



**COMMUNITY EXPLAINER**

## **CHALLENGES IN IDENTIFYING PEOPLE ARRESTED IN AN ICE RAID: SHORT- & LONG-TERM STRATEGIES**

Under the second Trump administration, enforcement actions - also referred to as raids - are happening swiftly and capturing anywhere from a single person to hundreds of people. Local rapid response networks around the country are receiving reports of ICE activity, verifying or confirming whether the reports are accurate, and providing as much support to the people detained and their loved ones as possible. We have guidance [here](#) about what to do after a community member is arrested by ICE, including what kind of information to gather and how to locate them within the detention system.

But what about when you don't know who has been arrested? Responders could find out about arrests in a number of ways that would not give them the identities of the people arrested:

- News reports;
- Community member call reporting something they observed but were not involved in;
- Validators or confirmers (people who go to the location of a reported raid to confirm the report) who were not able to get to the site of the arrests while they were happening;
- DHS press release or social media post;
- Rumors and reports in the days after an arrest.
- In these situations, it's not always obvious or easy to determine how to respond - if you don't know who has been arrested, how can you support them or their loved ones? Your network or coalition should assess your collective capacity before deciding which steps you take, and how much time you want to invest in investigating.

An important thing to keep in mind as you approach investigating a raid is that affected communities may already be developing their own responses and likely have existing networks of communication. For example, there are frequently WhatsApp chats or other ways that immigrant communities share information. **Building sustained relationships with people who are at risk of ICE arrests is a way to act in solidarity and in harmony with the efforts community leaders may already be undertaking and to be invited into continued communication.** Long-term investment in relationships can build trust so that those folks know that they can also reach out to you for support if something happens.

On the next page are some steps you can take, with considerations and tips to move at the speed of trust, meaning prioritizing relationship-building with affected communities over taking action quickly.

## 1. GOING TO THE RAID LOCATION.

Your approach here may depend on whether the arrests took place at a business or a home - going to a business to see if there is anyone who can answer questions about what happened is very different than going into a neighborhood or knocking on a door. One of the most important things is to read the room - if you sense that a family does not want to share, or is not in an emotional state that allows them to share, don't push for information.

### **Business**

- Look at the type of business and assess whether it is important to have someone from the same community as those arrested approach the business (*for example: it's in a part of town that is primarily Spanish-speaking, so it might not help to send a monolingual English-speaker*).
- Also consider whether someone with a power-up<sup>1</sup> identity might cause additional stress in the community (*for example: a white person walking around a shopping center asking about ICE after a mass arrest might cause additional fear or at least meet with suspicion*).
- It is also critical to assess risk and privilege among responders to determine who is best suited to go to the site (*for example: someone with DACA or anyone who is a noncitizen and who has any kind of criminal record might not be as safe in a place of high ICE activity as someone who has a green card with no criminal history, or a U.S. citizen*).
- If approaching the business owner, consider that this person might not be aligned with the interests of the workers. Some business owners or managers will want to see their workers supported; others have a primary interest in protecting their business, may not be sympathetic, or may have participated in the enforcement.
- Assessing these factors might have two outcomes: (1) you find the right person or combination of people to go ask some questions, or (2) you might determine that the activity is too high-risk for your responders or you don't have the right people to enter the site without causing additional stress.

### **Home**

- Someone who has experienced a home arrest, whether a single-family home or multi-unit complex, has had their most private and safe place violated. This is not something to take lightly and when deciding to approach a home or apartment complex, you should consider the identities of the responders (*for example: a white cis man with a baseball hat on knocking on a door in the days after a raid could cause additional harm or fear, and may lead to the inhabitants not answering the door*).
- Consider language needs and bring something to leave at the door if they do not answer that clearly identifies your group, how they can get in touch with you, and that ideally also provides some basic Know Your Rights information (like a red card).
- Make sure to have a clear way to offer support; the family or loved ones might still be reeling from a traumatic event, and you don't want contact to tax them more. For example, you could offer to help the family figure out how to find their loved one in detention or provide a legal

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<sup>1</sup> Each person has a number of intersecting identities; consider power-up and power-down identities and how that plays into individual risk assessments as well as power dynamics within coalitions and with impacted community members when seeking to connect. See [https://just1voice.com/advocacy/wheel-of-privilege/?srsId=AfmBOoo8yvTDnrlaj8ltjwsZR37kvdjby\\_amZQgCuSYNXrDS6rQ8hYgd](https://just1voice.com/advocacy/wheel-of-privilege/?srsId=AfmBOoo8yvTDnrlaj8ltjwsZR37kvdjby_amZQgCuSYNXrDS6rQ8hYgd)

services referral page.

- You should leave your contact information, your rapid response network's contact information, and can ask for the best way to stay in touch. You can also ask if they are in touch with others who were impacted (both to try to locate other people and to loop them in if you later find a WhatsApp group or other way that people are connecting).
- You should use intuitive and empathetic listening skills to determine how much information you should try to gather about the loved one who was arrested. The National Immigration Project's [Post-Arrest resource](#) provides some helpful information to gather, and your rapid response network might have additional or supplementary forms.

## **2. CHECKING SOCIAL MEDIA**

- People whose loved ones have been arrested in an enforcement action or raid may post on community social media pages like NextDoor or neighborhood Facebook pages. The local office of the federal enforcement agency involved may also have a Facebook page that might have information about the arrests, which may have comments of people whose loved ones were impacted.

## **3. USE YOUR NETWORK**

- Check in with volunteers, neighbors, congregants, members of other grassroots organizations, union and workers' center leaders, city council members, teachers, librarians, etc., to see if they have any other connections to the affected community or individuals. Approach with care and the understanding that searching for people in the aftermath of a raid can sometimes build more fear.

## **4. IDENTIFYING OTHER TRUSTED SOURCES**

- As discussed above, you may determine that you do not have the right people to safely (for you or the people at the site) go directly to where the raid happened to ask additional questions. This may be an opportunity to connect with neighborhood groups. **Churches, mosques, temples, or other places of worship** are often a good place to start. You can ask local faith leaders whether they know about the arrests or raid, or whether they know of anyone who might. That may connect you to local leaders or the neighborhood auntie who knows everything about everyone. You may find local neighborhood coalitions, WhatsApp groups, or networks that you didn't know about.
- You could also connect with a **local journalist** who might be able to go to the site with their identity as a reporter, who community members may be more inclined to speak with about what they saw. This could give you a start in connecting with impacted people. Consider approaching media outlets that share the same language as the affected community, when possible - [here are some thoughts about how to vet media outlets](#).

## **5. OTHER TIPS FOR LONGER-TERM RESPONSE TOOLS**

- Much of rapid response is relationship-building and creating trust so that communities see your network as safe and reliable, which involves organizing skills beyond the purview of this explainer. Here are some resources we recommend:
  - [Rural Organizing](#)

- [Rural Organizing Project](#)
- [Defend & Recruit](#)
- [UW-Madison School of Social Work: Building Trust, Cultivating Liberation: Lessons from Immigrant Community Organizing](#)
- [Hosting a KYR or Family Preparedness Clinic](#)
- You may need to build trust with any contacts you are connected with - even though you know how hard you have worked to get in touch with them and that you have best intentions, they may be skeptical, suspect, or ignore offers of help or support. Be patient and follow their lead. Be clear with what you can and cannot offer.
- Create a hotline or another open line of communication so that affected communities can come to you on their own terms. A “hotline” doesn’t need to be staffed 24/7 or offer live answering in order to be effective. Instead, you can set up a system where people can leave voice or text messages; you just need to ensure that someone checks it regularly and responds to inquiries. It’s important to assign volunteer hotline duties very clearly and not to overburden one person.