

Ten Actions You Can Take to Accompany Undocumented Immigrants

This backgrounder provides suggested actions that you can take to support undocumented immigrants in your community. Included are links to further information, which will assist your effort to launch some of the suggested initiatives or connect with groups already doing this work in your area.

1. Share Know Your Rights (KYR) Information.

Disseminate critical KYR information about legal rights during encounters with enforcement. Information is available in English and Spanish. You can find videos for individuals and families [here](#). You can download printable cards to post in your church and carry at all times in Arabic, Chinese, Korean, Spanish, and English [here](#).

ACTION: Share these KYR resources on social media and within your parish.

2. Accompany Individuals to ICE Check-Ins.

Some undocumented immigrants have ankle monitors that require an appointment or are scheduled to check in with ICE on a semi-regular basis. Attempting to accompany an individual through this process can provide comfort and may be helpful for the immediate outcome of the check-in. Volunteers who are neither lawyers nor legal representatives can appear at the ICE check-in as “reputable individuals.” Urge willing parishioners to submit the necessary information (as listed in [G-28 Instructions](#) and in [8 CFR 292.1\(a\)\(3\)](#)) to appear at appointments.

ACTION: Ask local ICE offices to allow you to accompany immigrants to their check-in appointments. Create a small ready-team that can attend check-in appointments with undocumented individuals in your community or church as requested.

3. Build Relationships with Local Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Offices.

It is important that U.S. citizens nurture relationships with [Immigration and Customs Enforcement \(ICE\) Field Offices](#) and [U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services \(USCIS\) community relations officers](#). Engaging local ICE and USCIS offices could help provide immediate points of contact when there is a need to engage in individual case advocacy, a long-term benefit for your work with undocumented immigrants. Please find contact information for and the location of your local offices on the [ICE](#) and [USCIS](#) websites.

ACTION: If you are a U.S. Citizen, look to attend ICE or USCIS community relations meetings in your area and set up meetings with local DHS Field Office leadership.

4. Provide Transport for Individuals to Immigration Court.

It is crucial that undocumented individuals who have pending immigration court proceedings consistently attend any legal appearances for which they are scheduled to appear.

ACTION: Organize a transportation ride-sharing network in your parish to assist individuals who need a ride to their court proceedings.

5. Facilitate Legal Screenings.

Roughly one million undocumented immigrants living in the United States are potentially eligible for an immigration benefit or relief. Unfortunately, many of these

individuals are unaware that they qualify or are unable to pursue such options due to financial limitations. Facilitating access to a reputable immigration legal services provider could help eligible individuals access the benefit or relief for which they qualify.

ACTION: Organize information sessions at your parish with reputable local immigration services providers. Discuss the availability of legal screenings.

6. Help Arrange Legal Services.

Immigrants are [more likely](#) to seek and prevail on claims of relief if they have the assistance of legal counsel. Encouraging attorneys to take immigration cases pro bono (free of charge) or offering a legal clinic is incredibly helpful. The Department of Justice (DOJ) provides a list of legal providers across the country, as well as a list of [accredited representatives](#) and recognized organizations, which can be used as a guide for immigrants seeking legal support. [The American Immigration Lawyers Association \(AILA\)](#) also provides a searchable database of immigration attorneys.

ACTION: Distribute these lists to pertinent points of contact within your parish and diocese, as well as to local immigrant rights organizations. Help facilitate meetings with legal representatives for consultations. Host a legal clinic in your parish to allow undocumented persons to ask questions or get information.

7. Raise Awareness of Notario Fraud.

Notario fraud increases when there are new or anticipated immigration policy changes. For this reason, it is vital to educate our fellow parishioners on notario fraud and advise individuals to only seek immigration advice from qualified legal services providers, such as reputable pro bono attorney from the DOJ or AILA lists. For more information visit [this site](#).

ACTION: Hold an educational event on notario fraud and immigration scams that highlights the importance of finding legitimate legal services providers.

Include awareness material about notario fraud in church bulletins and updates.

8. Start an Immigration Detention Visitation Ministry.

Many immigrants in detention experience fear and isolation and pastoral care or individualized visits can provide comfort and support.

ACTION: Gather a group to create this ministry. Find out where the closest detention center to your church is using [this map](#) then work together using [this resource](#) to create a visitation ministry group.

9. Pray Together, Raise Awareness, and Provide Community Forums for Undocumented Immigrants to Share Their Stories and Needs.

As always, prayer and pastoral support are vital to daily life. You can host a prayer service recognizing immigrants to help generate awareness within your local community. Consider screening an immigration documentary and invite an immigrant to tell his or her story afterwards or hosting an open forum for dialogue and listening.

ACTION: Organize a prayer service or educational event at your local parish and invite both native-born and immigrant congregants. [You can find resources here](#).

10. Advocate for Comprehensive Immigration Reform.

There is currently no established pathway for undocumented persons in this country to come forward and earn citizenship. The time is now for members of Congress to come up with a bipartisan solution for the undocumented people in our communities.

ACTION: [Join the Episcopal Public Policy Network \(EPPN\)](#) to raise your voice to members of Congress about the need for immigration reform. Attend a meeting with your elected officials, write an op-ed, or share on social media that you support bipartisan, comprehensive immigration reform.