

What would fair, humane immigration reform look like?




The monarch butterfly migrates each year from Canada and the U.S. to central Mexico and back. It has been adopted by many migrant rights organizations as a symbol of the beauty of migration and the right of living beings to move freely.

Our immigration system needs repair. But what will it take to make it work? The American Friends Service Committee offers seven principles for a fair and humane immigration system.

These principles are derived from nine decades of work with immigrant communities, whose voices must be heard as we work toward immigration reform that protects the human rights of all people.





Our immigration system is broken. Here's how to fix it — while respecting the human rights of all migrants.

1

Develop humane economic policies to reduce forced migration

Economic policies and agreements such as NAFTA (the North American Free Trade Agreement) devastate poor communities and force millions of people to migrate in order to survive.

International agreements and our own national immigration policies must address the underlying, **root causes of migration** so that those most brutally impacted by economic despair and crises are not further punished.

2

Protect the labor rights of all workers

All people in the United States—regardless of immigration status—have a **right to work with dignity**, but immigrant workers are often denied this right.

All workers, including immigrant workers, must be paid a **living wage** and have the right to freely associate, organize, and form labor unions without employer retaliation or retribution.

We must **end harmful policies** and actions that expose workers to abuse and exploitation, such as Electronic Employment Eligibility System (E-Verify), I-9 Audits, guest worker programs, and workplace raids.

3

Develop a clear path to citizenship

Approximately **11 million undocumented people** live in the United States. Most work in services and industries vital to the U.S. economy, pay billions in federal, state, and local taxes, and contribute to U.S. culture and the arts.

When they have no pathway to permanent residency or U.S. citizenship, they are left **living in the shadows**, vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

Providing opportunities to attain legal status would recognize the equity immigrants have built through their participation in U.S. society and would **reduce the marginalization and mistreatment** of undocumented individuals and their families.

4

Respect the civil and human rights of immigrants

Current **U.S. immigration laws criminalize immigrants**—and migration itself—by allowing the arrest, detention, and deportation of people based on their immigration status.

Those detained by immigration authorities have **no guarantee to due process** or a fair trial, and do not have the right to counsel if they cannot afford an attorney.

U.S. law and legal practice must be changed to **protect these fundamental human rights** for all people, regardless of immigration status.

5

Demilitarize the Mexico-U.S. border

Since establishment of new border control policies in 1993, the Border Patrol has generated a **culture of cruelty** that operates with impunity, disregard for the law, and inadequate oversight. This oppressive culture affects both those living near the border and those attempting to migrate.

As a result of fortification of the border, at least **7,000 migrants have lost their lives** after being funneled into dangerous desert crossings.

It's time to end the costly, ineffective, and inhumane policies that have militarized the Mexico-U.S. border region. **There are more productive and humane ways to respond** to the human impulse to migrate.

6

Make family reunification a top priority

Keeping families together has been the stated cornerstone of U.S. immigration policy since 1965.

Despite this, many immigrating families experience **painfully long separations** and families already in the U.S. are brutally divided by detention and deportation. These policies place great burdens on immigrant families.

Any changes to current laws and policies must **strengthen the reunification of families**, shorten separation periods and eliminate mandatory detention.

In addition, all family immigration benefits must be provided **equally to same-sex and heterosexual partners**.

7

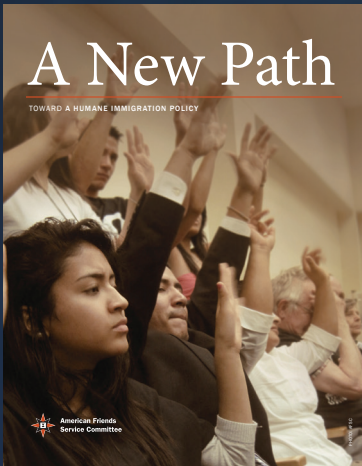
Ensure that immigrants and refugees have access to services

Health care, education, and an affordable, safe place to live are **basic human rights**, not privileges.

Currently, many immigrants and refugees are **excluded from access to services** to the detriment of all members of our communities.

Rather than limit access to these human services, we should **expand the safety net** for vulnerable populations and our society as a whole.





For a comprehensive look at AFSC's recommendations for fair and humane immigration policy, you can view a PDF or download a free copy of *A New Path* at afsc.org/newpath

Get informed, get involved



Learn more about AFSC's work for immigration reform at afsc.org/immigration.



Ask Congress to address the issues discussed in this document. (Find your legislators at www.house.gov and www.senate.gov. Call the U.S. Capitol switchboard at 202-224-3121.)



Write a letter to your local paper supporting fair and humane immigration reform.



Get involved with your local AFSC office.



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