



Community Organizing and Activism: Confronting Injustice in Public Spaces



Immigrant Rights

"We don't have to be alone. We can support each other."

– Maria Peralta Porras, Siembra NC Volunteer

OVERVIEW

Immigrants and their children comprise 28% of the United States population according to the Council on Foreign Relations (<https://www.cfr.org/social-issues/immigration-and-migration>). Following 9/11, the debate over immigration shifted as fear of terrorism spread. In 2003, Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE) was established within the Department of Homeland Security and today operates 400 offices around the world with 20,000 law enforcement and staff members under a \$6 billion annual budget (<https://www.ice.gov/>).

While some politicians believe there should be stricter limits on immigration, others consider ICE actions and raids to be inhumane and detrimental to the economic, social, and political well-being of the country. As a result, in recent years, some 700 cities and states have refused to cooperate with ICE's secret raids, opting instead to promote greater diversity and inclusion within their communities.

Siembra NC is a grassroots group working to protect Latinx residents through education and organizing efforts to affect change in local immigration policies. Documented and undocumented members of the community, as well as their allies, collectively resist programs of deportation, fight back against wage theft, and assist K-12 families in navigating educational goals for undocumented children (<https://siembranc.org/>).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the history of immigration practices and policies in the United States?
2. What reforms are needed to ensure immigrant rights are protected?
3. In what ways do immigrants and their work impact the economy?
4. What paths for citizenship exist for immigrants?
5. Why and how are large companies allowed to employ undocumented immigrants?
6. How can we make sure immigrants are treated fairly and humanely in all areas of their lives?