

Dear Colleagues,

After many years of advocating for immigration reform that would uphold the dignity and integrity of our immigrant sisters and brothers, we were pleased when last November President Obama issued an Executive Order that would temporarily delay deportation orders for certain groups of undocumented immigrants living and working in the U.S. However, in February an injunction was issued that has temporarily delayed the Executive Order. This delay has deeply impacted the lives of immigrant families across the country shattering their hopes of coming out of the shadows of society and having their contributions to the U.S. economy, society in general, and communities of faith, recognized.

We know that many of you have been working diligently to lead your areas to welcome the immigrant and do all you can to support comprehensive immigration reform. The recent set-back we have experienced in this country on the immigration reform front has discouraged even some of our best leaders and caused confusion for our congregations striving to be welcoming and supportive of immigrant families. Some time ago we covenanted with you to do our best to share with you our best thinking around the immigration concerns in the U.S. and other parts of the world. This letter is sent to you out of this commitment.

What we would share with you at this moment is that we have done the hard analysis of where we are in the U.S. immigration situation and are confident that the injunction issued in February that has temporarily delayed the Executive Order will be set aside. This means that as United Methodists we have much work to do to assist our immigrant sisters and brothers to prepare for the implementation of the Executive Order. By God's grace the moment will come when over 4 million immigrants will receive some relief from their long suffering.

Below we have included a resource to let United Methodists know that we have ongoing ministry to do with immigrant families including some concrete ways we can all continue to help. Please share this resource with leaders in your areas.

May we continue to pray for immigrant families not only in the U.S. but around the world. May God have mercy upon them and upon all of us.

Peace,
Julius C. Trimble
Minerva G. Carcaño

Ways United Methodists Can Help Immigrant Families Prepare for the Implementation of President Obama's Executive Order

As United Methodists we believe that the injunction issued in February that has temporarily delayed President Obama's Executive Order intended to bring relief to immigrant families will be set aside. As immigrant families prepare for this good day there are ways we can help:

- 1) We highly encourage United Methodists to work closely with Justice for Our Neighbor (JFON) sites when they are nearby. JFON and other legal clinics will need volunteers.
- 2) Local churches can host trusted local nonprofit immigration legal services providers to conduct information sessions and workshops in their church on what the Executive Order provides, who is eligible for relief under it, and what persons will need to apply.
- 3) Identify a local organization working with the Deferred Action for Parents of Americans (DAPA)-eligible community and work with them.
- 4) Provide other supportive programs that are often needed among immigrant communities including ESL programs, tax preparedness programs, and anti-fraud initiatives. These services for the DAPA-eligible community are vital as immigrants seek high quality legal support, resolve their taxes, collect documents that demonstrate continuous residence in the US, prove their maternity or paternity and learn English.
- 5) The DAPA-eligible community needs reliable, straight-forward information that eases fear and confusion. We encourage United Methodists to use the following website as a resource to share with congregations and especially with the immigrant community:
<http://www.adminrelief.org/>.
- 6) We expect the work of JFON and other immigration legal clinics to be overwhelming. Therefore, we strongly encourage churches to donate to either the offices of National JFON or one of their state-based sites at <http://njfon.org/donate/>. Funding will enable JFON's to hire more attorneys, host large-scale DAPA workshops, and continue hosting public education events about this form of relief.
- 7) Lastly, we will continue to advocate for a permanent, legislative solution for our immigrant sisters and brothers. To do this we want to show our elected leaders that United Methodist congregations are actively serving immigrant communities. Therefore, we urge you to share how your church is engaging in one of these ways above by emailing bmefford@umc-gbcs.org.

Thank you for your ministry with and to the immigrants in your communities! God bless you!