MN Immigrant Families and the COVID-19 Crisis: Public Action Toolkit

OVERVIEW OF THE IMPACT OF THE STATE AND FEDERAL COVID-19 RESPONSE ON UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS AND MIXED-STATUS FAMILIES

No matter what we look like, where we live, or what's in our wallets, getting sick reminds us that at our core we're all just human. Right now each person's wellness depends on everyone else's. Whether it's people with chronic health conditions or our undocumented or mixed-status families who can't forgo a paycheck to stay home, we must ensure all of us can access the care we need and have the support required to make the best choices for everyone's health.

Sadly, the COVID-19 crisis is exposing deep structural inequities about who is considered deserving of our collective resources.

There are an estimated 192,823 Minnesotans who are either undocumented or live with an undocumented person. With the recent release of state and the federal assistance to address the COVID-19 crisis, undocumented and mixed-status immigrant families were shut out of state unemployment insurance and were not eligible to benefit from a federal stimulus check. This means almost 200,000 Minnesotans will fall further through the cracks in this uncertain and painful time.

Whether we are white, black or brown, we all want to take care of our families. Yet this exclusion of undocumented and mixed-status families is a direct violation of our morals. Our federal and state governments are failing to see the human dignity that all people have - regardless of their immigrant status.

Now is the time to fight political narrative and rhetoric spewed by some politicians who claim that those without a Social Security number are "non-people." Now is the time to make sure that all Minnesotan families are able to thrive through these times, no exceptions!

To work towards a justice-oriented response to the COVID-19 crisis that benefits immigrants regardless of immigration status, we have THREE opportunities to lead boldly in this moment:

- **Action Step One:** Call your elected officials at the state and federal level to implore them to lead boldly to support undocumented immigrants and mixed status families by clicking HERE.

- **Action Step Two:** Invite others to join you in supporting undocumented immigrants and mixed status families by donating to a MN Immigrant Famiiles Fund AND push for public action on economic inclusion of immigrants by clicking HERE.

- **Action Step Three:** Post on social media or write a letter to the editor to raise awareness of the economic exclusion that undocumented immigrants and mixed status families are experiencing at this time by using this guide HERE.

TAKE PUBLIC ACTION - CALL YOUR REPS AND ELECTED OFFICIALS

Sample Call Script

Hello, my name is _____ and I am a reverend/pastor/priest/imam with ISAIAH at _____ in _____. I'm calling because I deeply believe that whether we are black or white, Latino or Asian, native or newcomer - we can all pull through this crisis together if we share our collective resources with one another. That's why I'm deeply disturbed that 200,000 Minnesotans from undocumented and mixed-status immigrant families were shut out of state unemployment insurance and were not eligible to benefit from a federal stimulus check.

Many individuals and elected leaders at the city and county level are stepping up to provide financial and social support in the absence of state and federal response. This is not enough. Generosity cannot be a substitute for justice in these times. I ask you to exercise bold leadership and find creative ways to address the immediate needs of these immigrant families and advance structural solutions so all families regardless of immigrant status can thrive, no exceptions. I would welcome a conversation from you. My number is _____. Thank you.

Need Numbers for your Elected Officials?

Find your U.S Representative and U.S Senator and their contact information here:
https://www.gis.leg.mn/iMaps/districts/

SAMPLE EMAIL INVITATION TO SHARE WITH OTHERS ABOUT THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEAD

Hi XXXXXXXX,

I hope you are doing well and staying safe and healthy. We are all facing uncertain times during this COVID-19 crisis.

In times of crisis, when we should be taking care of one another as a community. That's why I'm deeply disturbed that undocumented and mixed-status immigrant families were not eligible for state unemployment insurance and not eligible to receive a federal stimulus check. That means that our federal and state governments have effectively shut the door on almost 200,000 Minnesotans.

This is wrong and deeply disturbing. Yet, I want to be clear. Now is not the time to respond to this injustice with a charity or pity response. Now is the time to stand with our immigrant neighbors to address their immediate needs AND push our public leaders to take action.

I am asking you to take three actions with me to lead boldly:

- **Action One**: I ask that you contact your elected officials to express your anger for the lack of assistance being offered by the state and the federal government. to undocumented immigrants and mixed status families. You can find sample language and contact information for your representatives HERE.

- **Action Two**: Invite others to join you in donating to the MN Immigrant Families Fund to ensure that undocumented immigrants and mixed status families receive financial support which you can learn more about and donate to HERE.

- **Action Three:** Post on social media or write a letter to the editor to raise awareness of the economic exclusion that undocumented immigrants and mixed status families are experiencing at this time by using this guide HERE.

I would love to talk about this with you and address any questions or concerns you have.

Stay safe and well,
YOUR NAME

Immigrant Justice and COVID-19 Response - Social Media and Letter to the Editor Toolkit

About this Document and Our Mission

This working document is a shared resource of action steps, messaging, and online tools to use in response to COVID-19 in light of our issues and values. It will be updated and expanded regularly as developments emerge.

At these times, it is crucial that we remember it is our duty to care for one another. Our federal and state governments have failed to include undocumented immigrants and mixed status families in their responses to COVID-19, and we must step in and aid our immigrant neighbor, while also holding our elected officials accountable for the way they've shut out our community members.

This guide provides you with resources to powerfully push to address the immediate needs of undocumented immigrants and mixed status families while also demanding bold public action!

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New to Social Media? Read Our Set up Guide

ISAIAH

First Action Step

Post a Video of Yourself

Post a short video (posting a LIVE video is best) of yourself to social media:

1. Stating what values you hold dear that represent the best of what it means to be a Minnesotan and/or person of faith.
2. Expressing disbelief and concern about the economic exclusion undocumented individuals and mixed status families are experiencing in this time.
3. Sharing why Minnesotans at all levels of government should step up to make sure that there's economic inclusion so all Minnesotan families can have what they need during this difficult time.
4. Make sure your status is 'public' so that others can view and share.
5. **Tag ISAIAH @isaiahmn in your videos so we can see and share!**

Not sure what to say? It's not about saying the *right thing the right way*, it's about *being yourself* and speaking like you would in a face-to-face conversation.

Use these points as stepping stones.

1. **Quick Greeting**
2. **Honestly share your disappointment, concern and/or anger that undocumented immigrants and mixed status families were shut out of COVID-19 assistance. Thank Minnesota workers** still on the job to keep our families safe and healthy during COVID-19
3. **Say that you believe that in times like this,** we're all in this together, and we should look out for one another; we all have a role to play to get through this tough time together.
4. **Invite others** to join you in making a video expressing their suprise about how excluded undocumented immigrants and mixed status families are experiencing and to encourage others to not just donate to MN immigrant families but ALSO take public action to push for structural changes so they benefit from our collective resources too!

A Sample using the above steps:

1. *Hi everyone!*

2. *As you know this COVID-19 crisis has been hitting a lot of people hard and it's been a challenging time for everyone. No matter who we are or where we come from, we all need to share our collective resources to pull through this moment.*

3. *That's why I'm stunned and disturbed that 200,000 Minnesotans from undocumented and mixed-status immigrant families were shut out of state unemployment insurance and were not eligible to benefit from a federal stimulus check.*

4. *This is wrong. We're all in this pandemic together, and we've got to look out for one another. That's why I'm doing my part to donate to the Minnesota Immigrant Families Fund. If you're able, I want to ask that you donate and invite others to do the same.*

5. *However, that's not enough. We cannot just have a charitable response to this situation. We need to demand that our elected officials are held accountable to bold action on this issue. If you are ready for bold leadership on immigrant justice in these times, I ask that you make a video just like this to get the word out about how we can work together as one community to make sure everyone pulls through in this time.*

Tweet Bank

Hashtags: #COVID19 #StayHomeMN #mnleg #mngov #ProtectAllWorkers #coronavirus #ImmigrantJustice

Immigrant Justice

Almost 200,000 Minnesotans from undocumented and mixed-status familes are shut out of federal and state assistance. Accountable economic inclusion is needed for all, no exceptions! #ImmigrantJustice #COVID19

We all do better when we all do better so I've donated to the MN Immigrant Fams Fund & called my legislators to advocate for bold action to support immigrants in these times. #ImmigrantJustice #COVID19

Minnesotan immigrant families are some of the most impacted by COVID-19. Time to fight for inclusive financial assistance so all benefit, no exceptions! #ImmigrantJustice #COVID19 **Stay Home**

Caring for my MN neighbors means staying home & donating to the MN Immigrant Fam Fund so undocu immigrants & mixed-status families can make ends meet. #COVID-19 #StayHomeMN

We appreciate all those who stay home for those who can't. Thank you to undocumented immigrants & all Minnesotans who are working on the front lines against #COVID19. #StayHomeMN #ImmigrantJustice

This virus shows us just how connected we all are whether we are black, white or brown, undocumented immigrant or 5th generation. Standing united by staying home ensures our collective wellbeing through this outbreak. #StayHomeMN #COVID19 #ImmigrantJustice

Things to Post, Like, Share, and Retweet

MN Immigrant Families COVID-19 Fund
https://tinyurl.com/MNImmigrantFamFund

Minnesota COVID-19 Response Website
https://www.mncovidresponse.com

Stay Home MN Facebook Profile Frame
https://www.facebook.com/profilepicframes/?selected_overlay_id=2082793711845622

Narrative and Messaging Content for Writing Letters to the Editor

Sample Language for a Letter to the Editor

[STATE THE VALUE]

- We are all facing uncertain times during this COVID-19 crisis. No matter what we look like, where we live, or what's in our wallets, getting sick reminds us that at our core we're all just human.
- Right now each person's wellness depends on everyone else's. Whether it's people with chronic health conditions or our undocumented or mixed-status families who can't forgo

a paycheck to stay home, we must ensure all of us can access the care we need and have the support required to make the best choices for everyone's health.

[NAME THE VIOLATION OF THAT VALUE]

- Sadly, the COVID-19 crisis is exposing deep structural inequities and who is considered deserving of our collective resources. In times of crisis, when we should be taking care of one another as a community. That's why I'm deeply disturbed that undocumented and mixed-status immigrant families were not eligible for state unemployment insurance and not eligible to receive a federal stimulus check. That means that our federal and state governments have effectively shut the door on almost 200,000 Minnesotans.

[NAME WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE VIOLATION]

- This is not surprising. When a U.S Senator claims that people without a Social Security number are "non-people", when there is decades of lack of political will, courage and compassion by some politicians and special interests on immigrant rights to feed a dangerous cycle of economic and social exclusion of undocumented immigrants and mixed status familes.

[NAME THE ACTION THAT WILL ADDRESS THE VIOLATION]

- Now is not the time to respond to this injustice with charity or pity. Now is the time to stand with our immigrant neighbors to address their immediate needs AND push our public leaders to take bold action to make structural changes that allow for all to thrive, no exceptions!

Tips for Submitting a Letter to the Editor

- Keep your piece pretty short, 150 words or less
- Using your own personal reactions to the situation will drastically increase the likelihood that it's published.
- Send your letter to **both** your local newspaper to be printed and here: https://isaiahmn.org/submit-posts/ so that ISAIAH can publish it if it's not done through the newspaper.
- You can look up your most local newspapers here (note, it may not be the StarTribune in your area): http://bit.ly/mnnewspapers.

Other Key Messaging Content to Use to Shape the Public Conversation about the COVID-19 Crisis

Note: This language is to be used in broken out component parts or in entirety, depending on context and medium[1]

[1] Via raceclassnarrative.com

A. No matter what we look like, where we live, or what's in our wallets, getting sick reminds us that at our core we're all just human. But for too long, we've let a powerful few divide us to pad their own profits by making life and health a product for sale and blocking our efforts to ensure paid time to care for our loved ones and recover ourselves. We must rewrite the rules to ensure everyone can access the care that we need without fearing we'll go bankrupt to do it. This is a moment that we must stand with and for each other across our differences and against anything and anyone who seeks to divide us.

B. We pull through by pulling together, like we have done in the past. This means demanding the care and paid time every one of us needs. We stand united against a handful of politicians and corporate insurance and pharma industries that would use this crisis to generate profits rather than keep us from getting the testing, vaccines and treatments we need to get and stay well. We condemn those who peddle us lies and misinformation in order to further divide us so we don't join together to demand proven solutions like universal healthcare, paid time to care and protections that keep us in our homes and ensure we make ends meet.

C. Now more than ever, this virus has shown us that we are dependent on each other and whether we're Black or white, Latino or Asian, native or newcomer, we know it's time to pull together to demand the testing, treatment and time off we all need to get or stay well. Only by standing united can we ensure our own wellbeing through this outbreak and rewrite the rules to ensure better health for us all for generations to come.

D. Now is the time for us to unite across our differences and make policy choices that help every-day people -- not the richest 1% and a handful of corporations. As individuals, we can wash our hands, avoid unnecessary travel and check in on our friends and neighbors. As a united force, we can demand our local, state and national governments do everything possible to protect everyone's health, no exceptions.

Talking Points – Use in combination, mix and match depending on medium and length desired

1. **We get through this together. (response to individualism)**
    a. Our own health depends on the health of the person next to us, and the person next to them. Ensuring others can access care is how we take care of ourselves.
    b. Our families and neighborhoods are stronger, safer and healthier when we come together in moments of joy and celebration, and of illness and crisis.
    c. We pull through this by pulling together.
    d. This moment calls on us to go all in for all of us.

2. **This is a time to come together across the differences used to divide us. (response to racism, othering, dog-whistles)**
    a. Anyone who seeks to use this health crisis to divide us, scapegoat Asian Americans, immigrants or those struggling to make ends meet, endangers us all.
    b. Some seek to turn us toward going it alone and fear of each other in response to this viral outbreak. But we know that our own wellbeing is tied to everyone else's.
    c. Now more than ever, this virus has shown us that we are dependent on each other and no matter where we come from, what we look like, or how much money we have, we know it's time to pull together to demand the testing, treatment and time off we all need to get or stay well.

3. **Protecting our most vulnerable makes us stronger. (response to inequality)**
    a. We are all better off when we are all healthy -- especially the most vulnerable among us.
    b. Any one person's wellness depends on everyone else's. Whether it's people with chronic healthconditions or people without shelter, our undocumented neighbors or people living in detention, people providing vital services or those who can't forgo a paycheck to stay home, we must ensure all of us can access the care we need and have the support required to make the best choices for everyone's health.

4. **When we invest in local government, we invest in us. (response to role of government)**
    a. Local public health officials, healthcare providers and public school teachers and administrators lead us in coordinating services, sharing information, and protecting our health. Local governments need immediate and significant resources to do this work with and for us; it's past time we ensure we can have what we need by providing the people who care for, inform and educate our communities the resources to do their jobs. From the vaccines required to treat an outbreak to the testing necessary to know who has what, healthcare and paid time to recover has to be for everyone or no one can be sure to get and stay well. When any one of us is blocked from the diagnoses and treatments we require, all of us are vulnerable to unnecessary complications from illnesses we need not spread. By coming together, we can create a fair and comprehensive healthcare system that treats us all as equal and ensures we can stay well.

5. **Time to take care of all of us - not just corporations. (response to protecting people and not relying on market "solutions")**
    a. No matter what you look like, where you live, or how much money you have, when you're sick, getting care without going bankrupt to do it is everyone's your first priority. But for too long, we've let a powerful few divide us to pad their own profits

by making life and health a product for sale. We must rewrite the rules to ensure everyone can access the care that we need.

b. As the crisis disrupts our daily lives, including our ability to work, pay rent and send our kids to school, we need to ensure working people can make ends meet, not hand tax breaks to the richest 1% and finance bailouts for corporations.
c. The choices our government makes now to help us weather the outbreak of this virus can also set a better course for the future of our communities. Now is the time for us to unite across our differences and make policy choices that help every-day people in pursuit of a safe and thriving nation.