

Supporting Immigrant Neighbors in Your City



Resources for Synagogues and Clergy

In recent months and with no end in sight, major immigration enforcement operations have targeted a growing number of cities across the country. If your community is experiencing or anticipating such a deployment, this resource is designed to help you identify means of supporting impacted immigrant communities – both during initial emergency stages and for the long-term, after mass operations have concluded.

Connect with Local Organizations Supporting Immigrants

It's important to connect with immigrant organizations already doing the work for their own communities and follow their lead. Check with local interfaith organizing or clergy networks. We additionally recommend checking these resources to identify organizations in your area:

- Look at recipients of the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR)'s Ethnic Community Self-Help Grants, which can be found [here](#).
- Check out the national Ethnic Community Based Organizations (ECBO) Cohort from We Are All America (WAAA) [here](#).
- Access the national ECBO directory put together by the Karen Organization of San Diego (KOSD), organized by state, [here](#).

Before volunteering, it is critical to take into consideration your personal level of risk related to any number of factors, including immigration status, and to advise volunteers engaging through your congregation to do the same.

Volunteers and activists will be needed for many different roles, some of which may require expertise or initial training. While your local leaders may articulate additional specific needs, we have seen the following opportunities offered consistently in providing effective and immediate support:

- **Emergency food donation and delivery for people afraid/unable to leave their homes**
- **Adult accompaniment of children to schools to assist impacted families.**
 - Reach out to schools and districts with high immigrant populations as they may already have developed emergency plans and have ways to deploy volunteers.
- **Protection of worship services for faith communities with significant immigration populations**
 - Some churches have made their services by registration only and privatized the space to prevent immigration enforcement from entering without a judicial warrant. They have created programs for people not at risk to check-in individuals and provide a witnessing bystander presence.
- **Assistance in creating [standby guardianship plans](#) in case of parental arrest, detention or deportation.**
- **Accompaniment programs for individuals engaging with the immigration system through ICE check-ins, immigration court, and other public places people may fear going.**
 - Because detentions are increasing during once-routine encounters with immigration enforcement, accompaniment programs supporting individuals and Court Watch programs that monitor general court proceedings have been essential both for impacted individuals and for shining light on changed practices. Accompaniment is both an emergency and long-term response that pre-dates

this moment and will be needed long after it and there is a significant cache of resources to guide involvement. HIAS has developed an [online Community of Practice](#) for activists in the Jewish community across the country to connect and use in support of their local efforts that we invite you to consider joining.

Educate Your Community

- **“Know Your Rights” information is essential not only for impacted populations but for people who find themselves in bystander situations witnessing arrests and detentions.**
 - You may host, direct your community to participate in a session offered locally, or use a national training from a reputable organization such as the [National Immigration Law Center](#). There may be state or city specific variations to particular laws based on cooperation agreements with local law-enforcement.
- **Reclaiming a religious voice for welcome matters in our public discourse. Equip your community with the Jewish language to speak about the values motivating us.**
 - HIAS has produced a [wide array of ready-to-use Jewish educational resources](#) including liturgical readings, text studies, holiday content, B’nai Mitzvah project toolkits and more.
- **Establish plans for your own community in case of encounters with law enforcement.**
- Places of worship along with schools and hospitals are no longer treated as “sensitive locations” which means that arrests can now take place on the premises. However, judicial warrants are required to enter private areas when they are treated, designated, and marked as such. You may wish to identify and implement a resource like [this one produced by the Unitarian Universalist Association](#) as guidance for their congregations.

Consider Long-Term Responses

The threat to and trauma of immigrant communities will not dissipate with lessened media coverage or the conclusion of high-visibility operations. Continuing to be present for impacted populations, fighting to reclaim our national culture of welcome, and advocating to stop harmful policies and implement humane ones is essential to our long-term national identity as a free and fair democracy.

- **Join and Participate in the HIAS Accompaniment Community of Practice (COP)**
 - The COP will be useful to you as your community experiences the initial influx of a mass operation. We hope that you will stay and share the expertise you gain to support other communities across the country as they experience the same thing.
- Consider engaging in [HIAS programs that offer ongoing support for our immigrant neighbors](#).
- Whether welcoming Afghans with Special Immigrant Visas (SIVs), connecting lawyers to our pro-bono program or volunteering directly through our New York and DC based initiatives, HIAS continues its mission of ensuring welcome, safety and opportunity no matter the conditions around us. As we have throughout our 120+ year history, we pivot to meet the moment and help in the ways that are possible.

Prepare Your Leaders

- **HIAS staff may be available for consultation as you consider your larger community response**
 - If local clergy/organization leaders would like to consult with HIAS staff, please reach out to HIAS Rabbi-in-Residence Sarah Bassin at sarah.bassin@hias.org.