

Avelo Profits from Deportation. We Won't Let It Fly!

Avelo is the only known commercial carrier taking ICE deportation flights. Together, we can force them to drop the contract.

Here's what you'll find in this toolkit to help you organize locally so we can do it:

- [!\[\]\(30a147af384f9f71632c2ff17bc706c8_img.jpg\) ORGANIZING TOOLKIT - THE SHORT CUTS](#)
- [!\[\]\(9b33568d5c136f08ca688ce48be37574_img.jpg\) OVERVIEW OF THE FIGHT](#)
- [!\[\]\(8c93063dab026f10e159986b27c41c64_img.jpg\) THE THEORY OF CHANGE, GOALS & PLAN TO WIN](#)
- [!\[\]\(8a17676a8da87a4e59299223a765e613_img.jpg\) ABOUT AVELO AIRLINES & THE CAMPAIGN](#)
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- [!\[\]\(3ca549f0313858650ddae522dc3cfea6_img.jpg\) WHAT ELSE MATTERS TO AVELO](#)
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PS – this google doc is best viewed on desktop or in the google drive app on mobile; otherwise, some of the links might not open on mobile!

ORGANIZING TOOLKIT - THE SHORT CUTS

HOW TO GUIDES

- [There's a whole section with "how to" guides on holding an action, meeting politicians, making art, templates for different tactics, and more here](#)

REMIXABLE MATERIALS

- Customizable designs – [posters](#), [banners](#), [leaflets](#), [social media](#) graphics and posts, [leaflet for actions](#)
- Templates for public statements or political strategies [are also here](#).

Need support to organize your action or to identify what to do locally?

- Email us at [hola\(@\)defendandrecruit.org](mailto:hola(@)defendandrecruit.org) for help with turnout, strategy, anything!

OVERVIEW OF THE FIGHT

The Stop Avelo "Abduction Airlines" campaign is created by local groups all over the country looking to stop Avelo Airlines, supported by [Defend and Recruit](#). The campaign builds on the incredible work of local groups already taking action against Avelo airlines and is part of our overarching strategy to defend and build power in our communities.

Our Strategies to Counter Threats to Immigrant Workers & Their Workplaces

We need to mitigate five overall threats in every community because they are causing employers and employees to suffer.

1. ICE community arrests: With door-to-door know-your-rights education and trained ICE Watch volunteers responding to calls to our hotline across your state, we can reduce the risk people approached by federal agents or targeted by clandestine stakeouts will not know how to defend their rights
2. ICE workplace arrests: With [Fourth Amendment Workplaces](#) across the country where all staff know how to protect the rights of all present, there will be less risk of unconstitutional searches and seizures by federal agents
3. ICE jail arrests: By monitoring the people transferred from jail to ICE custody – including tracking the original charges that led to them being booked and fingerprinted – and researching police department misdemeanor booking policies, we can reduce the risk charges like driving without a license or trespassing will lead to ICE detention
4. Worker retaliation: If we show up to demand justice for workers who have been threatened with ICE detention by their employers, and ensure state and local prosecutors go after them, we can reduce the risk they will suffer financial or job losses

5. Eviction after an ICE detention: Launching a solidarity fund can provide emergency cash assistance to families experiencing ICE detention, with the goal of keeping them from becoming homeless or having to "self-deport" due to a financial crisis

THE THEORY OF CHANGE, GOALS & PLAN TO WIN

This campaign is part of strategy 3. We know that by stopping the bottom feeder, immoral companies that are helping with ICE arrests, especially [flights we can't track](#), we can keep more of our people safe.

Our Theory of Change: If we put pressure on Avelo's – "Abduction Air" – management through targeted escalating actions that threaten the company's reputation and already shaky financial situation, they will be forced to discontinue their DHS contract to avoid insolvency – and become an example for other bad actors who even consider providing deportation logistics.

We will do this by strategically influencing different financial levers of Avelo airlines and uplifting competitors who haven't decided to profit off of deportations. Making a clear example of Avelo on what can happen to airlines who participate in deportation logistics will help us ensure that no commercial airline decides to gamble with people's lives.

Defend and Recruit, a project of Siembra NC, with many national and local partners and friends, invites activists around the US to target Avelo in their communities, using public actions and political pressure to target the weakest pillars upholding the ICE contract status quo. More information on how to do that strategically in your community is included in this toolkit.

ABOUT AVELO AIRLINES & THE CAMPAIGN

THE COMPANY PROFILE:

- Avelo Airlines is a small airline launched in 2021 with a fleet of 20 aircraft.
- Headquartered in Houston, Texas, the company operates scheduled service primarily on the east coast with hubs and crew bases in New Haven, CT; Burbank, CA; Wilmington, DE; Lakeland, FL; and Raleigh, NC.
- On May 12, Avelo Airlines became the first commercial airline to begin deportation flights, and running flights and hiring flight attendants in Mesa,

AZ to fly people in ICE custody out of the country. At the end of May, in response to actions around the country, Avelo [painted](#) these planes white.

AVELO IS DESPERATE:

- The company [says](#) the contract is necessary for its bottomline.
- In an email reported on in the [NY Times](#), Andrew Levy, CEO, noted that the ICE contract is too good to pass up and would help stabilize their finances.
- Avelo has [cancelled](#) and shifted flight plans before of financial issues – it is clearly struggling with solvency.
- To manage the intake of ICE flights, the company announced it would [draw down](#) some scheduled flights in order to operate deportation flights (which it plans to fly on unmarked planes).
- Avelo is trying to [raise \\$100M](#) to expand their operations and is actively trying to hire staff to staff these flights.

NO ONE WANTS THIS:

- Their flight attendants have already [called](#) to cut the contract, citing concerns on passenger health and safety.
- At the end of May/beginning of June, [hundreds of people](#) took actions against Avelo in nearly 30 protests across the country.
- Tens of thousands of people have signed [petitions](#) and [pledges](#) committing to boycott Avelo.

AND IT'S CLEAR WHY:

- There's a financial argument: tax payers are subsidizing kidnapping. Avelo enjoys subsidies and benefits from local governments in places like: Salem, Oregon; Volusia County, Florida; Lakeland, Florida; Delaware; New York State; Dayton, Ohio; Salt Lake City, Utah and possibly Wilkes-Barre/Scranton, Pennsylvania – that means that you are paying to have families ripped apart. More on subsidies are noted below.
- There's a moral argument: ProPublica recently [published](#) an investigation into the conditions on previous Avelo flights. They're horrific – people are shackled and kept in terrible conditions for hours, and passengers and flight attendants are unsafe.
- There's sound legal concerns: the company has not said they will require the agency to prove those people have been ordered by a judge to leave the country, and the company has neglected to respond to questions from the CT Attorney General about their safety record and the nature of their contract.

ACTIONS ARE SEEING A RESPONSE:

- **We know the organizing is working. Thanks to protests:**
 - **In CT:** the Connecticut legislature advanced a [bill](#) that bans companies engaged in ICE deportation flights from business with state agencies and dramatically and purposely [ended](#) the fuel tax subsidy that Avelo had spent years lobbying for. The Attorney General has also threatened [investigations](#).
 - **In DE:** Even though Avelo is the only commercial airline in the State, the Governor has [said](#) he's looking for alternatives.
 - **In NY:** the government has announced the [SAFE AIR Act](#) - new legislation that would [revoke tax subsidies](#) and limit new contracts for commercial airlines like Avelo who are cooperating with ICE and violating due process.
- But our wins don't just have to be blue locations and political plays – there's more targets and stakeholders we can take on to affect Avelo. Just keep reading!



WHERE THEY FLY

Avelo has base locations that are most important to them:

- Burbank, CA
- Charlotte/Concord, NC
- Hartford, CT
- Lakeland, FL
- New Haven, CT
- Raleigh/Durham, NC
- Wilmington, DE
- Wilmington, NC

They fly in and out of 23 states to 50+ destinations. Check out their [flight routes](#) on their site.

The ICE flights are leaving from Mesa, AZ.



WHAT ELSE MATTERS TO AVELO

It's more than just airports. Avelo is desperate to remain solvent, and that means that any impact on their bottom line is what they care about. We know they enjoy the following financial tax breaks, incentives, partnerships, and collaborations – all of which we can target and impact to change their behavior. This fight starts at the airports but also intersects our schools; cities, and other partnerships they have – all of which are potential targets for your local group depending on where you live.

Note: the research below is provided by our friends at [LittleSis](#) and updated from intel from folks like you – so send it our way via email: [hola\(@\)defendandrecruit.org](mailto:hola(@)defendandrecruit.org)

Subsidies:

- [Salem, Oregon \(\\$1.2M\)](#)
- [Volusia County, Florida \(\\$1M\)](#)
- [Lakeland, Florida \(waiving fees and providing up to \\$30K\)](#)
- [Delaware \(at least \\$40K per year\)](#)
- [New York State \(part of a multimillion dollar package\)](#)
- [Salt Lake City, Utah \(up to \\$20M\)](#)

Programs that existed or are in the works:

- [Dayton, OH \(\\$1M\)](#) – Avelo no longer flies into Dayton but Ohioans did subsidise their costs when it did
- [Maybe Wilkes-Barre/Scranton, Pennsylvania \(\\$500K\)](#) – although it's unclear where progress is up to
- [La Crosse Regional Airport \(\\$250,000\)](#) – as an incentive program to bring the airline to WI
- [Champaign-Urbana, Illinois \(\\$1M\)](#) – with \$850K raised already

Partnerships & sponsorships:

Avelo has corporate relationships with schools, charities and credit cards:

- [University of Connecticut](#)
- [Yale University](#)
- [University of New Haven](#)
- [Colorado State University](#)
- [Quinnipiac University](#)
- [East Carolina University](#)
- [Aviator Air \(Florida\)](#)

- [Skyborne's Airline Academy](#)
- [Sterling Flight Training School](#)
- [United Way of Delaware](#)
- [Capital One](#)

Their **executives & board members** also have deep ties to our institutions:

- Andrew Levy, Board member at Copa Airlines (Latin American airline) & Board member at AerSale
- Brian Davis, Chief Commercial Officer: member of the Public Safety Commission, City of San Marino.
- Miguel Heras, Board Member: member of the Executive Board for Latin America at Wharton School at University of Pennsylvania.
- Thomas Cahill, Board Member: member of External Advisory Council at Lehigh University.
- Anita Pramoda, Board Member: member at Duly Health and Care in Chicago and Health Catalyst in Salt Lake City

Office Locations: Headquarters: 12 Greenway Plaza, Suite #400, Houston, TX 77046



DEMANDS

We're calling on different actors to do different things. This includes:

- Avelo Airlines: drop ICE contract
- Universities and partnerships: cut ties with Avelo
- Politicians:
 - Make a statement in support of protests and against Avelo
 - Remove subsidies that exist
 - Push resolutions and legislation to ensure that your community works with any contractor who supports ICE and immigration policies
- Workers and labor organizations:
 - Join our labor committee
 - Make a statement or write an oped against Avelo
 - Sign our labor letter
 - Pass a resolution or push a local official to take part in the political list above
- Faith organizations:
 - Make a public statement against Avelo, including writing an oped
 - Lead or sign a cross denominational local or national faith letter

- Pass a resolution or push a local official to take part in the political list above
- Organizations: don't fly for workplace travel on Avelo
- Passengers: don't fly Avelo

→ STRATEGIC ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE LOCALLY

Depending on where you live and what group you're with, there are different actions you can take to support the fight. This includes:

- **If you're at an Avelo base location:** protest at the airport and also push your local politicians to take further action with the demands above, if it makes sense in your political context (otherwise just protesting at the airport is still important!)
- **If you're in a location with an Avelo subsidy:** work on a local campaign to make a demand noted above – more on how to design a political campaign is in our [organizing tips and guide](#)
- **If you're in Houston:** protest at head office
- **If you're part of a university with a partnership with Avelo:** demand that your university cut ties with Avelo – more on how to design a campus campaign is in our [organizing tips and guide](#)
- **If you're in a destination city:** protest at the airport and also push your local politicians to take further action with the demands above, if it makes sense in your political context (otherwise just protesting at the airport is still important!)
- **If you're outside of any Avelo locations:**
 - If you're in a politically moveable location: push your local politicians to make a statement or pass legislation to never let Avelo fly into the city or work with any ICE contractor
 - Sign the boycott petition or an pledge to add to the pressure

POTENTIAL ALLIES

Targeting Avelo can be a bipartisan activity because it concerns taxes, jobs, communities, investments, and our future.

Alongside the usual allies on immigration issues, here are some potential allies with shared interests for action organizing:

- Pilots, flight attendants, and airport workers
- Local politicians, Attorney Generals, and governors
- Broader worker rights organizations and labor unions
- Legal rights organizations
- Groups and people concerned about cost of living, government overreach, and where tax dollars are going
- Tourism boards
- General flyers



STRATEGIC ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE VIRTUALLY

Help support local actions by taking virtual action, too:



Sign [our pledge](#) and the [boycott petition](#) to say you ain't fly Avelo until the drop the ICE contract



Post negative comments on [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#) and **send them a message** on [X](#) with the hashtags #StopAveloNow #BoycottAvelo #SayNoToAvelo



Send a message or **call Avelo** and explain that you'll be flying a different airlines until they drop the ICE contract



Leave a negative review on Google, [Yelp](#), and anywhere else you can and make it clear that it's because of their ICE contract



If you live in a community with a subsidy, email, call, or post on your local politician's social media demanding they end the subsidy



Post on Avelo CEO Andrew Levy's [most recent LinkedIn post](#) to let him know what you think about him prioritizing profit over people.



ORGANIZING TIPS AND GUIDES

Depending on where you are and what's most strategic, you might take action at an airport, university, or by pushing a local politician.

Here are some guides to do it all: *Note: these guides are written by us or our friends in other spaces fighting for justice. Add more resources by emailing [hola\(@\)defendandrecruit.org](mailto:hola(@)defendandrecruit.org)*

📋 **How to organize an action:** organizing action is fun and can be easy! You can host an action at an airport, local politician office, or some other target. Check out our simple guide on how to do it: [📋 How to organize an action](#)

Here's some resources from friends, too:

- [Organizing a protest](#)
- [How to Organize A Protest](#)

📖 **How to shift your university to cut ties with Avelo:** Avelo has relationships and partnerships with a number of key campuses, as detailed above. If you're a student group on these campuses, here's a breakdown on how you can strategize and impact their local relationship:

[📋 How to end Avelo's relationship with your campus](#)

🏛️ **How to get a reach out to a local politician:** Depending on where you are, there's a few political strategies you can try to get a response from Avelo and show them that their complicity in kidnapping will cost them subsidies and passengers. This includes getting local politicians to make statements; write letters to Avelo; end subsidies, pass legislation to stop Avelo, and pass legislation to work with any contractor working with ICE.

A guide on how identify a good strategy and the right politicians to work with on it is here: [📋 Avelo political strategies – how to guide](#)

Once you have political support, here's some **templates** to support various strategies:

- [📋 Template Letter to Avelo](#)
- [📋 Template Public Statement](#)
- [📋 Resolution template](#)
- [📋 Legislation template](#)

🎨 **How to Make Art for Your Protest:** We recommend making art at an art-making party or printing it out at a local printer, so that the images will be clear to flyers, in press photos, etc, and make the company even more worried about damage to its brand identity. We have created images you can use with a projector to make banners, signs or print out at an office supply store. You can find them [in this section](#).

Here's some guides to help you with making art for your protest:

- Orientation to Design & Art
 -  Staging for Action Art
 -  Self Guided_Visual Strategy
 -  Action Art Planning Checklist
- How-To Guides
 -  Banner Guide
 -  Picket Sign Guide
 -  Banner Drop Guide
 -  Flag Guide
 -  Wheatpasting Guide [Evergreen]

 **How to be safe and secure:** it can be a scary time, but protestors have rights, and there's actions you can take to ensure you and everyone part of your action are as safe as protest. Here's some resources:

- [Know your rights: protestor rights](#)
- [Digital security: checklist for activists](#)

GET SUPPORT

Need help organizing your action?

- Sign up for 1:1 organizer coaching. Email us at [hola\(@\)defendandrecruit.org](mailto:hola(@)defendandrecruit.org)

Need turnout?

- Add your action to the action map (*coming soon!*)
- Email us to help you turnout for it by inviting folks on our lists & talking through potential partners & allies – [hola\(@\)defendandrecruit.org](mailto:hola(@)defendandrecruit.org)