



Immigration & Asylum Information

Last updated: Feb 12, 2025

As Franciscans, we are called to act in kinship with all creation and protect the dignity of all people, particularly the marginalized. Jesus taught that his followers must welcome the stranger, and Francis of Assisi called his followers to be peacemakers in our personal lives and in society. Therefore, we are called to act in solidarity with all of our community members, including the migrants and refugees coming into our country. The recent influx of immigrants (the biggest since the 1800s) has made our work that much more important.

This live document is meant to be a resource to better understand the circumstances of immigration in the US right now and the rights of immigrants, and a tool to help you advocate in solidarity with them, whether it be with elected officials or in your communities.

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Information and Misinformation

Live Updates

- [Immigration Policy Tracking Project from Stanford and Yale](#)
 - Tracks all executive actions, including agency directives, executive orders, memos, etc.
- [Congress.gov](#)
 - The one-stop shop for everything happening in Congress, including hearings, bill statuses, etc
- [GovTrack.us](#)
 - Another way to track what's going on with Congress, easy to search by issue area, member, etc.

Mythbusting

Myth: Immigrants are taking Americans' jobs

- According to the [Bipartisan Policy Center](#), the decrease in native-born employment is due to non-labor force activities (i.e. retirement, enrolling in school, and entering disability). The unemployment rate (the percent of the population out of work but actively looking for a job) for native- and foreign-born **is about the same**.
- Additionally, the native-born population is more likely to work in higher-wage and higher-skill industries. The disproportionately native-born industries carry an average annual salary of \$50,000, compared to \$36,000 in the predominantly foreign-born industries¹.
 - Some may argue that the lower wages are due to immigration, however 54% of the occupations in disproportionately native-born industries require at least a BA, compared to just 6% in the disproportionately foreign-born industries²

Myth: Immigrants increase the crime rate/criminal activity

- From [The American Immigration Council](#): Studies have shown that there is either no connection between immigration and crime or, if there is one, immigration actually decreases crime

¹ [Bipartisan Policy Center](#)

² [Bipartisan Policy Center](#)



- Holds true with undocumented immigration as well
- Immigrants also have lower felony and lower incarceration rates than US-born citizens³
- Stricter immigration control does not correlate to lower rates of violent crime, property crime, or murder⁴

Myth: Immigrants come in illegally because they don't want to wait in line for legal immigration and/or have something to hide

- There is no 'line' or legal pathway for the overwhelming majority of undocumented immigrants. Most of them do not have the necessary family or employment relationships and cannot access humanitarian protection, such as refugee or asylum status, which means that regardless of how long they've been in the country, most undocumented immigrants have no way of achieving legal status.⁵
- Many undocumented immigrants are barred from obtaining legal status while **inside** the US, so they would have to leave the country and then come back once they have the green card. That being said, "any person who has been out of status for more than 180 days but less than 1 year, is barred from being re-admitted or re-entering the United States for three years."⁶

Myth: People coming into the US illegally are responsible for fentanyl and other illegal drugs pouring over the border.

- According to the [National Immigration Forum](#) and data from the CBP and US Sentencing Commission, fentanyl is primarily brought to the US by American citizens through legal ports of entry.
 - In 2022, 88% of fentanyl trafficking offenders were US citizens, & 86% of fentanyl trafficking convictions were for US citizens.
- According to the [Cato Institute](#), in 2023, 93% of fentanyl seizures occurred at [legal crossing points](#) or [interior vehicle checkpoints](#), not on illegal migration routes.
 - Drugs coming through a port of entry are at least 96% less likely to be interdicted than a person coming between ports of entry.
 - 0.009% of people arrested by Border Control for crossing illegally possessed any fentanyl whatsoever (less than 150 of the 1.7 million Border Patrol arrests).

³ [American Immigration Council - Debunking the Myths of Immigration and Crime](#)

⁴ [American Immigration Council - Debunking the Myths of Immigration and Crime](#)

⁵ [American Immigration Council - Why Don't Immigrants Apply for Citizenship?](#)

⁶ [American Immigration Council - Why Don't Immigrants Apply for Citizenship?](#)



- In 2020 and 2021, when the government banned most legal travel, fentanyl seizures quadrupled, and it went from a third of combined heroin and fentanyl seizures to 90%.⁷

Rights

All of the following information is from [iAmerica](#), the national immigrant justice campaign platform of the Service Employees International Union, which has a lot of information surrounding immigration rights, protections, and pathways. The following is for informational purposes only and is not intended to serve as legal advice.

- **All people in the U.S., whether citizen or non-citizen, have certain rights under the U.S. Constitution and other laws.**
 - You have the right to refuse consent for immigration enforcement or the police to search yourself, your car or your home.
 - You have the right to remain silent. If you want to exercise that right, you should say it out loud.
 - If you are not a U.S. citizen, you have the right to call the consulate of your home country. Immigration and police must let your consulate visit or speak with you.
 - You have the right to speak to an attorney before answering any questions.
 - You may say, “I will remain silent until I speak to an attorney.”
 - You do not have to sign anything that you do not understand.
 - You have the right to a copy of all your immigration papers.
- **I’m a U.S. citizen. What should I do if ICE questions, detains, or arrests me?**
 - **Does ICE have the right to detain or arrest U.S. citizens based on immigration status? NO.** The immigration law and its rules do not apply to U.S. citizens. ICE agents have deportation authority over non-citizens only.
 - ICE agents violate the 4th and 5th Amendment of the Constitution if they question, detain or arrest a U.S. citizen based on the citizen’s race.
 - Tell ICE that you are a U.S. citizen and ICE does not have the authority to detain or arrest you.
 - Ask to speak to your lawyer. You have the right to speak to your lawyer.
 - Ask for the ICE agent’s name and badge number and save that information.
 - Consult a lawyer about filing a lawsuit if you are questioned, detained and arrested. ICE and local police that assist ICE may be liable to pay fines and

⁷ [U.S. Citizens Were 89% of Convicted Fentanyl Traffickers in 2022 | Cato at Liberty Blog](#)



monetary damages for unlawful questioning, detention, and arrest of U.S. citizens.

What People & Organizations Can & Should Do

We have seen many executive orders and laws coming out targeting immigrants and refugees, however, there are still more to come, and some of them have questionable legal standing, so while we have some sense of what is going on, there is still quite a bit that is still up in the air. That being said, there are some actions that will be important regardless of what happens, and things that will be helpful should situations arise that require a rapid response.

- Continue to educate yourself and others about the facts regarding the realities of immigration, and make sure you are using and sharing legitimate information
- Write/call your representatives in support of immigrants and refugees
 - The more specific actions you are in support of or opposed to, the better.
- Build & strengthen relationships with local organizations and agencies, including law enforcement
- Show up at detention centers - pray, be present, be another set of eyes and ensure rights are being respected
- Ensure that you and your immigrant community members know their rights and what to do in emergency situations (see sources below).
 - The “protected areas” memo, which prevented ICE raids on schools, churches, hospitals, etc, has been rescinded
- Reach out to your immigrant community members and see what they need- this is likely a time of high stress for all of them, regardless of their status

Additional Resources

- [Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc \(CLINIC\)](#) has information on various immigration issues, an affiliate directory with partners throughout all US states & territories and Canadian provinces. They hold [clinics](#) for volunteers with their affiliate organizations or other non-profits on immigration issues/things to know.
 - [CLINIC Know Your Rights Flyers in 10 languages and counting](#)
 - [CLINIC Printable Red Cards in English, Spanish, & Portuguese](#)
 - [CLINIC Emergency Planning Guide in English & Spanish](#)
- The [Refugee Council USA Policy Center](#) has a ton of resources in many different categories, including action items, executive orders and analyses of them, and know your rights materials



- The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has created a sheet with a list of resources in a variety of languages on many aspects of the concerns about immigration. [Link Here](#)
- The [American Immigration Council](#) has lots of fact sheets and information about all aspects of immigration in the United States. They publish a weekly newsletter with stories and updates- subscribe on their website.
- [iAmerica](#), the national immigrant justice campaign platform of the Service Employees International Union, has resources in 18 languages which have a lot of information surrounding immigration rights, protections, and pathways, including legal resources.
- [Church World Service \(CWS\)](#) has offices and partners all over the country that work a lot in refugee resettlement, legal services, and other support services for incoming refugees and immigrants
- The [National Immigration Legal Resource Center](#) has many resources regarding legal rights and resources for immigrants in addition to many broader resources.
 - [National 287\(g\) Agreement Tracker](#) - tracks where and what kinds of agreements law enforcement agencies have with ICE
 - [Family Preparedness Plan](#) - step by step instructions on how to prepare for an emergency
- The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has released many statements and information sheets regarding immigration, in addition to statements from the bishops
 - [Catholic Elements of Immigration Reform](#)
 - [USCCB FAQ Responding to Immigration Enforcement Efforts](#)
 - [USCCB President Statement on the Executive Orders](#)
 - [Bishop Seitz \(of El Paso & Chairman of the USCCB Committee on Migration\) Statement on the Executive Orders](#)