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GRASSROOTS TOOLKIT

A COMMUNITY APPROACH TO FIGHTING DEPORTATIONS

Fighting deportation doesn't just happen on the streets by blocking deportation buses and ICE raids, it's often a legal fight that lasts months, if not years. While it's true that ICE can strike at a moment's notice, most deportations involve individuals who have simply run out of legal resources. In order to win deportation cases, families need support from the very beginning.



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FIRST: Find immigration groups in your community that are already fighting raids and deportation.

Donald Trump, by his executive action, unleashed terror on American immigrants and refugees when he implemented his Muslim Ban and launched his Deportation Force. In addition to these actions by Donald Trump, attention has come to longstanding problems resulting from our broken immigration system

More than ever before, advocates across the country are ready to respond to the needs of the immigrant community. Immigration deportations and raids aren't new. For decades, hundreds of community of faith and community organizations, have been providing immigrants resources and services to fight their deportation. Donald Trump's immigration orders are flooding these organizations with people looking for help. Rather than starting something new, get involved with an organization in your area that already has experts. The single most important thing you can do to stand against Donald Trump's deportation force, is to sign up to volunteer and to donate to local organizations working with the immigrant population.

If you have multiple groups in your community, be sure to ask if they provide specific support to families facing deportation. Some organizations limit their legal services to visa applications and don't provide support for families or family members facing deportation.

[To find a list of immigration organizations in your community, click here.](#)

SECOND: Create a “community deportation advocate” in your community.

For those facing deportation, the main challenge is identifying and coordinating community resources that are available in communities without a strong coalition of immigrant service providers, immigrants often don't know where to turn for support.

Because of this, smaller communities identify a “Community Deportation Advocate” (CDA) to serve as a point person for the immigrant community and service providers. The role of the CDA is to ensure every impacted family knows where to turn and every concerned citizen knows how to help.



CDAs ensure immigrants facing deportation have access to community resources by:

1. Creating and cataloging resources of available to families facing deportation
2. Identifying and engaging at-risk communities and ensuring they have access to the community resources.
3. Developing a rapid response network of activist able to mobilize within minutes of hearing about a developing raid or deportation.
4. Raising legal deportation defense funds.

Before you create something new in your community, it's important that you do your homework. Make sure to check with local places of worship and community organizations to see if someone is already meeting these needs in your community.

First, create a leadership team

Your first step is to create a leadership team to help lead the project. The leadership team should be representative of the community and should work to ensure undocumented voices have a prominent seat at the table. It's also a good idea to have members of the team represented from the faith and education community. Don't forget about the ESL teachers at your local school. They know more about what's going on in your community than anyone.

Second, identify your Community Deportation Advocate (CDA)

This person should have deep ties in the immigrant community and strong relationships with the advocacy community. They should also be bilingual and ideally, have friends that are lawyers. There are a number of people within the immigrant youth community that fit this description. Ask around until you find the right person willing to take on this role.

Third, create a local deportation defense directory

Create a Google Form to catalog the existing resources already available in your community. You can see an example, [here](#). Make the form available to organizations and individuals and don't forget to ask for phone numbers and email address. Make a specific list of community services that are available. Call community groups and places of worship. Spread the word to trusted allies in your community.

Here's our list of resources we're cataloging:

- Computer or Internet Resources



- DACA Information
- Education/Tutoring
- Employment
- ESL Support
- Financial Assistance
- Food donations
- Healthcare
- Household good donations
- Housing
- Housing Finance Assistance
- Housing/Automotive Repair Assistance
- Know Your Rights Resources
- LGBTQ Resources
- Legal Services
- Legislative Advocacy
- Naturalization/Citizenship Resources
- New clothing donations
- Organizing Space/Space for Public Meetups
- Refugee Assistance
- Resettlement
- Translation and Interpretation Services
- Transportation

Fourth, start answering questions and building relationships.

Have the CDA start meeting with community members. Remind them that they can't give legal advice. Their role is to help people connect to the resources already available. Start building trust in the community; (ideally) they will already have the trust. Relationships are the foundation this work is built on. If a family needs computer support, find someone with a computer. If they need someone to call their lawyer to clarify the process, call the lawyer.

Fifth, build a rapid response team

Start identifying people in your community who can help build a team able to respond at a moment's notice. Work with the local ACLU chapter to host a civil disobedience training or reach out to a local immigration lawyer with [AILA](#) to host an education event. Meet with the local activist community and see if they will stand in solidarity with you, the next time someone faces deportation.



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Use the resources available through [United We Dream](#) to get trained on deportation defense, and, get ready. Deportations in your community aren't a matter of if, but when.

Sixth, fundraise for a full-time CDA position

When your team takes off and you find yourself helping multiple families at a time, start a fundraising campaign to pay for the work. Partner with a local church or nonprofit to see if they'll act as your fiscal agent. Try to get local churches to hold a dedicated fundraiser to pay for your position. It's important that you start doing the work before you try to fund it. You may find out through steps 1-5 that a volunteer CDA will work for your community. Plus, people will be more willing to get behind your work if they see that you are filling a need in the community.

So that's it. That's what it takes to fight deportations in your community. It's not a quick and easy solution, but it's the best way to help the most people in need. Stopping deportations is a marathon, not a sprint. If you get started now, you can help protect those in your community most at risk.

Notice: This document should not be considered as legal advice because no one but a lawyer can give legal advice. IF you know of someone at immediate risk of deportation, the first thing you should do is find them a lawyer. [Click here to find an immigration lawyer in your community.](#)