



MUUSAN IMMIGRANT JUSTICE TOOLKIT

Maine Unitarian Universalist State Advocacy Network (MUUSAN)

www.muusan.org — admin@muusan.org

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This “toolkit” has been assembled by MUUSAN’s Racial, Native and Immigrant Justice Issue Group as a follow-up to the August 2018 MUUSAN SanctUUary Summit. Some of its contents were distributed to Summit participants before or at that event, but most are included as a result of workshops and discussions that followed. Not all of the included materials will be relevant to or useable by all congregations, but we hope there will be something here for everyone!

TOOLS INCLUDE:

1. **MUUSAN Immigrant Justice Resource List (August 2018):** a compilation, with contact information, of organizations and programs around the state working with immigrants and immigrant issues (10 p.)
https://www.muusan.org/uploads/2/1/1/2/21123334/muusan_immigrant_justice_resource_list_final.pdf
2. **Summary of Maine UU Congregational Involvement With Immigrant Justice:** survey responses from 20 UU congregations pre-Summit (2 p.). Write to Betsy at admin@muusan.org.
3. **SanctUUary Summit Primer 2018: Simple Steps to Get Started and Build Relationships for Immigrant Justice** (1 p.)
https://www.muusan.org/uploads/2/1/1/2/21123334/muusan_sanctuary_summit_primer.pdf
4. Tools for understanding legal rights and terminology:
 - a. **ACLU’s “Sanctuary Congregations and Harboring FAQ”** (2017) (8 p.);
<https://www.nwirp.org/wp-content/uploads/.../ACLU-Sanctuary-FAQ-March-2017.pdf>
 - b. **ACLU’s “Know Your Rights: In the 100-Mile Border Zone”** (4 p.);
<https://www.aclu.org/know-your-rights-100-mile-border-zone>
 - c. **Introduction to Immigration:** Multicultural Resources list from Maine DHHS Office of Multicultural Affairs includes explanation of how “immigrants,” “refugees,” and “asylees” differ (2 p.); <https://www.muusan.org/racial-justice.html>

- d. **Frequently Asked Questions:** Compiled by Catholic Charities Refugee and Immigration Services with particular focus on refugees and secondary migrants (8 p.) <https://www.ccmaine.org> › Refugee Immigration Services
5. Information About Immigrants in Maine
 - a. **Immigrants in Maine:** American Immigration Council useful information and statistics, especially about the economic impact of immigrants in Maine. (Note that some statistics refer to all foreign-born Maine residents rather than simply recently arrived immigrants, such as asylum-seekers) (5 p.); <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/immigrants-in-maine>
 - b. **Maine Immigration Data Profile:** Migration Policy Institute compilation of statistics (current through 2016) about Maine’s foreign-born residents (4 p.) <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/data/state-profiles/state/demographics/ME>
 6. **Literacy Volunteers of America—Maine Affiliate Offices** (4 p.) <https://www.muusan.org/racial-justice.html>
 7. **Unifymaine “Hate Crimes and Bias Incidents”** tri-fold brochure explains the difference and what you can do about them (2 p.) <https://www.muusan.org/racial-justice.html>
 8. Sanctuary materials:
 - a. **“Sanctuary in the Age of Trump”** explains background of the sanctuary movement and its growth under the Trump administration (13 p.); <https://www.sanctuarynotdeportation.org/sanctuary-report-2018.html>
 - b. **UUA Sanctuary Toolkit** (February 2017) available at the UUA website includes not only background on the religious sanctuary movement, but step by step suggestions for how to assess your congregation’s capacity and commitment, physical space and other logistical needs/resources, and how to get the process rolling. (43 p.) For further information on UU sanctuary, visit the UUA Sanctuary Movement page at <https://www.uua.org/immigration/witness/partners/newsanctuary>
 9. **Additional UU Resources for Immigrant Justice Work** (1 p.) <https://www.muusan.org/racial-justice.html>

HOW TO USE THESE TOOLS:

1. Open channels of communication to learn what’s happening:
 - a. Sign up for MUUSAN’s Immigrant Justice Google group (instructions for joining on MUUSAN website);
 - b. Watch for news on MUUSAN’s website and Facebook page;
 - c. “Like” the Facebook pages of organizations in the Resource List (see Tools, above) that might have information and events you’d want to hear about;

- d. Sign up for immigrant-focused electronic or print newsletters from groups such as the Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project (ILAP) headquartered in Portland but serving all of Maine's immigrants.
2. Research who and where the immigrants are in your community (or within reasonable travel distance)
 - a. Review the Resource List (*see Tools, above*) to see what groups serving immigrants are located or serve clients in your area: be sure to check their Facebook pages for the most current information about programs and events;
 - b. Check with your town's adult education program and any area shelters;
 - c. Inquire at local farms about immigrant farmworkers;
 - d. Learn which government or nonprofit programs and services in your area are utilized by immigrants, (e.g., English language learning programs) and consider volunteering. These are places where you have the opportunity to build relationships of trust and demonstrate your willingness to contribute;
 - e. Explore whether there are immigrant-owned or led businesses, organizations or volunteer projects in your area. These provide the best opportunities of all — to be an ally and willing worker without trying to run the show! ;
 - f. Connect with the closest Literacy Volunteers affiliate — they often work with English-learners (*see Tools, above*);
 - g. Check your local school to see if there are immigrant families who might need some extra assistance, whether education-related or otherwise, that you could offer through a school social worker.
3. Raise awareness in your congregation and community about Maine's immigrants: help spread an attitude of welcome!
 - a. Invite a speaker or religious leader of an immigrant faith community to appear in your pulpit or at another event like a film-and-discussion night;
 - b. Check out Color of Community in the Resource List (*see Tools, above*)—or for that matter, contact any of the listed organizations about making a speaker available. Most would welcome the opportunity!;
 - c. Consider challenging the congregation each week to learn how to offer an appropriate greeting in the native language of one of Maine's immigrant groups and celebrate anyone who finds an opportunity to try it out on a speaker of that language. (www.wikihow.com can provide you with appropriate foreign language greetings, complete with pronunciation);
 - d. Educate yourselves about hate crimes and bias statements (*see Tools, above*) and consider inviting a representative of UnifyME to hold a community conversation in your area.
4. Find out what connections members of your congregation may already have with immigrants and what skills they may possess that could impact your congregation's activities. Consider a survey asking members such questions as:
 - a. Whether they would like to be notified by a brief email or other method if there are opportunities for immigrant justice work on behalf of the congregation (which could include rallies and protests);

- b. What aspect of immigrant justice/assistance work they would like to see the congregation involved in or taking a leadership role on;
 - c. What work they may already be engaged in that serves, impacts or offers connections with immigrants and immigrant issues (this could include board work, tutoring or even financial support or certain organizations);
 - d. What skills, expertise and/or interests they might bring to the congregation's immigrant justice work (especially foreign language abilities!)
5. Become a Sanctuary Church (To our knowledge, there are no active sanctuary churches in Maine as of 1/2019. If we learn of any, we will make that known through our Immigrant Justice Google group)
 - a. Read "Sanctuary in the Age of Trump" (*see Tools, above*);
 - b. Read ACLU materials on sanctuary (*see Tools, above*) to understand the legal landscape of providing sanctuary;
 - c. Review and follow the steps set out in the UUA Sanctuary Toolkit (*see Tools, above*).
6. Sponsor or mentor an immigrant family or individual adult or young person
 - a. A Portland-based program called Hopeful Links assists young people who have come to the US alone, seeking hosts willing to house them and help them feel safe while Hopeful Links assists them to get stabilized and plugged into Portland Adult Ed to begin learning English. (*see Tools, above*) (please note correction to email contact: lucky.hollander @ gmail.com);
 - b. Several groups on the Resource List (*see Tools, above*) can provide models for sponsoring a family (*e.g.*, Capital Area New Mainers Project and Waterville Area New Mainers Project). In considering helping to move a new family to your area, keep in mind that a good job paying living wages and decent affordable housing are essential to an immigrant's success in our Maine communities and among the most helpful things you can provide;
 - c. Contact Showing Up For Immigrant Justice (SURJ)(www.showingupforracialjustice.org) for information on being a sponsor for current asylum seekers released from detention at the southern border. (Note: you cannot sign up to be a sponsor of an unaccompanied child);
 - d. Many of the organizations listed in the Resource List (*see Tools, above*) have volunteer opportunities that offer longer-term one-on-one relationships with immigrants, such as tutoring. *E.g.*, if you are in the Greater Portland area, consider the volunteer housing coach program of Prosperity Maine's Supporting Immigrant Tenants program, through which you can work with a newly arrived immigrant to help them understand the U.S. rental housing system and have a successful tenant experience.
7. COLLABORATE:
 - a. Almost all of Maine's active UU congregations are within a one-hour drive of Bangor, Augusta or Portland, so don't forget the synergy involved in teaming up to fill a volunteer need at an event or share costs to sponsor a speaker or film. (At a

recent MUUSAN network meeting, we experimented with brainstorming using these geographical clusters: **Bangor**: with Dexter and Dover-Foxcroft/Sangerville; Ellsworth; Castine; Pittsfield; and Belfast. **Augusta**: with Auburn; Damariscotta; Rockland; Waterville; and Norway. **Portland** (2 congregations): with Saco/Biddeford; Sanford; Kennebunk; Yarmouth; and Brunswick)

- b. Consider collaborating with other faith groups (e.g., the Catholic and Lutheran denominations have long been leaders in immigrant justice work). The Brunswick UU church has successfully partnered with several other religious organizations in the area to form the Midcoast New Mainers Support Group, which has helped a number of asylum seeker families with relocation to the Midcoast area. Cathey Cyrus of the Brunswick Church is willing to share their experience with congregations considering similar undertakings. (wdclark @ gwi.net — please write MNMSG in memo line)

8. DONATE:

- a. Any of the organizations on the Resource List (*see* Tools, above) would be thrilled to be the recipient of a half-plate collection or other financial donation
- b. If you prefer to purchase and provide a specific item with your funds, consider bus passes (if your town has public transit) or phone cards

9. ADVOCATE:

- a. Participate actively when MUUSAN puts out the call for letters to the editor or phone calls to legislators with respect to pending legislation that affects immigrants;
- b. Get access to information about rallies and protests and keep an email or phone list of members who wish to be notified so that you can act quickly. With more notice, consider a congregational event to paint protest signs.

10. CONTEMPLATE: As you proceed with your efforts to promote justice for immigrants in our communities, our state, and our nation, remember that the work we do is grounded in the principles of our faith and can nurture the spirit of life within us as well.

In choosing an immigrant justice path for your congregation, it may be helpful to acknowledge — preferably out loud:

As people of faith, Unitarian Universalists are called to live out our values and practice our principles through the work of justice. We affirm the worth, dignity, and human rights of all persons, regardless of their nationality, religion, or legal status. Our love knows no borders, so we stand in solidarity with all people, all families, regardless of citizenship status, and strive to create welcoming communities and congregations. We stand with the immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers in our state, as well as those yet to come. We commit to love our neighbors and to advocate for policies that protect the most vulnerable among us. We witness the suffering caused by immigration policies as inhumane and immoral. We are committed to making Maine a welcoming, safe, and loving place for all people. We hope this Toolkit provides you and Unitarian Universalists across the state ways to put your faith into action. – Rev. Christina Sillari