



## COMMUNITY RAID PREPAREDNESS CHECKLIST: Lessons Learned from New Bedford, MA and Marshalltown, IA\*

### ☐ LEGAL

#### To Prepare in Advance:

- Assign one strong, diplomatic person to coordinate the legal work and strategy
- Create an emergency list of a large number of lawyers that will be ready to roll immediately
- Prepare a database of the names and numbers of individuals who can help with translation and transportation
- Compile a list of law students available to assist in other areas.

#### To Provide When the Raid Occurs:

- Identify people locally, in the town where the raid happened, that can be ready to brief lawyers when they come.
- A centralized location for information for the lawyers. The more centralized the information is the more organized the effort will be.
- Transportation will be key, particularly if family members want to attend legal proceedings taking place in other cities.
- Mobilize a number of translators on hand for social services and for legal services.

### ☐ SERVICES

#### To Prepare in Advance:

- You will need a volunteer coordinator. You will likely get a strong response from volunteers, but will need someone to match up the skills of volunteers with the needs of the many organizations participating in the humanitarian and the organizing efforts
- Transportation will be essential. Either have a deal set with churches or other community organizations, or have a contract ready with a transportation company to bring people together quickly.
- You will likely need to create a relief fund for the families. It would be great to have the structure for something like this set-up in advance. You will need an online element to raise money, a community foundation to hold the money, and a streamlined program to give out the money.

#### To Provide When the Raid Occurs:

- We highly recommend having one place that is the central location for service delivery. It will make life easier on families, agencies, and organizers.
  - It is important to keep a consistent central location for a least the first couple of weeks. If possible, the location should be open for extended hours and on weekends.
  - Set-up a centralized intake system so people have to report their story a limited number of times. Stories should also be collected at this time; this will help in your organizing and media work..
- **Create a list of who is missing and where they are being held.** This will be essential and family members will be seeking this information. Again, this info needs to be centralized. Check out Detention Watch Network's toolkit for more information:  
<http://detentionwatchnetwork.org/communitymaterials>

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\*Reflections provided by the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition  
and Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement



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- After a raid, all the key players (social services, churches, lawyers, community organizations, etc.) should meet very regularly. Either everyday or night, or every other day, at least during the first couple of weeks.
- Create an immediate contact list, so everyone has everyone else's cell phone numbers.
- Organize a small group of trusted people who will check in with families to make sure they are in the loop on the humanitarian effort and getting what they need to restore some security to their lives.
- Food, diapers, milk, and other necessities are important to have on hand in the first few hours.

### ☐ ORGANIZING & MEDIA

#### To Prepare in Advance:

- Have model press releases ready in case a raid hits, this will make your life much easier: check out [www.fairimmigration.org](http://www.fairimmigration.org)
- Have a relationship in place with a national organization and communicate with them to help spread the story.
- You will likely spend a good bit of money, so having a little bit of money in the bank to fund this work, particularly if it takes place in a city that is a couple of hours from your headquartered.

#### To Provide When the Raid Occurs:

- If there is not a strong coalition in place, you will need to pull one together quickly.
- It's likely that in the first few weeks many of the affected families will be too preoccupied with legal issues and trying to put their life back together to be deeply involved in the organizing.
- As such, allies and other supporters will be important in helping organize a resistance to the raid and an event to show solidarity with the families. Churches, unions, community groups, and others will be really important and will also be able to provide financial support.
- Identify strong people, preferably documented, who are willing to tell their stories to the media if needed. The media and others will be asking for stories and you do not want to keep going back to families repeatedly and asking them to tell their stories.
- Respond immediately and show the human face. Have a press conference that day or the next day and make sure to have affected children and families front and center. Your early framing of the story will be essential - stick on the humanitarian story.
- Use technology to get the word out:
  - Consider using a blog to keep folks updated on a very regular basis.
  - Consider having someone create a short video (2 minute or less), posting it on YouTube, and letting the world know about. The tag at the end of the video should include a request for donations or a call to action.
- If you succeed in getting empathetic coverage, expect a local backlash. It will be important to give the media something new from your side everyday or the "anti's" will fill that space.

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