What You Need to Know About Keeping Your Money Safe

America is a country of immigrants... and so too the credit union movement in this country was born from our immigrant forebears. In the US, there are 46 million immigrants, representing 13% of the US population (1 out of 8 residents), contributing to our local economies, paying their fair share in taxes, and accounting for more than 20% of small business entrepreneurs.

Recent Executive Orders on immigration have created widespread concern in minority and immigrant communities across the nation. Despite these uncertainties, we want to assured you that Juntos Avanzamos credit unions remain committed to working with you. Once a member, always a member!

Credit unions are financial cooperatives, owned by their members and accountable to them. Juntos Avanzamos credit unions are here to serve you. Juntos Avanzamos credit unions are committed to meeting the needs of Latinos and immigrants. We provide relevant and responsible products and services in your language. We are immigrant and Latino friendly. In short, we are a financial institution you can TRUST.

Tips for Keeping Your Money Safe

- **Avoid High Cost and Predatory Services**: Many immigrants pay hundreds or thousands of dollars each year to cash their paychecks, pay bills, and send money home. With a credit union account, you can cash checks and pay bills for free. Some credit unions also offer safe, low-cost ways to send money home. And they can provide you with an ATM/Debit Card and even Prepaid cards that allow you and your family to access your funds anywhere, anytime.

- **Protect Yourself From Theft**: Carrying lots of cash can be dangerous. Some immigrants can become targets of crime because it is believed that they carry cash, particularly on paydays. With a credit union account you can deposit your money, access it anytime you need it, and carry only the cash you need.

- **Establish financial records**: A credit union account provides important records of how much money you receive and spend. This information can help you when you file taxes, or if you have a dispute with an employer, landlord or creditor.

- **Your Money is Safe**: The money you put in a credit union account is insured up to $250,000 by the U.S. government. This means that you will not lose a single penny, no matter what happens to the credit union.

Commonly Asked Questions

**Can I open an account if I don’t have a Social Security Number?**
Yes. You can legally open an account whether or not you have a Social Security Number, and regardless of your immigration status. Juntos Avanzamos credit unions accept a wide range of identification documents, including the Matricula Consular.
**What is an ITIN?**
The IRS issues Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers (ITINs) to people who are required to file tax returns and are not eligible for Social Security Numbers. Juntos Avanzamos credit unions accept ITINs as valid identification numbers to open accounts.

**What should I bring to open an account?**
- A photo ID (like your passport, Matricula consular, etc.)
- Proof of your home address (like a phone bill)
- An identification number: If you do not have a Social Security number, you may bring an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN)

**Will I lose the money in my account if I am detained or deported?**
No. Your account still belongs to you. Once you open an account, your money is safe. Also, keep in mind that credit unions provide remote access to your account via ATM, POS (debit cards), online access or through your Mobil phone device. You can access your account from wherever you are, **BUT** make sure to keep your personal information up-to-date at the credit union.

**Others are Here to Help**
If you are one of the 8.5 million permanent lawful residents in the US (refugee status, green card holder, etc.), start your naturalization process as soon as possible. Below are some resources:
- [National Immigration Law Center: Everyone has certain basic rights](#)
- [Acceso Latino: What all immigrants should know](#)
- The US Citizenship and Immigration Services ([USCIS](#)) has established a new fee structure: The standard fee is $725 (including biometrics). USCIS will introduce a partial fee waiver that will apply to applicants with household incomes between 150-200% of federal poverty guidelines, or between $36,000-$48,000 per year (for a household of four). The full fee waiver for applicants with household incomes under 150% of poverty remains in effect.
- If you can’t afford to pay the fees up front, apply for a “citizenship loan” or a “small dollar loan” from your credit union.

If you are an undocumented immigrant
- Seek assistance:
  - [National Immigration Legal Services Directory](#), Immigration Advocates Network
  - [ImmigrationLawHelp.org](#)
  - [List of Pro Bono Legal Service Providers](#), U.S. Department of Justice
- Know your rights:
  - [Know Your Rights [portal]](#), American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)
  - [Know Your Rights for Students](#), Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc.
  - [Immigrant Rights Teach-In and Know Your Rights Presentations](#), NYU Law
  - [Know Your Rights: What to Do if Questioned About Your Immigration Status](#), ACLU
  - [Know Your Rights: What to Do if Immigration Agents (ICE) Are at Your Door](#), ACLU
  - [Know Your Rights: What to Do When Faced with Anti-Muslim Discrimination](#), ACLU
  - [Know Your Rights! Protect Yourself Against Immigration Raids](#), United We Dream