

## LAAID VOLUNTEER hosting/transport 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 judgment, 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.

### **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 a 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 outdoor 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).

### **Internet/Phone**

The host should provide the immigrant with access to the home's internet. If the immigrant has a phone, they may need the use of Wi-Fi to contact their family/sponsor. **If the immigrant does not have a phone**, alternate access to a cell phone or computer should be provided so they may contact family and arrange for transport (flight or bus) to their final destination (this may be done by call, email, or WhatsApp). It is important to understand that contact with the immigrant's family/sponsor is vital for the immigrant to continue on their journey.

Guests at Church for the Highlands will be provided with access to the guest network and cell phones.

### **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. LAAID 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.

### **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.