

LAAID VOLUNTEER Conduct Policy

Louisiana Advocates for Immigrants in Detention is an all-volunteer organization that helps immigrants in the 8 Louisiana detention centers and 1 Mississippi detention center in Natchez. LA-AID hopes by fostering connections between volunteers, communities, and detained immigrants we can make a difference in perceptions and policy. LA-AID Volunteers write letters to people in detention, visit detention centers, advocate for humane treatment and medical care, and provide transportation, meals, and overnight hosting for released immigrants as they travel to their family/sponsor. ***We are not attorneys and do not provide legal representation for immigrants.***

As a volunteer there is a great deal of trust placed in you and your interactions with immigrants. These guidelines will ensure that all volunteers understand the expectations set forth by the Board of Directors.

Since our work deals with a vulnerable population, it is imperative that volunteers and immigrants feel safe and respected, without judgement, unwanted/uninvited behavior that demeans, threatens, or offends. To that end, please read the following policies volunteers should adhere to as they transport and/or host an immigrant. ***By becoming a volunteer you agree to the confidentiality rules:***

As a LA-AID volunteer, you agree to keep confidential all immigrant information and all organization information. A privacy waiver obtained from an immigrant in an effort to advocate for that immigrant should only be used to further that immigrant's release with the immigrant's express approval for all actions you may take. It is especially important that the immigrants A # be safeguarded, as well as their status, family connections, legal standing, and medical information.

You understand that any unauthorized information released is a breach of the volunteer conduct code and we will ask you to no longer be a volunteer with LA-AID.

Respect, Privacy, Safety during Hosting and Transport

- Introduce yourself as a LAAID volunteer. Be sure to emphasize that you are not there to offer legal counsel or any other kind of professional services.
- Please speak the immigrant's language (use a translator app, contact a live translator in your region or use the online live translator <https://www.tarjim.ly/en>). The immigrant may speak some English, but please ensure there is no miscommunication
- Volunteers should not take photographs of an immigrant or publish a photograph of the immigrant without the immigrant's express written permission.
- Volunteers should not contact a journalist about an immigrant without their express written permission.
- Respect and sensitivity to cultural differences should be demonstrated to all.
- Volunteers may be privileged to sensitive immigrant information. It is important such information MUST be kept confidential.

- Everyone is expected to respect the privacy of each other including not entering hosted immigrant's bedroom without knocking and being invited in. Bedroom and bathroom doors should have locks that the immigrant can use to feel safe while sleeping.
- Immigrant's property should be respected and if you need to see paperwork or items that an immigrant has in their possession, please ask permission.
- COVID - Please make it clear to the house guest if you want them to wear a mask during transportation in the car or other scenarios that will allow everyone to stay safe.
- If an incident occurs while hosting that appears to have caused the guest to become extremely fearful, uncomfortable, or traumatized, report the details to one of the Board of Directors.
- Please be aware that many, if not all, of the immigrants have been through trauma, either in their home country, on the journey to the United States, or in ICE detention centers. Some may wish to share parts of their stories with you, but others may not want to speak about what they've been through. We encourage you to be a non-judgmental, supportive listener and to refrain from asking questions about the reasons why the immigrant left their country or what they have been through unless they initiate the conversation. Please be aware that your guest may have needs or problems that you are not able to help with because of your personal capacity or because you may not have the appropriate expertise (lawyer, social worker, professional counselor). If your guest asks you for help beyond hosting, meals, and transport, we encourage you to refer the immigrant to resources in the state to which they are traveling. Non-profit legal organizations:
<https://www.immigrationadvocates.org/nonprofit/legaldirectory/>

Hosting in House

Immigrants may exit a host's home to a backyard for outside recreation, but should not be allowed to walk the neighborhood alone.

- Please make the hosted immigrant aware that this policy is for their safety.

If the host is leaving the immigrant home alone for any amount of time, please communicate to them that you will be gone and when you will return. There should be a way that they can reach you if needed (txt, phone, Whatsapp).

Pets

Ask the hosted immigrant if they have a problem with interacting with a pet dog or cat. If they do, it may be best to find a different house to host the immigrant.

House Guests other than immigrants

Allowing guests at your home while an immigrant is staying with you should be limited. The safety of the immigrant is paramount and a guest may not understand the trauma an immigrant has experienced in detention. Guests must be monitored in the presence of a hosted immigrant.

Quiet Hours

This is your home, you may request quiet hours. Be aware that the immigrant may want some quiet too after being detained. Please speak to the immigrant if you are playing loud music or TV.

Meals/Kitchen Use, Shared food

You may provide food for the immigrant, but please ask if they have any food aversions or allergies. LAID provides reimbursement per diem for hosts to house and feed immigrant's breakfast, lunch, and/or dinner.

Asking to help clear the table or put dishes in dishwasher is perfectly appropriate. Asking them to do more than that is not.

Immigrant guests at Church for the Highlands will be provided access to the kitchen, which is stocked with basics, and will be responsible for cooking for themselves and keeping the kitchen clean.

Host home Upkeep

If an immigrant is hosted for multiple days, you should let them know how to clean the bathroom if needed, do their laundry, put away dishes, etc. Host homes should be clean and safe places.

Immigrant guests at Church for the Highlands will be asked to help keep their bedrooms and the common areas clean. Guests may participate in volunteer projects around the Highland Center if they are interested.

Sleeping

Sleeping is permitted only in an assigned bed preferably in a room that the immigrant can have privacy and lock.

Bathroom/Showering

Bathroom privacy is essential, and bathroom doors should have locks. Please make sure that immigrants are aware that they should be clothed when outside the assigned bedroom or bathroom.

The host should never be in a state of undress when in the presence of the immigrant.

Internet

The host may provide the immigrant with access to the home's internet if appropriate or

may loan the immigrant a computer, tablet, or phone to use during their stay. Guests at Church for the Highlands will be provided with access to the guest network

Church of the Highlands – Highland Center Shreveport

Volunteers for the Highland Center should refer also to the policies for this facility.

Alcohol, Drugs, and Weapons Are Forbidden Under ALL Circumstances

Smoking is restricted unless the host allows smoking in their home.

Alcohol, drugs, and weapons are NEVER allowed. Even though the host may drink, please forego this while an immigrant is hosted.

- Please lock-up all prescription drugs.
- Illegal drugs may never be in a host's home.

Inappropriate behaviors volunteer or immigrant:

- Verbal, physical, any other sort of violence or sexual advances towards a volunteer by a hosted/transported immigrant.
- Verbal, physical, or sexual advances, including engaging in a physical altercation towards a hosted/transported immigrant.
- Making an offensive comment or gesture based on race, gender identity, or another characteristic of a person
- Putting the house or any person's physical or mental well-being at risk such as leaving the house unlocked
- Theft
- Being intoxicated or in a drug-induced state on the premises

A regional coordinator needs to be contacted immediately if an immigrant has violated policies on behavior. The coordinator will determine where the immigrant will be placed until their travel to their sponsor/family.

In the Event of a Fire at Host home

Please inform the hosted immigrant of exits in case of a fire.

If there is an alarm system that is set, let them know the alarm will sound if a door is opened and law enforcement may be notified if you open the door, but please open them anyway in case of a fire.

Volunteer Disciplinary Actions

We value our volunteers and hope that all will adhere to the policies listed, however, if a volunteer is not meeting LAAID volunteer policy requirements, the Board of Directors will meet to discuss the matter.

The board reserves the right to terminate a volunteer at any time if concerned about the volunteer's judgment or a situation that violates the policy.

A LA-AID volunteers must embrace Freedom for Immigrants Core Values:

1.) We are dedicated to abolishing immigration detention while supporting the organizing and power-building initiatives of those of us who are most impacted. We support policies that advocate for improved conditions of confinement provided that they do not conflict with our goal of ending the detention system in its entirety.

2.) We are a coalition of people who have directly suffered the injustices of immigration detention and people in solidarity. We are guided by the experiences and leadership of those who are or have been on the inside. Forging meaningful person-to-person connections are transformative and foundational to our movement.

3.) We know that the immigration detention system is built upon a long history of white supremacy, capitalism, and imperialism. It intentionally functions to dispossess marginalized communities and peoples of their homes and their histories.

4.) We understand that our service and advocacy efforts, including visitation, can never be politically neutral. We reject any framework that is purely charitable and replicates structural power inequalities at the interpersonal level.

5.) We recognize that the U.S. immigration detention system is the largest in the world and that the U.S. government and prison-industrial complex have played an active role in the development and infrastructure of detention systems in other countries. By changing the ways that immigrants are treated here, we are part of an international movement to transform state and community responses to migration so that immigrants are no longer caged, but welcomed.