

Many Ways for Immigrants to Participate

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We believe that participating in a community is important because it allows immigrants' voices to be heard. When our community is affected by a common problem, we come together to help find solutions. As immigrants, we may not be able to vote, but we can participate in religious groups, fundraisers, protests, neighborhood groups, and school organizations.

When we are involved with our community, we experience teamwork. We gain awareness and learn how to take action. Each one of us participates in our community by being active in our church or mosque. For example, we help organize

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field trips, wedding programs, graduations, holiday celebrations, funerals, and other events that impact our community. We are active in community programs that help prepare food for the needy. We load and unload goods, and we collect money. We also volunteer in our school government. We coordinate donations of food and coats for the winter.

Sometimes, immigrants are hesitant to participate because we feel we have no time or that we do not speak English very well or maybe we feel afraid. Recently, our class spoke in front of the whole school. We shared with other students in the auditorium about why they should take the English Health class. When we went on the stage, we were very nervous but by the end, we felt confident. We wanted to share our message about how you can be healthy and learn English. We believe immigrants should stand up to be counted!



Sawdatou Dia is from Mauritania. She has two children, and she likes to play with her kids in her free time. Meskerem Hailemichael is from Ethiopia. Her son and daughter live in Ethiopia with her husband. She works as a floor attendant in the Delta Sky Club at Reagan National Airport. Hanna Serbaga is from Ethiopia. She wants to go to college for nursing. She loves to play with her cousin's kids and read in her free time. All three writers are students in the English Health class at the Carlos Rosario Public Charter School in Washington, DC. (To protect her privacy, one student turned her back to the camera.)

AFTER YOU READ:

1. List some of the *general* as well as *specific* ways the authors participate in community. What might make them hesitate to participate? And what are some of the benefits they get from being involved?
2. Read the article on p. 28. Make a list of some of the ways you could get involved.