

# TIP SHEET:

## RESPONDING TO IMMIGRATION RAIDS IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

Recently, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations department conducted various raids affecting thousands of undocumented immigrants in rural America. On Aug. 8, 2018, Homeland Security Investigations conducted a raid in north central Nebraska. The town most affected—O’Neill, Nebraska, has a population of approximately 3,635, and is three hours away from the closest metropolitan city, Lincoln, Nebraska. The Center for Rural Affairs was able to help in response to the raid and, in turn, developed this tip sheet for rural communities that may be affected in the future.

Resources are limited in rural communities; therefore, volunteers and local community members are vital to an emergency response. As we helped undocumented immigrants and their families, we soon understood that important resources such as food, lodging, and financial and legal services were more than three hours away. We strive to help all rural communities in the U.S. by sharing this tip sheet and it is our hope it alleviates some work if a rural community is affected by a raid in the future.

### KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Our undocumented neighbors and fellow citizens alike must be aware of their rights and how to respond if they were to be arrested by an ICE agent.

1 In Nebraska, you have the right to remain silent. If asked, make sure to state your real name.

Ask to speak to a lawyer. Contact the Nebraska Immigrant Legal Assistance Hotline for a list of attorneys in Nebraska at 855.307.6730 or [nilah.org](http://nilah.org). If you are detained, have a family member request a Pro Bono Detainee application to apply for pro-bono assistance. The application can be found in both English and Spanish at [ciraconnect.org/legal-representation/](http://ciraconnect.org/legal-representation/).

3 Do not sign anything without an attorney present.

Carry a Know Your Rights card. Download one from American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Nebraska at [aclunebraska.org/en/know-your-rights/rights-with-law-enforcement](http://aclunebraska.org/en/know-your-rights/rights-with-law-enforcement). This card provides tips for interacting with the police/ICE and helps you exercise your rights.

5 Review the Rights and Planning Guide for important paperwork to fill out in advance at [ciraconnect.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/The-Rights-and-Plannig-Guide-2019.pdf](http://ciraconnect.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/The-Rights-and-Plannig-Guide-2019.pdf).

### RAID RESPONSE

If a raid has happened and you need assistance in responding, contact your local or statewide immigration rights organizations. In Nebraska, contact ACLU of Nebraska, Immigrant Legal Center, or Nebraska Appleseed.

- Appoint a local point of contact.
- Assign a legal coordinator to assist with organizing legal services through partner organizations.
- Designate a central place for services—preferably a church in which individuals can claim sanctuary if ICE returns.
- Communicate constantly with the rapid response team via group text, phone conference, or email.

If there is no local rapid response team, recruit interested volunteers to be part of a team.

Rapid response team members will coordinate the following areas:

- » Media
- » Schools
- » Faith entities
- » Donations
- » Law enforcement
- » Health and wellness
- » Volunteers



## RURAL RAID NEEDS

- › When responding to a rural raid, there will be a high demand for interpreters in the area.
- › Ask partner agencies planning to assist that they bring their own interpreters due to the scarcity of bilingual interpreters in rural areas.
- › There will be a need to organize transportation. Find volunteers who are willing to transport individuals to and from check-ins or court appearances.
- › Confidentiality is very important. Request a volunteer attorney to draft a confidentiality agreement or utilize an agreement that is already in place to have all volunteers sign.
- › Materials that will be needed at the central location include:



Printer/Copier

Paper



Pens

Scanner



Wi-Fi hotspot

Laptop



Sign-in sheets

Case management worksheet



Legal services intake form

Confidentiality agreement



Wagons or carts

Access to a phone line or internet



## MEDIA

The media contact will be an important role in organizing a press conference within the first day or two after the raid. Showing the human aspect of the raid is important. If individuals are willing to share their story, be cautious of disclosing their real identity or have a documented family member speak on their behalf.

## DONATIONS

- › Food donations—make sure to write a list of culturally appropriate foods that individuals will utilize in the coming months.
- › Financial donations—utilize stories to get the need out, but be cautious of using immigrant's identities. Set up an online fundraising page. Ideally, this page will also include a blog to let people know the progress of the work as well as the needs.

## HELPFUL ORGANIZATIONS

Nebraska organizations that may be able to assist during the response:

- › ACLU of Nebraska
- › Catholic Charities
- › Center for Rural Affairs
- › Grand Island Multicultural Coalition
- › Grand Island Latino Network
- › Heartland Workers Center
- › Immigrant Legal Center
- › Lutheran Family Services
- › Nebraska Appleseed
- › Centro Hispano

Nationwide immigration raid rapid response resources:

- › United We Dream: [unitedwedream.org/#join-uwed](https://unitedwedream.org/#join-uwed)
- › Detention Watch Network: [detentionwatchnetwork.org](https://detentionwatchnetwork.org)
- › American Civil Liberties Union: [aclu.org/issues/immigrants-rights](https://aclu.org/issues/immigrants-rights)
- › National Justice for Our Neighbors: [njfon.org](https://njfon.org)
- › National Partnership for New Americans: [partnershipfornewamericans.org](https://partnershipfornewamericans.org)

