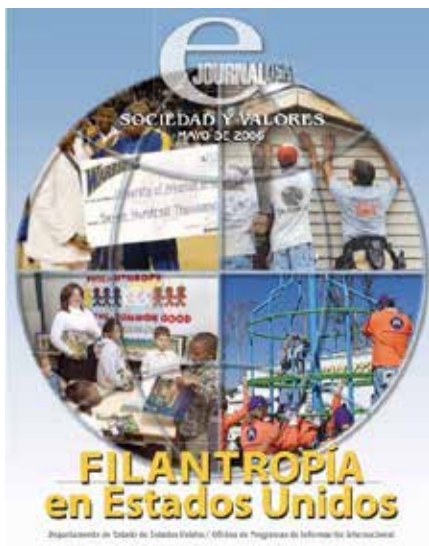
Many hospitals, clinics and health systems have financial assistance programs, through which, if your income level is below an established parameter, they can make substantial reductions in debt

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and even exonerate some of the bills from payment. But to do so, you must comply with the specific process in each organization –yes, tell the truth, don't manipulating figures, don't misrepresent your situation.

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SEEK HELP – THE UNITED STATES IS THE COUNTRY OF PHILANTHROPY



Faced with unmanageable situations, in cases of extreme poverty, complex diseases requiring processes and complex treatments, and with family and personal crises, don't hesitate to seek help. The United States is the country of philanthropy, of human beings helping others.

From the Salvation Army -that delivers hot food, groceries, clothes and shoes, blankets, even lodging for homeless people -to the multitude of churches that have food pantries and social programs, believe me, you will hardly be alone in your tribulation if you are in this great country.

When I arrived with my family in Florida, in November of 2017, we were located in a small agricultural town called Arcadia, where generous, timely, voluntary and delicate help embraced us day by day. A Methodist Church offered twice a week an almost luxurious lunch, with soup, main course, juices and dessert. Sometimes when eating we were approached spontaneously by them with bags of groceries. In the local Catholic

Church they even gave us drinking water, clothes, food and books in both languages so that we could palliate our loneliness as immigrants.



FOOD PANTRY is a program of many churches and nonprofit organizations at your fingertips when you need it. You usually go on distribution days or sign up in advance and get a variety of food for yourself and your family. To locate the distribution days and locations, type “Food Pantry Near to Me” in your search engine.

Don't be embarrassed, don't be ashamed. All those who attend you, do it with great care and courtesy. They are volunteers who love to serve others. Someday you will have the opportunity to help others as they do.

In Montgomery, Alabama, the great social work comes from the Baptist Association, a group that founded the portentous Baptist Health, which is a group of hospitals, clinics, research centers, family medicine centers that serve under various modalities to the entire population. The Adventists also have a wonderful social work, distributing vegetables and groceries; other congregations do likewise. Let's say that it is a fraternal competition to see who helps others the most.



I would recommend that when you go to receive food use what you can eat, and return it immediately what you are not going to use. Food is usually perishable and if you keep it for some time in your house certainly nobody will use it. And free food is a blessing that can't be wasted, definitely.

The WE CARE MINISTRIES and COMMUNITY OUTREACH programs are available to you throughout the United States. Some include medical and social assistance, financial assistance to pay utility bills. Along with the free distribution of food (food pantries) is the social

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work of people of faith, willing to
help you and your family.



TRUTH IS SACRED IN THIS CULTURE!

The Anglo-Saxon judicial system gives pre-eminence to the value of the word -lying is a very serious offense, often a crime. Then, whatever happens, always tell the truth.

You must not lie when you file your tax return, before a transit policeman, in any document you sign, and never in court. Truth will always be your best defense.

Moreover, a lie said in court or before an administrative instance constitutes fraud. If you build a series of lies you are already committing a conspiracy. This is so delicate that if you submit a false statement using the postal system, you would be committing a federal crime.

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A simple, stark, plain truth, without any objections, can save you. An ornate, sugarcoated and manipulated lie may doom you.

Police, administrative and judicial officials usually have psychological training and are able to detect any falsehood by the simple physical appearance of the person at the moment they speak to them. For even if you are psyched up to lie, your body, your physical expression, your sweating, will inevitably expose you.

THIS IS A COUNTRY OF MEN AND WOMEN OF FAITH...



The United States has among the keys of its formation process, the religious element underpinning the configuration of a society, the model of life and justice, the very notion of piety.

English Protestants came to America and founded communities that became great states. Today, many churches exert a leadership role in the U.S. society, including Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptists Presidents, and also a Catholic one.

America's traditional values are

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closely related to faith in God and the way of life that faith inspires. Of course, there are agnostic and atheistic currents, but they constitute a minority. Most of the American people are believers.

That is why I dare to recommend that when you arrive in the U. S. you go to a church. Do it with an open spirit, honestly. If you have doubts and concerns, ask questions. In each congregation there are leaders, advisors and pastors ready to listen to you. If you and your family get involved with a church, you will find many friends for the long term. In fact, for so many immigrants who have come alone from their lands, the only families they have found here have been those who share their faith vision in each congregation.

If you are busy on Sundays and Saturdays -the worship day of most congregations- connect yourself with a church representative to find out which weekdays they have activities.

Many churches have social programs, some of which may be of interest to you or your family. Some offer free English courses, medical crusades, and vacation camps for children. But beyond social assistance, the great benefit that a congregation offers you is human warmth, companionship, encouragement in the face of crises, and, of course, spiritual guidance.

HOW TO GET A LAWYER



At some stage of this new life in the U.S., you may need a lawyer, whether for immigration proceedings or for any civil or administrative matter. (Hopefully, not for an offence.)

Lawyers are qualified professionals and as such are expensive. That's why before you hire a lawyer it's a good idea to explore the different alternatives, and especially that you will be in detail about the costs to be shouldered.

Some lawyers usually offer a free initial consultation, either by phone or in person. In case you get it, it is very convenient that you bring a list of your main doubts so that you can clarify them before moving on.

A special resource to which you can appeal are the foundations and civil associations that assist immigrants in each state, in which case you have to make an appointment by phone and follow the instructions they give you in order to present your case, which they will analyze and tell you whether they can accept it or not. The [Though.com](http://TheThough.com) page lists the following organizations that assist immigrants:

ABA's Children's Immigration Law Academy, in Houston, Texas -legally represents children

Aldea, representing migrant families detained in Berks, Pennsylvania. Tel: 484-926-2014

Asylum Seeker Advocacy Project
Email: info@asylumadvocacy.org

CASA in Maryland, D.C.
Pennsylvania and Virginia. Tel: 866-765-2272

Casa Cornelia Law Center

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represents migrant children in San Diego County. Tel: 619-231-7788

Catholic Charities` Cabrini Center, in Houston, Texas, provides assistance to minors. Tel: 833-468-4664

Diocesan Migrant & Refugee

Services in El Paso, Texas, represents children separated from their families. Tel: 915-532-3975

Human Rights Initiative of Northern Texas, based in Dallas, assists children separated from their parents. Tel: 214-273-4333

Immigrant Defenders Law Center

represents children in California facing possible deportation. Tel: 213-634-4333

Immigrant Justice Corp provides representation to Central American families and children. 212-407-3417

Kids in Need of Defense (KIND)

Michigan Immigrant Rights Center, for migrant children in foster care in

that state. 734-239-6863

National Immigration Justice

Center, represents migrant parents who have been separated from their children. 312-660-1370

ProBar: has a program to assist detained asylum seekers in the South Texas area.

Raíces, in Texas. Has funds to pay bonds and legal representation for children.

Tahirih Justice Center provides assistance to adult migrants with an emphasis on women and girls. Centers in D.C., Houston, Baltimore and San Francisco

The Florence Project, in the state of Arizona. Tel: 520-868-0191

The Legal Aid Justice Center, in the state of Virginia.

The Rocky Mountain Immigrant Advocacy Network, in Colorado. Tel: 303-866-9308

Together Rising. An organization in

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Virginia that provides counseling to children separated from their parents who are detained in Arizona.



CLERICS AND LAITY FOR JUSTICE

The CLUE organization, made up by hundreds of pastors, priests, rabbis, ministers of other religions and laity, all united to help the immigrant in trouble, is of paramount importance. It is an interdenominational effort of men and women of different denominations seeking to contribute to the promotion of justice. They support you without asking you what your religion is, not even if you are a believer or not. I have a beautiful personal testimony about it.

THE NIGHTMARE OF BAIL BOND



God forbid you or your family should be detained, but in such a case it will be necessary to find a way to pay the Bail Bond which is the Court's guarantee of the case to grant parole to the detainee while due process proceeds.

Technically, the houses that finance the Bail Bonds keep only a percentage of the profit and it is up to you to secure a larger amount until you guarantee the fullness of the money deposited in the Court. But it is important that you read and understand the contract that you are signing at the moment of receiving that financing, especially the clauses relative to the recovery

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of the guarantee that you are offering (that is to say, a vehicle, a property), because the idea is that you don't lose what you have given in guarantee, but that when you pay it becomes fully yours again.

Unfortunately, this financing is much more difficult in immigration bonds because instead of covering only 10% of the allocated amount, it must be paid in full.

Certain civil associations that defend immigrants help them get the resources to pay those bonds, like RAICES, which is located in Texas. You could also explore ways to get funding through social networks, perhaps by creating an account.

**IF YOU HAVE AN ADDICTION,
DON'T HIDE IT. DON'T
DISGUISE IT! FACE IT!**



If you have an addiction, be it alcohol or an illegal drug, don't try to hide it and follow it alone, don't hide it either, just face it... it's the only chance to get specialized help and start overcoming it.

A support group can make it easier for you to be honest about your situation, find specialized help (psychologist, psychiatrist, as the case may be) and share with others who have faced similar crises. No one is going to look at you like a stranger because everyone has gone through it.

Approaching a support group does not disqualify you socially or personally, does not limit you in your field of work, on the contrary, exalts you, shows you as a person willing to overcome their difficulties.

Alcoholics Anonymous, for example, is an organization created in the 1930s in the United States, and now covers many countries. There they can help you deal with your alcoholism problem.

Drug addicts Anonymous, closely related to the previous one, can help you face the terrible problem of drug addiction. Don't hesitate to get close to it where you can find the necessary tools to face your problem early.

Gamblers Anonymous, is an organization specialized in helping people to overcome their unhealthy obsession for gambling.

There are also work groups for people who have problems with domestic violence, emotional instability, suicidal thoughts, or mere depression.

Your full independence, your mental health, without dependencies or addictions that could get you into trouble are key factors for your full development in this country.

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**BE CAREFUL WITH YOUR FIRST CAR.
THIS IS OF PARAMOUNT
IMPORTANCE!**



One of the great decisions of your life will be to buy your first car, and by my own experience I allow myself to offer you key recommendations in this regard:

- 1) Your first car should be subject to a rigorous selection, not bought on the run or thinking that it is a transitory thing. In fact, it can be your vehicle for a long time, and may save you a lot of money (or make you lose a fortune, according to the case).
- 2) Search information, make

questions, get advice on what you can buy, and that search should include the money available for the down payment, your monthly ability to pay, the likely costs of repairs and maintenance that will generate that car, and the years of useful life that may have left.

3) Don't let yourself be carried away only by the appearance: beautiful cars, freshly painted, with beautiful upholstery and pleasant aroma can have the engine damaged, problems with the transmission box, and can even be recovered vehicles that have concealed defects.

4) In order to choose the used car that best suits you, take into account:

a) Mileage of the vehicle, that is, how many miles it has traveled and its age. A "new" vehicle around 200,000 miles has received special

wear and tear, that is, they “worked” it night and day;

b) Cylinder capacity of the engine, taking into account that 4 cylinders are economical in terms of gasoline, but 6 and 8 cylinders are not.

c) The make of the vehicle; there are very good classic vehicles that come for more than 300,000 miles, and others that when they reach 200,000 are already much deteriorated. Your trusted mechanic can illustrate you better about this.

5) It is essential that a trusted mechanic checks the car. Any mechanic can tell you how you know if an engine is already increasing compression, if a transmission is slipping or ... Never buy without proper advice.

6) As we are talking about used cars, I strongly recommend that you buy from a dealer that offers you a written guarantee of at least 30 days and has its own mechanic's

workshop to fulfill that guarantee.

7) The best thing is to check the history of the vehicle by paying the subscription to CARFAX or a computer registry record about the accidents in which each car has been involved. Sometimes they offer you a beautiful vehicle that comes from being recovered from a terrible accident and then you can have hidden problems.

8) The mere fact of how to buy or pay for it, is already a fundamental issue. It is not the same to buy it from credit as is on cash. Of course you can find better prices and perhaps you find a simpler vehicle, with more years and more miles, while you work and manage to buy something newer. On credit you have to consider the active rate, and maybe it will be more convenient for you to take out a bank loan to pay cash to the dealer and reimburse the bank.

Of course, there are very serious dealers that offer an economic rate of interest.

9) Before taking out a vehicle on credit, sit down to do the math of its real cost; how much will be the down payment, how much you are going to pay monthly, and for how many months. That tells you the real price of the vehicle, not the advertising that always overwhelms us. Technically, it would be possible for a new vehicle with a discount rate and an outgoing year price to be cheaper for you than a used vehicle, taking into account that with the new vehicle maintenance costs would be minimal in the first few years.

10) If you make a large investment in a new or used vehicle in good condition, complete the investment by acquiring a "full cover" insurance which would guarantee

the replacement of the vehicle in case of loss (total loss). Throwing thousands of dollars at risk of losing it in any collision or carelessness, is almost irresponsible, an absurd lack of foresight.

11) Do you know how to drive mechanical cars, I mean synchronous gearbox? These are usually cheaper.

12) Remember that your car in the United States cannot need major repairs in an average time. Mechanical labor is very expensive, very difficult to repair an engine or gearbox. So what you buy should work for you at least long enough.

13) If you see cars online, you must determine whether the vehicle is offered by the owner or by a dealer or reseller. Try to find out how many owners the vehicle has had. In general, vehicles with few owners are more well-preserved. Older

people's vehicles are usually intact.

14) The spare parts of certain brands are more expensive than others; make a research about it. It is very important to do this.

15) Don't think that you buy it today and tomorrow you will sell it easily. Selling a used vehicle is often very difficult because the United States has an immense fleet of used vehicles for sale. Proportional to the number of new vehicles you see at each dealership is the number of vehicles used at dealerships or simply in private hands. Selling it will take time, unless you auction it off for less than its real value and then that will be a loss to you.

16) Finally, take great care of your vehicle. In the U.S., maintenance is done by you. Periodically check the fluids (engine oil, hydromatic oil, brake fluid, water or coolant, hydraulic steering fluid, i.e. the

steering wheel). And change the oil as often as indicated. Even old, your car is a treasure.

BEWARE OF ACCIDENTS AT WORK!



An incessant promotion by all means offers the services of labor lawyers, able to get you compensation if you have suffered physical damage at work. Well, maybe you will, but the important thing -and the real gain- is that you don't have accidents at work.

Because all monetary compensation is usually insufficient, even if you are paid thousands of dollars for a fall, or a fracture or irreversible physical

damage, what is the use of a full account when you are unable to walk or if you are disabled or simply can't work anymore?

So, take care of yourself. Your greatest treasure is your health, an asset to you and your family. Without health you cannot help them, you cannot produce. Never accept anything that puts your physical integrity at serious risk.

For example, the best paid of all construction, roofing, or roof repair jobs can only be performed under strict safety measures, including a safety belt, scrupulous adherence to safety standards, and never risking a fall that can always be fatal and disastrous. Say no to the offer of \$300 a day, no more. Your life is worth a lot more than that.

So, when you fall into the temptation of skipping hours of sleep for the simple obsession of making more

money, you start working “overtime” and end up without sound sleep. You wake up exhausted, too early, and take an extra dose of caffeine, either in normal coffee or with energizers that are made from caffeine. You feel yourself accelerated, more energetic, but your pancreas and liver will suffer and you are severely damaging your health. Find information about the effects of prolonged consumption of these energizers.

The best energizer is to sleep between 7-8 hours and rest at least one day a week. When your body has rested spontaneously generates the energy to work -you do not need additional substances. If you have a night shift, set aside as a sacred thing a minimum of hours to sleep through during the daytime, without any noise or distractions, so that rest becomes truly restorative.

What good would it do you to accumulate a small fortune, and after ten years of exhausting work you look physically and mentally broken? Mental freshness is just as important as physical freshness. So, delight yourself with music, movies, books, family activities, recreation, laughter, fun -and your mind and emotions will be better.

Yes, you came to the United States to work and get ahead. But also to remain alive and pursue a life of fulfillment. Your sick, collapsed body will be a huge waste and a tragedy for you and your family people. Take care of and love yourself, this is your best gain.

A SINGLE NEGLECT OF YOUR CHILDREN CAN BE FATAL TO YOU

The United States is a very rights-based society. I mean, it protects and watches over the rights of the legally weaker. Among these are children –they are a legal asset protected by the community, even over your own resources and capabilities.

In other words, in the United States children are sacred, untouchable, and you have to take care of them and guarantee their well-being up to a minimum limit of guarantees. Otherwise, you could face legal consequences for neglecting them.

If your child gets sick, you cannot try home remedies on them or postpone going to the doctor -you must immediately go to the

appropriate health center. If you are not careful and your child gets worse, you would already have criminal responsibility for it. You should be especially aware to viral illnesses (the dreaded flu) and any sudden illness.

It is also your responsibility to ensure that the child is properly treated at home. It's not a question of whether or not you want to give your child the medication. You have to follow the treatment by the book.

It is particularly important that your child adhere to his or her immunization schedule. You can't skip or forget or postpone dates in order to meet that schedule.

When the child is traveling with you in the car, he or she must forcibly wear a seat belt, otherwise you could

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receive a ticket (fine) for several hundred dollars. Younger children should use the portable seat and ride in the back seat. It's also your responsibility to keep doors and windows locked and, of course, to drive very carefully, avoiding liquor intake, speeding and disrespect of traffic signals. Any infringement with the presence of children is drastically aggravated.

You can never leave your child unaccompanied, neither at home or in your car. Even if your absence is for a few minutes, that can pose a serious risk to the child's safety, and you will face criminal consequences.

Children should always be kept away from all forms of violence. If you have problems at home, the child should never be affected, especially if you have arguments

with your partner. Remember that bodily discipline is very limited in this country, and you should avoid using physical force on him, particularly when you are angry or upset.

Finally, you must understand the trauma of American society as to children in particular. This society is greatly affected by the physical and psychological damage to children and minors that have caused great scandals. When you approach a child you are already in an alert zone, keep your distance, never be overaffectionate or offer a ride to a pedestrian child. The best way to help a child on the street is to call the police.

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HOW TO SURVIVE IN THE UNITED STATES

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