

What is Safety NetWorks?

Safety Networks is a project initiated by Assembly Mennonite Church in response to government actions that have instilled fear in many of our Latino neighbors. As people are hurt by aggressive immigration enforcement actions, we seek to follow Christ's call to aid, visit and care for God in our midst.

In March 2017, a group at Assembly learned of urgent needs at the National Immigrant Justice Center (NIJC) in Goshen. NIJC helps immigrants maneuver through the complex immigration system. Rather than focus on legal work, NIJC paralegals were spending significant time coordinating volunteer drivers with immigrants needing safe transportation.

We responded by developing a system to solicit volunteers to help not only with transportation, but with a variety of immigrant needs that NIJC identified. We formed a "Network" for each need, and designated Network coordinators to work with our referral partners and contact volunteers. Each Network has tools, guidelines, policies, and procedures to provide structure and support to its volunteers.

Who we work with

Safety Networks' current referral partners include NIJC and The Center for Healing and Hope. We partner with Eighth Street and other community members to create our volunteer corp. As we established our Networks, we collaborated with other groups working to serve immigrants in our community including the Immigration Consortium, Elkhart County HOPE, and the local Sanctuary Churches movement.

How to support and get involved

To volunteer for one or more Network, please visit our online sign-up at <http://bit.ly/safety-net-start>.

For donations, make check out to "Assembly Mennonite Church" with "Safety Networks" in the memo line. Send to 727 New York St, Goshen IN 46526.

For more information, contact Michelle Shelly at mshellymd@gmail.com

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10/2021

Networks	Descriptions
Umbrella	Oversees the coordination and functioning of the other Networks. Stays in contact with the Network coordinators and referral partners to ensure the Networks are operating as intended and to identify unmet needs.
Transportation	Assists immigrants with transportation to legal proceedings, medical appointments, and other local needs. Coordinator vets volunteers, provides guidelines and offers resources the volunteer may need while interacting with an immigrant (list of “on-call” interpreters and people with social services expertise).
Rapid Response	Coordinates individuals able to quickly mobilize at the site of an immigration raid to document what happens and act as witnesses to increase accountability of law enforcement agents. Coordinator communicates with volunteers when they sign up and provides guidelines for being a raid witness. The coordinator receives and verifies reports of a raid, then activates the Network. After a raid the coordinator receives reports and images from the volunteers, and reports it to local media.
Family to Family	Connects immigrant families in need of a variety of forms of support with an individual/family/small group able to provide help. This Network intends to foster a longer term relationship between volunteer and immigrant, with the support offered including assistance such as friendship, transportation, childcare, interpretation, and financial needs (especially if a wage-earner has been deported).
Interpreters	Volunteers create a Network of language resources for immigrants as well as for non-bilingual volunteers for the other Networks. Assistance may involve translating at a medical or court appointment, or helping a volunteer driver and immigrant communicate critical information.
Resource Support Team	Social workers and others with knowledge of community resources provide support to immigrants and volunteers in the other Networks by sharing information on where undocumented people can receive services (such as food, assistance with rent, utilities, etc).
Technology	Provides technology expertise and support in developing and managing the online sign-up, and in developing technology tools to facilitate the work of the other Networks.
Financial Resources	Solicits tax-deductible contributions and disperses financial resources to support the work of the other Networks according to defined policies and procedures.