

UMC Ways to Get Involved

Ways to Get Involved in Welcoming Immigrants to the US

1. Support Interfaith Worker Justice by connecting with a local group (see attached list). This ecumenical group with strong UMC leadership advocates for just labor practices nationally and locally. Local groups challenge “wage theft” and provide support for workers confronted with unjust practices. www.iwj.org, 773-728-8400
2. Learn more about the UM Immigration Clinic Program -- Justice for Our Neighbors (information below). See how you can become a volunteer in this church-based legal services program for immigrants, a program of UMCOR.
3. Find out more about the UMC's stand on immigration. Read the two new General Conference resolutions on Immigration (attached) and use the study questions to explore faith perspectives, current realities, attitudes and potential responses.
4. Call 202-225-3121 and ask for each of your Senators and your Representative. Let them know that as a United Methodist, you support family unity and would like them to co-sponsor the *Reuniting Families Act (S. 1085.HR 2709)* [see details attached.]
5. Urge President Obama and Homeland Security Secretary Napolitano to declare a moratorium on raids, detentions and deportations until the broken immigration system is addressed through just immigration reform. You can do this through letters, via the web (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/CONTACT/>) or through letters to the editor of your local paper. See list of resource people in the United Methodist Church who can provide more information.
6. Urge Congress and the new Administration to make just, comprehensive Immigration Reform a legislative priority this year that unites families, respects the rights of all workers, puts human rights over enforcement as a priority for immigration policy, and enables undocumented immigrants to gain legal status. Go to <http://www.umbcs.org/c.frLJK2PKLqF/b.3634159/siteapps/advocacy/ActionItem.aspx?aid=12356> for information on how to contact your legislators.
7. At the state level, urge your state legislators to avoid legislation that penalizes undocumented immigrants or takes on federal authority in immigration enforcement. This includes opposing "287-G" agreements between the Department of Homeland Security and local law enforcement which deputizes police as immigration agents. This has led to racial profiling and undermines public safety (people are less willing to report crimes).
8. Reach out to immigrants within our churches and in the community to explore how to support them, particularly through assistance to families impacted by raids, detentions and deportations.

INTERFAITH WORKER JUSTICE – WORKER CENTER NETWORK

Arizona

Interfaith Worker Justice of Arizona
331 E. Willetta
Phoenix, AZ 85004
(480) 522-4707 [Rev. Trina Zelle](mailto:Rev.Trina.Zelle)
<http://www.iwjarizona.com/>

Arkansas

Interfaith Worker Justice Center
2200 West Sunset, Suite B-4 (In the Blake Business Center)
Springdale, AR 72762
(479) 750-8015 Rachel Townsend
<http://www.nwawjc.org/>

California

Young Workers United (San Francisco)
P.O. Box 15866
San Francisco, CA 94115-5866
(415) 621-4155 [Dianne Enriquez](mailto:Dianne.Enriquez)
<http://www.youngworkersunited.org>

Illinois

Arise Chicago
1020 W. Bryn Mawr, 3rd Floor
Chicago, IL 60660
(773) 769-6000 Adam Kader

Indiana

St. Joseph Valley Project - Workers' Center
2015 W. Western Ave.
South Bend, IN 46619
(574) 287-3834 Gregor Koso

Michigan

Washtenaw County Workers' Center
(No permanent address at this time)
Ann Arbor, MI
(734) 474-7107 [Alicia Alvarez](mailto:Alicia.Alvarez)
<http://workercenter.org/index.htm>

Minnesota

Interfaith Center for Worker Justice
2604 East 22nd St
Minneapolis, MN 55406
(612) 332-0663 Matt Glaude

Mississippi

MPOWER
383 South Fourth St.
Morton, MS 39117
(601) 732-1898 Marie Thompson
<http://www.mpowercenter.org>

New Jersey

New Labor
103 Bayard St., 2nd Floor
New Brunswick, NJ 08901
(732) 246-2900 Rich Cunningham
<http://www.newlabor.net>

New York

Capital District Workers' Center
33 Central Ave.
Albany, NY 12210
(518) 482-5595 [Gene Rodriguez](mailto:Gene.Rodriguez)
http://www.labor-religion.org/local_cd_wc.htm

Restaurant Opportunities Center (ROC) on New York
275 Seventh, 17th Floor
New York, NY 10001
(212) 343-1771 Rekha Eanni
<http://www.rocny.org>

North Carolina

Central Carolina Workers' Center
Beloved Community Center, PO Box 875
Greensboro, NC 27406
(336) 230-0001 Marilyn Baird

Western NC Workers' Center
PO Box 667
Morganton, NC 28680
(828) 432-5080 Francisco Risso

Ohio

Cincinnati Interfaith Workers' Center
40 E. McMicken Street
Cincinnati, OH 45202
(513) 621-5991 Don Sherman
<http://www.cworkers.org>

Tennessee

Memphis Workers' Center
3035 Directors Row, B - 1207
Memphis, TN 38131
(901) 332-3585, Fax: (901) 332-3532 Rebekah Jordan
<http://www.midsouthinterfaith.org>

Texas

Houston Interfaith Worker Justice Center
c/o Catholic Charities, 2906 Houston Ave.
Houston, TX 77009
(713) 862-8222 [Annica Gorham](mailto:Annica.Gorham)

Workers' Defense Project / Proyecto Defensa Laboral
PO Box 6423
Austin, TX 78762
(512) 391-2305 Cristina Tzintzun
<http://www.workersdefense.org>

Wisconsin

Madison Workers' Right Center
2300 South Park St., Suite 6
Madison, WI 53713
(608) 255-0376 [Patrick Hickey](mailto:Patrick.Hickey)
<http://www.workerjustice.org/wrc.html>

Voces de la Frontera Workers' Center
1027 S. 5th St
Milwaukee, WI 53204
(414) 643-1620 x201 Cristina Newmann-Ortiz
<http://www.vocesdelafrontera.net>

UMC Justice for Our Neighbors Legal Clinics information

Each Justice for Our Neighbors legal clinic is an opportunity for local congregations to "open their doors" with a warm and hospitable welcome for newcomers in their midst. JFON provides a place for community gathering and table fellowship where parishioners and newcomers may come together to seek peace and transformation in a troubled world.

Church Based, Volunteer Led

JFON provides free, professional legal services to immigrants in monthly clinics. This UMCOR program connects a national network of church-based, volunteer-led immigration clinics to asylum seekers and immigrants who need a helping hand to navigate the maze of rules and laws that affect their lives in the United States.

JFON represents the response of the United Methodist Church and its local congregations to the needs of immigrants seeking to reunify their families, secure immigration status, and enjoy the right to work.

The JFON model embraces the mandate of biblical hospitality. The program relies on United Methodist connectional relationships to bring together resources and commitment from local churches, districts, conferences, and UMCOR.

Trained and resourced by UMCOR's national office, JFON volunteers advocate for just and compassionate immigration laws and public policy, networking with other advocacy groups where possible.

The JFON network is coordinated by a national staff in Silver Spring, MD. Some twenty clinic sites in nine annual conferences participate. JFON services are provided by qualified immigration attorneys.

Getting involved...

1. Learn more about JFON by visiting our website: <http://justiceforourneighbors.org> and / or watching a short video about JFON on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vLLXhLTrAdE>
2. Support your local JFON project by volunteering your time and energy or by becoming a donor. Visit <http://new.gbgm-umc.org/umcor/work/immigration/jfon/clinic-site-list/> to find a project near you.
3. If there is no JFON in your Annual Conference, consider starting one. Contact Alice Mar, JFON Program Manager for more information. AMar@gbgm-umc.org
4. Donate to the JFON Advance # 901285

***Call Your Senators and Representative Today
Urge Them to Support and Co-Sponsor
The Reuniting Families Act (S. 1085, H.R. 2709)***

Call 202-225-3121 and ask for each of your Senators and your Representative, and tell them:

Hi, my name is _____ and I'm from _____. As a United Methodist, I believe family is the bedrock of society. Please keep families together by supporting and co-sponsoring the Reuniting Families Act (S. 1085.HR 2709).

The Reuniting Families Act is a bill to help family members reunite in America in a timely manner. This bill would reform America's family-based immigration system to end lengthy separations of loved ones, promote family stability and foster the economic growth that immigrant families have provided throughout our history. As a result of current long waits, many family members who apply for visas in the prime of their lives are not granted admission until they reach retirement age. The current system has not been updated in 20 years — it keeps spouses and children and their parents apart for years and even decades. Specifically, the bill would:

- **Recapture unused family-based and employment-based visas previously allocated by Congress which remain unused:** Unused and unclaimed visas from 1992 to 2007 would be placed back into the pool of current visas for families and employers to utilize, and unused visas in future fiscal years would “roll over” to the next year.
- **Allow green card holders to reunite with their spouses and minor children:** The bill classifies the children and spouses of lawful permanent residents as “immediate relatives.” This would allow lawful permanent residence spouses and children to immediately qualify for a visa.
- **Increase the per country limits of family and employment-based visas from 7% to 10%:** Right now, each country only has a 7% share of the total cap of visas that Congress allocates each year. Small countries and large countries get the same percentage under current law. Increasing each country's percentage of visas would eliminate the absurdly long wait times for individuals to immigrate from large countries like China and India.
- **Allow widows and widowers to immigrate despite death of a petitioner:** Every year, a number of immigrants are deported because the U.S. citizen relative or lawful permanent resident relative who sponsored them has died before the government adjudicated their applications. The bill addresses the immigration-related hardships caused by these family tragedies by clarifying that the government should continue to process the applications of immigrants who are already in line to receive a family visa at the time of their sponsoring relative's death.
- **Promote family unity by allowing more people to use the system:** The bill would also allow more people to use our family immigration system by giving the Attorney General more power to waive barriers for immigrants who have been present unlawfully in the past. Similar to other provisions in current law, this provision allows an already eligible individual to immigrate to the U.S. if he or she demonstrates hardship to a family member or eligibility for an immigrant visa.

United Methodist Women's Immigrant Rights/Civil Rights Initiative

Steps for Action – April 2009

The major advocacy focus of UMW on immigrant/civil rights at the national level in 2009 is:

- a) Urge President Obama and Homeland Security Secretary Napolitano to declare a moratorium on raids, detentions and deportations until the broken immigration system is addressed through just immigration reform; and
- b) Urge Congress and the new Administration to make Comprehensive Immigration Reform a legislative priority this year that unites families, respects the rights of all workers, puts human rights over enforcement as a priority for immigration policy, and enables undocumented immigrants to gain legal status.
- c) At the state level, we urge states to avoid legislation that penalizes undocumented immigrants or takes on federal authority in immigration enforcement. This includes:
 - Opposing “287-G” agreements between the Department of Homeland Security and local law enforcement which deputizes police as immigration agents. This has led to racial profiling and undermines public safety (people are less willing to report crimes).
 - Encouraging municipalities to become “sanctuary” cities. This guarantees services like health care and public education without asking for documentation, without fear that a person’s status will be reported to Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE).
 - Ensure that undocumented immigrants will continue to be able to obtain driver’s licenses, without questioning their immigration status. This is essential to guarantee public safety and to avoid a proliferation of unlicensed, unregulated drivers, as well as to enable immigrants to get to work.

What you can do:

1. Write to President Obama and Homeland Security Secretary Napolitano urging them to declare a moratorium on raids, detentions and deportations until the broken immigration system is addressed through just Reform.
2. Visit your Congressional representatives to get to know the staff working on immigration, find out their views, and urge them to push for Comprehensive Immigration Reform.
3. Let your state officials know you oppose state involvement in immigration enforcement, including “287-G” agreements between the Department of Homeland Security and local law enforcement which deputizes police as immigration agents. This has led to racial profiling and undermines public safety (people are less willing to report crimes).

4. Write letters to the editor to raise concerns about current immigration policy at the federal, state and/or local level; to call for a moratorium on raids, detentions and deportations; and to call for just immigration reform.
5. Reach out to immigrants within our churches and in the community to explore how to support them, particularly through assistance to families impacted by raids, detentions and deportations. Have a house gathering to watch the movie *The Visitor* (www.thevisitorfilm.com). A study and action guide by Active Voice is available on line at www.scribd.com/doc/6338125/The-Visitor-Discussion-Guide. Find out how you can visit immigrants in a local detention center.
6. Read new UMC Resolutions, *Welcoming the Migrant to the US*, #3281, p. 412; *Global Migration and the Quest for Justice*, #6028, p. 754

Background:

United Methodist Women have been actively engaged in an initiative on Immigrant Rights/Civil Rights since 2006. The initiative affirmed by the Women's Division views immigrant rights as a racial justice concern that calls us to live out the Charter for Racial Justice both within the organization of United Methodist Women and in society. United Methodist women affirm United Methodist Church policy, which states that *"To refuse to welcome migrants to this country and to stand by in silence while families are separated, individual freedoms are ignored, and the migrant community in the US is demonized...is complicity to sin."* [Welcoming the Migrant to the US, United Methodist General Conference 2008] United Methodist Women have held vigils to challenge ICE raids in Tennessee and to protest detentions in New York City; they have petitioned to support the right of education for children in detention; they have provided material support to families whose loved ones are in detention; they have advocated for just immigration reform with elected officials. In Iowa and Colorado they circulated petitions calling on elected officials to make this a welcoming nation for immigrants. They rallied for Immigrant and Civil rights in Ft. Worth at General Conference, and for the labor rights of immigrant workers in Houston. They have challenged anti-immigrant hate groups in local communities and advocated for the civil liberties of all immigrants.

In early 2009, United Methodist Women supported 17 "Family Unity Hearings" spearheaded by Congressman Gutierrez. The faith-based hearings enabled families to share stories with elected officials of how detentions and deportations are separating families and impacted citizens as well as new immigrants. United Methodist Women participated in some of the 170 prayer vigils held across the country in February led by the Interfaith Immigration Coalition. UMW have lifted up immigration in Legislative Events, held educational events, attended seminars through the Seminar Program, and shared through the UMW online community.

United Methodist Women's Immigrant/Civil Rights Initiative, April, 2009
Contact: Carol Barton, Community Action, 777 UN Plaza, 11th floor, New York, NY 10017;
212-682-3633; cbarton@gbgm-umc.org; www.umwmission.org (see quick link to "immigration" at bottom of home page); www.umwonline.org (join immigration community).

**Interfaith Immigration Coalition
Grassroots Schedule of Events
Summer 2009**

June 1 National Faith and Immigration Conference Call-In Day

June 1 is International Children's Day, and so at 4 pm EST we will have a brief conference call where we will provide legislative updates on family immigration and a specific message in support of family immigration reform. Once the brief conference call is over, participants will call their Representative and Senators through the Capitol Hill switchboard, as well as other members in their local faith communities to make the same calls. We want to begin to "flood" House and Senate offices with calls in support of comprehensive immigration reform.

June 3 Campaign Launch and Summit Faith Caucusing Time in Washington DC 9-11:30

Key faith leaders from strategic states will be coming to attend the larger summit and during the first day we will be meeting together to hear what is happening in strategic states and sharing with one another our plans for future possibilities of engagement to help move comprehensive immigration reform in the fall. The Reform Immigration for America Summit will continue through June 5.

July 6 National Faith and Immigration Conference Call-In Day

As the United States celebrates independence on July 4, at 4 pm EST on the next Monday, we will have a brief conference call where we will offer legislative updates on immigration, specifically focusing on citizenship. We will discuss specific messaging in support of a pathway to citizenship for all undocumented immigrants. Once the brief conference call is over, participants will call their Representative and Senators through the Capitol Hill switchboard, as well as other members in their local faith communities to make the same calls. On both call-in days, emphasis will be given to developing a strategy around creating local networks to call in and make the faith voice heard on Capitol Hill.

Summer Made in LA screenings

A number of the groups within the IIC are encouraging their local groups/congregations to host community screenings of the film to help spread awareness and mobilize advocacy for comprehensive immigration reform.

August-September 7 Month of Action

The focus is to mobilize faith communities in strategic states and districts to have contact with Members of Congress and urge their support for comprehensive immigration reform in the fall. The means of Member contact will vary, based on what the local faith communities feel is most effective and appropriate for their context:

- Host a prayer vigil and invite your Member of Congress
- Neighbor to neighbor in-district lobby visit
- Invite your Member of Congress to a potluck/town hall meeting called, Breaking Bread and Barriers, hosted by several congregations, with the purpose of having Congressional Representatives share their stance on comprehensive immigration reform, answer questions, and for the community to highlight positive contributions of immigrants.

Resources for how to put together each of these events will be sent to interested faith communities.