

CHECKLIST: SHORT-TERM CONTRACTS AND RELATED BILLS

This checklist is part of a larger Manual titled “Protecting Assets and Child Custody in the Face of Deportation,” released by Appleseed in 2017. For more info and to read the full Manual, please visit www.AppleseedNetwork.org/DeportationManual.

This checklist is not legal advice. You can search for a lawyer at <http://www.ailalawyer.org/>.

There are many kinds of short-term service contracts. Some examples are listed here, but you may also have others:

- Water
- Electric
- Gas
- Cable/Internet
- Phone or cell phone
- Trash/recycling pickup
- Other delivery services like newspapers, food, etc.

The first thing to do is make a list of all the contracts you have. On that list include the following information:

- The provider (the name of the company that gave you the contract, i.e. Verizon) and the provider’s mailing address, phone number, email address and website.
- Name of the person who is on the account (this could be your name or someone in your family)
- Account number
- Amount owed/balance remaining for each contract. Make a note of whether the contract is paid month-to-month or in longer chunks of time.

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- Make a note about whether the contract has a termination section (info about how you can cancel the contract). If there is no termination section, you can call the provider and ask them how to terminate the contract.
- Make a note about whether you can put another person on the account in case you aren't around.

Once you have your list of contracts together, make sure you also have a copy of each contract, as well as a copy of the last bill and proof of payment for each contract. Use your list to contact each provider and ask them the following questions:

- Can someone else manage your account for you? Can you add someone else's name to your account? What is the process to add someone's name to your account?
- Do they offer service in other countries?
- What is the process to terminate an account? Do you have to appear in person, call customer service, or can you terminate online?
- Are there fees for early termination?

Once you have your list and answers to all your questions, put it together in one place and make sure to share it with someone you trust. Even if you leave the country, you will still be responsible for the contract and any unpaid amounts, so it is good to start preparing to transfer your accounts or cancel them as soon as you can.

Remember: The plan is to have a plan. You are taking the right steps to protect your family. Don't be afraid to ask for help so you get answers you can trust: try your lawyer or caseworker, or ask your child's school or doctor's office.