

GETTING (MORE) INVOLVED WITH U.S. IMMIGRATION

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CONTENTS

| | |
|--|--------|
| Arizona Organizations (Tucson/Green Valley/Nogales) | page 2 |
| Continue to Learn About Immigration | page 3 |
| What’s Happening in Your State..... | page 4 |
| What’s Happening in Your Community..... | page 5 |
| What to Do When you Return Home | page 6 |

*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. You can **download an electronic version** of this booklet or watch Alyson’s presentation “**US Immigration – The Basic**” at the Green Valley-Sahuarita Samaritans website, Learn More, More on Immigration <https://www.gvs-samaritans.org/more-on-immigration.html>*

*To **suggest improvements** or additions to the next version of this booklet, send an email to ImmigrationBooklet22@gmail.com with “Suggestion” in the subject line. All feedback is welcome.*

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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.

Alliance for Action (a4a) Immigration – Advocates for fair immigration legislation and policies throughout the US.

(<http://www.alliance4action.org>)

Border Community Alliance – Provides short-term travel and seminar opportunities for Americans to learn more about border issues and Mexico. (<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 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>)

Colibri Center for Human Rights – Originally the Missing Migrant Project, this organization 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.colibricenter.org/>)

Green Valley-Sahuarita Samaritans – Provides exposure to a wide range of experiences and information at the border including : desert

searches, water drops, Operation Streamline observation, donations and visits to the (shelter/soup kitchen) Comedor (Sonora, Mexico), and volunteer support at the Casa Alitas shelter in Tucson. Check the website for meetings that are open to interested parties and 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 (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.

(<http://forms.nomoredeaths.org/en/>)

Tucson Samaritans – 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. 23rd Street, Tucson) 1:30-5:00pm. Check the website to confirm. (<http://www.tucsonsamaritans.org/>)

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

CONTINUE TO LEARN ABOUT IMMIGRATION

1. Watch “US Immigration – The Basics” 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/> All 4 options are good, especially “Noorani’s Notes” and “Legislative Bulletin”
3. Take the “Pew Research US Immigration Mini Course” (search on this phrase)
4. Check with national, religious organizations that may offer immigration services and newsletters.
5. Explore “<https://trac.syr.edu/immigration/>” for reports and data analyses of federal immigration data about immigration courts, ICE enforcement, etc. (some data available by state and local jurisdictions)
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 to this article “Shameful history of US intervention in Latin America”
<https://www.wnycstudios.org/story/shameful-history-us-intervention-latin-america>
8. Read “Getting Migration from the Americas Right” from Center for American Progress (6.24.19)
9. Watch “Border Hustle” on YouTube.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GLwNdlynrtk>)
10. To learn more about the specifics of the border issues, listen to this series of NPR podcasts:
<https://www.thisamericanlife.org/656/let-me-count-the-ways>
11. Read “Why Countries Continue to Consider Regularization (Amnesty)” (<https://www.migrationpolicy.org>)
12. Check out the national organizations listed in this article:
<http://hellogiggles.com/news>
“7 important organizations that help immigrants that you can donate to right now”
13. Explore this list of organizations (and their websites) that focus on immigration. Get a feel for the range of work that’s being done around the country:
<https://theswamp.media/important-organizations-that-help-immigrants-in-the-us>
14. Here are some additional national and international organizations that work on immigration issues:
 - a. International Rescue Committee (IRC)
<https://www.rescue.org/>)
 - b. Migration Policy Institute
<https://www.migrationpolicy.org>)
 - c. MoveOn.Org (<https://front.moveon.org/>)
 - d. Southern Poverty Law Center
<https://www.splcenter.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)
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>

Be sure to select "Region/Country of Origin = Total" at the lower right of the chart. Note: you can view # of immigrants by county or select countries of origin by state or county.

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 (Not all states have immigration courts) <https://www.justice.gov/eoir/eoir-immigration-court-listing>
4. **Immigration Detention Centers** – National Immigration Justice Center (2017) <https://immigrantjustice.org/ice-detention-facilities-november-2017>
Download the excel spreadsheet, enable editing at the top of the page, go to the "Facilities Listing" tab at the bottom of the page, click on the state column down arrow, sort alphabetically by state, go to your state's listing to see the list of detention centers. Note some have detainees, others none.
2nd source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_detention_sites_in_the_United_States
5. **Local Jurisdictions with 287 (g) Agreements** – Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)
NOTE: ICE deputizes local authorities to proactively enforce federal immigration laws.
<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. Here is an example of police procedures pertaining to immigrants (from Tucson, AZ) :
<https://www.tucsonaz.gov/files/police/general-orders/2300IMMIGRATION.pdf>.

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. (Review "Seattle.gov" to read about Seattle's Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs and Seattle's Immigrant and Refugee Commission to understand one city's approach to immigrants.)
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. **Your Place of Worship – or other local places of worship** may provide support for immigrants. Check local Catholic churches with Spanish services. Explore **Interfaith Organizations**.
6. **Sanctuary Churches** – find one in your area and support them or initiate one in your church
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 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.
17. **Moveon.org** – may include immigration in the portfolio of issues they address
18. **Indivisible.org** – may include immigration in their issues.

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 about the border (or your local bookstore or your library could highlight one or more).
NOTE: One of the best border and immigrant book and video lists is at the GVS Samaritan's website, click on Learn More, click on Books (or Videos):
<https://www.gvs-samaritans.org/books.html>
<https://www.gvs-samaritans.org/videos.html>
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. Apply to volunteer for the SPLC (Southern Poverty Law Center) Southeast Immigrant Freedom Initiative
<https://www.splcenter.org/all-sifi-volunteer-opportunities> for a week in Georgia or Louisiana.
7. Read this article to learn more about how to participate in local immigration issues. (Search: Immigration Defense Project, Community Responses to Stop the Deportation Dragnet)
8. Offer to serve on an immigrant task force or committee in your community.
9. Contact your local, state, and national representatives to urge them to improve the situation for immigrants – in a variety of ways. 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.*

We'd love to hear your story – and how this booklet helped you find a way to stay involved - at ImmigrationBooklet22@gmail.com.