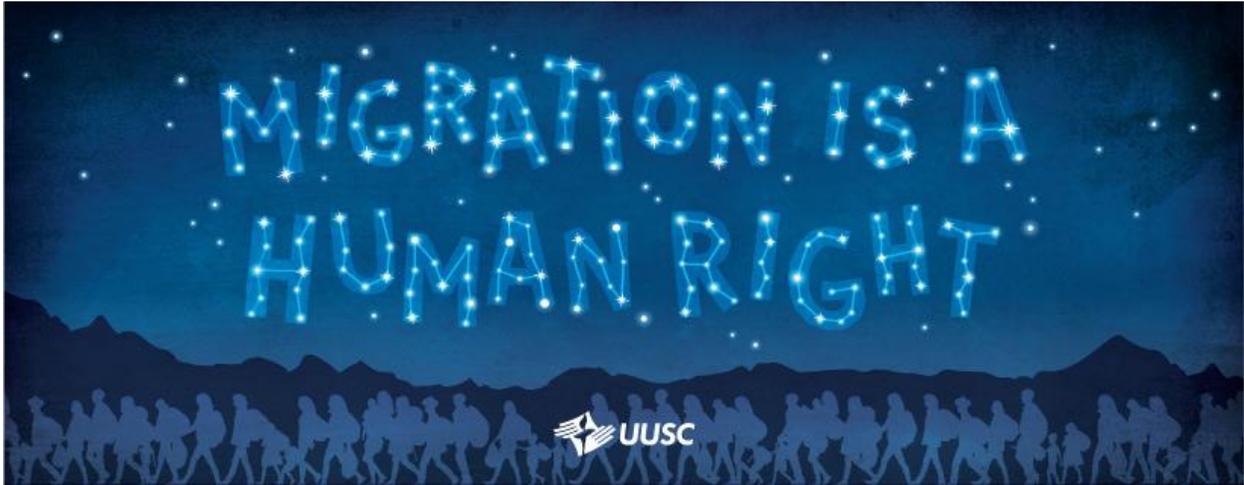


# Congregational Accompaniment Project for Asylum Seekers

Handbook for Congregations  
Fall 2019



Among other wonders of our lives, we are alive  
with one another, we walk here  
in the light of this unlikely world  
that isn't ours for long.  
May we spend generously  
the time we are given.  
May we enact our responsibilities  
as thoroughly as we enjoy  
our pleasures. May we see with clarity,  
may we seek a vision  
that serves all beings, may we honor  
the mystery surpassing our sight,  
and may we hold in our hands  
the gift of good work  
and bear it forth whole, as we  
were borne forth by a power we praise  
to this one Earth, this homeland of all we love.

*"A Prayer among Friends," by John Daniel, from the collection Of Earth*

## Introduction

UUSC's Congregational Accompaniment Project for Asylum Seekers is a new initiative to support communities of faith as they host and support migrants through the process of obtaining legal asylum. It grew out of a collaboration among several organizations, beginning in the spring of 2018, to assist migrants from Central America by recruiting and supporting individuals and families to open their homes as sponsors of asylum seekers. These organizations included [Freedom for Immigrants](#), Showing Up for Racial Justice ([SURJ](#)), [Pueblo Sin Fronteras](#), and Innovation Law Lab.

The [UU College of Social Justice](#), which is a joint program of the UUA and UUSC, joined this effort in the winter of 2019, by creating a Handbook for Sponsors of Asylum Seekers, primarily directed toward individuals and families who were serving as sponsors. One member of the SURJ team, Rev. Dottie Mathews -- who is also a retired UU minister -- became particularly involved in supporting UU congregations interested in collectively sponsoring asylum seekers. As this work expanded, she approached the UU College of Social Justice and UUSC to bring the work under our umbrella, in order to support more congregations to join us in this life-affirming project.

This Handbook is designed to help congregations understand what it means to accompany a person or family in this way. It will help guide your community's discernment as you consider whether you feel called to become a sponsoring congregation. If you choose to move forward, the Handbook contains practical guidelines and best practices to help you along the way, drawn from the growing community of congregations engaged in this form of solidarity. Throughout, you will find reflections, meditations, and practices that we hope will be a continual reminder that hospitality, solidarity, and resistance to injustice are all grounded in our faith. And while the materials reflect our Unitarian Universalist grounding, we hope they will be widely accessible to congregations of any faith tradition.

*Please note that legal issues and provisions for migrants are changing often these days. Always check with competent legal advisors to verify current rules and regulations as they apply to your situation and location.*

The materials here draw on those created and compiled by the organizations named above, as well as others. We are deeply grateful for all of the individuals who have offered their time, insight, and commitment to furthering this particular way in which we can contribute to immigration justice.

...no one leaves home unless  
home is the mouth of a shark  
you only run for the border  
when you see the whole city running as well...  
you only leave home  
when home won't let you stay... -- from "Home" by Warsan Shire

*Listen to her read the full poem:*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nl9D92Xiygo>

## Accompaniment as a Response to Injustice

Across history and throughout nations, people have found ways to accompany, shelter, and defend the rights of those who are at risk, providing sanctuary in a wide variety of forms. Often, those taking the most risks in solidarity have themselves been members of the targeted population.

Within the context of escalating immigration injustice in our country today, many people both within and beyond migrant communities have looked for new ways to challenge and resist what we're witnessing. Scores of volunteers have joined border organizations in both the US and Mexico to help offer legal information and to staff the short-term shelters that are often overwhelmed by the number of people in need. All over the country, neighbors and friends have created networks to accompany migrants to immigration hearings, legal and medical appointments, and check-ins with ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement). They offer emotional care and comfort in times of stress and fear; provide a ride or translation services or advocacy before a judge; meet migrants in transition at bus stations with supplies for their journey; and help them find secure housing and work.

In all forms, accompaniment is an invitation to witness, to listen, and to show up; it is a practice of being human together in the face of extremely dehumanizing systems and circumstances. For those of us who are not directly targeted by ICE, accompaniment brings us closer to the violence of our immigration and criminal punishment systems, creating opportunities to build relationships with those who are most impacted. As a result, many people who engage in accompaniment become deeply transformed, and grow more committed to disrupting these harmful systems and acting for a more liberated future for all.

Churches, synagogues and mosques have often sought ways to respond together, acting on the fundamentals of their faith. In recent years, well over 150 Unitarian Universalist congregations have declared themselves Sanctuary communities (along with many others from virtually every faith tradition). These churches welcome someone who is under a deportation order to live on church property while they appeal their cases, in order to keep families intact and simultaneously register their protest against immigration policies.

Choosing to host a migrant seeking asylum differs in many ways from offering formal Sanctuary, though there are some similarities. It is a deeply personal form of solidarity in which many individuals and families have engaged, inviting someone to share their homes for many months or more. Congregations are especially well-suited to take on this vital form of action together.

## Terms and Definitions

**Asylum seeker:** An *asylum seeker* is a person from another country who has entered the asylum process in the United States. The process begins at the border or within the US, when a migrant declares a well-founded fear of violence or persecution in their home country due to race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. If this initial "credible fear" testimony is provisionally accepted, the person is generally put into detention, even though they have not been charged with any crime and may well have entered and presented themselves legally. This imprisonment can last for a few days or for many months, or in some cases even years. Children – including toddlers and babies – pregnant women, and people who are very ill have been imprisoned, and at least seven deaths have been reported among ICE detainees in 2019 alone.

**Parole:** In the immigration system, people seeking asylum or who are otherwise detained may have the opportunity to be considered for “parole”. This means they can be released after initially establishing that they have a credible fear of violence or death if they were to return to their own country. The chances of someone being released on parole are more likely if there is an American citizen who is willing to vouch for them and support them once they are freed from detention.

**Sponsor:** A *sponsor* is a US citizen who has agreed to offer safe shelter, food, and basic support for an asylum seeker, without any expectation of an exchange of services in return. When a congregation undertakes sponsorship, it is still necessary to have a primary host home with a person willing to be named as the official sponsor to immigration authorities. Sponsors are generally asked to make this commitment for a minimum of six months.

**Sponsoring Congregation:** This designates a faith community that has decided together to join in the support of an asylum seeker (this can be either an individual or a family). In addition to identifying the community member willing to provide a safe home for the migrant(s), a sponsoring congregation provides the team of willing volunteers who will help the migrant find an immigration lawyer, navigate public transportation, find appropriate health care, raise funds, show up for ICE check-ins and court hearings, and get connected to the community.

**Parole Package:** When your congregation is matched with an asylum seeker in detention, you will be asked to pull together the materials that will help make the case for your guest’s release. These include a letter that details your intent and capacity to support the person; proof of the identity, citizenship, residency, and income of the person offering housing; and letters from others in your community who also agree to support the asylum seeker (with translation, transportation, orientation to the city, and so on).

#### **Prayer for One People**

Spirit of Life and Mystery, known by so many names,  
make us mindful of the deep weaving of life that unites us.

Awaken us to abundance:

the dawning of another peaceful day, far from the drums of war;  
the senses of our bodies that let us greet the grace of the earth;  
the homes that shelter us, the food that sustains us,  
and the love that binds us across time and distance and trouble  
to those who live in our hearts.

Show us the path still set before us to follow,  
the vision that pulls us on:

of a people truly joined in the beloved community  
where our differences don’t divide us  
and our longings bring us closer,  
where wealth is shared, where none are impoverished;  
and where we live lightly on the earth  
in gratitude, in reverence, and in joy.

## **Discernment**

The first step in becoming a sponsoring congregation is one of collective discernment, asking together: Is this what we feel called to do? Is this something we are equipped to do?

At every stage of your discernment and throughout the sponsorship time, we strongly encourage you to ground yourselves in simple spiritual practices that help remind your group that this solidarity is based in your values and in your faith. It can be very helpful to begin all of your meetings with a time of silence followed by a meditation or prayer. Some groups also invite a brief check-in to allow time for feelings to be expressed openly – including doubt or anxiety, shame for some mistake we've made, or frustration at the stickiness of the process. Throughout this Handbook we offer suggested prayers and meditations but please feel free to bring in your own!

For most UU congregations, it isn't necessary to begin by actively involving the entire congregation in the discernment process, though you will want to bring the congregation along through frequent updates and perhaps a congregational vote, depending on what you're asking of the overall community. We generally begin with a small group from within the congregation who have self-identified as the asylum seeker's support team, with one person designated as our primary liaison (this does not have to be the same person as the one who will physically house the asylum seeker).

This is the broad outline of the process you can then expect; each of these stages are detailed below:

1. Exploration and discernment, including detailed information about what it means to sponsor an asylum seeker
2. Readiness conversation, by which we ensure that the host home as well as the support team are ready to move forward. As part of this process we'll have at least one conversation with the support team – including the congregation's minister – and a separate conversation with the host family/person
3. Matching process, when we contact allied organizations and immigration lawyers currently in touch with the asylum seeker, to make the best possible match for the congregation and make sure the location and circumstances fit the needs of the asylum seeker
4. Preparing to receive your guest(s), including specific information on the parole package, guiding the support team in things that can be done before your guest's arrival, and informing the congregation
5. Welcome and settling in, with best practices and advice on how to best support your guest in the early weeks
6. Ongoing support and coaching, which we offer throughout your congregation's sponsorship; this includes group calls, occasional webinars, and support resources

### **EXPLORATION AND DISCERNMENT**

Once you've contacted us to express interest in hosting an asylum seeker, we'll ask you to pull together a core support team comprised of members of the congregation able and willing to make a commitment of at least a year. This group will include the person willing to serve as host, which means the guest will live with them in their home.

The next step is to be sure everyone on your team has their initial questions answered, and the following discernment questions will help with this. Once everyone has had a chance to read

and consider this information, we will set up a group call in order to answer any further questions you may have.

## **Discernment Questions for Congregational Sponsorship**

### *1. What does it mean for a congregation to act as the sponsor for an asylum seeker?*

Congregational sponsorship means that a group within a faith community makes a commitment together to support a person or a family who have entered the legal process of seeking asylum in the United States. This commitment is generally for a year or longer, and includes providing secure housing (preferably in a home rather than in the church), fundraising for basic needs, accompanying the guest(s) to ICE meetings and court hearings, and offering friendship and community throughout the process. US Immigration Services requires a particular person to be the named sponsor, so even when a congregation is taking on this commitment collectively, **there still must be an individual US citizen willing to be named as the official sponsor.**

### *2. Our congregation has not made a public declaration of Sanctuary. Are we eligible to be sponsors to asylum seekers?*

Sanctuary and asylum sponsorship are very different things, although both involve stepping up to act as advocates for migrants wishing to gain the right to remain in this country. In most cases, Sanctuary is invoked when an immigrant has been issued an order of deportation and that person's legal support team needs more time to advocate for the immigrant to remain in the country. The person may resort to taking shelter in a house of worship during those proceedings (which may extend many months) and, as a result, may not leave the premises. In most cases, the attorneys for that person are in communication with immigration authorities about the location of their client.

Taking sanctuary is not in itself unlawful but it does involve some level of risk to the congregation and is an extreme hardship for the person in sanctuary and their family, since it amounts to a form of house arrest. It is also not a legal status: there is no law that prevents ICE from entering the building and detaining the person who has taken Sanctuary.

Sponsoring an asylum seeker, on the other hand, is entirely within the parameters of the law. If a person has credible fear for their safety in their home country, they are permitted under international law to enter the U.S. and make a plea for asylum. It is this right to safety that the Trump administration has been challenging at every level, intending to end all possibilities of entering the US in part by declaring the most dangerous countries of Central America as "safe third countries". As of this writing, many migrants already within the US and in the asylum process are still free to pursue their claim. While authorities are reviewing that claim – which can take many months – the asylee needs a sponsor who is a U.S. citizen (or legal permanent resident) to help them through the initial stages of the process and allow them to begin getting settled in this country.

### *3. What kinds of cross-cultural experiences have the people in our core team had in the past?*

Who we each are – that is, our core identity – is complicated! Our sense of self is influenced by a huge array of factors: individual characteristics, life events, personal choices, cultural recognition, socialization, and so on. It is also inevitably influenced by our relative position of privilege and power, especially in relation to race and class. If we are white Americans with a college degree, we are sitting somewhere near the top of the mountain when it comes to

privilege, even if we don't think of ourselves as being particularly well-off. We are likely to have little to no experience with some dimensions of life that the majority of the world's people live out daily: worry about where the next meal will come from, inability to receive good medical care, lack of reliable transportation, consistent fear for our personal safety, lack of choice when it comes to work, being on the receiving end of bias or prejudice, and so on.

As a sponsoring congregation, you are volunteering to act in solidarity with a person or family who may share few of your experiences, identities, or assumptions. By definition, they are in a position of vulnerability and dependence, at least at the start of their journey with you. It is important that your core team develop the capacity to examine assumptions and points of view, shaped by your positions of relative privilege, that may be unconscious or invisible to you, so that you can receive and support your guests as fully as possible. It's also important that you become comfortable having honest conversations with each other about mis-steps when they happen – and they *will* happen! – so you can learn and grow in your accompaniment rather than feeling shame and shutting down. A good mantra for this work is, *Never a failure, always a lesson!*

*4. What are the core values of our faith that might point us toward taking this action as a way of putting our beliefs into action? How do we feel about taking this action?*

Within the articulation of Unitarian Universalism captured in our Purposes and Principles, we declare our commitment to the inherent worth and dignity of each person; justice, equity, and compassion in our relationships with each other; and our respect for the intricate and interdependent web of life. There are countless ways in which we can manifest these broad commitments in the way we live our lives, and sponsoring an asylum seeker or family is one of them. How does this action fit well within the ways your community already acts on its values? How might it seem to be a stretch or a new expansion of how you resist injustice and act on our guiding principles?

I am living a life I don't regret,  
A life that will resonate with my ancestors,  
and with as many generations forward as I can imagine.  
I am attending to the crises of my time with my best self,  
I am of communities that are doing our collective best  
to honor our ancestors and all humans to come. – *adrienne maree brown*

*5. What practical considerations should we weigh before our congregation takes on a commitment like this?*

You will want to consider the capacity and willingness for a core team to take on long-term support for an individual or family, as well as the ability for a member to become the official sponsor and physically host the migrant(s) in their home. In addition, you should consider anticipated support or concerns from your congregation outside of the immediate support team. Every congregation is different, and you are the experts in your own community and its processes!

As you weigh bringing an asylum seeker into your setting, it is important that the environment is thoroughly and realistically assessed. Of its nature, the decision to sponsor an asylum seeker means that those engaging in this solidarity will be reaching across differences in culture,

language, ethnic identity, nationality, and life circumstance, and sometimes differences in gender identity. It is important that your core team be clear and honest about your capacities and those of your larger faith community. By definition, asylum seekers are fleeing violence and fear, and they have often been deeply traumatized; our goal is to provide a place and a community of safety and nurture.

*6. What is required of the person who will serve as the official sponsor for our guest(s)?*

The official sponsor must be a person with current legal immigration status in the US as a US citizen or legal permanent resident. This person will be the one providing the parole package, which will enable the asylum seeker to leave detention and take up residence in your community. This will include a letter declaring your willingness to support the asylum seeker for at least six months, as well as proof of your income and your citizenship or legal residency. We ask that the host review the **Guidelines for Shared Living** in Appendix 2 and answer the questions there, as part of the discernment process.

The person hosting should have a home that accommodates the guest(s) realistically – e.g. an adequately sized private room or rooms depending on the numbers of people you’re willing to host. Ideally, the home will be within easy access to public transportation, but with a sufficient pool of people willing to help with transportation this becomes less essential. The host should assume that even with a strong network of support, they will be the logical “point person” for the guest(s), since they will be sharing their home for a significant length of time. While it is not essential that the host person or family include a person who speaks the immigrant’s language, this is of course an enormous aid in building relationships and easing the settling in process.

Because the official sponsor’s home will be the address registered with the immigration authorities, it’s important to note that ICE could make an unannounced visit at any time. Anyone in the building whose status is a concern could therefore be at risk. For that reason, we ask you to think carefully about any persons who might regularly be at the location who are outside one of these categories: 1) a US citizen, or 2) a Legal Permanent Resident, or 3) a holder of an Employee Authorization Document, or 4) an exchange student.

*7. Does the asylum seeker have to live with the named sponsor?*

Your guest does not have to live with the person who volunteers to be the named sponsor. However, the governmental paperwork you will submit must show the true address where your guest will reside. Congregations may have parsonages, apartments, or access to other living quarters which might better accommodate a family unit. Whether the asylees live with the named sponsor or elsewhere, the sponsor is still the person who will be in immigration records as the one for ICE to contact as needed, and will send in the information noted above.

*8. How can we stay alert to assumptions or expectations that might get in the way of our efforts to support our guests?*

Helping people who are in need is a core tenet of every faith tradition, and is a central way in which we put our beliefs – as well as our compassion and our commitment to justice – into action. But “helping” can also be problematic, because as with so many dimensions of our lives, there are power imbalances involved. Ideally, at the same time that we’re filling an immediate need, we are also working to shift those power dynamics so that the person we’re helping can act with as much choice, agency, and dignity as possible. Being aware of our assumptions and expectations can keep us centered in that larger goal.

Some questions you might think about together:

-- Are there feelings that we're hoping or expecting to have in the process of sponsoring our guest, such as feeling useful (or even essential)? How do we tend to cope, if we find ourselves feeling useless or confused instead of helpful?

-- What expectations do we have about how grateful our guests will be for the support we're offering? What if that gratitude doesn't show up the way we're expecting?

-- Though we know that many cultures relate differently to time and punctuality, what are our assumptions about both? How do we interpret chronic lateness for appointments? How do we feel about it?

-- As adults, have we ever been dependent on another person or persons for our survival? If so, how did it feel? If not, what can we imagine about the feelings it would evoke for us?

-- What practices might we commit to with each other, to help keep our own opinions or preferences in check so that our guest can make the decisions that seem best to them?

### Daily

These shriveled seeds we plant,  
corn kernel, dried bean,  
poke into loosened soil,  
cover over with measured fingertips

These T-shirts we fold into  
perfect white squares

These tortillas we slice and fry to crisp strips  
This rich egg scrambled in a gray clay bowl

This bed whose covers I straighten  
smoothing edges till blue quilt fits brown blanket  
and nothing hangs out

This envelope I address  
so the name balances like a cloud  
in the center of sky

This page I type and retype  
This table I dust till the scarred wood shines  
This bundle of clothes I wash and hang and wash again  
like flags we share, a country so close  
no one needs to name it

The days are nouns: touch them  
The hands are churches that worship the world.  
– Naomi Shihab Nye

### 9. What kinds of roles should we anticipate for the support team?

It is usually best to have one person designated as the team coordinator, whether or not that person is the same as the one hosting as a sponsor. This person will be responsible for

coordinating the various other support tasks that will be needed. These will vary some depending on who you are hosting as a guest, but will generally include:

- organizing bilingual help as needed
- fundraising via GoFundMe or similar platform
- coordinating travel from the detention facility to your community
- organizing initial shopping for basic necessities (most asylum seekers arrive with very few belongings)
- coordinating purchase of a phone and phone plan
- seeking a pro bono or inexpensive immigration lawyer (often this will be someone from within the congregation)
- organizing rides, accompaniment, and translation for ICE appointments, medical appointments, court dates, etc.
- helping register children for school if applicable
- setting up a bank account when possible, so the guest can manage their own funds
- keeping the congregation and minister up-to-date on all developments

*10. What kind of financial commitment is involved?*

In the first months of the asylum process, the migrant(s) are financially dependent on your community for all of their needs (housing, clothing and cosmetics, food, transportation, phone, medical care, legal aid, etc.). This is why we suggest crowd-sourced fundraising, which helps you raise support funds not only from members of the congregation but from family and friends around the country. Most sponsors have been able to raise between \$5,000 and \$7,000 relatively easily, and in addition you'll find that donations of clothing and necessary goods are often generously provided.

Your guest will be eligible to apply for a work permit, but these often take many months to be approved and vary in the length of time for which they're valid (this process varies greatly by state). Once they have a permit, they can seek employment according to their skills and inclinations. In most states, they can open their own bank account if they have a passport; this allows them to manage their own funds rather than relying on someone from your team to distribute money as needed, and aids in a sense of agency and independence.

*10. Are we legally liable for our guest? That is, if s/he commits a crime of some kind or misses an ICE appointment or court hearing, are we at risk in any way?*

Neither the official sponsor nor the congregation are liable in any way if your guest commits a crime, unless they have participated or can be implicated in the crime. Your guest is solely responsible for their appointments with ICE, for showing up for their court dates, and for following any restrictions or rules that may be imposed on them as they await an asylum decision. No one within the sponsoring community is legally responsible for your guest financially, either; your commitment is a voluntary one.

It's also important to note that your guest is free to move if they choose to, and it is their responsibility to inform ICE if they do so. It is helpful for sponsors to remind their guests that failure to inform ICE of a change in residency can result in an immediate deportation order; but this is ultimately the decision of the migrant.

## **THE READINESS CONVERSATION**

Once your group has gathered to consider the questions above, has identified a willing host, and has agreed to move forward with sponsorship, we'll set up a call to assess with you your readiness to proceed. This call should include your minister, the identified host, and the lead

members of your support team. It is often a good idea to invite in key decision makers from the congregation, such as your Board Chair, even if they will not be actively involved in the asylum support process.

Here are some of the questions that are likely to be asked during your call, so you have a sense of how we're trying to assess readiness to proceed. You will also have time to ask your questions, of course!

- Can you describe your congregation's leadership structure (both formal and informal) and offer your assessment of where each of those categories of people will be as far as supporting this effort?
- Does your congregation have experience in sustaining a commitment to an effort of this level? If so, we'd love to hear a bit about what you learned in that process. If not, we'd love to hear a bit about what you're worried about **and** what you're excited about.
- Please tell us about your congregation in relation to immigration justice. Do you have an Immigrant Justice team in place? How active is it? Is there wide congregational support for its work, beyond the active members?
- What kinds of self-assessments and/or training programs has your congregation engaged with around issues of power, privilege, and race? Is your core group of volunteers open to having these conversations with each other as the asylum support process unfolds?
- Have local authorities weighed in on being a "welcoming" or "sanctuary" city at all (positive or negative)? Are you aware of your local authorities (police and sheriff) stance on cooperation with ICE?
- Having legal help early in the process is crucial. If you don't have a local immigration attorney who is prepared to offer pro bono assistance, is the congregation prepared to fund such representation (which can be several thousands of dollars) on behalf of your guest?
- Who will be the named Parole Sponsor/host? Is that person willing to play the central role of coordinating the other volunteers, or will that coordination role be played by another member of your group?
- If you're not located in a major metropolitan area, what is the largest city near you? How long does it typically take to drive there? Is public transportation available to get there? How much does it cost and how long does it take?

**Principles of Emergent Strategy:**

Small is good, small is all (the large is a reflection of the small).

Change is constant.

There is always enough time for the right work.

There is a conversation in the room that only these people at this moment can have. Find it.

Never a failure, always a lesson.

Trust the people.

Move at the speed of trust.

Focus on critical connections more than critical mass –  
build the resilience by building the relationships.

Less prep, more presence.

What you pay attention to grows. – *Emergent Strategy, Adrienne Maree Brown*

## **MATCHING PROCESS**

Based on the information you've provided to us, we will be in contact with one or more of the organizations that directly support migrants at the border and in detention who are awaiting sponsorship. Once we have identified a migrant or migrant family who appear to be a good fit, we will share their profile and all the information we have about them with your leadership team.

The policies and practices governing how migrants and asylum seekers are treated by the US government is literally changing day by day, which makes it difficult to estimate how long you may wait between the time you finish your discernment and say "YES!" to this form of solidarity, and the day you finally greet your guest for the first time. In some cases, it will be possible for you to communicate with and support your guest while they are in immigration detention. In other cases, they will be released so swiftly that you'll be making arrangements for their travel to you almost immediately. And in some cases, you will be matched with someone already free of detention who needs to move to your area because of family or other connections.

## **PREPARING TO RECEIVE YOUR GUEST**

The following are broad guidelines of the kinds of ways you can prepare for your guest, ranging from the most legalistic and practical through to ways you can be as welcoming and hospitable as possible.

**-- Prepare the parole or bond package** (samples of these elements are in Appendix 1). The person serving as official sponsor (often the same person who will host the guest in their home) must prepare the parole documents for ICE. Sometimes this may be referred to as the bond package. These materials include a letter from the sponsor, stating that they are a US citizen and that they are prepared to fully support the person(s) for one year. The sponsor will need to send proof of citizenship/residency and proof of their household income as well. Additional letters from members of your congregation and community, especially from people who hold leadership roles, can be of great use in the parole package. These additional letters should explain their relationship to you, why they are writing the letter, and the form(s) of support they can offer.

### **-- Supporting your guest in detention**

Detention (prison) is a harsh new reality for migrants, right on the heels of a difficult and sometimes traumatizing journey. It's challenging to be in detention under even the best of personal circumstances, and much harder when one is struggling with poor health, past trauma, language barriers, the grief of leaving loved ones behind, and the many uncertainties of migration.

Detention also means incredibly boring days with time passing very slowly. Usually detainees have little idea of what's happening with their asylum process and no sense of how long they will be detained. Two ways that you can support your guest through the experience of detention are by making yourself available for phone calls (with a translator if needed), and supplying funds for the commissary account.

Detainees are not permitted a free phone call, though some detention centers will facilitate them contacting a person who can help them buy a phone card (through the commissary – see below). They cannot receive incoming calls, so you will need to learn to recognize the phone number that they are calling from.

Having a supportive person to talk with – even someone not yet known and familiar – offers a welcome respite for some people; others may be shy of calling you, or intimidated by language barriers, so let your guest decide whether to call and how long to talk. If you do not speak your guest’s language (usually Spanish) and they do not speak yours, a phone call may be difficult or even impossible, though some sponsors have had success lining up a specific time for their guest to call and then having a bilingual friend on hand to translate.

**-- Supplying funds for the commissary**

Having some funds in a commissary account while in detention is very important, especially in order to buy a phone card (the only way to make calls), toiletries, and snacks. Detention commissaries register inmate funds by their name and “A” number (you cannot send funds until you’ve got the “A” number). Their systems for depositing funds vary, so once you know what detention center you’re dealing with, go to their website to find out the process. Many of them use Western Union.

Having a chance to buy a snack or make a phone call helps keep people hopeful in a difficult place. Unfortunately, commissary prices tend to be quite inflated as the result of predatory companies contracted with many detention facilities, so money doesn’t stretch very far. You can send whatever amount is comfortable for your budget; between \$30 and \$50 per week is an average, but you should be mindful of what you feel able to afford.

Don’t deposit money into someone’s account in any way other than the “official” mechanism used by the detention center. Sometimes sponsor names/numbers are sold within detention centers in order to scam you, so don’t agree to deposit money from or for people you don’t know.

**-- Arrange for your guest to travel to your home.**

When parole is granted, the person serving as official sponsor will be contacted by an ICE officer to confirm the details of who they are and where they live. When instructed by Homeland Security, you will book travel for your guest from where they are detained to the identified sponsor’s home. You may also need to secure car seats if you will be hosting babies or small children. **Do not make travel arrangements for your guest until you’re instructed to do so by ICE.** Be aware that you might be asked to book a flight or a bus ticket within a few days -- or even for the next day. This is customary for detention centers, so don’t be alarmed -- but do know that tickets will be more expensive than if you were booking them a few weeks out.

Sponsors will usually email or fax a copy of the detainee’s flight or bus itinerary to the ICE officer. ICE will then transport them to the airport or Greyhound station for their travel; depending on where the detention center is located there may be community groups ready and able to assist with this transition.

**-- Build up your support network.**

Now that you know who it is you’ll be sponsoring, you may want to expand your support team to include people who share important dimensions of your guest’s identity. If you’re sponsoring someone who identifies as gay or transgender, send out inquiries within your community to build a list of queer and queer-friendly folks, especially those who speak your guest’s language. You may also try to identify supportive people in the community who are around the same age as your guest, and/or who share another identity important to them (for example, based on their profession back at home, their religious identity, etc.).

-- **Shrink the language barrier.** If your guest does not speak English and you do not speak their native language(s), line up plenty of bilingual people in order to create a strong network for your guest and for your sponsoring household. If no one in your sponsoring home speaks your guest's language, your shared lives will sometimes be challenging for all of you. It will be very important that all of you have access to people able and willing to help. Get familiar with Google Translate and similar apps on your phone so you can use it easily and introduce your guest to it if they don't already know about it. This is also a perfect opportunity for you to brush up your rusty Spanish skills or enroll in a class! There are also many free and useful online language-learning resources to explore to help you increase your skills.

-- **Explore what kinds of health services are available.** Find out what the options are in your city for people who cannot pay for their healthcare. If the person you're expecting identifies as LGBTQ+, be sure the places you find are queer-friendly, and learn about the resources they have available for translation services. Ask to speak with a social worker who can walk you through the kinds of insurance that might be available during the months before asylum is granted (this varies by state).

-- **Become an expert in your local public transportation.** If you generally drive or walk in your city but there is some system of buses and trains, become familiar enough that you can walk your guest through the system in the early days or weeks of their stay. One of the earliest ways to help your guest have a sense of agency is for them to get places they want to go under their own steam, instead of having to be accompanied or driven everywhere. Learning the public transportation system will be a challenge in the beginning, but it will offer a lot of freedom very quickly.

-- **Explore options for English classes.** Not all asylum seekers have an interest in or are ready to begin to learn English, especially in the early months. Some of them have very little schooling in their past, which can make it challenging to read or write in their own language, much less in a foreign one. Nevertheless, having the option available if they choose it will be very helpful. In the early weeks and months when it will be difficult for your guest to work, having a schedule and a place to go with a purpose can be helpful. Find out what kinds of classes are available for free, especially ones that are walking distance from your home or on an easy route for public transportation.

#### A Prayer among Friends

Among other wonders of our lives, we are alive  
with one another, we walk here  
in the light of this unlikely world  
that isn't ours for long.  
May we spend generously  
the time we are given.  
May we enact our responsibilities  
as thoroughly as we enjoy  
our pleasures. May we see with clarity,  
may we seek a vision  
that serves all beings, may we honor  
the mystery surpassing our sight,  
and may we hold in our hands  
the gift of good work  
and bear it forth whole, as we  
were borne forth by a power we praise  
to this one Earth, this homeland of all we love.  
– John Daniel

## **WELCOMING AND SETTLING IN**

There are many dimensions to settling in to a new living situation, especially in the case of people who have become migrants out of necessity rather than choice. Patience and flexibility are essential – along with compassion for yourselves as well as for your guest, amid all the uncertainty.

The following are some guidelines and best practices for the person hosting your guest in their home:

**-- When you pick your guest up, be sure to have someone who speaks their native language with you.** As you head toward home, let your guest know how far away you live and point out landmarks as you go as a way to help orient them, but don't expect it all to be retained. Remember that the transition from detention to (relative) freedom is a big one, as is the shift from their home country to one that feels very foreign.

**-- Don't ask for details about what your guest has been through or why s/he fled to the US.** Over time, much of the story will come out; in many cases the person will have with them an English language version of their "credible fear" interview when they entered the US and they may offer it to you to help you understand their history. Unless you will need this information in order to help communicate with a lawyer, don't ask for it. Most asylum seekers by definition have been through trauma, often multiple times, and people process such events in their own time and manner, often by choosing not to remember or to recount when possible.

**-- Once home, show them their room and around your house (and yard, if you have one).** Offer food and water and let them know that they can help themselves to what they need without asking (e.g. getting a midnight snack from the fridge). Help them find their way around the bathroom (where you keep towels, shampoo, etc.). If they've been in detention they already know that paper can go in the toilet but it's helpful to reiterate this, since throughout Latin America it's deposited in a basket by the toilet. Though they may be full of energy, it's safe to assume that they've had a long and anxious trip getting to you and that they'd probably like to rest and have some alone time in their room. They may want to sleep, more than anything, for the first few days.

**-- If you have pets, introduce them.** Fear of dogs is common, especially of large dogs, so be patient; and often the only experience of cats is of strays that are viewed as full of vermin, so there may be cultural norms to get used to.

**-- In the first few days, show them how to use the machines they will need, especially washer, dryer, and if you have it, dishwasher.** Find out how they like to make coffee and help them do it (some of us take our coffee stronger or weaker than they may prefer; a one-cup drip can solve the problem cheaply). Find out what kinds of food they would most like to eat, and see whether you can take them with you to a grocery store likely to stock what they want. Sometimes terms can be confusing; "crema" usually means sour cream, for instance, and "queso" is likely to be soft *queso fresco* rather than cheddar or something like that.

For other members of your support team (other than the host home), here are some early things that you will want to pay attention to:

-- **Find out when your guest has their office check-in with ICE and be sure that a Spanish speaker can accompany them there.** Usually the first check-in is scheduled for within a week of your guest's arrival, and sometimes the office is an hour drive away or more, depending on where you live. In some cases a tracking ankle bracelet will be imposed on the guest at this first check-in, which is distressing and humiliating so be prepared to offer sympathy and comfort.

-- **Plan a shopping trip within the first few days to buy clothing that may be lacking, especially winter wear if you're in a cold area.** If you have been able to find a church or other place that offers free clothing, it will save you a ton of money if you go there first to find what you can, especially expensive things like boots and heavy coats. Underwear, socks, and some other clothing will need to be purchased. Figure out what your limits are financially and be as clear (and realistic) as you can be about it, so your guest isn't surprised in the store. Most asylum seekers will arrive with very little clothing and will need pretty much everything.

-- **Help your guest figure out what kind of phone is most affordable and get them set up with a plan.** Unless they come with a phone and a plan, in today's world this is essential for everything from making social plans to communicating with a doctor or seeking work, and it will need to be a smart-phone. Sometimes it's possible to transfer a used phone to their name, but many of these are "locked" to the company that first issued them; buying into that company's plan may not be the most affordable option.

-- If you have an old phone you no longer use and are willing to give your guest, you can consider adding them to your calling plan. The down sides to this are that you remain responsible for it (they're not paying their own bills) and you carry the cost if there are data or calling overages.

-- Some sponsors/guests have had good luck with MetroPCS, which is owned by T-Mobile and uses their network. Good smart-phones can be \$200 or less to purchase, with an adequate monthly plan of data, texting and calls for \$18-25.

-- Note that most inexpensive phone plans require a separate purchase of a card for calling Central America.

-- **If your guest is up for it, plan a small get-together to meet some of the people in the support network who speak their native language.** You can make this a festive welcome party and expand the sense of connection that your guest has, with the chance to visit a bit with a wider range of people. It is especially helpful to invite people close to your guest's demographic (queer if they are, younger if they are, etc.). This gives them access early on to a range of people they can then contact on their own if they choose to. *Follow the lead of your guest in this: some people will not feel sociable for a while, or will be inherently introverted.*

-- **With your guest's permission, start a GoFundMe campaign to help support them financially.** As sponsors we have agreed to cover room and board, often for six months or longer; but there are many other needs that add up to quite a lot of money. These include clothing, transportation, phone, cosmetics, incidentals, and medical and legal help where free options are not available. In the best case scenario, the campaign will be successful enough that your guest will have funds left over from the first months' expenses to use for rent when they are able to strike out on their own. Ballpark amounts that have been successfully raised range from \$3,000 to \$8,000.

Ask your guest if they'd like a photo of themselves shared on the page and what they'd like to share in a short bio. Craft the page together as much as possible, with your guest's input and vetting. Be specific about the reasons the funds are needed, and then send the link to

everyone you can think of. You will have the best luck if you update it once a week or so and add news and photos, with the input and permission of your guest.

Note that most guests will not be able to open bank accounts in their own name, so GoFundMe will need to be attached to your own account; be transparent about all expenses. Work out with your guest a regular and predictable way to provide them the cash they need from the account so that it doesn't feel like another level of dependence.

*You Reading This, Be Ready*

Starting here, what do you want to remember?  
How sunlight creeps along a shining floor?  
What scent of old wood hovers, what softened  
sound from outside fills the air?

Will you ever bring a better gift for the world  
than the breathing respect that you carry  
wherever you go right now? Are you waiting  
for time to show you some better thoughts?

When you turn around, starting here, lift this  
new glimpse that you found; carry into evening  
all that you want from this day. This interval you spent  
reading or hearing this, keep it for life -

What can anyone give you greater than now,  
starting here, right in this room, when you turn around? – William Stafford

## ***As time goes on***

-- **Try to be patient and compassionate, even when you're feeling stressed – and extend that compassion to yourselves too!** Your host may be sharing their home with a guest for six months or a year, and over the long haul there are always stresses (as in any relationship). These are compounded by the sense of helplessness and uncertainty that any asylum seeker must live with, and by language and culture barriers especially if no one in the household speaks their native language(s). There is a lot that good will and intention can overcome though, so hang in there!

-- **Help your guest think about long-term preferences, especially in terms of location and preferred work.** There are often vocational schools and training programs available, including for those without work permits, but they often require proficiency in English. If your guest has relatives in some other part of the country who they would like to try living with, it might be worthwhile for them to go for some weeks or even months to try it out (keeping in mind the dates for ICE appointments or court dates, and any travel restrictions that might apply).

-- **Know your own needs and limits.** Every life has its challenges, even for those of us who are relatively privileged. Illness in the family, job loss, and other unexpected developments can impact our capacity to be good hosts. Do your best, be honest about your limits, and ask for help when you need it.

**-- Remember that you don't have to share all of your opinions about your guest's choices.** Most of us have opinions and judgements about pretty much everything, like a running commentary droning along in the back of our minds: opinions about other peoples' clothing or appearance, what they say and do, the choices they make, and so on. You'll find that you've got opinions about your guest's choices, too – and that's both inevitable and harmless, as long as you recognize they are *yours* and don't actually have to be shared with your guest. Sometimes it's helpful to remind ourselves lightly, *I don't actually have to have an opinion about that!*

## **Dynamics to Keep in Mind**

### **Honoring your guest's independence and sense of agency**

As you provide support and hospitality for your guest toward creating a new life in the United States, it's important to remember the survival skills that have helped them through very difficult situations so far. They are experts in their lived experience and their own needs, and they must be trusted and empowered to make decisions for themselves. Although they have limited material resources, they still have the capacity to be agents of their own lives. As we join them in their journey by providing some guidance and material support, we also want to honor and support their independence, resilience, and resourcefulness.

It can be challenging as a sponsor to lend support and offer solidarity, while at the same time not limiting the independence of your guests. They will decide for themselves how they want to move forward with their asylum case and in their new lives. As you develop bonds of care and connection with your guest, it is natural that you'll also feel deeply invested in their future, as you would with any person you care about. So if there are times when your guest makes decisions or plans you don't agree with, it may be challenging to resist the urge to "fix" or change what you see. Remember that your guest has the right to make decisions based on their own moral compass, judgment, skills, and vision for their life.

Through self-reflection and the support of your own community, consider what practices will help you find the balance between offering support while refraining from imposing your own sense of "what's best" for your guest. It is especially important that we stay mindful of the dynamics around identity and power – related to race, gender identity, age, citizenship, survivorship and other factors – that may impact this relationship.

### **Identity, Power & Privilege**

We all have a variety of identities, lived experiences, and social locations related to privilege and power which inform how we move through the world. In relating to guests seeking asylum and temporary sanctuary in our home, it's important to remember that an imbalanced power dynamic exists, and to seek to equalize this wherever we can. This power imbalance is intensified by the fact that sponsors hold the physical power over the residence, the financial power over resources, and the knowledge of local customs, laws, and social norms. Everything we can do to reduce the skewing of power and support the independence of our guests will help.

Throughout the process of sponsorship and accompaniment, we are also called to remember that there are no saviors here: we engage in this work as human beings expressing our humanity by offering solidarity to those who have lived through truly unjust and traumatizing situations.

For further exploration of and reflection on how your own identities may inform your role as a sponsor, and in social justice work more broadly, you may wish to check out the ["Who are you?"](#)

section of the UU College of Social Justice Study Guide, which includes sections for those who identify as people of color, and for those who identify as white.

### **Managing expectations**

Throughout the sponsorship experience, it's a good idea to revisit some of the questions you considered during your discernment process, especially concerning expectations. The more clearly we can name our own expectations and assumptions, the more easily we will adjust without disappointment if things turn out to be a bit different from what we're anticipating.

We all react differently to new circumstances in our lives and you may see a range of reactions from your guest(s). For example, the guest you are matched with might be an introvert who likes to stay home, watch movies, and read; or they may be very extroverted and like to go out every day or night, talk with friends on the phone, and engage with new people all the time.

Likewise, different people respond differently to the sudden change in circumstances, from being in places of scarcity and danger to now being in a place of relative abundance and safety. Some will hold on tightly to every possession that comes their way, because they have come from a place of survival in which they had guaranteed access to nothing. Some may quickly spend any money shared with them, and others will immediately want to send it home to loved ones who they feel need it more. Some might only pick out a few items at the store when given the option to get "anything" they wanted, as they are accustomed to few possessions and feel no need to fill their closet immediately. Others will want to buy everything they like, because it's been a long time since they were able to choose something for themselves. These are all different responses to the same set of circumstances. Honoring and affirming your guest's preferences, even when they vary from your own, is part of making your home a place of sanctuary.

### **Coping with Trauma**

Trauma manifests in people in many different ways, and healing from it also comes about in a wide variety of forms and practices. Being flexible with guests' coping mechanisms without judgment will help to create a supportive environment during this transitional time in their lives. Symptoms of anxiety, depression, and/or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) are common in asylum seekers, though not universal.

Each person will have their own way of coping. Some may take long walks, some sleep in late; some may stay occupied all the time with videos or chatting with their friends. Some ways of coping may look as though your guest is disengaged, but that may be an important way for them to take care of themselves in a given moment. Try to be accepting and understanding, re-centering in the principle of supporting your guest's independence and respecting their process of healing in the ways and on the timeline that is right for them.

There are also cultural differences in how we may heal from trauma. In the United States, it is common to pursue therapy in a variety of forms. But U.S. therapeutic approaches are often unfamiliar or less useful to people from different cultural backgrounds. Going to church, playing sports, gathering with others in community who share some of their identities or experiences, or engaging in the world in a way that supports their mental health may be the best options for them. Ultimately, we must trust guests to know what they need to heal from what they've experienced.

If your guest is open to professional help and is seeking your support, work together to find options that will feel most accessible, relevant, and welcoming for them. Research health care

and mental health services where your guest's language is commonly spoken, where providers specialize in care for immigrants and refugees, and where there is a trauma-informed and social justice-oriented approach. Links for learning more about trauma, and finding resources for healing and support, are included in Appendix 3.

## Appendix 1: Preparing the Parole Package

The parole or bond package is one of the key contributions each sponsor makes toward securing an asylum seeker's release from detention. When you are matched with an asylum seeker, you will be told when and to whom the parole package should be sent.

The materials you'll prepare are:

- a letter from you as the sponsor, stating that you are a US citizen, and declaring your willingness and capacity to support the person for a minimum of six months. Include your commitment to help the person comply with ICE appointments and court hearings.
- proof of citizenship/residency (a copy of your passport and of your driver's license)
- proof of your household income
- where you work and how long you've worked there
- proof of housing (copy of your lease agreement, mortgage documentation, or utility bills)
- additional letters from members of your community; these should explain their relationship to you, why they are writing the letter, and the form(s) of support they can offer.

### SAMPLE SPONSOR LETTER FOR PAROLE PACKAGE

Name and address of  
sponsor

Date of letter

RE: Letter in support of \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Immigration Officer,

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (sponsor name) \_\_\_\_\_ am writing to respectfully request that you release \_\_\_\_\_ (name of asylum seeker) into my custody during the pendency of her removal proceedings. My spouse, \_\_\_\_\_, and I are both US citizens.

The full address where we live and will shelter and support \_\_\_\_\_ (guest) is - \_\_\_\_\_ We have lived in this home since \_\_\_\_\_; I'm enclosing a copy of our most recent utility bill as proof of residency.

The best phone number to reach me is \_\_\_\_\_. As back-up numbers, during most weekdays from 9:00-5:00 I can be reached at \_\_\_\_\_.

As proof of citizenship and lawful status to be a sponsor, I'm enclosing here copies of my US passport and my driver's license. As proof of income I am enclosing a recent paystub for my biweekly paycheck. I am a \_\_\_\_\_ (profession) \_\_\_\_\_, currently working at \_\_\_\_\_ (institution, position, agency, etc.) I have been in this position for \_\_\_\_\_, and prior to accepting it I worked \_\_\_\_\_.

We are prepared to provide shelter in our home and all of \_\_\_\_\_ (guest name) 's meals, as well as financial support for incidentals. We will also provide her with a monthly transit pass that will allow her to use the metro system, and we will ensure that she appears for every court hearing and ICE check-in scheduled throughout the processing of her asylum claim.

In addition, we have an extended community through our congregation, \_\_\_\_\_ and our community organization \_\_\_\_\_. The network of \_\_\_\_\_ speaking volunteers through these communities is extensive, and there is a high level of commitment to supporting asylum-seekers in all the ways needed in order to help them feel at home and safe. This

includes helping to arrange English language lessons, introducing \_\_\_\_ (guest name \_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ speakers her age, and linking her to members of the migrant community here. Thank you for your kind consideration of this request. If I have omitted information that would be helpful or if you need any other questions answered, please don't hesitate to contact me at the numbers listed above.  
Sincerely,

## **Appendix 2: Guidelines for Shared Living**

These guidelines are designed for the person within the congregational team who will physically host the asylum seeker in their home.

As you begin to prepare yourself, your family and your home for your guest, it's important to be as aware as possible of your expectations for what it will be like. Any time an additional person joins a household, it changes our patterns and rhythms. We each come with our own preferences, habits, and customs, and as we blend our lives for a short or long time, we will come up against our differences and will need to figure out together how to adapt.

Sometimes it can be startling how reactive we feel about small changes in our living space, even when we know that such changes are inevitable when we invite an asylum seeker to share that space. The questions here are designed to provoke your reflection *before your guest arrives*, so you can observe your own responses and consider what they tell you about both your conscious and unconscious expectations. Thinking carefully about *preferences* (such as relative neatness) versus *requirements* (such as no tobacco smoking in the house) will help you come up with guidelines while encouraging your own capacity to be flexible and resilient.

After you've thought about the topics and questions below, please take some time to outline what you'd like to be able to count on as guidelines for shared living. Follow the topics we've listed, even if only to say that you're relaxed or unconcerned about that element. Feel free to add other things that have occurred to you. We encourage you to be honest with yourself about what feels truly non-negotiable for you and where you feel flexible about household dynamics. Being clear and up-front can make all the difference in making your sponsor/guest experience harmonious and happy for all of you! It will also be helpful for you to bring your list to the core group that will help support you as host, to hear from them any thoughts or responses.

We'll ask you to share your guidelines with us in preparation for receiving your guest; if there's something we think needs clarifying or more consideration, we'll offer suggestions. These guidelines will be shared with your guest as we finalize the match, and your guest may have elements they'd like to add or clarify as well. Once complete, we hope the guidelines will help you all be on the same page as you begin living together. It may also be helpful to consider them a "living document" that will need to be revisited, reflected upon, and possibly revised as time goes on and they are put into practice with your guest.

### **Privacy and personal space**

Consider the usual rhythm of your weekdays and weekends: when you usually leave for work and return, when others in the house are home or out, how you're used to coming together for social or meal time and when you prefer to be quiet or alone.

Are there elements of this rhythm that you'd like your guest to know about?

Are there disruptions to this rhythm that would particularly bother you, such as music playing early or late in the day, or phone conversations happening in common space?

### **Household chores**

Consider the basic tasks that help your house run smoothly: taking out the garbage and recycling, sweeping the kitchen floor, cleaning the common use spaces, and so on.

Are there chores that will need to increase in frequency with another person living in the home? Are there weekly chores that would be particularly helpful if your guest were able and willing to take them on?

If there are chores that may be unfamiliar to your guest (such as separating out recyclables), are you able to be patient and flexible during the learning curve?

### **Neatness and cleaning up**

Think about the ways that you and others in your household use the common spaces (kitchen, living room, entryway or foyer, dining room or other eating space, shared bathrooms). We all have different needs for neatness, and if you live with a partner, child, or roommate you already know how to negotiate these differences!

Do you or others tend to leave some of your things in the common living area (books, shoes, coffee cups...)? If you do not, how important is it to you that the common area be kept free of personal items? If you do, would you be comfortable having your guest do the same?

Are you comfortable letting others know when a space feels too chaotic and needs to be neatened up again?

Are you able and willing to leave the neatness or messiness of your guest's bedroom up to your guest?

Are there rules you would like to have followed even in a private bedroom room, such as not accumulating dirty dishes there?

If you or others will be sharing a bathroom with your guest, is it okay for personal items to be stored there, such as makeup and toothbrushes?

### **Meals and food**

What are your habits and practices around common meals? How often do you and your partner, family, or roommates have dinner together?

Is it important to you that your guest join you for these meals?

Is it important to you that you have meals at times that are just with your partner? If so, are you comfortable letting your guest know this?

Will you be most comfortable having all food be used communally, or setting aside some foods just for your guest or just for you and your family?

What is your system for noting when you're running low on something (e.g. a grocery list)? Is this system easy for your guest to use, or will it need to be adapted?

### **Friends of your guest**

You may find that the asylum-seeker you're hosting already knows one or more people in your city. Over time, it's very likely (and desirable!) that they will make new friends and contacts, and they may want to bring these friends home to visit.

How do you feel about your guest bringing a friend home to hang out in their room? In the common space? Cooking together and sharing a meal?  
How do you feel about your guest having a friend stay overnight with them?

### **Substance use**

How do you feel about cigarette smoking in the house? On an outside porch or in the yard?  
How do you feel about alcohol use?  
How do you feel about marijuana use in the home? On an outside porch or in the yard?

*It is important to know that even in states that have legalized marijuana, as long as it is illegal on the federal level it could cause legal problems for your guest if they should be caught in possession of it. Nevertheless, since your guest is an adult (even if a young one), they may make different decisions about using marijuana than what you might decide.*

### **Safety Considerations**

Do you have preferences or concerns about when your guest goes out or comes home (e.g. very late at night)?  
Are there safety factors in your neighborhood or city that are especially important to convey to your guest in order to keep them safe?

**Are there other household norms or guidelines that are important to you?**

**As you try to consider your guest's perspective, what kinds of guidelines do you think will make them feel most welcome and supported in your home?**

## **Appendix 3: Support Resources**

This is not a comprehensive list, but rather links that have been compiled in response to the questions and concerns have come up from sponsors at this time. Please send us additional resources you suggest during our annual program review.

### **Legal resources**

- Pro-Bono Attorneys by State:  
<https://www.justice.gov/eoir/list-pro-bono-legal-service-providers>
- 
- Link to more legal resources ([maybe some from here](#))

### **Health resources**

- [Find a Federally Qualified Health Center near you](#). Community Health Centers — also known as Federally Qualified Health Centers, or FQHCs — provide care regardless of your insurance status or ability to pay. There are nearly 1,400 health center organizations with more than 11,000 locations in urban, suburban and rural communities across the country. They can be found in all 50 states and U.S. territories. All health centers offer comprehensive primary and preventive health care. Many also offer dental, mental health and pharmacy services.

- [Planned Parenthood](#) may be an option for free or affordable sexual and reproductive health care. Find one near you [at this link](#) or by calling 1-800-230-PLAN.
- Here is a directory [LGBTQ Primary Care Community Health Centers in the US](#) and [Trans Health Clinics](#).
- Trans folks can access hormones (often through Planned Parenthood, and sometimes other clinics)

### Trauma resources

- [Overview of PTSD symptoms](#)
- [Harvard Program in Refugee Trauma](#)
- [Find trauma and PTSD therapists and support groups near you](#)
- [About somatic experiencing](#) as a treatment for PTSD
- [Find somatic experiencing practitioners near you](#)

### Resources for secondary trauma (for people who are supporting trauma survivors)

- [Secondary traumatic stress and self-care packet](#)
- [What is compassion fatigue?](#)
- [Self-care tips for compassion fatigue](#)
- [101 Stress Relievers](#)
- [Find trauma and PTSD therapists and support groups near you](#)

### Resources for survivors of violence

- [National Consortium of Torture Treatment Programs](#) The focus of many of the programs is comprehensive services—health, mental health, social and legal services—for torture survivors living in the US, including of course asylum seekers and refugees. "Torture" includes violence based on gender identity and sexual orientation, so these programs should include that perspective in their programming.
- [National Resources for Sexual Assault Survivors and their Loved Ones](#) from RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network)
- [National Domestic Violence Organizations](#), from the National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma & Mental Health

### Other Resources

- Sponsor toolkit from Santa Fe Dreamers Project:  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B-CM1PHb8\\_Fxc2hZVHJ0TIIHam1dGZzMVdnZjJFUHBqMzNn/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B-CM1PHb8_Fxc2hZVHJ0TIIHam1dGZzMVdnZjJFUHBqMzNn/view)

# Resources about Central America and migration

## Current News and Events

[This is a multi-media exploration](#) of the rise of migrant detention in the United States over the past forty years. Produced by [The Guardian](#) (UK) in September 2019, it is an excellent resource for helping your community or congregation understand how we have come to depend so much on imprisoning people for migrating.

[Envio Magazine Digital](#) is a monthly in-depth analysis of current events in Nicaragua and elsewhere in Central America, published through the University of Central America (UCA) in Managua, Nicaragua, and published in both English and Spanish.

[The Latin America Working Group \(LAWG\)](#) offers a weekly update that surveys news from Latin America, the US border region, and new developments in US immigration policy. They offer more in-depth analysis on immigration developments and have toolkits on how to take action.

[Migratory Notes](#) offers a weekly digest of migration news and continually updated resources for understanding the issues and for taking action.

[No More Deaths](#) is a network of volunteers based in Tucson, AZ, who provide humanitarian aid to migrants crossing the desert. The group has issued several in-depth studies about abuses by US Border Patrol and is an excellent source of news about this part of the border and the struggle for a more just and humane immigration policy.

## Books

[Undocumented: How Immigration Became Illegal](#), by Aviva Chomsky (Beacon Press, 2014). This is an exploration of US immigration law and the many ways it has changed through our nation's history, driven by the needs of the economy and by racism.

[A four-session book discussion guide](#) is available for this book from the UU College of Social Justice, for use by congregations or book groups (free).

[Border Patrol Nation: Dispatches from the Frontlines of Homeland Security](#), by Todd Miller (City Lights Books, 2014)

[Empire of Borders: The Expanse of the US Border Around the World](#), by Todd Miller (Verso, 2019). *Note: this book becomes available July 23, 2019.*

[Grabbing Power: The New Struggles for Land, Food and Democracy in Northern Honduras](#), by Tanya M. Kerssen (Food First Books/Institute for Food and Development Policy, 2013). *This analysis of the struggle for land and human rights in the Aguan Valley offers insight into the US immigration crisis from the perspective of those who are fighting for the right to remain safely at home in their own country.*

## Videos

### [Who Is Dayani Cristal?](#)

Spurred by the body of an unidentified migrant found in the Arizona border desert, Gael Garcia Bernal and Marc Silver embed themselves among migrants making the perilous journey north. This film is an excellent resource for helping people understand the driving factors for migration from Central America and how high the stakes are for them.

A brief [film discussion guide](#) is available from the UU College of Social Justice (free).

## [Harvest of Empire](#)

This documentary reviews four centuries of colonialism and American expansion, grounding the rise of poverty and violence in Latin America to the history that drives it and the immigration that arises from it.

*A brief [film discussion guide](#) is available from the UU College of Social Justice (free).*

## **Appendix 4: Organize! Challenging Unjust Immigration Systems**

Sponsorship of asylum-seekers is one powerful way to engage in solidarity and increase one's proximity to the injustices of our current immigration system. Action in social movements is also necessary to disrupt and transform the violence, racism, and inhumanity of the system itself. Many people come to sponsorship having already made a commitment to organizing and activism related to immigration; many also become (more) politicized through the experience and seek channels for changing broader structures and policies that have created harm for the migrants and asylum seekers who are now a part of our lives.

### **Organizations**

There has long been a powerful tradition of immigrant-led organizing in the United States. In these dangerous times, many grassroots groups which center the experiences of directly-impacted people continue to lead the movement for change. Which grassroots immigrant-led organizations, campaigns and coalitions can you map and connect with in your own community? There may also be groups in your area designed for allies to follow the leadership of those most impacted. Making local ties helps build community and sustain involvement in action close to home. At a national level, here are a few organizations, which also have local chapters, to follow, support, and with whom to connect:

- **Mijente**  
<https://mijente.net>  
*Mijente is a new national hub for Latinx and Chicanx organizing, using a hybrid offline and online platform to create a political home that brings together leadership, advocacy, culture and media to spark the culture and policy change we need. Mijente is not just Pro-Latinx, but pro-Black, pro-woman, pro-queer, pro-poor because our community is all that and more.*
- **Movimiento Cosecha**  
<https://www.lahuelga.com>  
*Cosecha is a nonviolent movement fighting for permanent protection, dignity, and respect for the 11 million undocumented immigrants in the United States. Committed to winning real victories for our community, Cosecha believes in using non-cooperation to leverage the power of immigrant labor and consumption and force a meaningful shift in public opinion.*
- **United We Dream**  
<https://unitedwedream.org>  
*United We Dream transforms fear into finding your voice. We empower people to develop their leadership, their organizing skills, and to develop our own campaigns to fight for justice and dignity for immigrants and all people. This is achieved through*

*immigrant youth-led campaigns at the local, state, and federal level.*

- **National Domestic Workers Alliance**

[www.domesticworkers.org](http://www.domesticworkers.org)

*NDWA works for respect, recognition, and inclusion in labor protections for domestic workers, the majority of whom are immigrants and women of color.*

- **The Sanctuary Movement**

<https://www.sanctuarynotdeportation.org>

*A growing movement of both immigrant-led and allied faith communities doing what Congress and the Administration refuse to do: protect and stand with immigrants facing deportation. This page links to a recent [report on sanctuary in the Trump era](#) and (below that) to local Sanctuary coalitions in several cities, states and regions.*

### **Background Readings and Resources**

A focus of immigration justice organizing in the current political climate has included calls to expand our understanding of “sanctuary” from a place of refuge offered within four walls to a politics of justice and inclusion that protests the criminalization of immigration while expanding multiple forms of solidarity with and protections for those most targeted.

- [Expanding Sanctuary - What Makes a City a Sanctuary](#)-- A February 2017 report from Mijente on expanding sanctuary cities to protect all residents from criminalization and deportation.
- [A Radical Expansion of Sanctuary: Steps in Defiance of Trump's Executive Order](#) by Marisa Franco -- An overview of Expanded Sanctuary under the Trump regime including first steps for local organizing campaigns by Marisa Franco, co-founder of Mijente and part of the #Not1More campaign.
- [Informed Immigrant](#)-- An exhaustive resource site from immigrant justice, rights and service organizations including information and recommendations responding to Trump's Executive Order, Resources for Immigrants and allies and legal information on employment, DACA, the BRIDGE Act and beyond.

### **Multimedia Resources**

- [The Call to Sanctuary: How to Create Safety in Your Community](#)-- a five-minute overview of how to create safety in your community locally, legally, at school and at church, narrated by many voices in the movement for immigrant rights, produced by Brave New Films.
- [Expanding Sanctuary](#), a short video from Mijente and BYP 100 -- Black, Latinx, Muslim, Trans and LGBTQ communities are redefining and expanding what sanctuary means to protect themselves and each other from not just immigration enforcement but all the threats coming from 45's regime. The shared attacks means a linked fate between all our communities. This brief video outlines the connections and ways to respond.

- [Sanctuary Movement Webinar from Auburn Seminary](#) -- A series of short videos from a webinar discussing sanctuary in the era of Trump featuring Rev. Alison Harrington - Southside Presbyterian Church, Raul Alcaraz Ochoa - Protection Network Organizing, Peter Pedemonti - New Sanctuary Movement of Philadelphia, Rev. Alexia Salvatierra and Rabbi Jonathan Klein - Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice.
- [Love Resists webinars](#) --To help individuals, groups, and congregations deepen their understanding of accountable resistance, Love Resists offers webinars led by some of our partners and resistance movement leaders.

## Campaigns for Sanctuary Cities

- [Mijente](#), the [Transgender Law Center](#) and [Black Youth Project 100](#) are working together to promote sanctuary cities through policy change. Download their "[What Makes a City a Sanctuary Now](#)" report to connect with this campaign. This approach focuses on sanctuary protections not only for undocumented immigrants, but also for people of color and transgender individuals, which are all groups that have been historically underserved and overpoliced.
- [Expanding Sanctuary Policy Solutions](#) (also from [Mijente](#)) – A crowdsourced guide to defy, defend and expand sanctuary policies. Includes sample laws and policies for sanctuary cities, such as welcoming city ordinances, policing oversight, limits on local/federal law enforcement cooperation, and more.
- [Sanctuary City Toolkit](#) ([National Immigration Law Center](#)): This advocacy toolkit includes talking points, fact sheets, legislative history and legal research to promote state and local policies that stop immigration enforcement.
- [Protecting Immigrant Communities](#) ([Local Progress](#)) - Resources geared towards local officials who want to pass sanctuary policies to protect immigrants in their communities. Includes sample city and school district policies, issue briefs, reports and webinars.
- The [American Civil Liberties Union](#) is running a [Freedom Cities campaign](#) through its People Power platform to fight President Trump's anti-immigrant and anti-democracy agenda. The campaign is starting with immigration issues and recommends nine specific policies for cities to adopt.

## Additional Strategies to Create Sanctuary Communities

In addition to passing Sanctuary policies that reduce the ways municipalities cooperate with ICE, there are broader campaigns to expand sanctuary in our communities through a variety of strategies. Here are some resources for learning more and getting involved:

*Build Community Support*

If local, business and political leaders are organized to support immigrant and threatened communities, they can shine a light on the way our criminalized system tears families apart.

- [Community Defense Zone Starter Guide \(Mijente\)](#) - A roadmap for setting up community defense zone local campaigns and reaching out to local leaders.
- [Combating political hate speech \(UJUSC\)](#) - Ways you can take action to counter anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant bigotry.
- [Love Resists](#) offers a variety of resources for faith communities to disrupt criminalization, including the violence of immigration detention and deportation. This [congregational action guide](#) (pdf) can help faith groups get started in exploring and committing to strategies for expanding sanctuary and solidarity.

### *Know Your Rights*

Helping to make sure people in immigrant and threatened communities know their rights, and what to do if they are targeted by a policing action, can be the difference between being safe and getting arrested.

- [Know Your Rights for Immigrants & Muslims \(ACLU\)](#) - Downloadable tip sheets and videos for what to do when confronted by discrimination or by police action, available in many languages including English, Spanish and Arabic.
- [Know Your Rights and Deportation Defense Cards \(United We Dream\)](#) - Print out these simple guides for how to interact with Immigration & Customs Enforcement agents. Available in English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean and Arabic.
- [Informed Immigrant Resources 101](#) - Stay updated with the changes happening to America's immigration policies and enforcement.
- [Interfaith Sanctuary Toolkit](#) - Designed to help congregations in discernment and practical steps when considering whether or not they are called to offer physical sanctuary for asylum seekers.
- [New Sanctuary Movement Legal Toolkit](#) from the Center for Human Rights and Constitutional Law-- A toolkit covering legal implications and know your rights for congregations offering sanctuary to individuals and/or families. Most recently updated in 2007 but with relevant information.

### *Designed Prevent Raids and Arrests*

Allies and supporters can sometimes help prevent raids and arrests by US Immigration, Customs and Enforcement by showing solidarity and being present during the enforcement action.

- [ICE Raids Toolkit \(Immigrant Defense Project\)](#) - Download this comprehensive toolkit that describes where and how Immigration & Customs Enforcement raids happen, and how to challenge them.
- [Preparing for Raids Guide \(National Immigration Law Center\)](#) - A quick outline of ways that immigrant community members and allies can prepare for immigration raids.
- [A brief guide for sharing reports on raids on social media responsibly](#), from **Desis Rising Up and Moving** -- A brief guide for sharing reports on raids on social media responsibly and communicating in a way that supports our communities to best protect themselves.
- [Immigration Raids Rapid Response: For Faith Allies](#), **Inspired by Sanctuary in the Streets from New Sanctuary Movement Philadelphia** -- A brief toolkit for faith communities including how congregations and denominations can prepare and respond to immediate threats of ICE/police raids.

### *Fight Deportations*

Community support can help stop a deportation order, after someone has been detained.

- [Anti-Deportations Toolkit \(Not1More\)](#) - Learn how to influence deportation proceedings through community campaigns and public advocacy for individuals with a deportation order.

### *End Abusive Detention*

The holding and detention facilities for the US immigration system are often inhumane and violent. Here are ways that supporters outside the system can improve conditions on the inside.

- [End Abusive Detention Toolkit \(National Immigrant Justice Center\)](#) - A guide to organize and advocate for more humane detention centers through Immigration and Customs Enforcement contracts and inspections.
- [Detention Watch Network](#)-- a national coalition building power through collective advocacy, grassroots organizing, and strategic communications to abolish immigration detention in the United States. Their website contains many resources for learning and organizing, including through the #DefundHate Campaign.
- [Starting a Visitation Program Webinar \(SSL\)](#) - Watch this webinar from the Standing on the Side of Love campaign on how to break down the isolation of immigration detention.
- [Detention Support Toolkit \(Black Immigration Network\)](#) - Download this complete toolkit for how to start a visitation program at an Immigration and Customs Enforcement facility.

- [ICE Death Watch Toolkit \(National Immigrant Justice Center\)](#) - Over 160 people have died while in custody of Immigration and Customs Enforcement since 2003. Download these talking points and resources to advocate for a more humane ICE detention system.

*Stop the criminalization of aid to migrants*

- [No More Deaths](#) works to end death and suffering in the Mexico–US borderlands through [civil initiative](#): people of conscience working openly and in community to uphold fundamental human rights. Their website offers an array of resources for learning and action, including their campaign to demonstrate that Humanitarian Aid Is Never a Crime.

*Solidarity with border organizations*

As caravans of migrants traveled north together in recent months, creating a powerful exodus of collective strength and solidarity, many in the U.S. wondered how to respond. [This crowd-sourced googledoc](#) offers a variety of ways to support border organizations through donations, amplification, and volunteer work, and also identifies related solidarity and accompaniment organizations to join in other regions, as well.