

Safe Ways to Get Involved

by Cynthia Tschampl

1. **Join a group that organizes advocacy activities.** Actions have more impact when they are focused, plus there is often safety in numbers. Your group may also be able to help you find legal assistance if something goes wrong. For a list of possible organizations that either provide legal services or organize in their communities, please visit <www.miracoalition.org/services>.
2. **Write a letter to the editor** (or even a full opinion piece) of your local newspaper. Newspapers do collect addresses and phone numbers with submissions, but they remain confidential; only your name and city are printed if your letter is printed.
3. **Share your story.** Laws affect lives, and telling your personal story shows the impact of existing laws. Many groups collect personal stories for advocacy days, educational packets, press conferences, and other events.
4. **Attend a march or rally.** Stay away from counter-protesters or people opposed to your group's stance! They often become a flashpoint of conflict and therefore, negative media attention. In general, always keep calm and positive, and encourage those around you to do the same.
5. **Participate in solidarity days.** Perhaps you cannot take a day off work, but you can wear the appropriate color, or tell your co-workers and family what the day means.
6. **Boycott.** You can advocate for change with your dollars. Spend them on companies you believe in, and avoid buying products from groups that abuse their workers or that take advantage of immigrants.
7. **Register people to vote.** Perhaps you are not eligible to vote yet, but you can help empower those who are. Learn about which candidates are friendly towards immigrants and educate others, walk with them to the voting station, help translate for voters, etc.
8. **Volunteer with a campaign to elect someone you really believe in.** Campaigns always need volunteers to stuff envelopes, make phone calls, run errands, hand out flyers, etc. In short, there is something for folks with all levels of English ability.
9. **Visit your legislators at the State House or in their district offices.** The State House is a public facility, open to everyone. You may not be a full-fledged "constituent" (someone who is eligible to vote and lives in the elected official's district), but you do live here and pay taxes. Therefore, you should feel free to set up an appointment and to share your opinions/concerns about the issues you care about. It would be best to do so with a group of like-minded folks from your area. If you can't visit in person, write letters!
10. **Attend city or town council or school committee/board meetings.** This will help to keep you informed about your community and to keep the local elected officials accountable. It will also be a visible sign that you care about your community. If they are going to discuss a proposal of particular interest, be sure to bring your friends and family. It also helps to take notes in case follow-up actions are required.

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