

# GETTING (MORE) INVOLVED WITH U.S. IMMIGRATION

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*This booklet will help you **explore** ways to stay involved with immigrants and immigration issues – both nationwide and in your community.*

*This booklet could be a **study guide for a group** that wants to become more involved with immigration – but first needs to learn more.*

*After exploring current national, state, and local issues, you can **connect with local and national organizations** that work with or support immigrants.*

*We urge you to find ways to apply your talents, interests and passions to some aspect of US immigration.*

*This booklet was created by Alyson Ball who works with immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees in Arizona and Virginia for people who have visited the border and are looking for ways to get involved with immigrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers in their local communities.*

# ARIZONA ORGANIZATIONS

## (Tucson/Green Valley/Nogales area)

*Here is a partial list of local organizations that can help you learn about border and immigration issues while you're in southern Arizona. Please look at their websites and sign up for their e-newsletters if you would like to stay apprised of their programs, activities and reports.*

**AZ Immigration Alliance** – Advocates for fair immigration legislation and policies throughout the US. (<http://azimmigrationalliance.org/>)

**Border Community Alliance** – Provides educational, travel, and internship opportunities to build community at the Arizona/Mexico border. (<https://bordercommunityalliance.org/>)

**BorderLinks** – Provides week-long learning opportunities for visiting groups or individuals who are interested in exploring issues related to the US-Mexican border and history. (<https://www.borderlinks.org/>)

**Catholic Community Services of Southern Arizona – Casa Alitas** – Manages the temporary shelter in Tucson that houses asylum seekers after they have been released from local detention. (<https://www.ccs-soaz.org/agencies-ministries/detail/alitas-aid-for-migrant-women-and-children>)

**Undocumented Migration Project** – (includes the Colibrí Center) works with families of the disappeared to try to resolve the hundreds of cases of unidentified migrants who have died in the desert. (<https://www.undocumentedmigrationproject.org/>)

**Green Valley-Sahuarita Samaritans** – Save lives in the desert with desert searches and water drops and supports several project and migrant shelters on both sides of the border. They observe Operation Streamline a fast-track plea-bargaining hearing. Check the website for meetings that are open to interested parties on zoom or held every other Monday (8am) at Good Shepherd United Church of Christ (17750 S. La Canada Drive, Sahuarita, AZ). (<https://www.gvs-samaritans.org/>)

**Kino Border Initiatives** – This faith-based organization manages El Comedor (in Nogales, Sonora, Mexico) which provides two meals per day and overnight accommodation for deported and northbound travelers. Also, conducts deported and north-bound migrant interviews and produces research that is used for advocacy with local Border Patrol and in national forums. (<https://www.kinoborderinitiative.org/>)

**No More Deaths** – Works to prevent deaths in the desert and advocates for faith-based immigration reforms. Also, produces reports from their observations and research. (<https://nomoredeaths.org/en/>)

**Tucson Samaritans** – Saves lives in the desert with desert searches and water drops. Provides an excellent information and training session (including border issues, history of Samaritans, and volunteer activities) the first Sunday of every month at Southside Presbyterian Church (317 W. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, Tucson) 1:30-5:00pm. Check the website to confirm. (<http://www.tucsonsamaritans.org/>)

**Watch the New York Times (7-minute) Video** : Search “NY Times When Entering the US was as Easy as Crossing the Street” (Nogales)

# CONTINUE TO LEARN ABOUT IMMIGRATION

1. Watch “US Immigration – The Basics” (56 minutes) for an overview of US immigration history, laws, and current immigration procedures and issues. (Go to YouTube.com and Search “US Immigration – The Basics”) or click on this link: (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xsP3zHzRxPA&t=26s>)
2. Get updates from National Immigration Forum at: <https://immigrationforum.org/> Sign up for all 3 options: Forum Updates, Forum Daily, Legislative Bulletin.
3. Take the “Pew Research US Immigration Mini Course” (search on this phrase) This is a 5-part, email course.
4. Check with national, religious organizations that may offer immigration services and newsletters.
5. Explore Syracuse University’s TRAC data and reports using federal immigration data for enforcement, courts, etc. Some data is available by state and local jurisdiction. You can find the database here: <https://trac.syr.edu/immigration/>
6. Watch “Harvest of Empire” (YouTube - 1.5 hours) which explains how the US government supported the destabilization of various Central American and Caribbean countries.
7. Read or listen (15 minutes) to this article “Shameful history of US intervention in Latin America” <https://www.wnycstudios.org/story/shameful-history-us-intervention-latin-america>
8. Learn about the root causes of migration by watching “A Story of Migration – A Tale of Two Cities” on YouTube (30 minutes) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MnW8QHF0x3s>
9. Watch “Border Hustle” on YouTube (24 minutes)– the story of a man and his daughter who cross the border and what happens when they are picked up by Border Patrol. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GLwNdlynrtk>)
10. To learn more about the specifics of the border issues, listen to this series of five NPR podcasts: <https://www.thisamericanlife.org/656/let-me-count-the-ways>
11. Read Migration Policy Institute’s Report “Why Countries Continue to Consider Regularization (Amnesty)” and search on other topics for their reports: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org>
12. Check out national immigration organizations listed in two articles by putting these links in your search: <https://hellogiggles.com/news/organizations-that-help-immigrants-donate/>  
<https://vocal.media/theSwamp/important-organizations-that-help-immigrants-in-the-us>
13. Three more organizations that work on immigration:
  - a. International Rescue Committee (IRC) <https://www.rescue.org/>
  - b. Southern Poverty Law Center <https://www.splcenter.org/>
  - c. ACLU : <https://action.aclu.org/>

# LEARN WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR STATE

*In addition to national immigration laws and regulations, state-specific laws create a context for the local regulations that apply to immigrants. The Dillon Rule (in effect in 39 states) determines whether local or state jurisdictions can make decisions about a wide range of issues including immigration-related matters and the unauthorized, specifically. At two extremes are (1) states that want local law enforcement personnel to proactively assist federal immigration law enforcement, and (2) states that favor maintaining a separation between the local police/sheriffs and federal immigration law enforcement. Among other decisions, each state decides whether the unauthorized can be issued driver's licenses, can take advantage of in-state tuition, and can earn specific professional certificates.*

*Here are several ways to start learning about your own state's immigration situation:*

1. Go to the National Council of State Legislatures (search: Immigration) : <http://www.ncsl.org/>
2. Go to American Immigration Council:  
[www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/topics/state-by-state](http://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/topics/state-by-state)  
Create your state's immigration fact sheet.
3. Search "(your state) immigrants in the economy" for reports/articles of interest

*Here are some sources of state-specific immigration data and information:*

1. **Immigrant Population** – Migration Policy Institute (data from US Census Bureau)  
<https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/us-immigrant-population-state-and-county>  
Click on your state on the map and see the number of immigrants by county and by the country of origin.
2. **Unauthorized Residents and their % of the Labor Force**– Pew Research Center (2016)  
<http://www.pewhispanic.org/interactives/u-s-unauthorized-immigrants-by-state/> This chart shows the # of unauthorized as well as the % of the labor force, by state
3. **Immigration Courts and Judges** – US Department of Justice lists Immigration Courts and Judges, by state, here:  
<https://www.justice.gov/eoir/eoir-immigration-court-listing>
4. **Immigration Detention Centers** – Wikipedia has a good list of US immigration detention centers here:  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_detention\\_sites\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_detention_sites_in_the_United_States)  
An excel spread sheet of immigration detention centers (2017) can be found at the National Immigration Justice Center website here: <https://immigrantjustice.org/ice-detention-facilities-november-2017>
5. **Local Jurisdictions with 287 (g) Agreements** – Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) deputizes local authorities to proactively enforce federal immigration laws. Find a list of 287 (g) agreements in your state here:  
<https://www.ice.gov/287g>

# LEARN WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR COMMUNITY

*At the local level, learn how your community welcomes and includes immigrants by looking at local websites. The ILRC (Immigrant Legal Resource Center) has a publication called "Local Options for Protecting Immigrants" which describes a wide range of local immigration policies. (<https://www.ilrc.org/local-options>)*

*You can explore a range of local volunteer possibilities by contacting these kinds of organizations:*

1. **Local city or county government** – check your local government website. Here's a sample for Seattle: <https://seattle.gov/searchresults?terms=immigration>
2. **Immigration law firms** – for-profit organizations that represent immigrants in your community
3. **Pro Bono Lawyers**
  - a. Non-profit organizations offering legal support
  - b. University Immigration Clinics
4. **Legal Funds** – raise money to provide immigrants with legal representation
5. **Places of Worship** – may provide support for immigrants. Check local Catholic churches with Spanish services. Explore **Interfaith Organizations**.
6. **Sanctuaries** – to protect the unauthorized to find one in your area and support them or initiate one in your own place of worship
7. **Refugee Resettlement** – organizations that support refugee resettlement locally (Search "who resettles refugee in the state of xxxx?")
8. **Bond Funds** – raise money to provide bond funds for detained immigrants
9. **Transportation** – provide transportation for immigrants to immigration court, ICE check-ins, ICE processing appointments, medical, legal and other appointments.
10. **Migrant Worker Support** – for immigrants who are wrongly treated in the workplace (see [www.legalaidatwork.org](http://www.legalaidatwork.org) report "Workplace Raids Employer Rights and Responsibilities")
11. **English Language Training** – organizations that provide English as a Second Language (ESL) training in your community.
12. **Immigrant Support Organizations** – provide "Know Your Rights" training for unauthorized in your community (The National Immigration Law Center and the American Civil Liberties Union provide a wide range of community education tools including "Know Your Rights". Search "NILC Know Your Rights" and "ACLU Know Your Rights")
13. **University Student Clubs** that pertain to immigrants
14. **Student Clubs** at local high, middle, elementary schools
15. **Clinics** - Health organizations, international, or free clinics that welcome immigrants
16. **Expectant or Young Mother** – provide health and mental health support for pregnant women and new mothers.

# WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU RETURN HOME

## Select a Way to Stay Involved

*The key to staying involved is finding a fit for you. Depending on your experience, skills, and interests, you can explore a wide range of activities and organizations that support immigrants.*

*Here are some of the ways you can start applying your new knowledge, enthusiasm, and talents:*

1. Tell the story of your border visit to friends and family. Host a meeting, afternoon tea, or cocktails at your home for those who want to learn more.
2. Set up a more formal presentation of your border story at your church, library, city or county venue, high school, local college, or university.
3. Suggest your book club read a book or watch a video about immigration. Here are good lists of books and videos:  
<https://www.gvs-samaritans.org/books.html>  
<https://www.gvs-samaritans.org/videos.html>  
<https://azmigranttrail.com/resources/>
4. Write a letter to the editor of your local or regional newspaper and learn from the experts about LTE's and OpEds here:  
<https://www.theopedproject.org/oped-basics>

5. Volunteer for a local nonprofit that supports immigrants. Encourage others to join you. Or start your own organization. (Helping with a fundraising event is often a good way to get involved quickly.)
6. Learn more about how to participate in local immigration issues at the Immigrant Defense Project.  
<https://www.immigrantdefenseproject.org/community-stop-deportation/>
7. Offer to serve on an immigrant task force or committee in your community.
8. Contact your local, state, and national representatives to urge them to improve the situation for immigrants – in a variety of ways.
9. During primaries and elections, ask political candidates (at the national, state, and local levels) to summarize their thinking on immigration.

**A FINAL WORD:** *If your first inquiries, emails, and calls to organizations supporting immigrants are not responded to as positively or enthusiastically as you'd like, don't get discouraged. Keep looking for the right fit for you. It's there, you just need to find it. Good Luck.*