



## UU Mass Action Congregational Immigration Justice Guide

### **Grounding:**

Pause, slow down. Breathe, if that is comfortable. Maybe close your eyes and feel the ground beneath you, or hear the sounds around you.

Thank you for opening this document amid the flood of information, news, resources, and chaos we are all absorbing in these times. We hope this document can be a reminder that as things change rapidly around us, UU Mass Action and our partners are here. We hope we can be a guide in this time so that we can have the impact and show up in the ways we need to to fight this administration and protect our communities. We must remember that we are not alone, we must find ways to ground and nourish, and stay resilient and committed to taking action together.

May we feel all the hope, all the love, we generate with our actions and relationships. May this hope, this love, fill surround and hold us pushing out what does not serve us, filling us with what does. Blessed be.

### **Introduction:**

In these turbulent times, UU Mass Action hopes to provide some starting points and resources for when congregations are faced with the question 'what do we do now?' Because times will keep changing, we will continue to update this doc with the latest information and opportunities from our partners. We remain dedicated to the relationships we've built over the years and to centering frontline communities most impacted, and will stay grounded amid the chaos. We hope this document and UU Mass Action can be an anchor amidst the chaos.

We have identified several major areas in which you can take action for immigration justice (shared below). Not everyone can do everything - we encourage you to think about what areas you and your congregation feel called and ready to do given the opportunities below and the resources and interests you have. We encourage you to direct your energy towards efforts being organized by frontline groups and organizations (especially our partners) to have the most impact.



- [Responding to ICE in our communities/LUCE](#)
- [Preventing deportation with BIJAN](#)
- [Hosting Families](#)
- [Systems changes/legislation](#)
- [ICE Protocols for your Congregation](#)
- [What do I do with all this? Organizing your congregation](#)
  - [Community Organizing Framework](#)
  - [Community Organizing Principles to keep in mind](#)
  - [Steps to implement this document into your congregation](#)
  - [SUMMARY](#)
- [Additional Resources](#)
- [Donation suggestions](#)

As always feel free to email [Tali](mailto:Tali@uumassaction.org) or [Jo](mailto:Jo@uumassaction.org) with questions or concerns at [tsmookler@uumassaction.org](mailto:tsmookler@uumassaction.org) or [jmurphy@uumassaction.org](mailto:jmurphy@uumassaction.org).

## **Responding to ICE in our communities**

Many people wonder what we can do to respond to increased local ICE activity. Many of the current effective ways to prevent detention and deportation and support those in the process are with some of the accompaniment opportunities with BIJAN shared below. We encourage you to consider if any of those roles are right for you. They may not seem as urgent or effective as showing up where an ICE raid is happening, but they can have major impacts on preventing deportation.

Our partners recently launched the [Luce ICE Watch Hotline](#) that responds to sightings of ICE to help verify and support neighboring communities. If you are interested in being a hotline volunteer (bilingual requirement), or a lead in your town to organize verifiers, or a verifier, email [tsmookler@uumassaction.org](mailto:tsmookler@uumassaction.org). You can sign up to be a verifier or hub leader [here](#).

We do encourage you to review these resources to have more context in understanding best practices for if/when ICE shows up in your or neighboring communities:

- Here you can download [a Defend and Recruit workbook](#)
- Here's advice from [Never Again Action](#).



- It is also important to remember that spreading vague information can add to panic. If you know of confirmed reports of ICE in your community please share the information with [as many specifics as possible](#) so it can be useful to others. Please do not amplify vague reports of ICE activity.

## **Volunteer for our partner BIJAN**

Volunteer: Many of you have likely heard of our partners at the Boston Immigration Justice Accompaniment Network. **We want to highlight that the volunteer opportunities below, at their best, can prevent detention and deportation.** These may not seem like huge roles, but they can make a big difference in someone going through the deportation process. For those interested in rapid response as a way to intervene in detention and deportation, we encourage you to consider trying out some of the roles listed. People in detention are the most vulnerable to deportation so supporting folks who are impacted by detention is critical. [Here is the complete list of BIJAN opportunities](#) right now which will continue to be updated.

Donate: Additionally, [BIJAN](#) posts bail for people in immigration detention. Last year, the Beyond Bond & Legal Defense Fund, a key part of the network, has contributed to 58 immigration bonds--typically averaging around \$7,500 each--helping all of those neighbors get free from the immediate violence of ICE jail. **We know that bonds remain an important tool for collective liberation and supporting families.** Let's draw on our collective material and spiritual resources to sustain and keep each other safe in the years to come!

## **Hosting Families and Individuals**

Forty-one years ago, Massachusetts enacted the first-in-the-nation "right-to-shelter" law, guaranteeing all homeless families with children and pregnant women access to temporary housing and other emergency services. However, over the past years, Governor Maura Healey and our State Legislature have been chipping away at this critical guarantee. This is forcing families with pregnant individuals and children to sleep on the streets and in unsafe conditions.

One way UU Mass Action has been responding to this crisis is by organizing host families. We are available to support you in discerning if this is something you can do and to be a resource if you have questions. You can choose the length of time you host, from one night to several months - it is up to you. Even a few nights can be incredibly helpful.

Some resources are below:



- Check out the [FAQ prepared by the Brazilian Workers Center](#) that may answer some questions. (NOTE: IFSI is now supporting the coordination of the host families program and will have an updated FAQ soon; in meantime the BWC one is still very accurate!)
- When you are ready to host [just fill out this form](#) - NOTE LINK DIFFERENT THAN WHAT IN FAQs ABOVE
- Contact Kathleen McTigue <[kathleenmctigue@gmail.com](mailto:kathleenmctigue@gmail.com)> if you want to talk to someone who has hosted many families or if you have questions.
- Crowdsourced resources for support services for hosts [here](#).
- **You can organize a “cluster”** which is a few host families together supporting a family, which provides more community and support and extends how long groups are able to host families. [Here’s is a sample document](#) from the Concord UU cluster. If you’d like to learn more about this model, reach out to [tsmookler@uumassaction.org](mailto:tsmookler@uumassaction.org).

### **Rent to immigrants**

This is a huge need for families. Boston offers a [Landlord Incentive Program](#) that pays some of your costs! If you have a prospective tenant who has housing assistance from [HomeBase](#), please rent to that person!

## **Systems Change/Legislation**

We need our leaders in MA to take bold action to support and protect immigrants in our community, in addition to the direct support shared above. UU Mass Action organizes in a few areas:

### **Legislation:**

UU Mass Action supports various immigration justice legislative campaigns. We are still finalizing our 2025-26 list of supported legislation and will continue to add, but so far they include:

- [Dignity Not Deportations](#), action guide [here](#)
- [Human Rights Bill](#)
- [Rent Stabilization Ballot Signature Drive](#):
  - A major impact of the kidnappings of immigrants has been losing income and ability to pay rent. We also saw impact of unaffordable housing with the high need for shelter last year, and that impact on immigrants. Housing Justice is Immigrant Justice!



- This will be a powerful sprint to November to get more than 100k signatures! It will take all of us to get there! A great, concrete, time bound opportunity for congregations to jump in this fall to support our partners.

Some ways you can support these:

- [Sign up for a monthly UU Action Hour](#): These are multi issue but often include calls to action around Right to Shelter and Immigration Justice.
- [Check out upcoming events](#): We update our events page regularly with our Immigration Justice team meetings, calls to action, and more!

### **ICE Protocols for congregations**

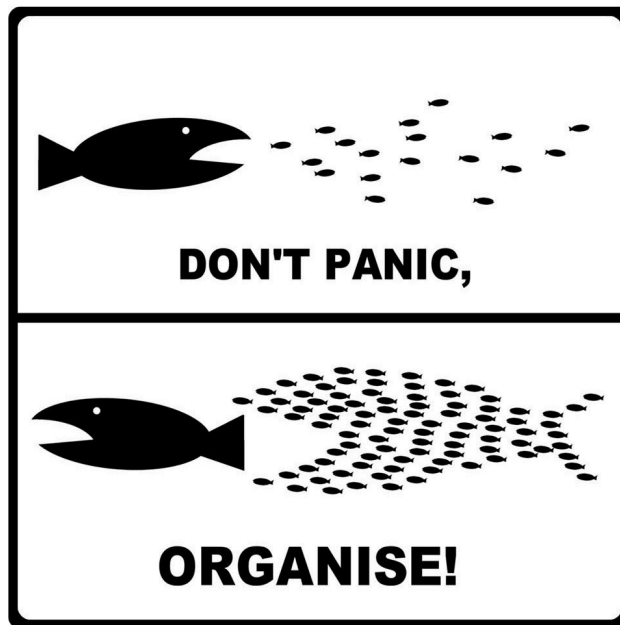
- [ICE and Immigration Enforcement in Congregations](#)
- [ICE Policy and Protocols for your Congregation](#) (by Episcopal City Mission)

### **What to do with all this info? How to Organize your Congregation**

#### **Community Organizing Framework**

UU Mass Action focuses on **Community Organizing** as how we approach social change. One definition of community organizing is ***"Building power with and developing the leadership of people in our community for the purpose of moving the world as it is toward the world as it should be."*** It means you need 1) a community and 2) to be organized.

As one organizer put it, there are a lot of people walking around South Station everyday. They are not a community, and they are not organized. They don't have power. To organize a community, we need to build relationships so together we can be organized in taking action so we can be moving towards having an impact together. We won't be as effective if we are a bunch of individuals doing our own thing, wandering around south station. Below is a visual for community organizing and building power.



UU Mass Action works to bring UU individuals and congregations together so we are not each swimming in our own direction, but coming together so we can powerfully have an impact.

With this in mind, we encourage you to use this document **as a foundation for organizing your congregation.** We hope you individually will take action. But we need to grow our movement. So we encourage you to review these opportunities and identify what your congregation is interested in organizing around. You can be creative!

Some examples:

- If you are interested in policy, can you build a mini campaign that includes education, a goal of making x amount of calls in your congregation, and recruiting x amount of people for advocacy day? And can you delegate roles to build leadership in the process?
- If you are interested in accompaniment, could you create a space for people together to commit to signing up for x roles/month, and have a monthly potluck to share stories and build relationships with each other?
- If you are thinking about hosting, can you organize 3 host families to host for a week each, and share the experience with your congregation to politicize them about the right to shelter and invite them to call their legislators.



There are ways to take action alone, and ways to build community and power while taking these actions. We hope you will consider how you can use any of these opportunities to BUILD POWER in your congregation.

### **Community Organizing Principles to keep in mind**

There is not one way to organize - be creative! And while there is no one right way, below are a few key organizing principles we hope you will keep in mind:

- **Relationships:** Relationships are the building blocks of movements. You may have been organizing with people in your congregation for years but don't know why they care about social justice. Can you build in nourishing connective time that helps you get to know each other on a deeper level? Building relationships and trust on deep levels will be critical in the months ahead.
- **Partnerships:** Don't be a single fish/congregation swimming off in your own direction. Especially if you are not directly impacted, because then you might be swimming off in unproductive directions that might feel good but not be valuable. We hope you will lean on UU Mass Action for direction on organizations to partner with because we have been building these over years with organizations that center the voices of those directly impacted. AND we encourage you to explore your local landscape and build your own relationships with groups in the area doing important local work. Both UU Mass Action, and our connection to statewide organizing, as well as your local town, are important.
- **Building leadership:** In everything you do, ask yourself - are there ways we can delegate responsibility in a way that 1) builds leadership and 2) builds ownership? This can prevent burnout to spread the roles, as well as bring more people in because now they will feel more accountable to the work. Can someone make a flier? Can someone else email out to the congregation? Can someone else lead this meeting or create the agenda? Can 3 people sign up to reach out personally to 10 people to invite them to UU Advocacy Day? Tool: [Ladder of engagement](#)
- **Centering frontlines:** Those who are closest to the pain are closest to the power. Those most impacted know what they need, what is a real solution, what is a false solution. Frontline communities are not a monolith, but at UU Mass Action we have built relationships with aligned frontline groups. We encourage you to understand your positionality, and learn from/lean on groups that center frontline voices - those most at risk - in determining what is a valuable use of your time.
- **Strategy, goals, vision:** Be clear what it is you are working towards, and if/how your strategy gets you there. Your goals can be manifold - organizing people to show up in



solidarity for the Right to SHelter WHILE building your team's numbers. Revisit and adapt as the landscape changes, but try to be clear what it is your group is working towards.

- **Adaptability and groundedness:** We invite you to both be adaptable and grounded. Make a plan of how you can engage in this issue, who are your key organizations/partnership you will be in relationships with. What is your anchor, your north star as a group? What are your grounding values? The organizations you are in relationship with-like UU Mass Action and our partners - will be adapting with you. Stay grounded in your relationships with each other, with the broader immigrations justice movement, and be attuned to when you need to revisit your work to respond to the moment (being informed by groups on the ground).
- **Community:** Congregations are already set up to be there for each other, you have a built in community guided by values. In times of chaos, in moments where we need to respond rapidly or adapt, the foundations and relationships you build by being connected to each other will be critical. Community building - potlucks, movie nights, mutual aid, cooking each other meals - will strengthen those relationships and muscles for showing up for each other and in solidarity when needed. When you are going to an action, the folks you turn to to join you are often your friends and community. So build up your networks! Strengthen your community and be ready to show up together when we need you.
- **Make the Revolution Irresistible:** We need to make our movements a place people want to be in. One of the biggest threats we face is people burning out, becoming numb, feeling powerless. Part of our work is to spiritual nourish each other so we can stay accountable to being in this for the long haul. Instead of tired overwhelmed leaders, what if we prioritized what we each need to model that we are a social justice team that is nourishing, soulful, fun, and connecting? What do you need to do for yourself and your group to make joining irresistible? We invite you to incorporate ritual, connection, creativity, and joy as you build your groups.

**Suggestion for operationalizing these suggestions:**

1. **Learn:** Read through this document in your congregation (social justice team, with a buddy, etc)
2. **Assess:** what are you doing already? What might you feel energized about? What partnerships already exist? What are your group's strengths/weaknesses? How can you use this moment to bring more people in?





3. **Brainstorm:** given this document and your assessment of where there is energy, what are some creative ideas of how you organize your congregation's energy to deepen your involvement with UU Mass Action and our partners?
4. **Commit:** What are 1-2 campaigns, partners, opportunities you can commit to in the next 2-5 months?
  - a. Feel free to reach out to [tsmookler@uumassaction.org](mailto:tsmookler@uumassaction.org) if you would like a thought partner on this!
5. **Plan:** What are the steps you need to move in that direction? How can you get more people involved and delegate tasks to delegate leadership? What are check in points to continue to be relevant as the landscape changes? How can you make it joyful?

**Summary:** If you are organizing right, you will be building power no matter what you choose to do. If and when tides change, that power can be channeled to where it is needed most. So whatever you choose to do, aim to do it in a way to deepens each others relationship, how many people are engaged, how many leaders are involved, deepen each others skills and analysis about issues, and deepen each others commitment for the long term so that we are building the power we need to matter what happens.

**UU Mass Action is here for you.** We encourage you to seriously review our opportunities and partnership, let us know what we could be doing better so that we are one of the key groups you align with in these times. We are the only UU organization doing MA statewide organizing, and we have sifted and vetted our partners over the years so we are confident we are providing opportunities that are strategic and meet the moment. Let us be here for you. And we hope you will help shape our work as we move forward together.

**Additional Resources (will keep editing/adding)**

- [See upcoming UU Mass Action opportunities](#)
- [Risk, Courage, and Discernment: Spiritual Preparation for Collective Action](#) (UUA/Rev Elizabeth Nguyen)
- [Immigrant Justice Congregational Resource Mapping](#) (by Episcopal City Mission)



- [General Immigration Support resources](#)
- [Grounded, Resilient & Responsible toolkit from the UUA](#)
- [What is harboring from National Lawyers Guild](#)
- [Understanding the Smuggling/Harboring Federal Crime](#)

**Donation suggestions: (we will edit as the needs unfold)**

- [Boston Immigration Justice Accompaniment Network](#):
  - Donate to the [Bond Fund](#) which posts bond to get people out of detention
- Local Worker Centers/Mutual Aid Groups
  - [Brazilian Workers Center](#)
  - [Pioneer Valley Workers Center](#) (Springfield)
  - [Centro Comunitario de Trabajadores \(New Bedford\)](#)
  - [Mutual Aid Eastie](#)
- [LUCÉ Defense Hotline](#)