

July 15, 2022

Arlington County Board
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Arlington, VA 22201
countyboard@arlingtonva.us

Dear Arlington County Board Chair Cristol, Vice-Chair Dorsey, and Members Karantonis, Garvey, and De Ferranti:

We, over 60 local and national organizations, and community members harmed by police collaboration with ICE and at risk of detention and deportation urge you to reconsider the County’s proposed “[Trust Policy](#)” and amend it to ensure that the immigrant community in Arlington is protected from targeting by law enforcement and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (“ICE”). Although the proposed policy states Arlington County’s commitment to “protect[] the rights of all residents, regardless of their immigration or citizenship status,” it falls far short of ending Arlington County’s longtime collaboration with ICE. This cooperation not only undermines public safety, but when local police – who lack expertise and knowledge of immigration laws –actively cooperate with ICE officers, the racial biases and discrimination of the criminal legal system are layered on top of the already racist enforcement of U.S. immigration law. Arlington County’s immigrant community constantly live in fear that basic interactions with local police and government agencies will result in deportation and [separation from their families and communities](#).

The [Communities of Arlington Protected from Abuse by ICE \(“CAPA”\) Policy](#) was developed with and by community members impacted by Arlington County collaboration with ICE and will ensure that Arlington County ceases any voluntary cooperation with federal immigration enforcement officials and that Arlington County does not serve as a pipeline to deportation of community members. While we are glad that some of the protections under CAPA have been adopted by the Trust Policy, we continue to be extremely concerned that the Trust Policy is woefully inadequate when placing limits on Arlington County law enforcement’s collaboration with ICE.

The County’s Trust Policy reaffirms the [Arlington County Police Department’s Directive Manual 523.04](#)—which is completely at odds with Arlington’s commitment to not facilitate civil immigration enforcement. ACPD’s Directive does little to end ACPD’s collaboration with ICE, and instead gives police officers vast discretion to interrogate community members about their immigration status and then turn them over to ICE, merely because those community members are suspected of certain criminal activity (or in some cases even absent a suspicion of criminal activity). None of this is collaboration required under federal or state law and is completely at the discretion of ACPD. Instead, Arlington County’s policy must reaffirm that Arlington law enforcement shall not contact ICE under any circumstances unless required by law. The County Board entered into this process in order to put restrictions on county collaboration with ICE immigration enforcement, but this draft policy totally defers to police and places no meaningful controls on their actions.

Moreover, the Trust Policy makes no mention of CAPA’s proposal of ensuring that County employees accept a range of identification documents when delivering services and benefits to residents. It is imperative that the County’s Policy adopts these provisions and explicitly applies them to law enforcement, as allowing people stopped for offenses to prove their identity with non-standard ID provides a way for undocumented individuals to be released or given citations rather than arrested. Reducing arrests mitigates the harsh consequences that can follow merely from being detained, such as loss of job or income, housing insecurity, inability to care for children, or transfer to immigration detention.

We also urge the County Board to use all means at its disposal to push the Arlington County Sheriff’s Office to adopt CAPA’s protections and end its voluntary collaboration with ICE. The Sheriff’s Office [directly and consistently assists with federal immigration enforcement](#) by actively notifying ICE when an individual is being released from the Arlington County Jail. From January 2019 to October 2020, ICE arrested 104 people released from the Arlington County Jail because of this notification policy. The goals and aims of Arlington County’s Trust Policy cannot be achieved without also ensuring that the Sherriff’s Office ceases its cooperation with ICE.

We are concerned that absent these critical protections, the County Board’s proposed policy does nothing to protect the migrant community in Arlington from ongoing criminalization and abuse by Arlington law enforcement and ICE. As currently proposed, the Trust Policy essentially serves as a blank check for further targeting of immigrant communities by Arlington law enforcement and ICE and continues to leave Arlington as an ICE-supporting jurisdiction.

As the ICE out of Arlington coalition engaged with community members in drafting CAPA, it was clear that the immigrant community in Arlington County wants to not only “trust” the County, but also wants the County to **trust and protect** them. Because the criminalization of migrant communities in Arlington County has led to Arlington police and Sheriff directly handing people over to ICE, there has been a breakdown of trust and restoring that trust requires Arlington County to affirmatively state that it will not cooperate with ICE unless it is forced to do so by law. However, by permitting extensive and unnecessary cooperation with ICE, Arlington County is sending a clear message to the immigrant community that it does not trust them and will not protect them from abusive and racist law enforcement. This policy, as written, is far less protective even than neighboring Fairfax County.

We appreciate Arlington County’s commitment to the immigrant community. However, we strongly urge you to center people and communities who have been affected by or at risk of harm from policing and collaboration with ICE. CAPA is a reflection of these values and we look forward to achieving the strongest protections for our families, neighbors, and loved ones.

Sincerely,

Community members harmed by police collaboration with ICE and at risk of detention and deportation
La ColectiVA
National Immigration Project (NIP-NLG)
Legal Aid Justice Center
#ICEoutofArlington Campaign partners

Endorsing organizations are listed below in alphabetical order

ACLU People Power Fairfax

ACLU Virginia
African Communities Together (ACT)
American Jewish Committee
AYUDA
Bread for the World
CASA
Centreville Immigration Forum
Church World Service
Coalition of Asian Pacific Americans of Virginia
Congregation Action Network
Cornerstone
DC Never Again Action
Detention Watch Network
Domestic Workers Alliance
Dream Project
Dreamers Mothers In Action
Edu Futuro
EMGAGE - Muslim Leaders
Envision Freedom Fund
Families For Freedom
Free Them All Virginia
Freedom for Immigrants
Fuego Coalition
Hamkae Center
Hispanic Organization of Leadership and Action
Jewish Community Relations Council
Just Neighbors Ministry
Korean American Association of Northern Virginia
Latina Institute for Reproductive Justice-Virginia
League of United Latin America Citizens - National
Maryland Against ICE Detention
Multicultural Community Center
Muslim Counterpublics Lab
MU Saints Unafraid
National Immigrant Justice Center
Neighbor's Keeper
New Virginia Majority Education Fund
NoVA Branch DSA
Progress Virginia
Respond Crisis Translation
Sacred Heart Catholic Community Center
SEIU 512
SEIU32BJ
Shirlington Employment and Education Center
Sin Barreras
SURJ Northern Virginia
Tenants And Workers United
The Commonwealth Institute for Fiscal Analysis
Unitarian Universalist for Social Justice
United Food and Commercial Workers Local 400
United We Dream DMV
Virginia Civic Engagement Table
Virginia Coalition for Immigrant Rights
Virginia Coalition of Latino Organizations
Virginia Immigration Intercollegiate Alliance
Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy
Virginia League of Planned Parenthood
Virginia Organizing