

COMMUNITY DEFENSE ZONE STARTER GUIDE



THANK YOU

This guide draws from lessons and work of several organizations and leaders. Several samples, frames, and ideas come from campaigns led by Puentes in Phoenix, Arizona and Georgia Latino Alliance for Human Rights (GLAHR) in Georgia. It also draws heavily from the work of Not One More Deportation campaign and Southerners On New Ground (SONG) across the southern United States. Special thanks to Caitlin Breedlove, Carlos Garcia, Adelina Nichols, and Nora Rasman.

Design inspiration from [isaura jimenez guerra](#)



TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART 1	WHY WE NEED COMMUNITY DEFENSE	1
PART 2	ABOUT THIS GUIDE	2
PART 3	GOALS	3
PART 4	ACTIVITIES & COMMUNITY OUTREACH	4
PART 5	WHAT'S NEXT	24
PART 6	TOOLS & SAMPLES	25



PART 1 | WHY WE NEED COMMUNITY DEFENSE

Across the country we see increased racism, injustice and criminalization just days into Trump's presidency. We know these problems didn't start with Trump - but we have real reason to believe these problems will escalate. Whole communities are being targeted and attacked; there are diminishing options to petition government because of the balance of forces and toxic politic that is taking hold at the federal level. Our silence will not stop what's happening. We need to organize. When we say organizing we are referring to the most classic definition: uniting people to fight back for a common goal.

For communities being targeted by the Trump Administration, specifically immigrants and refugees, Muslims, LGBTQ and Black communities, we must create community based sanctuary as well as advocate for policies at the local and state level. To truly build community protection, we must acknowledge and include the ongoing issues of mass incarceration and criminalization that have ravaged communities across the country. Our objective with sanctuary is not to arrive at the status quo, in fact we need to expand its meaning and its impact.

Because Trump's regime does not even pretend to represent us we must organize to resist, defend ourselves and transform our communities: county by county, town by town, city by city. It is imperative that we organize where we live, work, party and pray in order to attract more people, build leadership, and make change in an arena that is within reach right now. We can bring people together to rekindle our most precious shared values and spark actions to build power and make a real difference in local communities.

PART 2 | ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This document lays out a roadmap for setting up Community Defense Zone campaigns in local communities. We know that many people are doing different kinds of work right now, but we also have heard from many that templates are needed for where to start under the new reality of the Trump Era. A few things about this guide:

1. It is designed to be adaptable for small towns or larger cities, and recognizes that the pace and approach in building base or waging policy change campaigns are different across place. We hope it's useful across that spectrum of local context.
2. It has framing, ideas and tools that are adapted from red state organizing veterans: all of the contributing ideas have been tried out by organizers in red states under hostile state and local governments. We believe people who have organized and resisted in hostile conditions (whether because of group identity or local/state government) have very important contributions in this time.
3. It emphasizes how we might be able to reach beyond our existing circles, and engage non-activists we encounter in a variety of ways.
4. This training is meant to be paired with 'Know Your Rights' materials, to help facilitate greater understanding and recognition that all communities have inalienable rights, regardless of skin color, religious creed, country of origin or whether or not they speak English.

PART 3 | GOALS

PRIMARY

1. Identify the needs of communities who are being attacked and targeted by long-standing and emerging policies and practices. The best way to do this is through ensuring both the engagement and leadership of these communities.
2. Get local elected and/or appointed officials to support demands and policy to expand and defend sanctuary and create Community Defense Zones.
3. Recruit a base of supporters, with leadership and participation of vulnerable communities, for Community Defense Zones.
4. Create various ways for people to engage and support, specifically through activities and commitments from your base of supporters.

SECONDARY

1. Bring everyday people in local communities into the fight for expanded sanctuary.
2. Nurture and support leadership of people targeted by Trump regime.
3. Connect different community leaders and members targeted by Trump regime to each other.

PART 4 | ACTIVITIES AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

This section covers core activities for setting up a Community Defense Zone, including a detailed description on outreach to different community members.

One of the main questions that will arise in the formation of a Community Defense Zone - what do you want me to do? Developing locally relevant and creative responses to this question will be an ongoing task. The list below is meant as a starter list to help spark the process, providing initial answers to how people can participate.

CORE ACTIVITIES

1. Do outreach to identify supporters, see where people stand, and recruit committee members.
2. Distribute posters, yard signs and window stickers.
3. Hold a press conference with supporters, including statements from community leaders (this doesn't solely include elected officials) to demonstrate wide/growing support.
4. Hold a community meeting with people who have signed on to determine local needs and next steps.
5. Hold community building events to get more sign-ons (ex: potlucks, sports, movie screenings, children's activities).
6. Hold fundraisers to support directly affected communities. For example, this could include costs associated with legal fees, moving expenses, rapid response, loss of employment.

OUTREACH

The main purpose of all the different forms of outreach are to build a base of human beings who support the campaign. This base can then be mobilized into action (to some degree) as needed. Not everyone recruited will be equally involved, and that is fine. But, the more people who endorse or align with the campaign, the more people you have to call on locally for support for the work that needs to be done. Another goal is to educate communities around what is needed, what is happening, what their rights are, and that create Community Defense Zones is possible. Many of us also feel it is an opportunity to remind us all that constitutional protection should exist and we deserve to have it.

The outreach invites different members of a community to take a side and a stand on what is happening. It also creates an opportunity for people to join in and do their part to protect the community from the threats we are under. Many members of communities and groups do not know that we have a constitutional right to not allow ICE, police, or federal agents into our homes, buildings, and spaces unless they file a court order signed by a judge.

The posters, signs, doormats and placards we create can remind us every time we enter or exit our homes, place of business, school, or faith community what we believe in and what we deserve. Organizing can be contagious and give us courage: but only when we reach out to more and more people, and do not settle for preaching to the choir. When we do this work we show our children, families, neighbors and community who we are and what we believe. We show them that we believe we deserve rights and dignity, and we teach them how to demand the same.

Outreach is a core method to find supporters for the work, and grow your base. Organizers should think of ‘community leaders’ in the broadest possible way: who do people in your county, town, or city listen to and respect? That person is a leader that it makes sense to reach out to. Leaders are in neighborhoods, in and out of institutions, and in so many places in every community. Many of the outreach steps are similar for the different outreach targets listed below.

OUTREACH (DOOR TO DOOR)

STEP 1: RESEARCH

Do you (or anyone you know) have a connection to electoral organizers who know a lot about neighborhood demographics or voting trends in your town by districts and areas? What can you learn about who lives where? This will be critical to coming up with a strategy for how to figure out what neighborhoods you want to do door to door outreach in. Door to door outreach is the most basic building block of in-person outreach, which is why it is at the top of the outreach section. It is one of the most important ways we can go out in the community and make connections with our neighbors. It can be tiring and hard work, it can also be deeply rewarding. For many of us, going door to door may be the first time that we are actually meeting many of our neighbors or fellow community members. In this political moment, it is a really good idea to try to figure out what neighborhoods might be most supportive to your cause. Research where Latinx/Chicanx community members are living, democratic voting districts, large Muslim communities (perhaps connected to where there are major mosques), and LGBTQ communities. Obviously, none of this information guarantees that all the doors you knock will be ‘friendlies’, but it gives you a better sense of door knocking where people are more likely to be on your side. If you have access to someone who really knows how to use electoral tools, you can even download lists in neighborhoods of residents who are regular voters, and who always vote democratic.

STEP 2: PREPARE AND EXECUTE

Once you have a neighborhood or list, and you set a day and time to door knock, get prepared for it. Check out the sample script below, and adapt it to your local concerns. Review the script (or rap) and practice in pairs. A few notes about door knocking: everyone develops their own style, but it is always important to say your name, let them know you live nearby, and ask them questions. If they clearly are Trump supporters, just thank them for their time and keep it moving. Set a goal of how many doors you will knock as a group that day, and keep going until you finish up your list. Have a group goal to keep up morale, and cheer each other on over text or when you meet back up.

STEP 3: MEET UP AND EVALUATION

Also meet up in person with your team after door knocking, appreciate each other, share how it went and count up your total doors knocked. If possible, go somewhere together for food or to hang out a little bit. Load information collected into your database or lists. Check in about how many sessions of door knocking will get you to your goal of how many neighborhoods in your town you want to knock doors in generally. For example, if your goal is to knock doors in 8 different neighborhoods, make sure you also count up how many door knocking sessions that will take with how many people. Note: Door knocking stays more fun for longer the more people you have doing it.

OUTREACH TO ELECTED AND APPOINTED OFFICIALS

STEP 1: RESEARCH

Who is this person? What can you find out about them from googling them? Find out where they are from, anything you can about their voting records, what issues they are associated with, etc. Find out anything you can about their personal background. For example, do they have children? Are they a vet? Did they go to school? If so, where? Sometimes elected and appointed officials have personal stories that very much affect the issues that are important to them. For example, if the official has a child with a disability it may deeply impact their understanding around bullying. Obviously, people of color, undocumented people, LGBTQ people, Muslims and those who identify strongly as allies to these communities will be more likely to be sympathetic to your cause. But, you don't want to assume so from jump. Take all these factors into consideration but pay particular attention to their track record as an elected or appointed official.

STEP 2: ASK FOR A MEETING

It is important to consider who in your group is the best person (or group of people) to ask for the meeting. It is good to choose people who may be able to influence the person you want to meet with. Is there someone who can ask for the meeting that is in their district? Or is a known leader of a respected community group or faith institution? A local business owner?

Of course, it is also fine to ask as individuals, but helpful to name what you want to talk about. If they refuse to take a meeting with you, you do have options to demand a meeting if the person is an elected official. This is not an option with other kinds of leaders--they are individuals, and not under any obligation to meet with anyone they don't want to meet with. If you do want to demand a meeting, you could show up with a small group at their office and ask for a meeting. You could also invite local press or let local press know they are refusing to meet with you. The meeting might end up being more strained, but if they won't meet with you when first asked, it is always an option.

STEP 3: PREPARE AND EXECUTE

Once you have a meeting set, get prepared for it. Group members who will be attending the meeting should definitely be present. However, it is also important for group members not attending the meeting to also help prepare.

To prepare, go back to your research and review what you know about this person. Agree on a 2-3 core messages for the meeting as well as what the ask and action step is for the person you're meeting with.

Begin any meeting with thanking them for their time. You should acknowledge and appreciate positions they have taken that you agree with. You should find a way to name the urgency of the moment - giving that sentiment a local spin and flare. You are the expert on where you live - so connect to the local. For example, you could start the meeting by talking about how concerned you are about the safety, dignity and mental health of undocumented people in the local community, Muslims, LGBTQ youth, and activists who have been outspoken about opposing Trump. First person stories and testimony are most valuable to deliver the message. You could add some of the local neighborhoods and schools where these communities live and say that you have felt the tone of fear and pain in these places. You could name a few local incidents of hate speech, violence, or graffiti (sadly most communities have examples).

You can continue from there saying that your community group is made up of everyday people and is running this campaign and wants your support. Explain exactly what the campaign is, and what it is not. Always make sure you frame how this is a win for them to support in some way - aligned with people they represent, issues they already care about, makes them look good, etc.

Organizing has a component of mutual interest - put yourself in their shoes. Why is this good for them? Then ask them for their support. Be prepared for them to say no, or say that they really want to support it but cannot. Push them as to why they cannot support it. Also be prepared for them to say yes, and to then offer your support in return--by holding them up as an elected or appointed official doing the right thing in a very hard moment in our country's history. Thank them for caring about everyone who lives in your county or town, not just the few.

STEP 4: EVALUATE THE MEETING

After the meeting, try to go grab a cup of coffee or something nearby and evaluate the meeting. Did it go as planned? Where did you get with it? What are next steps? Is there something that you learned? Would you do it the same again? How did the outcome of meeting help or hurt your work?

STEP 5: FOLLOW UP

For starters, always follow up a meeting with a thank you note or email. If the official was not willing to sign-on, brainstorm a re-approach down the line--taking different people or brainstorming if other officials who have signed on could influence them.

OUTREACH TO FAITH LEADERS AND CONGREGATIONS

STEP 1: RESEARCH

If you are meeting with a faith leader, who is this person? What can you find out about them from googling them? Find out where they are from, anything you can about their history in the local community, find out about the group or congregation they lead, what issues they are associated with, etc. Have they attended any vigils lately? Given speeches or sermon lately that were public? If so, read or watch them to see how they talk about issues, ideas and their faith work. Find out anything you can about their personal background. For example, do they have children? Are they a vet? Did they go to school? If so, where? Sometimes faith leaders have personal stories that very much affect the issues that are important to them. For example, if the faith leader has a lot of families in their congregation who have LGBTQ teenagers it may deeply impact their understanding around bullying.

Obviously, people of color, undocumented people, LGBTQ people, Muslims and those who identify strongly as allies to these communities will be more likely to be sympathetic to your cause. But, you don't want to assume so from jump. Take all these factors into consideration but pay particular attention to their public track record as a leader. If you are meeting with a congregation or group, prepare for a meeting with more than one person. Research the history of their congregation or group. Who are their members? What have they collectively taken stands on? How do they describe themselves? What do they say they value? What weekly or monthly programs do they run and for who?

STEP 2: ASK FOR A MEETING

It is important to consider who in your group is the best person (or group of people) to ask for the meeting. It is good to choose people who may be able to influence the person you want to meet with. Is there someone who can ask for the meeting that is from their group or congregation? Or is a known leader of a respected community group or other faith institution? A local business owner from the same neighborhood as the group or organization? Of course, it is also fine to ask as individuals, but helpful to name what you want to talk about. If they refuse to take a meeting with you remember they are individuals, and are not under any obligation to meet with anyone they don't want to meet with. Explore other faith leaders and groups to meet with, and consider coming back to them later if you gain sign-ons from other faith leaders who might be able to ask again for a meeting on your behalf.

STEP 3: PREPARE AND EXECUTE

Once you have a meeting set, get prepared for it. Group members who will be attending the meeting should definitely be present. However, it's also important for group members not attending the meeting to also help prepare. To prepare, go back to your research and review what you know about this person. Agree on a 2-3 core messages for the meeting as well as what the ask and action step is for the person you're meeting with.

Begin any meeting with thanking them for their time. You should acknowledge and appreciate positions they have taken that you agree with. You should find a way to name the urgency of the moment - giving that sentiment a local spin and flare. You are the expert on where you live--so connect to the local.

For example, you could start the meeting by talking about how concerned you are about the safety, dignity, mental health, and spiritual help of undocumented people in the local community, Muslims, LGBTQ youth, and activists who have been outspoken about opposing Trump. First person stories and testimony are most valuable to deliver the message. You could add some of the local neighborhoods and schools where these communities live and say that you have felt the tone of fear and pain in these places. You could talk about the spiritual impact on the public spaces and civic life in your county, town or city. You could name a few local incidents of hate speech, violence, or graffiti (sadly most communities have examples).

You can continue from there saying that your community group is made up of everyday people and is running this campaign and wants your support. Explain exactly what the campaign is, and what it is not. Always make sure you frame how this is a win for them to support in some way - aligned with people they care about, issues they already care about, makes them look good, etc. Organizing has a component of mutual interest--put yourself in their shoes. Why is this good for them? Then ask them for their support. Be prepared for them to say no, or say that they really want to support it but cannot. Push them as to why they cannot support it. Offer to come do a presentation for their members about these issues, share resources and tools. Also be prepared for them to say yes, and to then offer your support in return - by holding them up as a faith leader or group doing the right thing in a very hard moment in our country's history. Thank them for caring about everyone who lives in your county or town, not just the few.

STEP 4: EVALUATE THE MEETING

After the meeting, try to go grab a cup of coffee or something nearby and evaluate the meeting. Did it go as planned? Where did you get with it? What are next steps? Is there something that you learned? Would you do it the same again? How did the outcome of meeting help or hurt your work?

STEP 5: FOLLOW UP

For starters, always follow up a meeting with a thank you note or email. If the official was not willing to sign-on, brainstorm a re-approach down the line - taking different people or brainstorming if other officials who have signed on could influence them.

Many faith leaders or communities might be interested in what they can do beyond signing-on their support for the campaign. Here are some ideas coming from similar campaigns that have happened in local communities in red states:

1. Faith groups can ask the campaign to authorize them to hold a meeting with mass attendance to promote the campaign in their group or congregation and with their sister congregations, groups or partners.
2. Extend a public commitment to not allow police and ICE to come into their buildings.
3. Offer support for accommodation, food, and transportation for people in the case of a raid.
4. Match members of a group or congregation with more leadership positions in the campaign.
5. Organize a group of members willing to go to coffee hours with other local faith communities and recruit them into support of the campaign.

OUTREACH TO LOCAL BUSINESSES

STEP 1: RESEARCH

What is this business? Who is their clientele? Have they ‘taken stands’ before in the community? Do they give money to, or support any community groups? Who owns this business? What can you find out about them from googling them? Find out where they are from, anything you can about their business history, what issues they are associated with (if any), etc. Find out anything you can about the owners’ personal background. For example, do they have children? Are they a vet? Did they go to school? If so, where? Do they own more than one business? Sometimes local business owners have personal stories that very much affect the issues that are important to them. For example, if they have employees who are Muslim, this may deeply impact their understanding around bullying. If they are younger business owners, they may be less ‘traditional’ in their understandings of their ‘role’ as business owners and wanting to get involved--they may feel a different kind or level of ‘civic duty’.

In some organizing work some of us have done in Durham, NC we found that younger white men who owned successful new restaurants and microbreweries were extremely concerned about the level of homophobia present in North Carolina state government. They were willing to take public positions on these issues, and donate food, beer and space. Obviously, people of color, undocumented people, LGBTQ people, Muslims and those who identify strongly as allies to these communities will be more likely to be sympathetic to your cause. But, you don’t want to assume so from jump. Take all these factors into consideration but pay particular attention to their track public track record as a business owner.

STEP 2: ASK FOR A MEETING

It is important to consider who in your group is the best person (or group of people) to ask for the meeting. It is good to choose people who may be able to influence the person you want to meet with. Is there someone who can ask for the meeting that is connected to their business? One of their vendors or investors? Someone in their faith or social circles? Or someone who is a known leader of a respected community group or faith institution? Another local business owner?

Of course, it is also fine to ask as individuals, but helpful to name what you want to talk about. Many business owners are not used to being approached by community groups - if they own a restaurant, cafe, or bar ask to meet with them there - after eating a meal or having a drink there. If they refuse to take a meeting with you remember - they are individuals, and not under any obligation to meet with anyone. You might wait until you have other local businesses signed on that they respect, and then ask those business leaders to re-approach them on the campaign's behalf.

STEP 3: PREPARE AND EXECUTE

Once you have a meeting set, get prepared for it. Group members who will be attending the meeting should definitely be present. However, it's also important for group members not attending the meeting to also help prepare. To prepare, go back to your research and review what you know about this person or business. Agree on a 2-3 core messages for the meeting as well as what the ask and action step is for the person you're meeting with.

Begin any meeting with thanking them for their time. You should acknowledge and appreciate public positions they have taken that you agree with. If you think their business has been a safe and welcoming place for all parts of the community, say so. Some of us have started meetings with business owners talking about how we have appreciated being their customers because their business is a welcoming place for folks of color, LGBTQ folks, people with disabilities, etc.

You should find a way to name the urgency of the moment to them - giving that sentiment a local spin and flare. You are the expert on where you live - so connect to the local. For example, you could start the meeting by talking about how concerned you are about the safety, dignity and mental health of undocumented people in the local community, Muslims, LGBTQ youth, and activists who have been outspoken about opposing Trump. First person stories and testimony are most valuable to deliver the message. You could add some of the local neighborhoods and schools where these communities live and say that you have felt the tone of fear and pain in these places. You could name a few local incidents of hate speech, violence, or graffiti (sadly most communities have examples). You should mention that business support locally is really important to many people, and gives real legitimacy to justice-oriented efforts.

You can continue from there saying that your community group is made up of everyday people and is running this campaign and wants your support. Explain exactly what the campaign is, and what it is not. Always make sure you frame how this is a win for them to support in some way--aligned with the spirit of their business and the people they sell to, issues they already care about, makes them look good, etc. Mention that some businesses worry that taking a 'political stand' will hurt their business--but many have found the opposite is true, that progressives intentionally give them more business because they take stands. In some cases, taking positions has brought businesses negative attention, but also positive attention.

Organizing has a component of mutual interest--put yourself in their shoes. Why is this good for them? Then ask them for their support. Be prepared for them to say no, or say that they really want to support it but cannot. Push them as to why they cannot support it. Also be prepared for them to say yes, and to then offer your support in return--by holding them up as a local business owner doing the right thing in a very hard moment in our country's history. Thank them for caring about everyone they do business with, not just the few. Sometimes local business owners are actually really pleased to be acknowledged as community leaders, and asked for their support.

STEP 4: EVALUATE THE MEETING

After the meeting, try to go grab a cup of coffee or something nearby and evaluate the meeting. Did it go as planned? Where did you get with it? What are next steps? Is there something that you learned? Would you do it the same again? How did the outcome of meeting help or hurt your work?

STEP 5: FOLLOW UP

For starters, always follow up a meeting with a thank you note or email. If the official was not willing to sign-on, brainstorm a re-approach down the line - taking different people or brainstorming if other officials who have signed on could influence them. If business owners are excited about the campaign, they might ask what other ways they can support besides signing on. Here are some successful ways local businesses have supported these kinds of campaigns in the past:

1. Match employees and business owners with opportunities to volunteer with campaign business outreach to other businesses.
2. Ask the business to host a fundraising event for the campaign.
3. Ask the business to hang a campaign poster and/or put down a campaign doormat.
4. Make a commitment to not allow police or ICE to enter the business.

OUTREACH TO CIVIC LIFE LEADERS AND OTHER COMMUNITY LEADERS

Sometimes we get very stuck in a limited idea of who a leader is. Especially in smaller towns, leaders are often not high profile individuals. Librarians are often seen as key progressive leaders. People who lead community centers, or Parks and Recreation centers. Directors of Neighborhood centers are often major leaders in the lives of the people who come through the doors of their facilities everyday. Considering how to approach such leaders is important.

STEP 1: RESEARCH

Who is this person? What can you find out about them from googling them? Find out where they are from, anything you can about their history in the local community, find out about the groups they lead or work with, any programs they started or work on, etc. Have they attended any public events lately? Been quoted anywhere? If so, read or watch them to see how they talk about issues and their ideas. Find out anything you can about their personal background. For example, do they have children? Are they a vet? Did they go to school? If so, where? Sometimes community leaders have personal stories that very much affect the issues that are important to them. For example, if they run a neighborhood center, they may see all the time how the low income kids with disabilities are treated by other youth and systems themselves and this may deeply impact their understanding around bullying. Obviously, people of color, undocumented people, LGBTQ people, Muslims and those who identify strongly as allies to these communities will be more likely to be sympathetic to your cause. But, you don't want to assume so from jump.

Take all these factors into consideration but pay particular attention to their public track record as a community leader. If you are meeting with a group, prepare for a meeting with more than one person. Research the history of the center or group. Who are the leaders, staff or members? Do they 'serve' any constituencies or specific neighborhoods? How do they describe themselves and what they do? What do they say they value? What weekly or monthly programs do they run and for who?

STEP 2: ASK FOR A MEETING

It is important to consider who in your group is the best person (or group of people) to ask for the meeting. It is good to choose people who may be able to influence the person you want to meet with. Is there someone who can ask for the meeting that is from their group or goes to their center often? Or is a known leader of a respected community group or faith institution? A local business owner from the same neighborhood as the group or organization? Of course, it is also fine to ask as individuals, but helpful to name what you want to talk about. If they refuse to take a meeting with you remember they are individuals, and are not under any obligation to meet with anyone. Explore other community leaders and groups to meet with, and consider coming back to them later if you gain sign-ons from other leaders who might be able to ask again for a meeting on your behalf.

STEP 3: PREPARE AND EXECUTE

Once you have a meeting set, get prepared for it. Group members who will be attending the meeting should definitely be present. However, it's also important for group members not attending the meeting to also help prepare. To prepare, go back to your research and review what you know about this person and/or their group. Agree on a 2-3 core messages for the meeting as well as what the ask and action step is for the person you're meeting with.

Begin any meeting with thanking them for their time. You should acknowledge and appreciate positions they have taken that you agree with or programs/work they run that meets needs in the community. Many community leaders are used to trudging along and doing the hard work, while they few 'other people' as getting all the attention and resources. They might appreciate you appreciating what they do.

You should find a way to name the urgency of the moment - giving that sentiment a local spin and flare. You are the expert on where you live - so connect to the local. For example, you could start the meeting by talking about how concerned you are about the safety, dignity, mental health, and spiritual help of undocumented people in the local community, Muslims, LGBTQ youth, and activists who have been outspoken about opposing Trump. First person stories and testimony are most valuable to deliver the message. You could add some of the local neighborhoods and schools where these communities live and say that you have felt the tone of fear and pain in these places. Ask them what they have seen in the communities they work in. You could talk about the spiritual impact on the public spaces and civic life in your county, town or city. You could name a few local incidents of hate speech, violence, or graffiti (sadly most communities have examples).

You can continue from there saying that your community group is made up of everyday people and is running this campaign and wants your support. Explain exactly what the campaign is, and what it is not. Always make sure you frame how this is a win for them to support in some way aligned with people they serve/care about, issues they already care about, makes them look good, etc. Organizing has a component of mutual interest - put yourself in their shoes. Why is this good for them? Then ask them for their support. Be prepared for them to say no, or say that they really want to support it but cannot.

Push them as to why they cannot support it, but be prepared to hear that there reasons are actually legal if they are running public community centers, for example. Ask them if they would support as an individual, and remind them that for the people who respect them, seeing their name could make a big difference. In many smaller towns, librarians are deeply respected - people know them as community and public servants, and it does make a difference what they support. Offer to come do a presentation for their members/staff/community about these issues, share resources and tools. Also be prepared for them to say yes, and to then offer your support in return--by holding them up as a local community leader or group doing the right thing in a very hard moment in our country's history. Thank them for caring about everyone who lives in your county or town, not just the few.

STEP 4: EVALUATE THE MEETING

After the meeting, try to go grab a cup of coffee or something nearby and evaluate the meeting. Did it go as planned? Where did you get with it? What are next steps? Is there something that you learned? Would you do it the same again? How did the outcome of meeting help or hurt your work?

STEP 5: FOLLOW UP

For starters, always follow up a meeting with a thank you note or email. If the community leader was not willing to sign-on, brainstorm a re-approach down the line - taking different people or brainstorming if other community leaders who have signed on could influence them. Many community leaders might be interested in what they can do beyond signing-on their support for the campaign. Here are some ideas coming from similar campaigns that have happened in local communities in red states:

1. Community leaders or groups can ask the campaign to authorize them to hold a meeting with mass attendance to promote the campaign in their group or center. They can invite other groups, leaders, and/or neighborhood centers. They can frame as a 'community meeting'.
2. Extend a public commitment to not allow police and ICE to come into their buildings.
3. Offer support for accommodation, food, and transportation for people in the case of a raid.
4. Match members of a group with more leadership positions in the campaign.
5. Organize a group of members willing to go to coffee hours with other local community leaders or groups and recruit them into support of the campaign.
6. Host a fundraiser or other event for the campaign.

When we organize in communities, we often picture academic institutions as the private colleges that we hear about most in movies and in the news. Community colleges can be incredible sites of support and resistance. Student groups are often filled with students who are already passionate about issues of social justice. Generally speaking, understand that student groups and educational institutions might be collaborative or at odds with each other. You should approach both, but you might want to first approach the institutions followed by the student groups. Do not assume that an administration will be happy to endorse simply because one or more of their student groups are involved.

STEP 1: RESEARCH

What is this institution? What is their student population? How do they advertise? Who is the person or people you are meeting with? What can you find out about them from googling them? Find out where they are from, anything you can about their history in the local community, etc.

Have they attended any public events lately? Been quoted anywhere? If so, read or watch them to see how they talk about issues and their ideas. Find out anything you can about their personal background. For example, do they have children? Are they a vet? Did they go to school? If so, where? Sometimes community leaders have personal stories that very much affect the issues that are important to them. For example, if they work in the administration of a community college and many of their students speak English as their second language this may deeply impact their understanding around bullying and marginalization.

Obviously, people of color, undocumented people, LGBTQ people, Muslims and those who identify strongly as allies to these communities will be more likely to be sympathetic to your cause. But, you don't want to assume so from jump. Take all these factors into consideration but pay particular attention to their public track record as a leader or institution in the community. If you are meeting with a group, prepare for a meeting with more than one person. Research the history of the institution. Who founded it? Who financially supports it? If you are connecting with a student group, find out how the group formed.

Are the leaders new students or students who have been there awhile? Is the student group flying solo or does it have an academic advisor or other institutional support? How big are they? How many members? What have they accomplished? Do they already have community partnership off their campus or outside their institution? What is their capacity?

STEP 2: ASK FOR A MEETING

It is important to consider who in your group is the best person (or group of people) to ask for the meeting. It is good to choose people who may be able to influence the person you want to meet with. Is there someone who can ask for the meeting that is a student, teacher or staff from the institution? Or is a known leader of a respected community group or other educational institution? A local business owner from the same neighborhood as the institution? Of course, it is also fine to ask as individuals, but helpful to name what you want to talk about. If they refuse to take a meeting with you remember they are individuals, and are not under any obligation to meet with anyone. Explore other educational institution leaders and groups to meet with, and consider coming back to them later if you gain sign-ons from other leaders who might be able to ask again for a meeting on your behalf.

STEP 3: PREPARE AND EXECUTE

Once you have a meeting set, get prepared for it. Group members who will be attending the meeting should definitely be present. However, it's also important for group members not attending the meeting to also help prepare. To prepare, go back to your research and review what you know about this person and/or their group or institution. Agree on a 2-3 core messages for the meeting as well as what the ask and action step is for the person you're meeting with.

Begin any meeting with thanking them for their time. You should acknowledge and appreciate positions they have taken that you agree with or curricular or extracurricular resources they offer for students of color, immigrants, LGBTQ students, students with disabilities, etc.

Many smaller academic institutions and community colleges are used to doing a lot with not much financially - don't assume that their students are primarily wealthy and white, many community colleges have students of all ages, class backgrounds, and racial backgrounds. Talk about the urgency of the moment - giving that sentiment a local spin and flare. You are the expert on where you live--so connect to the local. For example, you could start the meeting by talking about how concerned you are about the safety, dignity, and mental health of undocumented people in the local community, Muslims, LGBTQ youth, and activists who have been outspoken about opposing Trump.

First person stories and testimony are most valuable to deliver the message. You could add some of the local neighborhoods and schools where people in these communities live and say that you have felt the tone of fear and pain in these places. Ask them what they have seen on their campus or with their students. You could talk about the negative impact on the public spaces and civic life in your county, town or city. You could name a few local incidents of hate speech, violence, or graffiti (sadly most communities have examples).

You can continue from there saying that your community group is made up of everyday people and is running this campaign and wants your support. Explain exactly what the campaign is, and what it is not. Always make sure you frame how this is a win for them to support in some way - aligned with their students needs, issues they already care about, makes them look good, etc. Organizing has a component of mutual interest - put yourself in their shoes. Why is this good for them? Then ask them for their support. Be prepared for them to say no, or say that they really want to support it but cannot. Push them as to why they cannot support it, but be prepared to hear about trustees or money, etc. Ask them if they would support as an individual, and remind them that for the people who respect them, seeing their name could make a big difference. Offer to come do a presentation for their staff/board/trustees about these issues, share resources and tools. Also be prepared for them to say yes, and to then offer your support in return - by holding them up as a local educational institution or group doing the right thing in a very hard moment in our country's history. Thank them for caring about everyone who lives in your county or town, not just the few.

STEP 4: EVALUATE THE MEETING

After the meeting, try to go grab a cup of coffee or something nearby and evaluate the meeting. Did it go as planned? Where did you get with it? What are next steps? Is there something that you learned? Would you do it the same again? How did the outcome of meeting help or hurt your work?

STEP 5: FOLLOW UP

For starters, always follow up a meeting with a thank you note or email. If the person, institution or group was not willing to sign-on, brainstorm a re-approach down the line--taking different people or brainstorming if other leaders, institutions or groups who have signed on could influence them. Many educational institutions or groups might be interested in what they can do beyond signing-on their support for the campaign. In the next section are ideas on activities. Here are some ideas coming from similar campaigns that have happened in local communities in red states:

1. Educational institutions or groups can ask the campaign to authorize them to hold a meeting with mass attendance to promote the campaign on their campus. They can invite other groups, leaders, and/or educational institutions. They can frame as a 'community meeting'.
2. Extend a public commitment to not allow police and ICE to come into their buildings.
3. Offer support for accommodation, food, and transportation for people in the case of a raid.
4. Match members of a group with more leadership positions in the campaign.
5. Organize a group of members willing to go to coffee hours with other local educational institutions or students groups and recruit them into support of the campaign.
6. Host a fundraiser or other event for the campaign (mostly applicable for student groups).

PART 5 | WHAT'S NEXT?

This is only a starter guide. Because many local communities have already been working on these issues, have their own contexts and successes, and are looking to meet this moment with what has come before and what can come after. Also, organizing is about bringing people together, and that process is not one that can be fully predicted - you will learn and iterate your approach and plan as you receive feedback from people. We see this guide as intending to give local organizing a boost and some helpful tools where it makes sense. We see certain needs that are clear from our point of view going forward:

1. We see the classic organizing outlined here as one kind of blueprint building us towards having local bases that leaders can mobilize towards action at needed times, and build with towards campaigns. We literally see a network of sign-ons as a base from which some people can be galvanized into a rapid response network.
2. There is not one way to resolve and fix all the issues we face. In addition to looking to create policies that create greater protection and justice, we also must impact our local elections to have leaders who will truly stand with our communities, and finally, we believe this moment will challenge us to build alternatives outside of government. This guide seeks to support in identifying and mobilizing a base of support - solutions will derive based on your local context and needs.
3. Organization and networking are important. Although these activities are locally based, we know these issues are not only taking place in isolation. Mijente is just one of many national/regional formations that can provide space to connect, get support, and get good organizing and policy ideas. Seek out collaboration in order to amplify and connect what you're doing locally to other places. Look out for opportunities to converge and mobilize across place to amplify our collective efforts.

PART 6 | TOOLS & SAMPLES

SAMPLE BUSINESS OUTREACH LETTER

Dear member of business community,

Thank you for your interest in standing with members of our community to protect our human and civil rights and liberties amidst the attacks being levied by the Trump regime. Many of our community members are concerned as Trump has promised to deport our immigrant and refugee neighbors, threatened Muslim, Arab, LGBTQ communities and is promoting more policing for already over-policed Black communities. This will have a negative impact that will ripple across [city/town] and it is important for community members and business owners to stand together.

We hope you will join [] and designate your business as part of the []. Together we can build a better [].

As part of the []:

- You will be connected to a community of individuals looking to support businesses that stand for fairness, justice, civil and human rights.
- Have an opportunity to hold events or fundraisers that benefit communities or families in need, thus increasing visibility of your business in the broader community.
- Receive campaign materials, as well as stickers or posters to post at your business so that community members can recognize you as forming part of the [].
- Along with elected officials, faith and community leaders, you would help provide stability and take a just stance in the face of racism, intolerance and xenophobia.

To sign up [].

Thanks for your consideration,

SAMPLE DOOR TO DOOR SCRIPT

STEP 1: INTRO- CONVERSATIONAL

Hi, my name is _____, and I'm part of [group] or I am a resident of [neighborhood/area of town]. How are you doing today?

We're out here today because we are worried that under President Trump, more of our neighbors will be unfairly targeted, and forced to live in fear. Trump has promised to deport our immigrant and refugee neighbors and threatened Muslims community members. He has put people in positions of power who are anti-LGBTQ, anti-civil rights, anti-Black, and anti-environment.

Are you worried about your safety or your neighbors safety under Trump? We want to make sure that all of our neighbors know our constitutional rights so that we can stay safe in our own neighborhoods and that we have a way to organize against deportations, discrimination and other potential attacks.

STEP 2: INFORM THEM OF THEIR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS

Although I am not an attorney, I want to share information about what your and your neighbors rights are when interacting with police or immigration officials. The most important things to remember are:

- Do not open the door. Unless a law enforcement agent has a warrant, they cannot make you open your door or enter your house. If immigration or other law enforcement agents are at the door, ask them to put the warrant under the door so you can look at it.
- Remember that ICE agents also wear vests that say "Police." They don't always identify themselves as ICE agents, so make sure to ask for a warrant and their ID, BEFORE you open the door.
- Make sure that everyone in the house knows this, and that children know not to open the door.

- Do not lie, do not show any false documents, do not run or physically resist. If agents are inside your home, say “I do not want to answer any questions” and ask them to leave their contact information. If they start searching your home clearly say, “I do not consent to this search.”
- In case of a raid, call the local campaign to report the raid and get support.

This is complicated, and there are a lot more details about how to deal with law enforcement. This is why we are organizing our neighbors to be able to respond.

STEP 3: ASK

Options for ask:

We have [yard signs/posters] available, would you like one? We suggest the poster be hung close to your front door for quick reference. The yard sign is a great way to show support for the campaign.

Are you interested in coming to our [event] on [date/time]? [If Yes: hand them a flyer and ask them for their contact info so you can follow up.]

Would you like to be kept informed about this campaign? [If Yes: ask them for their contact info.]