



COVID-19 Policy Principles

- **Policymakers should respond to COVID-19 by considering the health and safety of all people – including all types of immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees** and recognize that we will only overcome the pandemic, if we ensure that everyone is able to seek health care and as many people as possible practice social distancing.
 - Immigrants should not fear seeking healthcare during this time and all immigrants should be able to access emergency medical services and programs. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) should suspend all immigration enforcement actions near hospitals and other health care facilities. Also, DHS should clarify that seeking health care and participating in economic relief programs will not result in a public charge finding.
 - We should prioritize the health and safety of healthcare workers and suspend enforcement activities that impede those priorities. DHS should ensure that the loved ones of frontline healthcare workers are not deported, or in fear of being deported, and that protective supplies such as masks are going first to health care workers. DHS should limit immigration enforcement only to those who pose a significant danger to the community, which will ensure ICE enforcement officers are not competing for protective equipment.
 - ICE facilities should not add additional detainees, not transfer detained individuals, and immediately reduce the number of people in immigration detention through the use of alternatives to detention for the safety of guards, other workers serving this population, and the detained.
- **Federal agencies should continue important immigration-related functions.** While we need to continue to protect our country from COVID-19, it should not be at the expense of ignoring the health, safety, and other important needs not directly related to coronavirus.
 - We must continue to allow people seeking refuge and protection from persecution and violence to enter even if it means housing them for a limited period to test and, if necessary, provide temporary quarantine (preferably in already existing housing options such as hotels) for no more than 14 days. Closing our borders to asylum seekers puts them in danger from different but no less dangerous threats.
 - As government offices close or limit their regular services, they should ensure that individuals do not lose opportunities unnecessarily. Practical policies such as allowing automatic renewals of visas, work authorization, or other authorizations

that are expiring during the pandemic and allowing virtual or delayed completion of I-9 forms to allow for the efficient hiring of new workers should be implemented.

- Denying new visas or halting visa processing should not be taken lightly as those immigrants may be people who we need to be on the frontlines [helping](#) us get through this challenging time. H1-B visa holders [are helping to find a vaccine](#) to COVID-19. Agricultural workers continue to be needed to help maintain food chains that re-supply grocery stores.
- **Congress should ensure that the economic solutions it enacts help all workers, including all immigrants.** Workers in all of our communities are suffering the economic impacts of COVID-19, and if significant parts of the population are deliberately left out of the economic supports that will have widespread impacts on all Americans.
 - Immigrants should not be excluded from the economic stimulus. They are facing the same economic challenges as everyone else.
 - Immigrants pay the same taxes we all do — federal income tax, social security tax, Medicare tax, property tax, state income tax, sales tax, that help cover federal and state services that benefit all communities.
 - The total spending power of immigrants in the U.S. — the total income they earn minus the taxes they pay — was \$927 billion in 2014.
- **Policymakers should recognize that this pandemic is a global issue and will require global solutions.** While limiting travel across borders is a social distancing practice that can help minimize the spread of the disease, countries still need to cooperate in additional ways to ensure that the virus does not spread. Policymakers need to work to maintain the global supply chain that provides necessities such as food, drugs, and medical devices.
 - Particularly in border areas, Congress should authorize investments in the capacity of neighboring countries, UNHCR, and international relief organizations so they have the ability to provide testing, isolation wards, alternatives to detention, and safe and healthy shelters.
 - Currently, Mexico and Northern Triangle countries have fewer, or no, identified cases of corona virus compared to the U.S. and to prevent the spread of the virus to these countries, Congress should provide neighboring and Northern Triangle countries resources that address the root causes of irregular migration.
 - Congress should provide resources to ensure that transnational criminal organizations and human smugglers do not take advantage of the situation and continue to, or expand their operations, which could lead to the additional spread of COVID-19.