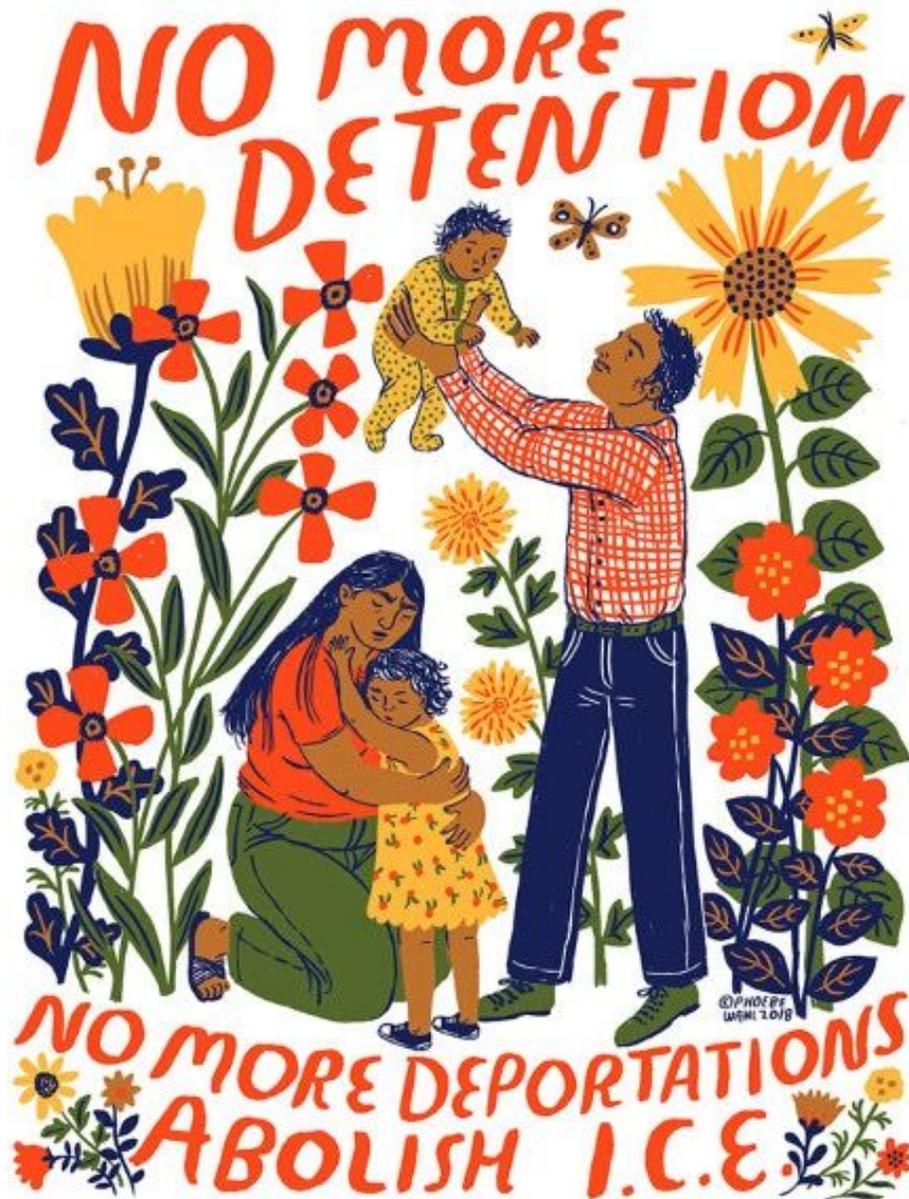


Keep ICE Out of Iowa Toolkit



Art by [Phoebe Wahl](#)

Created by:

American Friends Service Committee Iowa
Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement

About the organizations

American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) is a 100-year-old Quaker organization devoted to service, development and peace programs throughout the world whose work is based on the belief in the worth of every person, and faith in the power of love to overcome violence and injustice. AFSC Iowa has worked on immigrant rights issues for nearly 30 years providing legal services to immigrants and refugees around the state and equipping leaders to advocate and organize for pro-immigrant policies to create welcoming systems and combat systemic oppression.

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Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement (CCI) is a statewide, grassroots community organization with over 40 years of political and issue organizing experience. CCI's mission is to put people and planet before profits, politics, and polluters through grassroots organizing and activism. They believe that everyday people have the power to create real, meaningful change. CCI works directly with impacted communities to address key issues like environmental justice, worker justice, racial justice, immigrant justice, climate justice, economic justice, and political justice.

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About this toolkit

In June, Iowa CCI held a series of 'Keep ICE Out of Iowa' events around the state where national immigrant rights organizers joined us to discuss best practices for keeping our communities safe and making Iowa more welcoming. A big takeaway for us from those meetings was that people were hungry for tools and resources that would help them build a better Iowa.

This tool kit is intended to be used as a guide to help advocates and communities in Iowa get started with a local organizing campaign. Make sure you join organizations to stay plugged in and connected in order to build power and advance immigrants' rights across our state for the long haul!

In this tool kit you will find resources designed to provide information, guidance on how to form a campaign, how to prepare and respond to a raid, and ideas for actions you can shape to fit the needs in your neighborhood or community.

The more folks who know and exercise their rights, the less people will end up in jail or have their families separated by ICE.

Before you begin, think about these guiding questions:

1. Who are the organizations/leaders representing immigrant communities in my area?
2. Who might be supportive of these efforts in my area?
3. Who might be against these efforts in my area?
4. Who are the stakeholders that serve immigrants or the broader community in my area?

The more folks who know and exercise their rights, the less people will end up in jail or have their families separated by ICE.

Disclaimer:

This toolkit is designed to provide guidance and resources on how to build a more welcoming Iowa for immigrant families and is not intended to provide legal advice.

Iowa - the moment we're in

In **2014** a nationwide effort where immigrants and allies pushed back against Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE) collaboration with local jails resulted in unprecedented rejection of ICE by sheriffs around the country. [In Iowa, at least 26 sheriffs decided to not honor ICE detainer requests](#) without probable cause or a warrant. This change resulted in fewer immigrants being detained in Iowa jails in **2015**.

The Presidential campaign and election of Donald Trump in **2016** resulted in a severe crackdown on immigrant families nationally and a ratcheting up of anti-immigrant rhetoric at all levels.

Iowa's Republican-controlled state legislature, emboldened by anti-immigrant policies championed by the Trump administration and following the lead of other states like [Texas](#) and [Arizona](#), introduces Iowa's own anti-immigrant legislation, [SF481](#), which passes the Senate in April **2017**. [ICE arrests in the region that includes Iowa are up 67% in 2017](#). Iowans respond by [marching in record numbers](#), [proposing local measures](#) to limit the harm of Trump's policies and building networks to [track, respond to](#) and [defend against](#) ICE persecution.

Immigrants' rights advocates organized together in [unison](#) throughout **2018** to halt any movement of SF481 despite the [strong support of the legislation by Governor Kim Reynolds](#). Gov. Reynolds quietly signed the bill into law in April 2018. Iowans continued to organize after the bill was signed into law and began to strategize ways to limit the harm of SF481, educate the community that their rights have not changed and work to eventually repeal the law.

Senate File 481

On July 1, 2018, the anti-immigrant legislation SF 481 went into effect after a long, two-year battle in which thousands of Iowans organized and spoke out against the legislation.

This law was proposed by Senator Julian Garrett (R-Indianola) and Representative Steven Holt (R-Denison), both of whom have long histories of proposing anti-immigrant legislation.

SF 481 forces local law enforcement agencies and local entities like city or county departments to work closer with ICE as well as honor written ICE detainer requests. [You can read the full legislation here.](#)

This law will have many ramifications on our communities including an increase in racial profiling. Minority communities often report feeling unfairly targeted by local officials or agents of local law enforcement.

One section of SF481, specifically protects against this type of targeting and does not authorize Iowa police to stop or arrest someone based on their immigration status, or prolong someone's detention to investigate immigration status. The new law prohibits any local entity or official from discriminating on the basis of race, skin color, language spoken, or national origin while enforcing immigration laws. Nevertheless, SF 481 may motivate local law enforcement to discriminate against immigrants by engaging in pretextual arrests, in the hopes that these arrests will eventually result in the individual being turned over to ICE.

If you feel like you were unfairly targeted, you are able to file a complaint with Iowa's Attorney General that the officer or agent acted in violation of SF481.

You should contact AFSC Iowa or Iowa CCI or call the statewide hotline (515-996-0003) for help filing a complaint.

[Find out more about how SF481 will impact Iowa here.](#)

Know Your Rights (KYR) & Family Preparation

'Know Your Rights' trainings are an effort to help immigrant and refugee communities be more knowledgeable of their rights during interactions with law enforcement.

The more that people know and exercise their rights, the less power ICE will have in our communities. These trainings and plans will help keep people out of jail and keep families together.

Trainers review [this KYR material](#) and also do role-play exercises with participants in order to prepare them for real-life situations.

Additionally, these trainings have expanded to what we refer to as 'Family Preparation'. In the unfortunate instance that a family is separated by ICE, it's important to have a family plan in place. Oftentimes, one or both parents are taken from the family unit, leaving children to fend for themselves. We encourage families to have open, transparent dialogue about what to do in case that happens.

Trainers now combine KYR and "Family Preparation" trainings in order to prepare communities for best and worst-case scenarios. Trainers walk through this [emergency plan guide](#), answer questions from families, and then volunteers sit down with families to complete their plans.

In Iowa, the following organizations are prepared and qualified to give KYR and Family Preparation trainings upon request:

- ACLU of Iowa
- Al Exito
- American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)
- Catholic Charities
- Justice for Our Neighbors (JFON)
- Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement (CCI)
- Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence
- Office of Latino Affairs

Terminology

Borrowed in part from [United We Dream](#)

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) - refers to the federal law enforcement agency under the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS), responsible for identifying, investigating, and dismantling vulnerabilities regarding the nation's border, economic, transportation, and infrastructure Security.

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) - DACA is a federal program, announced on June 12, 2012 that protects successful applicants from deportation and gives them work authorization for a renewal period of 2 years. It is important to note that DACA provides **lawful** presence but it does not provide lawful status. **Around 3,100 individuals in Iowa** are beneficiaries of DACA who must renew every 2 years, paying \$495 each renewal. The Trump Administration revoked DACA in September 2017 and the program is currently pending under various court cases.

Detainers - or an "ICE hold" is a request from ICE to local law enforcement to hold an individual for 48 hours past the time they would have been released on their criminal case (e.g. on bail, when charges were dismissed, or at the end of a jail sentence). Detainer paperwork usually includes a request for notification of release date (asks the local agency to tell ICE when an individual is going to be released) so that ICE can be there at that time to arrest them. Detainers have been found to be unconstitutional when they are not accompanied by a judicially reviewed warrant. *In July of 2018, SF481 required law enforcement to honor all written detainer requests. Previously 26 departments in Iowa had publicly refused to honor them.*

Immigration Detention - Once someone is arrested by ICE, they may be released or detained in immigration custody. If detained, they can be transferred to hundreds of jails across the nation. These include private for-profit prisons and contracted local county jails. In immigration detention, people have no right to be provided with a lawyer, and often suffer terrible conditions, including solitary confinement and poor medical care. There are no public defenders and some immigrants may have to fight their case via video, never seeing the judge in person. **In Iowa**, nine counties have special agreements with ICE called "Intergovernmental Services Agreements" that

have been used to detain people since 2017 (Bremer Co., Des Moines Hold Room in the City of Des Moines, Hardin Co., Linn Co., Marshall Co., Muscatine Co., Polk Co., Pottawattamie Co., Story Co.)

Sensitive locations - Refers to the sites that the U.S. ICE and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) have determined that enforcement actions should not take place. Such sites include:

- Schools, such as known and licensed daycares, preschools and other early learning programs; primary schools; secondary schools; post-secondary schools up to and including colleges and universities; as well as scholastic or education-related activities or events, and school bus stops that are marked and/or known to the officer, during periods when school children are present at the stop;
- Medical treatment and health care facilities, such as hospitals, doctors' offices, accredited health clinics, and emergent or urgent care facilities;
- Places of worship, such as churches, synagogues, mosques, and temples;
- Religious or civil ceremonies or observances, such as funerals and weddings; and
- During public demonstration, such as a march, rally, or parade.

Sanctuary - A Sanctuary is a place where our vulnerable neighbors can feel safe to live as their full selves.

- Many local communities use the term “sanctuary,” “sanctuary of safety,” “welcoming city” or even other names to describe different approaches that municipalities take to brand themselves in a pro-immigrant way, and some places may not use a particular brand name at all. While there is no legal definition for a “sanctuary or welcoming city” and the protections that municipalities can provide are limited, these could be policies that aim to actively prevent ICE from collaborating with local law enforcement, working to protect Muslims from a religious registry, surveillance & harassment, uniting against police brutality and stop and frisk and united against misogyny and for womxns' and LBGTQ rights.
- Local faith communities and schools are also designating themselves as “sanctuary” and fall under the [“sensitive locations” memo](#). Faith communities around the country are providing live-in sanctuary protection for people who fear or are facing deportation. These spaces are designed to honor the dignity and humanity of individuals and call for changes to an unjust system. Schools and institutions of higher

education aim to protect their students and families by adopting policies and procedures designed to limit access of ICE to personal information and to school property.

Undocumented - Refers to people who are not U.S. citizens or Permanent Residents of the United States, who do not hold a current visa to reside in the U.S. and who have not been approved for legal residency in the U.S.

Create a petition

We know that more people means more power...and that leads to change. In order to successfully change your community for the better, you need to have a big base of people to support the work.

Petitions are a great tool for growing your base of supporters. If you are brand new to organizing around this issue or starting a new campaign, asking folks to sign onto your petition is a great - and easy - way to engage more people.

A petition should be short and scannable. Use a bold “i-statement” header to capture the overarching message of your campaign. For example, you could use this phrase as a header for an immigrants rights campaign:

I support keeping families together - not in cages or jails.

Below your header, go into more detail about the goal of your campaign. Be sure to include contact information or social media where signers can get more information about your work. This subsection should be no longer than a few sentences.

The body of the petition should be where folks sign on to support. The following is key information you want to gather so you can keep in touch and let them know about next steps or upcoming events:

- Name
- Address
- Phone Number
- Email

As a rule of thumb, always fill out the first line of your petition with your own information - lead by example. A blank petition can be daunting or appear that others do not support your cause. Be the first to sign on to your great work.

[Follow this link for a printable petition template.](#)

As you collect petition signatures along the way, be sure to follow up with people. Shoot them an email with an update about your work or give them a

call and ask if they would like to meet one on one. It's important to build good relationships with your supporters and add more leaders to your team.

Campaign Overview

The following section is designed to give you a quick snapshot of the campaigns in this toolkit. More details about each specific campaign can be found after the overview section.

Issue campaigns typically follow these general guiding principles:

1. Identify a goal - what is the purpose of your campaign? What do you want to achieve?
2. Identify your demands - what are your primary requests that will help you achieve your goal?
3. Identify the targets - who are the people in your community (typically people in power) who will give you what you need to achieve your goal? Who are the people who need to be pressured in order for your demands to be met? Who is the ultimate decision-maker who could make or break your campaign?

Report ICE Enforcement Actions to Advocacy Organizations

There is no question that ICE has been persecuting Iowa families for years, sometimes under the radar arresting individuals or small groups of workers and sometimes in large-scale worksite raids like Marshalltown, Postville and Mt. Pleasant.

In 2017 we launched a statewide ICE reporting hotline with the goals of:

- 1) supporting families who have had loved ones detained and
- 2) tracking ICE persecution so that we can report to mainstream media the “people’s report” on ICE attacks and so that we can propose solutions to limit ICE activity in our communities.

The hotline is staffed at AFSC Iowa and supported by volunteers across the state who are connected with statewide community response teams.

Families or observers call the hotline at **515-996-0003** to report ICE activity, request assistance and get connected to local resources.

Patterns and needs identified will help us build strategy to keep up with the ever-changing tactics of ICE and the ongoing needs of families.

Keep People Out of Jail Campaign

In order to keep ICE out of Iowa, we must work within our own communities to keep people out of jail. We know our justice system is anything but just. [Studies show that law enforcement agencies are more likely to detain and arrest people of color](#) - especially brown and black communities - than white people. ICE utilizes our broken systems to target immigrant communities.

Currently there are **20,000** people working for ICE. They need local law enforcement agencies to assist them in their operations if they want to deport more people. Many immigrants are detained by ICE after they have been arrested for other offenses, even minor infractions like driving without a license.

By working with local law enforcement agencies to practice discretionary policing in which officers actively distribute more tickets instead of making arrests, we can prevent ICE from deporting our community members.

[Follow this link to find out more about this campaign.](#)

Keep Families Together Campaign

[Families get hurt the most by ICE activity.](#) Many immigrant families have established roots in our communities. Their kids go to school with our kids. They've opened businesses and restaurants. They've made Iowa their home. If we want to keep families together, we must keep ICE out of Iowa.

[Children carry the heaviest burden when their parents are targeted by ICE.](#) If a family member is detained by ICE, it's important to ensure that they have the proper legal resources including the potential to be released on bond so they may stay with their families.

By working with county sheriffs and county attorneys to establish higher standards of accountability in their jails, we can make it more difficult for ICE to separate Iowa families.

[Follow this link to find out more about this campaign.](#)

Electoral

Immigrants, refugees, and people of color are historically overlooked by or excluded from the political process. And yet, politicians continue to target these populations for the purposes of winning elections.

It's time our communities play a more active role in politics and put our issues at the forefront of every election. When we tell folks to be involved in politics, we don't just mean 'go vote'. Voting is just a small part of politics. In fact, it's all of the action steps leading up to election day that are the most important.

[Follow this link to find out more about electoral work.](#)

Keep People Out of Jail Campaign

Identify the goal:

The goal of this campaign is to engage local police departments and encourage them to use discretionary policing practices in order to keep folks out of jail and out of the hands of ICE.

Identify the demands:

The following are our main demands:

1. Use discretion & accept various forms of identification
2. Eliminate pretextual stops
3. Cite & release for minor infractions
4. Implement the use of 'Immigrant Miranda Rights'

Here's a list of identification we want police departments to accept:

Driver's license
Passport
Birth certificate (copy)
Work ID
School ID
Marticular ID
Library Card
Car registration
Insurance card
Lease or proof of residence
Community ID

Identification is one of the main ways that police officers initiate the pipeline to deportation. While many police departments in Iowa assert that they do not work directly with or for ICE, problems relating to identification have been the primary issue that landed individuals into ICE's custody.

For example, driving without a proper driver's license or failure to ID are the two most frequent problems immigrants face with local police. We're asking that police departments accept more forms of identification in order to avoid unnecessary arrests.

Eliminating pretextual stops will prevent people of color, including immigrants and refugees, from being targeted by the police. Pretextual stops

are when law enforcement uses minor violations to stop an individual in the hopes that it could lead to a bigger problem.

Examples include (but are not limited to):

- Broken tail light
- Improper placement of registration stickers on license plates
- Window tints
- Loud music

Pretextual stops allow law enforcement to inquire about other things such as identification, residence, employment, etc. These types of questions could lead officers to discover information about someone's legal status.

Citing and releasing suspects for minor infractions instead of making arrests over petty offenses would prevent more people from being turned over to ICE. We refer to this as *discretionary policing* meaning the police officer can use their discretion as to how they handle a traffic stop or public encounter.

Minor infractions like failure to provide ID, driving without a license, or speeding have led to unnecessary arrests, landing folks in ICE custody. We're asking police departments to issue more tickets instead of making more arrests.

'Immigrant Miranda Rights' is a new concept developed by our friends in Texas. We know law enforcement often finds loopholes in the law in order to obtain more information from the folks they stop or target. This new practice of immigrant miranda rights would require police officers to remind people of their right to remain silent after every question.

Here's a list of minor infractions where officers could cite & release:

Driving without a license
Minor vandalism
Speeding
No proof of insurance
Open container
Loitering
Soliciting
Littering
Public intoxication
Public disturbance
Noise complaint
No tags (expired or in the wrong place)
Trespassing
Items hanging from rearview mirror
Failure to signal
Car accident not involving major injury
conceal/carry (or having a knife, pepper spray)
Jaywalking
U-turn
Turning into wrong lane
Wrong way
Tinted windows
Tail light/headlight out
Mechanical issue

Here's a list of common questions that an officer may ask that could lead to inquiry about immigration status:

- Where are you from?
- Where were you born?
- Where do you work?
- How long have you lived in Iowa? (or US)

If that department had implemented the Immigrant Miranda Rights practice an example would look something like this:

Officer: "Where are you from? You don't have to answer that."

There may be other demands that make sense for your community in addition to the above list. Meet with your local leadership team and immigrant families to discuss what's right for your area.

Identify the target(s):

We refer to the person or group we're organizing to influence a *target*. The target should always be the person or group who has the power to meet your demands. **For this campaign, our target will be local police departments, specifically the Chief of Police.**

Additionally, you may have secondary targets, or people who are in the circle of influence of your primary target. These are typically people who will help you make a connection or influence the primary target. **For this campaign, our secondary targets are city officials like a Mayor or City Council.**

Keep Families Together Campaign

Identify the goal:

The goal of this campaign is to engage county sheriffs departments, county attorneys, and county officials and encourage them to implement policies that hold ICE accountable and make it harder for ICE to separate Iowa families.

Identify the demands:

The following are our main demands:

- Publicize 'Know Your Rights' (KYR) information in jails
- Create 'consent form' process in preferred language OR offer interpretation for those who are illiterate
- Require independent interpretation during interviews
- Create review process of detainer requests (county attorneys)
- Establish a community ID program

Know Your Rights information is essential for combatting ICE tactics, keeping people out of jail and keeping families together. Often, immigrants and refugees do not know what rights they have in the US or after being detained by police. This is especially true for those who do not speak English as their primary language.

We want to publicize KYR information in a variety of languages and in public locations around the jail so everyone has access to the information. When people are informed of the rights they have, they are more likely to assert those rights to the police or ICE agents.

One of the stipulations of SF481 was that the Iowa Attorney General's office became the overseer of this law. The AG's office is required to create and implement a complaint process which members of the public can use to record violations of SF481. Once a complaint is received, the AG's office must conduct an investigation regarding the complaint. If the complaint is found valid, the AG's office will give the local entity or persons listed in the complaint an opportunity to adjust their practices or risk losing state funding.

However, this complaint process could also be utilized by people who feel their rights have been violated because of SF481. If you or someone you know feels that this law has caused a local entity or government employee to violate your rights, you can file a complaint with the Iowa Attorney General's office at (515)281-5926.

Consent forms will allow individuals being detained by ICE to understand exactly why they are being held, who is holding them, and giving them the option to deny an interview with ICE.

When individuals are held on an ICE detainer request, they are usually provided minimal information if any at all. A consent form policy would force police to be more transparent by requiring the jail to inform the individual of the detainer request, the reason they are being detained, the names of the agent(s) who detained them, and the option to approve or deny an interview with ICE agents.

For those who are unable to read or write, a third-party interpreter would be used to read the consent form and know your rights information to the individual.

Independent interpretation is a priority for keeping families together. It is unethical for law enforcement or other government agencies to use ICE as interpreters. It's important that the information being interpreted is accurate.

ICE agents have one goal - to detain and deport undocumented immigrants. By allowing ICE agents to act as interpreters for individuals detained by that agency, we are not allowing them due process and risk misinformation being given to the individual.

We want to require all county jails to use a third-party interpreter for any interview or interaction with a federal immigration agency.

Detainer request review process would verify the validity of an ICE detainer request. These requests are also known as administrative warrants. They are not judicial warrants, which must be signed by a judge. Detainer requests are informal requests directly from ICE.

The legality of these requests has been questioned by various courts across the country.

In Iowa, Senate File 481 (SF481) requires law enforcement to adhere to all written detainer requests, but not verbal. Given this and the fact that we question the legality of such requests, we would like county attorneys to review any detainer request issued to a county jail.

This process would not only validate the requests but also slow down ICE's operations in Iowa and make it difficult to separate families.

Community ID programs

Identification is the biggest issue immigrants face in our communities. We identified a few ways to overcome identification issues above, but perhaps the most innovative way to assist immigrants during interactions with law enforcement or ICE and create more welcoming communities is the establishment of a community ID program.

A community ID card is similar to a non-operator's license. It is a photo ID card that also lists address and assigns a county ID number. It is not federally recognized so there are some limitations to the card such as you could not drive a car or board a plane. But, it's an ID that could be obtained and used by any resident of your city or county.

Community ID would directly help people who currently lack locally-recognized IDs. The populations most affected are: people in poverty, seniors who no longer drive, homeless folks, victims of domestic violence, victims of natural disasters, immigrants, people with mental illness or disabilities, and youth. These groups are denied basic human rights and have no access to public services without proper ID.

The Community ID program would indirectly serve everyone in Polk County by creating an inclusive community - building a safer, more integrated community that allows all residents to be full active participants in both the public and private sectors.

There are a wide variety of ways that this program could be implemented. There are several models available to use as a template. Some cities like San Francisco and the Bay Area issue their IDs through a government agency while other places like New Haven, CT issue their IDs through a church/non-profit.

[Johnson County, Iowa was the first county in our state to pass and implement a community ID program.](#)

Cities and counties across the country have started utilizing these cards in an effort to protect community members and provide more access to everyday things like:

- Opening a bank account
- Getting a job
- Interacting with law enforcement
- Picking up kids from school

Regardless of how you administer the ID, creating this type of program requires partnership from impacted communities, advocates, local government, and local businesses.

Identify the target(s):

For this campaign, our target will be local police departments, specifically the County Sheriff

For this campaign, our secondary targets are county officials like the Board of Supervisors or county attorneys.

Electoral Campaign

We've seen immigrants used as political pawns year after year. Yet, we rarely see politicians doing any good for that community despite advocacy efforts. It's important to lift up immigrant rights issues with local elected officials and candidates so that communities are shaping their own narrative instead of having electeds speak for them.

There's more to elections than just voting. The months leading up to the election are the most important - it's your chance to vet the candidates and see where they line up with your values and your issues and push them to do more on the issues you care about.

In order to make immigrant rights a priority in elections, we need to prepare community members to ask tough questions at public events or candidate forums. We recommend creating an issue brief that can be shared not only with candidates but your community as well.

[Here is an example of an issue brief.](#)

If you have a larger community group and you are interested in putting your people-power into an election (ie canvassing for a candidate), it's important to create and send out a questionnaire to your local candidates. During tight races, especially primaries, candidates need all the people-power they can get. They're working to knock on as many doors as possible to discuss their platform. By creating a questionnaire you can see where the candidates stand on your issues.

[Here is an example of a questionnaire.](#)

Don't feel pressured to back any particular candidate. It's just as important to create an issue campaign during election time as it is to support any one candidate.

For example, during the 2014 midterm elections Iowa CCI did not find that any of the 3rd District Congressional candidates were very progressive so CCI did not endorse. However, they did run an issue-based door knocking campaign around the issue of minimum wage. It was a core issue that

Iowans had identified as important but none of the candidates were giving any real attention to that issue. Members knocked on thousands of doors and raised awareness on stagnant wages and their impact on Iowa's economy and Iowa families and stated where each candidate stood on that particular issue. This strategy achieved two things: 1) it helped CCI identify thousands of supporters for their "Fight for \$15" campaign 2) it helped potential voters see where candidates stood on a key issue. This is a great option for communities that are looking to grow their support base for immigrant rights.

Community Response Teams

The purpose of the Iowa Community Response Teams (CRT) is to respond to community members whose family members have been detained or deported by ICE or to prepare for a large-scale raid.

Iowa Community Response Teams are made up of community members, faith leaders, school leaders, and immigrant groups. There are currently six teams established across Iowa. Each team is comprised of roles that are intended to meet the varied needs of those who have been affected, from supporting families with food and clothes to rent assistance.

Teams can include but are not limited to:

- Community Team - responds to the immediate needs of families.
- Advocacy Team - engages in policy work on both local and state level.
- Legal Team - provides legal assistance when possible.
- Media Team - collects and shares information to outside communities.
- Education Team - provides local communities with valuable education related to their rights.

The teams are useful resources for communities to build proactive support networks during a time of increased persecution of immigrant families in Iowa. [Click here to read more about building a local CRT.](#)

Below are the locations and point people for existing teams:

Des Moines: Erica Johnson, ejohnson@afsc.org

Iowa City: Rafael Morataya; rafael@cwjiowa.org

Dubuque: Tim McClain; tmccclain75@gmail.com

Ottumwa: Evelyn Rivera; erivera@ottumwacrisiscenter.org

Marshalltown: Joa LaVille; immigrantallies@yahoo.com

Story County: Liz Mendez-Shannon; emendezs@iastate.edu

If you are interested in building a CRT in your area, please contact AFSC at (515)274-4851 or email afscdesm@afsc.org

Media Guide

Media can be very useful when trying to push for change at the city or county level. It's important that immigrant rights advocates and allies properly utilize the local media outlets to inform communities about their work as well as control the narrative.

Immigration is a polarizing subject. It's important that local groups control their messaging and convey the facts because there will be opposition ready to rely on false stereotypes and/or political propaganda. There are several great immigrant-led media outlets to follow and obtain great information from like [Define American](#), [Dream Coalition](#), and [DRM Action Coalition](#).

Meet with your leadership team and create core talking points. This ensures that everyone on your team is on the same page and conveying the same messages to media and the general public.

Here are some important questions to ask yourself before working with media:

- What story are you trying to tell?
- Who is the best person to tell this story?
- How will this story advance your cause?
- What are some potential rebuttals you could receive?
- What is your response to those rebuttals?

For example, in the Summer of 2018 a young woman named Mollie Tibbetts was missing for a few weeks and ultimately was found dead in a field in her hometown of Brooklyn, Iowa. When law enforcement revealed the identity of the primary male suspect, media outlets and politicians alike immediately began to question the immigration status of the suspect due to his national origin.

Iowa CCI, AFSC, and the statewide immigrant rights network immediately held a private conference call to discuss the situation and agree on our messaging. Reporters had already begun to call for quotes and opinions on a variety of immigration-related topics so it was imperative that we were all in agreement on our media approach.

As a coalition, we agreed on the following priorities:

1. We offer our deepest condolences to the Tibbetts family during this extremely difficult time.
2. One person's actions do not define an entire group of people or a community.
3. The suspect's immigration status is irrelevant to this case. A person's status is not a motive for a crime.

By having a clear and unified message, we were able to curb news stories across Iowa and the country. We turned the focus from the suspect's immigration status and put it back on the fact that a young woman was murdered for rejecting a proposition from a man.

Your talking points should be simple and direct. Don't spend time writing a novel. People won't follow what you're saying. We recommend getting all your thoughts down on paper first, then edit them down to simple sentences. Be sure to practice with your team and prepare for interviews.

What's the difference between a media advisory and a press release?

A media advisory alerts local media, in a brief statement, to upcoming events such as a public meeting or a press conference. It's a basic invitation that answers the 5 W's - who, what, when, where, why.

Here's a few key points when writing a media advisory:

- Keep it short - no more than a paragraph
- Include a catchy headline that pulls in the most important information
- Answer the 5 W's
- Don't forget contact information - add your main media contact (name, phone, email) in case they have questions or follow up

A press release is the more detailed version of a media advisory. It tells a story and creates an image that reporters can use alone or as background to writing a story. It should read like an article, include quotes and facts, and be used to grab the attention of larger media outlets.

Here are a few key points when writing a press release:

- Create a catchy headline and subheader - media reads hundreds of press releases every week, make yours stand out

- Keep all the important information at the top
- Write it like an actual news article
- Don't forget to include quotes from actual spokespeople - a variety of perspectives is necessary for a good release
- Keep it to one page or less

Press Release Template

{PLACE LOGO HERE} - if you have one

Press Release
Month, day, year

For more information, contact:
Full name
Office #
Cell #
Email

THE HEADLINE GOES HERE AND SHOULD BE ONLY ONE LINE LONG, BOLD AND ALL CAPS. IT SHOULD CAPTURE THE READER'S ATTENTION.

Add subtitle with more detailed context of the headline (italics, no caps)

CITY, STATE—Catch the reporter's attention in the first paragraph and provide enough context for the reporter to understand the importance of the issue. Include critical details, such as what will be covered at the event, who the notable speakers are, and why the event is significant.

The next two to three paragraphs can expand on the detail of your release. This is your opportunity to give readers a visual and create your story. Be sure to include at least one quote from a spokesperson from your group and/or an impacted person.

Keep the release to one page or less.

Leave a contact email and phone number in case the reporter needs additional information.

###

[This - ### - indicates the conclusion of the press release]

Include a general description of the organization or coalition—centered and in italics—following the conclusion of the press release. This is called a boilerplate.

Media Advisory Template

{PLACE LOGO HERE} - if you have one

Media Advisory
Month, day, year

For more information, contact:
Full name
Office #
Cell #
Email

THE HEADLINE GOES HERE AND CAN BE UP TO FOUR LINES LONG, BOLD AND ALL CAPS. IT SHOULD CAPTURE THE READER'S ATTENTION.

A subtitle may be used for additional context (italics, no caps)

CITY, STATE—Catch the reporter's attention in the first paragraph and provide enough context for the reporter to understand the importance of the issue. Include critical details, such as what will be covered at the event, who the notable speakers are, and why the event is significant.

What: Name of event

Who: Name, role, and organization of speakers or important attendees

When: Date and time

Where: Location and address

Leave a contact email and phone number in case the reporter needs additional information.

###

[This - ### - indicates the conclusion of the media advisory.]

Include a general description of the organization or coalition—centered and in italics—following the conclusion of the media advisory. This is called a boilerplate.

Social Media Guide

Social media can be very useful when trying to push for change at the city or county level. It is a way for grassroots groups to amplify your message, inform communities about your work, and find immigration activists willing to take action on your issue.

Platforms

Many social media platforms exist. It's a good idea for groups to start at least one official social media profile for communicating about events, actions, and opportunities to help out. Group members can also spread the word by posting about their work on their personal accounts. Your friends, family, and online community may be interested in getting involved themselves.

Content

Meet with your leadership team and create core talking points. This ensures that everyone on your team is on the same page and conveying the same messages on social media.

Your talking points should be simple and direct. Don't spend time writing a novel. People won't follow what you're saying. We recommend getting all your thoughts down on paper first, then edit them down to simple sentences.

When possible, include graphics that are simple to understand and have to do with your issue. You can use the tips in the Graphics section to quickly and easily create a graphic using colors, words, and symbols that help brand your campaign and illustrate the story.

Here are some important questions to ask yourself about creating social media content:

- What story are you trying to tell?
- Who is reading this post and how much do they know about the issue?
- How will this post advance your cause?
- What are some potential rebuttals you could receive?
- What is your response to those rebuttals?

Trolls

Immigration is a polarizing subject. Other users of social media platforms will use the issue to try to get attention or start online debates. It's important that you meet with your leadership team to decide how you will respond to inflammatory or derogatory comments. Trolls thrive on attention and often derail important, community building conversations, and they take up the emotional energy of moderators. Most of the time it is best to delete or hide their comments and remain focused on the work at hand.

Graphics

It is important to prepare at least one graphic that can help communicate about your work. It can help communicate emotion about an issue, and consistent graphics can help people be sure that they've found the right page, event, or information.

There are many simple, free or cheap graphics programs available to help you develop eye-catching graphics.

One program is [Adobe Spark](#), which is available for use on mobile phones or the web, and has free or monthly subscription options. It allows users to combine photos, logos, and text, and provides eye-catching pre-made templates.

[Canva](#) offers similar web-and-app based usability, and pre-made templates for easy flyer and event graphic design.

Check out [Iowa CCI's instagram](#) for examples and inspiration for graphic content.

Materials & Resources

Below you will find other helpful materials and resources that will elevate your local campaigns. Please note that some of these resources come from other national organizations. The authors of this toolkit will do our best to keep these resources updated on a regular basis.

- [Immigrant Legal Resource Center \(ILRC\) - SF481](#)
- [Iowa Immigration Lawyer List](#)
- [Red Cards](#)
- [Hotline](#)

A Note from the Authors

Thank you for utilizing this toolkit to make your communities a better and more welcoming place for all people. We hope you find the information, templates, and resources useful in your local organizing efforts.

We recognize that this toolkit does not have all the answers. It's merely a starting point.

Both AFSC and CCI are here to assist and guide you throughout the process. We want to build strong leadership throughout Iowa. Change starts and stops with everyday people like you.

If at any time you have questions or clarifications, need further guidance, or would like more training, please do not hesitate to contact either organization.

For a better Iowa,

Madeline Cano
Iowa CCI

Erica Johnson
American Friends Service Committee