

How CBF's Immigration Injunction Protects Your Church

Video Discussion Guide



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the “How CBF’s Immigration Injunction Protects Your Church” video series to help your church prepare for immigration enforcement activity at your church. The content is geared toward CBF churches which are protected by an injunction that prohibits most immigration enforcement activities on our properties. However, much of the advice applies to any house of worship, including those not covered by the injunction.

The series contains three videos totaling 23 minutes in length. This discussion guide is intended to help jumpstart conversations among church leadership and membership in order to proactively plan how the church will respond if immigration officers come to the church. At the end of the guide is a list of potential next steps for your church. A church member with a legal background (attorney or law enforcement) is an ideal candidate to facilitate this discussion in case questions specific to your context arise. However, no specialized legal training is required.

This information is for educational purposes and is not a substitute for legal advice. State and local laws may vary, and our focus today is only on federal law and general enforcement practices. You should consult an attorney licensed to practice in your state to ensure that you understand your legal rights and responsibilities.

INTRO QUESTIONS BEFORE WATCHING THE FIRST VIDEO

1. Why is this topic important?
2. Why did you want to learn more?

VIDEO 1

1. The video series opens with an animated scene of ICE agents coming to a church to make an arrest. What’s your reaction? Have you ever thought about ICE agents coming to your church? How do you think you would respond to ICE or other immigration agents coming to your church?

2. The video included a brief discussion of the biblical basis that roots CBF’s ministry among immigrants and refugees. What is the basis for our church’s ministry? Who are the immigrants within our membership or ministries? How do they help us follow Christ? What can we learn from their experiences and their faith? How is our church being called to show solidarity with immigrants not only as helpers, but as co-laborers and co-disciples in the mission of God?
3. Why would churches, schools and hospitals generally be considered off-limits for immigration enforcement?
4. Anyone who has ever watched an American police TV show or movie is familiar with the idea that law enforcement officers need warrants. Did you know that there are different kinds of warrants giving different levels of authority to law enforcement officers? What are some key differences between types of warrants? Why is it important for church leaders and volunteers to understand them when dealing with immigration enforcement?

VIDEO 2

1. The animated scene this time is of an outdoor church activity, such as a barbecue, where Kevin approaches ICE officers as they approach the church sidewalk. Why would it be important to go out proactively to meet the officers? How would you respond if you were at the barbecue and saw officers approaching?
2. The video says that “Churches should not be afraid to offer ministries that may help immigrants and refugees.” What concerns have you heard or felt about the legal risks of church ministries that support immigrants and refugees? How do we discern the difference between what is legal, what is just and what we are called to do as followers of Christ?
3. The video gave four categories of ministry and compassion that we can always do:
 - ministering to physical needs of our neighbors
 - connecting immigrants to legal services
 - advocating for policy change
 - donating to organizations on the front lines, including CBF Global Missions

Which of these does our church participate in? Is there a category you would add to the list?

4. What steps should be part of the church’s response plan? What should be included in the church’s protocol?

5. One piece of advice is to keep the church doors locked when possible. How can a locked door be inclusive of neighbor instead of exclusive? What changes would we need to make to have our doors locked when possible?
6. Another piece of advice is to remove public advertisements of some church events or vary church schedules to reduce the predictability of when and where vulnerable neighbors might be at church. What do you think about this advice?

Should the facilitator need some specific examples: Some church activities, like times for a food pantry, might have been the same for years, so removing the time from a church schedule might not do any good. What if the church opened the food pantry on another day for a set time that wasn't advertised to the general public? What if the church started delivering food to the usual families who now might be too afraid to leave their homes?

VIDEO 3

1. The opening scene this time involves an arrest at a church pursuant to a valid judicial warrant. What do you think about the possibility of immigration officers coming to your church to arrest someone in our worship service? In the scene, Pastor Lisa and Kevin ask if they could bring John Doe to the officers. Why would they ask for this? What would you have done? If your instinct is to engage in civil disobedience and hide John Doe or help him evade officers, what steps have you taken to prepare for this personally while also protecting the other immigrants at the church?
2. CBF churches are covered by the injunction that requires immigration officers to conduct any enforcement action "in a non-public area, outside of public view" to minimize the impact on the whole church of the enforcement activity. What are requests we might make of ICE officers so that they can do their jobs in the least intrusive way possible while also keeping safe as many of our neighbors as possible?
3. Who at our church should interact with ICE? Who wouldn't be intimidated by law enforcement, but would be vocal to hold the officers to their legal duty? What qualities would be important for this church leadership role?
4. Would you feel comfortable documenting an ICE visit to your church?
5. Does everyone who might interact with ICE know where to find the injunction and how to report to CBF any suspected or confirmed immigration enforcement activity?
6. How can you help with pastoral care of the congregation if ICE comes to the church?

NEXT STEPS:

1. Put up the CBF poster if you have not already done so. Have at least one paper copy of the injunction at the church.
2. Create a procedure on how the church, including authorized responders, should interact with ICE. If possible, have the procedure reviewed by a local attorney to ensure you are also complying with all applicable laws.
3. Choose and train authorized responders. Training might include:
 - a. Watching this three-part video series using the discussion guide.
 - b. Reading the [Fact Sheet: Warrants and Subpoenas](#) to learn the difference between administrative and judicial warrants.
 - c. Reviewing the ["Not So Harmless" Immigration Questions](#) document and discussing potential responses.
 - d. Roleplaying scenarios of ICE coming to the church to practice asking for a warrant and denying permission to enter without one. Consider using [ICE Ruses](#) to help with these scenarios.
 - e. Reviewing the [ICE Detention Contingency Plan Framework for Church Communities](#) resource and evaluating the church's readiness.
4. Let the congregation know what is expected of them if law enforcement agents come to the church.
5. For CBF churches: If you suspect or know of immigration enforcement activities at your church, complete the ICE reporting form to notify CBF: cbf.net/ice.