

# SECTION 2



# COMMUNITY RESPONSE

## Overview

Immediately following the raids in the Bay Area a number of communities quickly rallied to support immigrant families. For example, some cities held “know your rights” community forums with immigration attorneys, elected officials and in some instances, with local police representation.

Some cities in the Bay Area, such as Richmond, East Palo Alto, San Francisco, San Jose and Fairfax passed resolutions recognizing the contributions of immigrants to the US and condemning the ICE raids. (In the third section of this toolkit, you will find the copy of the Richmond City resolution.)

San Francisco and Oakland reaffirmed and in the case of Oakland, updated their “sanctuary” ordinances to clarify when local police departments may, and may not, cooperate with ICE to enforce immigration laws.

In this section, one will find ideas for meeting with their elected officials, including ideas that may be helpful to illustrate the harm that immigration raids cause in our communities by impacting everyone and not just immigrants.

BAIRC developed a document to record ICE raids and to document possible violations of an individual’s rights when ICE neglects to follow proper procedures. This form is also meant to record immigrant community’s experiences during a raid. These stories can be used in meetings with the elected officials and others.

# Meeting with City Officials



BAIRC encourages individuals, groups, and organizations to visit their city officials to explore how government can protect immigrant communities against ICE activities.

BAIRC wants community members to feel prepared to meet with their local elected officials. Included in this section, one will find a sample list of topics to address during a meeting with elected officials.

**If this is the first visit to an elected official**, the visit should result in a meaningful dialogue and the beginning of a respectful relationship. Before the meeting, gather facts about the immigrant community in the city or county, such as, number of immigrant residents in the city, the size of the local immigrant workforce, local industries that depend on immigrant labor, the size of any local 2006 immigrant rights mobilizations or marches.

## Key points to remember before the meeting

- Elected officials may not be aware of the negative impacts of ICE activities on immigrant and non-immigrant communities.
- It is important to be prepared to share examples and stories from local communities.
- It is best when individuals tell their own stories. Local examples and stories are the best tool to help officials understand the impact of raids on communities.

## Examples of points to make during the meeting

- ICE activities impact public safety and increase the distrust between the community and local authorities. This could set back community policing strategies and makes immigrants more vulnerable criminal elements (see memo from Chris Magnus, Richmond Chief of Police, to Bill Lindsay, Richmond City Manager).
- ICE activities impact public health. Immigrants begin to fear going to the doctor or to a clinic (see email from Amy Moy, Vice President of Planned Parenthood to community organizations).
- ICE activities impact children who experience trauma and fear leaving their parents; a result, schools experience high rates of absenteeism (see statement by school Principal – local elementary school in Concord).

### **Find out the type of agreement, if any, which exists between ICE and local law enforcement. For example:**

- Is there an agreement between local police departments/county sheriff and ICE to share information when individuals are arrested and detained?
- Does the local police department/ county sheriff collaborate with ICE when it comes to issues such as gang violence, narcotics, or documentation fraud?

*For assistance on finding this information, contact BAIRC.*

If a particular city or county does collaborate with ICE, request a copy of all written policies describing this particular partnership. This information can be used to educate community members and to advocate the adoption of resolutions and/or ordinances that will respect and protect all community members regardless of immigration status.

# Other Helpful Points for a Meeting with Elected Officials

## **Encourage the adoption of a resolution that urges ICE to identify itself as “Federal Immigration Police” NOT just “Police”.**

- This causes confusion within the immigrant community, and misleads individuals into opening their door to ICE without asking for proper identification first. It also leads to greater distrust between immigrants and law enforcement.

## **Encourage elected officials to publicly voice opposition to ICE activities**

- Statements of opposition by city officials will create the catalyst for change to ICE procedures.
- These statements should be publicized through press conferences, press statements, community forums, and widely distributed inter-city memos
- Encourage elected officials to hold hearings on ICE activities to investigate impacts on community relations and violations of civil rights

## **Any delegation visiting an elected official should be diverse. Consider inviting the following:**

- Representatives of diverse ethnic communities. For example, ICE arrests have included members of the Indian, Brazilian, Afghan, Chinese, and Latino communities among others.
- Representatives of the faith community
- Representatives of organized labor
- Immigrant rights advocates

Documentation at the meeting is important, such as individual testimonies or newspaper, radio or television clips that highlight local examples of ICE activities and their negative impact on community members.

And remember, smile and speak from the heart. Do not be afraid to let your passion and anger show, but always remain respectful and calm.

### What is the difference between an ordinance and a resolution?

An ordinance is legislation. It is meant to create a new law and will include ways to enforce that law. It often takes time to create and pass an ordinance and a lot of time with city officials is needed to make sure everyone understands the issue.

A resolution is not legislation and does not seek to create a new law. Resolutions can be developed and approved quickly. Because a resolution places a city or county on record for having stated something, this is often an effective tool for groups seeking to have their city “on record.”

# Sample - One hour agenda for use in meeting with City Officials



## I. Introductions (5 minutes)

- Make sure that everyone has a chance to say their full name and the group, organization, or sector of the community (s)he is representing.  
*For example: "Hi, my name is Cathy Russ and I'm a concerned member of the community on this issue"*
- Take information highlighting the size and contributions of your local immigrant community.

## II. Discussion on city policies regarding collaboration with ICE (15 minutes)

- Don't forget to request the written policies
- Allow city officials to talk and give you information

## III. Community concerns and impacts (10 minutes)

- Bring as much documentation of local examples of ICE activities and their negative impact on the community
- If there has been no ICE activity in your community – consider yourself lucky! Frame the discussion on how such a thing can be prevented.

## IV. Non-Collaboration Agreements (15 minutes)

- If there is already a law that clearly dictates no-cooperation between local law enforcement, focus on how this law is enforced and how the city educates city employees and department heads as well as the general public about the law.
- If there is no law dictating no-cooperation between local law enforcement, begin to educate elected officials about the benefits to all communities if such a law existed.

## Other asks (15 minutes)

- Public statements
- Community forums
- Press events
- Other resolutions