

GLSEN[®]
SOLIDARITY
WEEK



Intro to Immigration Justice

LGBTQ+ immigrants in the United States encounter unique obstacles to securing protection and safety, particularly when caught up in the immigration enforcement and detention systems. One in four substantiated incidents of sexual abuse in immigration detention involved a transgender individual over a four-year period. Further, LGBTQ+ immigrants pursuing claims to protection that are related to their sexual orientation or gender identity often face discriminatory attitudes in the immigration court system that lead to denials of immigration protection and longer periods of detention (From the National Immigrant Justice Center).

At GLSEN, we're working to build a world in which every student is safe and affirmed. According to the Williams Institute, there are **over 81,000 LGBT DREAMers, and of that, 39,000 have participated in DACA**. It's imperative that we are creating safeguards for students, regardless of their immigration status, to thrive and learn. When fear and anxiety permeate the air around a student's livelihood, structure, and safety, there's a direct impact on their ability to learn and succeed in school. Our commitment to safe and affirming schools must include a lens of immigration justice.

What does a commitment to immigration justice look like?

Advocating for immigration justice can look a number of different ways, from volunteering for immigrant rights organizations in your community, to learning about policies that affect immigrants and supporting legislators who will protect immigrant rights, to taking direct action to protect immigrant individuals and families, and more. Keep reading for some ways you can take action to support immigrants.

Ways to support immigrants in your community

- Talk to immigrant students of **various statuses** in your school about what supports would be helpful to them, then work with your administration to establish appropriate policies and programs.
- Engage in advocacy to get police out of your school. Local police departments often collaborate with ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) which can create unsafe situations for undocumented students.
- Work with local immigrant rights organizations to offer trainings at your school so that all school staff can better support immigrant students.
- With a school club or a group of peers, gather materials to donate to a nonprofit that works with immigrants who have recently been released from detention centers.

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- If you speak a language other than English, you can offer translation services within your school or community. You can also become a volunteer translator through **Translators Without Borders**, a nonprofit organization that offers translation services in a number of languages.

Engage in policy advocacy

Policies that affect immigrants are constantly being proposed and considered at the state and federal level. Even if you can't vote, you can make your voice heard by calling or emailing your representatives about policies you care about, and by signing petitions to show your support for a particular policy.

- Read through **this list from Immigration Equality**, an LGBTQ+ immigration rights organization, to learn about some current legislative priorities regarding immigration. If anything in particular interests you, do a Google search to learn more about it!
- Congress spends more than \$25 billion each year to detain immigrants through ICE and CBP. **Sign this petition** to show your support for defunding these programs.
- **Sign this petition** to encourage Congress to pass a permanent legislative solution that will provide a pathway to citizenship for immigrant youth.

Keep up with immigration rights organizations

This list includes just a few national immigrant justice organizations, but if you're interested in doing work in your community, you can Google immigrant rights organizations in your city or state to find more. Many of the organizations listed below have newsletters so that you can stay up-to-date on their work and on the landscape of immigrant rights in general. Signing up for these newsletters can be a great way to keep learning about immigrant justice on a regular basis.

- **American Civil Liberties Union (Immigrants' Rights page)**
- **Immigration Equality**
- **National Immigration Law Center**
- **National Immigrant Justice Center**
- **Southern Poverty Law Center (Immigrant Justice page)**
- **UnLocal Queer Immigrant Justice Project**