



DETENTION  
WATCH NETWORK

# #CommunitiesNotCages:

Toolkit to Fight Detention and  
Deportations

 [bit.ly/cnctoolkit](https://bit.ly/cnctoolkit)

*\*This is a 'live' toolkit and will be updated as new information and resources are released\**

[\[ESPAÑOL AQUÍ\]](#)

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## Acknowledgements:

This working toolkit has been drafted by Detention Watch Network with crucial information from our members and partners.

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## Introduction

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In response to the re-election of Trump and expected increasing attacks on immigrant communities, we have developed this live toolkit to help guide and support the work of organizations and individuals looking to fight detention expansion, support people in detention and fight deportations. Organizations and individuals should assess their capacity and determine what strategies and resources best fit their local context. This is by no means an exhaustive list of options and existing tools, it's an attempt to centralize what has already been created and make it accessible.

**If there are resources not listed here that you feel would be useful to include, please e-mail:** [program@detentionwatchnetwork.org](mailto:program@detentionwatchnetwork.org).

## Values to Guide Our Work

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- **Working towards abolition and racial justice.** Immigrant jails and deportations are part of the prison industrial complex and it is imperative that organizations and individuals work in solidarity and coordination with local organizations to call for the release of everyone in cages, and an end to raids and local enforcement operations. County jails and state prisons are a key component of the immigrant detention system, it's crucial that organizers supporting the release of people detained in ICE custody uplift the demands of groups working to dismantle the prison industrial complex.
- **We Keep Us Safe.** We know the federal government will continue to attack our communities and that is organizing and mutual aid that will keep us safe.
- **“Nothing about us without us”** comes to us from the disability justice movement and captures the essence of how we must engage people detained and immigrant communities in our fight for their freedom. Maintaining a constant line of communication with those inside ICE jails, and those who have survived that system, helps ensure our work is not having unintended negative consequences for people detained and responds to their immediate needs and priorities.
- **Language justice and accessibility.** We know most resources are not in the language of communities who are most impacted. In order for our communities to access and understand our work and demands, we need to translate resources to inform those impacted by these policies and their loved ones.

## Federal Policy Resources

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\*New resources continually posted by [Detention Watch Network](#), [National Immigration Law Center](#), [National Immigration Project-NLG](#), [Immigrant Legal Resource Center](#) and [Immigrant Defense Project](#).

- **Executive Orders Resources**
  - [Explainer | Trump's day 1 executive orders](#): with a high-level focus on the criminalizing and detention portions of the executive orders. Written jointly by IDP, DWN, ILRC, AAJC, SEARAC, NIPNLG and IJN
  - [National Immigration Project: Setting the Record Straight About Sanctuary Policies](#) (January 22, 2025)
  - [Black Alliance for Just Immigration Policy Explainers](#): Each explainer includes a description of the executive action, its implications, and its specific impact on Black immigrant communities, serving as a resource for community members, advocates, and policy professionals.Com
  - [Community Explainer: Laken Riley Act](#) (January 2025)
  - [National Iranian American Council \(NIAC\): 2025 Travel Ban Center-](#) President-elect Donald Trump and his key advisors have vowed to bring back the “travel ban” and expand it. As a result, we believe an unjust ban on the issuance of visas to Iranians is once again imminent. Please use this center and share it with your family and friends to inform yourself and find ways to push back.
  - [DWN](#), [NILC](#), [NIP-NLG](#), [ILRC](#), [IDP](#)

## Calls to Action

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- **National Calls to Action**
  - **Sign Petition:** [Say NO to immigration detention at Guantánamo Bay](#)
  - **Sign Petition:** [Tell Senate NO more funding for Detention & Deportation](#)

## Federal Strategies

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### Target: Members of Congress

Congress has the power to pass federal laws, including the budget and appropriations bills that decide how the federal government spends its money. Members of Congress are

decision-makers, as well as an important check on other federal targets. The Trump administration's plans to massively expand detention and deportation enforcement operations will be impossible without resources and policy changes that can only be approved by Congress. Therefore, we need to make sure they use their authority to amplify our demands.

**How to identify your Members of Congress:**

- To identify your Member of Congress in the House of Representatives, enter your ZIP code at <https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative>.
- To identify your Members of Congress in the Senate, enter your state at [www.senate.gov/senators/contact](http://www.senate.gov/senators/contact)

**Demands:**

- **Vote against any proposals for more funding for immigration detention, deportations, enforcement, ICE and CBP during the appropriations process and other budget-related legislation.**
- **Vote against any legislation that further criminalizes immigrants and makes more people vulnerable to detention and deportation. Several criminalizing bills are slated to be introduced this year.**
- **Publicly oppose new or expanded detention facilities in your state or district.**
- **Publicly oppose policies and practices that further criminalize immigrant communities and tear families apart.**

**Tactics**

- Create petitions, email templates, or phone scripts for your community to contact your members of Congress.
- Schedule in-district meetings or a DC visit with your members of Congress.
- Tag your members of Congress in social media content with your demands.
- “Bird-dog” members of Congress at public appearances.
- Request a member of Congress conduct an announced inspection at a detention center in their state or district.

**Resources (*templates and active petitions*):**

- Sign Petition: [Say NO to immigration detention at Guantánamo Bay or anywhere](#)

## State Strategies

As we face a Congress that is advancing anti-immigrant legislation, coupled with executive actions aimed at increasing detention, deportations, immigration enforcement and criminalization of immigrants at the federal level, state-level strategies to protect immigrant communities will be essential. State legislation is an effective tool which can be used to pass protections and limit the reach of federal enforcement mechanisms.

Historically, blue states have been at the forefront of introducing and passing a variety of protective measures for immigrant communities. Depending on your state's political landscape, these bills can be introduced as standalone legislation or strategically packaged together to address multiple protections.

**Below is a List of Bill Options:**

Legislation Options	Model Policies
Bills aimed at reducing detention through intergovernmental service agreement and private prison bans.	<a href="#">California's Dignity Not Detention: SB 29, (2017)</a>
Legislation ensuring data privacy, policies that restrict the collection and sharing of information by state or local governments.	<a href="#">Colorado's Protect Personal Identifying information Kept by State: HB 21-131, (2021)</a>
Limiting cooperation between local law enforcement and ICE (Prohibition of 287(g) and local resources to enforce immigration laws).	<a href="#">Keep Washington Working Act: SB 549, (2019)</a>
Policies that establish "sensitive locations" where immigration enforcement is restricted, such as schools, hospitals, and places of worship.	<a href="#">California's Schoolsites and Day Care Center: Entry Requirements: AB 49 (2025)</a>
Policies limiting state and local law enforcement transfers of individuals to ICE.	<a href="#">California's HOME Act. AB 1306 (2023)</a>

"Don't Ask" policies, which prevent law enforcement from inquiring about a person's immigration status.

[New York's Prohibit and Regulates the Discovery and Disclosure of Immigration Status: S2235 \(2025\)](#)

## Targets: State Representatives, Governor, and Attorney General

To advance pro-immigrant protections, identify and collaborate with champions in your state legislature who are committed to supporting immigrant communities. Consider the following criteria when identifying legislators:

- ☐ **Knowledge:** Choose representatives who have a clear understanding of immigration issues, including enforcement and detention.
- ☐ **Personal Connection:** Identify legislators who have a personal connection to immigrant communities or a demonstrated track record of advocacy.
- ☐ **Commitment:** Ensure that the chosen champions are willing to push for the strongest protections possible, including those without harmful carve-outs.

## Process for Developing State Legislation

### Step 1: Identify a Need in Your Community

- Assess your community to understand how detention and enforcement impacts immigrant families. Collect data, stories, and reports that highlight issues such as high detention rates, collaboration between law enforcement and ICE, or lack of legal protections.

### Step 2: Build a Coalition

- Work with existing statewide or local coalitions to build a team that includes legal, communications, and organizing support. Ensure the coalition represents diverse stakeholders, such as people directly impacted, community-based organizations, legal experts, and advocacy groups.

### Step 3: Identify a Legislative Champion

- Find a representative or senator who will be willing to author the bill. Choose someone who understands the issue, has a personal connection to the cause, and is committed to passing the strongest possible protections.

### Step 4: Begin Bill Drafting

- Collaborate with legal experts and coalition members to draft the bill. Research similar legislation in other states and adapt successful language to fit your state's policies. If your coalition needs assistance, reach out to the [Immigrant Legal Resource Center](#)

([ILRC](#)) or [Detention Watch Network \(DWN\)](#).

#### **Step 5: Develop a Robust Advocacy Strategy**

- Create a comprehensive strategy that includes advocacy, communications, and organizing components. Develop public campaigns, meet with stakeholders, and mobilize grassroots support. Build alliances with unions, faith-based organizations, and immigrant rights groups to amplify your efforts.

#### **Step 6: Engage Your Governor**

- While the bill is progressing through the legislature, engage the governor to build support for the bill's passage. The governor's approval is critical, so establish regular communication to address any concerns they may have.

#### **Disclaimer:**

State bills on immigrant protections rarely pass on the first attempt. Some bills may pass faster than others, but it usually takes years of sustained advocacy to build the necessary support.

#### **Resources:**

- [Policy Options: Protecting Immigrant Communities at the State and Local Level](#) (American Immigration Council resource).
- [State Legislation Bans on Immigration Detention](#), 2021 (DWN resource)
- [Joint Statement from Thirteen State Attorneys General: State and Local Law Enforcement Cannot Be Commandeered for Federal Immigration Enforcement](#) (January 23, 2025)

## **Local Strategies**

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Local decision-makers have the power to pass laws that protect immigrant communities from detention and deportation.

### **Target: Board of Supervisors/ City Council/ Other local elected bodies**

#### **Demands:**

- Demand that the Sheriff Department end collaboration with ICE including through 287(g) agreements, raids, joint task forces, ICE access to jails including for ICE interviews and

arrests, or information sharing such as databases or booking sheets. When local law enforcement cooperates with ICE, this funnels more people to detention and deportation.

- Place a moratorium on any local law enforcement collaboration with ICE including for raids, joint task forces, ICE interviews inside of jails and sharing of information with ICE.
- Pass local ordinances to ban detention centers in the city or county.

**Tactics:** Organizational sign-on letters, meetings, calls, petitions.

## **Target: Mayor**

### **Demands:**

- Mandate local law enforcement to stop any collaboration with ICE and DHS.
- Mandate city entities to not ask for immigration status nor share information with ICE.

**Tactics:** Organizational sign-on letters, meetings, calls, petitions.

### **Resources**

- [Policy Options: Protecting Immigrant Communities at the State and Local Level](#) (American Immigration Council resource).

## **Target: Sheriff's Departments**

### **Demands:**

- Stop any collaboration with ICE, including but not limited to 287(g) agreements; allowing ICE in the jail for any purpose including ICE arrests, information-sharing, or ICE interviews; information-sharing with ICE including a person's release date, access to local databases, booking information or any other local information; supporting in ICE raids; and joint task forces. Cooperating with ICE funnels people directly into detention and deportation.
- Stop receiving community members to be detained at facilities under their jurisdiction.

**Tactics:** Organizational sign-on letters, Calls, e-mails, social media days of action, in[person] action, letters from the Board of Supervisors who have control over the sheriff's department budget and any oversight committees.

### **Resources:**

- [Stopping Mass Deportations Through Sheriffs: A Toolkit for Organizers](#)

- [What is a 287\(g\)?](#) Does your locality or a neighboring locality have a 287(g) agreement? [Check out this map](#) put together by the Immigrant Legal Resource Center that tracks 287(g) agreements across the country and offers resources for those who want to fight back.

## Community Defense Resources

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- **Know Your Rights (KYR) Resources**
  - [Immigrant Legal Resource Center Know Your Rights Toolkit](#)
    - Printable [red cards](#) in 16 languages to distribute to community members (Arabic, Chinese, English, Farsi, French, Haitian Creole, Hmong, Korean, Pashto, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog)
    - [Downloadable, fillable, and printable Family Preparedness Plan](#)
    - [know-your-rights handout](#) in 8 languages to help families prepare for a possible interaction with ICE (English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Arabic, Russian, Tagalog, Vietnamese)
    - [Know Your Rights tutorial video in seven languages](#) to help prepare you for encounters with Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE)
    - [toolkit](#) on holding a Know Your Rights presentation in your community
    - A webinar in both [English](#) and [Spanish](#), providing a sample Know Your Rights presentation and tips on planning one.
  - [Immigrant Defense Project: Know Your Rights](#)
    - [Flyer](#) [16 Languages- English, Spanish, French, Portuguese, Tagalog, Haitian Creole, Hindi, Bangla, Punjabi, Arabic, Urdu, Simplified Mandarin, Traditional Mandarin, Korean, Russian, Hebrew]
    - Social media graphics
  - [Mijente Materials Prepare Against Raids: “Defend Your Rights”](#) (English and Spanish)
  - [Cielo- Know Your Rights Videos in indigenous languages](#) (Nahuatl, Tzeltal, Akateko)
  - [Asian Law Caucus: Guide for Immigrant Communities in 2025](#) (English, Arabic, Bangla, Chinese, Hmong, Khmer, Korean, Tagalog, Vietnamese)
  - [National Day Laborer Organizing Network Know Your Rights](#) (English)
  - [Muslims for Just Futures Community Defense Resource Hub](#): collection of tools and guidance designed to empower grassroots organizers, mutual aid networks, and solidarity movements. These resources provide critical Know Your Rights (KYR) information and frameworks for navigating infrastructure development, managing risk, and building resilience against state targeting and repression. (Spanish, Punjabi, Urdu, Hindi, Bangla, Nepali, Dari, Pashto)

- **Raid Response Resources**
  - [Playbook for defending immigrants](#) (Siembra NC)
  - [A Guide for Employers: What to Do if Immigration Comes to Your Workplace](#)
- **Supporting people in detention resources**
  - [FFI's finding you loved in detention and National Immigration Hotline](#)
  - [Fighting Deportation Using Participatory Defense \(Webinar\)](#)
  - [When ICE is Watching: Know Your Fight](#) (Community Justice Exchange): Do you check in with ICE and/or ISAP/BI? Learn about risks for arrest and detention and how to reduce them through knowledge and planning ahead (English, French, Cebuano, Spanish, Hindi, Arabic, simplified Chinese, Portuguese, Wolof).
- **Direct Action Resources**
  - [Rucku's Society Direct Action Resources](#)
- **Security and Safety Resources**
  - [Amnesty International Digital Security Resource Hub](#)

## Advocacy Resources

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\*New resources continually posted by [Detention Watch Network](#), [National Immigration Law Center](#), [National Immigration Project-NLG](#), [Immigrant Legal Resource Center](#) and [Immigrant Defense Project](#).

- **Sanctuary Resources**
  - [ACLU Letter and Memo on the Trump Administration's Legally Baseless Threats Against State and Local Officials](#) (January 23, 2025)
  - [Joint Statement from Thirteen State Attorneys General: State and Local Law Enforcement Cannot Be Commandeered for Federal Immigration Enforcement](#) (January 23, 2025)
  - ILRC [Fact Sheet on Sanctuary Policies and 8 USC 1373](#) (February 13, 2017)
  - ILRC [Growing the Resistance How Sanctuary Laws and Policies Have Flourished During the Trump Administration](#) (December 2019)
- **Protections for Students Resources**
  - [NILC's Plyler and Data Collection Factsheet](#): provides information on how schools play a vital role in safeguarding family data during the enrollment and administrative process.
  - [NILC's Key Points to Know About FAFSA Data Security Factsheet](#): highlights how the federal government utilizes FAFSA information. Additionally, states, schools, and other institutions can access FAFSA data for various purposes.

- [NILC's Education For All Campaign Factsheet](#): provides an overview of the Education for All campaign, which fights to ensure access to education for undocumented students.
- **Federal Appropriations Resources**
  - [How to Defund Hate](#): Although the Defund Hate campaign is no longer active, the website continues to provide resources on the budget process and how to advocate for defunding ICE and CBP.

## Communications Resources:

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- [2025 Messaging Guidance to Challenge the Detention, Deportation, and Criminalization of Immigrants](#)

## Additional Resources

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- **Healing Justice Resources**
  - [Care Practices Guide: A Resource for Collective Care in Movement Building](#) by Latinx Therapists Action Network (LTAN) (English and Spanish)
  - [United We Dream Resilience and Community Care Toolkit](#) (English)
- **Political Education Resources**
  - [Detention Watch Network](#)
  - [Critical Resistance](#)
  - [Interrupting Criminalization](#)
- **Zines**
  - “[Rosita Gets Scared](#)”, an interactive comic zine created to help young people understand what it means to be undocumented, available for free as a digital download in Spanish, Tagalog, Vietnamese, and in English.