

Statement on the Effects of Deportation and Forced Separation on Immigrants, their Families, and Communities

A Policy Statement by the Society for Community Research and Action: Division 27 of the American Psychological Association

Highlights

- Negative psychosocial effects of deportation on individuals, wives, children, and communities.
- Contextual effects surrounding deportation.
- National and judicial policy recommendations.
- Local jurisdiction policy recommendations.
- Policy recommendations for neighborhoods and institutions.

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Executive Summary

Deportation has numerous detrimental impacts on individuals who are deported, and on the families and communities they are forced to leave behind. This policy statement reviews the empirical literature to describe the effects of deportation on the individual, families, and the broader community, in order to inform policy and practice recommendations.

This policy statement is an official statement of the Society for Community Research and Action, Division 27 of the American Psychological Association, and does not represent the position of the American Psychological Association or any of its other Divisions or subunits.

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The Society for Community Research & Action takes a strength-based approach to research and action. This brief, however, focuses exclusively on the impacts of deportation. There are multiple ways in which people, individually and in community, organize to respond to deportation, as well as the threat of deportation. These actions show the resistance and resilience of communities. These responses, however, are beyond the scope of this specific document. SCRA members are in the process of summarizing the literature in this area to make policy recommendations as well. This additional brief is forthcoming.

Deportations have markedly increased in the US in the past three decades, with 340,056 people being deported from the country in 2017 (US Department of Homeland Security, 2017). Most people who are deported have lived in the country for over a decade and many are parents or caregivers of US citizens (Brabeck, Lykes, & Hershberg, 2012; Brabeck & Xu, 2010; Dreby, 2012; TRAC Immigration, 2006). Approximately, 5.9 million US citizen children (and at least three million more children who are in the US without authorization) have at least one caregiver who does not have authorization to reside in the United States (Mathema, 2017; Zayas & Cook Heffron, 2016). Immigration policies have moved away from the goal of family reunification, and have the potential to harm US citizens by separating families—including children—from their parents. For example, the hardship exemption of the Immigration and Nationality Act limits exemptions of deportation to parents, children, and spouses. Consequently, extended family caregivers, such as grandparents, are ineligible for the exemption in spite of any undue hardship caused to their US citizen family members from their deportation (Zug, 2009).

The effects of deportation are felt by individuals, families, and communities. Nearly four in five families screened in family detention centers have a “credible fear” of persecution should they be forced to return to the countries from which they migrated (US Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2016). Many of those deported are forced to return to dangerous, turbulent environments, and

deportations have resulted in kidnapping, torture, rape, and murder (Stillman, 2018). Deported individuals often find it challenging to support their families, and coupled with the trauma and stigma of the deportation, may find it difficult to maintain contact with family members; this often leads to severed relationships (Dreby, 2012; Hagan, Castro, & Rodriguez, 2010; Zayas & Bradlee, 2014; Zayas & Cook Heffron, 2016).

Family members left behind suffer multiple psychosocial consequences. Separation of a child from a parent due to deportation is associated with economic hardship, housing instability, and food insecurity (Capps et al., 2015; Chaudhary et al., 2010; Dreby, 2012). Family members are often forced to take on new roles to make ends meet: the remaining caregiver(s) must often work longer hours, leaving little time for contact with children; older children often become primary caregivers of younger siblings and/or must work to support the family, impacting school performance and retention (Chaudhary et al., 2010; Dreby, 2012). Following deportation of a family member, children demonstrate numerous emotional and behavioral challenges, such as eating and sleeping changes, anxiety, sadness, anger, and withdrawal. Even if the family is ultimately reunited, the consequences of their forced family separation often remain (Brabeck et al., 2012; Dreby, 2012; Hagan et al., 2010).

Moreover, the broader community suffers negative consequences of deportation regardless of first-hand experience. Following immigration raids and deportations, community members are often more fearful and mistrustful of public institutions, less likely to participate in churches, schools, health clinics, cultural activities, and social services, and more reluctant to report crime to the police (Capps, Rosenblum, Chishti, & Rodríguez, 2011; Hagan, Rodriguez, & Castro, 2011; Hagan et al., 2010; Sládková, Mangado, & Quinteros, 2012; Vargas, 2015). Studies have also demonstrated that immigrant adults are emotionally taxed following deportations and the threat of deportations in their communities; associated anxiety and psychological stress has been linked to cardiovascular risk factors (Brabeck et al., 2012; Martinez, Ruelas, & Granger, 2017; Torres et al., 2018). Immigrant children living in communities where immigration raids have taken place feel abandoned, isolated, fearful, traumatized, and depressed (Adames & Chavez-Dueñas, 2017; Capps, Castañeda, Chaudry, & Santos, 2007). Moreover, children—regardless of immigration status—experience fear and shame regarding deportation, which impacts their sense of self and well-being (Dreby, 2012).

In order to assuage the myriad devastating consequences of deportation on individuals, families, and communities, the US should make policy and practice changes. Federal immigration policies should keep

families together through comprehensive immigration reform that ends the threat of deportation and bolsters hardship exemptions for all family members. Local communities should prioritize safety and inclusion for all families, regardless of immigration status, by developing programs to foster support networks, sense of belonging, mental health/healing, building community, and collective political action, as these types of programs foster hope and wellness for children and families.

Introduction

This brief first describes specific aspects of current US immigration policies. It then reviews the empirical literature to describe the effects of deportation on the individual, families, and the broader community. The literature focuses primarily on deportations of Mexican and Central American immigrants, which are the largest groups of immigrants to the US at this time. Findings from these studies form the foundation for policy and practice recommendations, which comprises the last section of this policy statement, but there is no reason to expect that these findings are inapplicable to other immigrant groups.

Policy Background

Changes in US policies around immigration and deportation affect individuals, families, and communities in which deportations occur. Over the past three decades, US policies and procedures have changed markedly twice. In 1996, the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act and the Illegal Immigrant Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act were passed into law. These laws expanded the types of offenses for deportation, enabled retroactive deportation, and weakened judicial review over deportations (Brabeck et al., 2012; Hagan et al., 2010). The second change came after the 2001 passage of the USA PATRIOT Act, which also increased administrative authority over deportations. With these changes came a massive increase in deportations. From 1900 to 1990, approximately 20,000 people were deported each year. In the mid-1990s, the deportation rate increased by 800 percent to 180,000 a year, but has since more than doubled to 340,056 deportations in 2017 (US Department of Homeland Security, 2017, table 39). Of those deported, approximately 40% in 2016 had a prior criminal conviction (US Department of Homeland Security, 2017, table 41), meaning that most enforcement policy is aimed at those who do not have criminal convictions (Brabeck et al., 2012; Dreby, 2012; Hagan et al., 2010, 2011; US

Government Accounting Office, 2009). The majority of those deported have lived in the US for over a decade, with the median length of residence being 14 years (Brabeck & Xu, 2010; TRAC Immigration, 2006). Further, a growing number are parents whose children are US citizens (Braback et al., 2011; Dreby, 2012). These changes in immigration policy have moved the US away from the explicit goal of post-World War II immigration policy: family reunification (Hagan et al., 2010). Moreover, although the hardship exemption to the Immigration and Nationality Act authorizes the cancellation of deportation if such deportation would cause undue hardship to a US citizen, it limits deportation stays to the person's spouse, parent, or child. Consequently, grandparents, who are often primary caregivers of US citizen children, are ineligible for this exemption (Zug, 2009).

Psychosocial Effects of Deportation on the Individual

In addition to the trauma, violence, or abuse experienced prior to migration, during the migration journey, or during detention, many immigrants who are deported return to extremely dangerous and often turbulent environments in their countries of origin. Researchers at the Global Migration Project developed a database recording people who had been deported and then faced death or other harms (Stillman, 2018). The researchers contacted more than two hundred local legal-aid organizations, domestic violence shelters, and immigrants' rights-groups nationwide, as well as migrant shelters, humanitarian operations, law offices, and mortuaries across Central America; they also interviewed several families (Stillman, 2018). Their database includes numerous cases where deportations resulted in harm, including kidnapping, torture, rape, and murder (Stillman, 2018). This is especially important to consider given 79% of families screened in family detention centers have a "credible fear" of persecution if they returned to the countries from which they migrated (US Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2016).

Psychosocial Effects of Deportation on Family Members

Nearly 10% of US families with children have at least one member without citizenship, and 5.9 million US citizen children have at least one caregiver who does not have authorization to reside in the United States (Mathema, 2017; Romero, 2003). Therefore, deportation policies and procedures affect a much larger percentage of US citizens by association. Several studies provide evidence that

the forcible separation of a family is associated with negative psychosocial effects for children and other family members (Adames & Chavez-Dueñas, 2017; Capps et al., 2015; Chaudhary et al., 2010; Dreby, 2012; Hagan et al., 2011; National Council of La Raza, 2007). Indeed, we would expect the effects to be severe for these families since separation is not by choice and often occurs suddenly and unexpectedly, with little preparation or planning (Brabeck et al., 2012; Dreby, 2012). In this section, we discuss effects on children and the family unit.

The effects of sudden and forcible separation of a parent due to deportation on children are considerable. In a study of 190 children in 85 immigrant families across six US cities or towns spanning from the west coast to the south, Chaudhary et al. (2010) concluded that children faced serious challenges due to deportation of a parent, including economic hardship, housing instability, food insecurity, and separation from parents. Children experienced behavioral changes in eating and sleeping habits, and emotional changes such as increased crying, anxiety, anger, aggression, withdrawal, and a heightened sense of fear. These outcomes were still present 6 months later. In another study of 91 parents and 110 children in 80 households in Ohio and New Jersey, results were similar (Dreby, 2012). A third study conducted in three cities after immigration raids also showed consistent results, with children feeling abandoned, isolated, fearful, traumatized, and depressed (Capps et al., 2007). Similar results were obtained by Zayas (2015) in a study of citizen children of unauthorized parents. In fact, in a comprehensive review of the literature that ranged from 2009 to 2013, Capps et al. (2015) discerned that children experienced psychological trauma, material hardship, residential instability, academic withdrawal, and family dissolution after the deportation of a family member. Children who were present at the moment a parent was detained tended to have greater emotional, cognitive, and behavioral effects (Chaudhary et al., 2010). Furthermore, after a deportation, older children often needed to take on jobs to help support the family, which impacted school performance, persistence, and retention.

The family unit is also greatly affected by deportation. The majority of those deported are men (TRAC Immigration, 2014). When this person is a father, frequently mothers become single parents, often with no or little income, and sometimes facing large legal bills (Dreby, 2012). Indeed, a study of immigration enforcement in six US locations between 2006 and 2009 found that families lost 40%–90% of their income, or an average of 70%, within 6 months of a parent's immigration related arrest, detention, or deportation (Capps et al., 2016). Given this context, mothers often work long hours, frequently at more than one job, which results in reduced contact with their

children. Older children often become primary caregivers to younger siblings due to lack of affordable child care options. Moreover, parents fear losing custody of their children because of their new circumstances or threats made by immigration officials (Brabeck et al., 2012; Dreby, 2012). Furthermore, deported parents find it difficult to obtain work that would enable them to help support their families who are still in the US, which is demoralizing. This new circumstance, coupled with the trauma and stigma of the deportation, may make it difficult to maintain contact with children. A diminished emotional connection, combined with attachment-related issues brought on by a sudden separation, can effectively sever father–child and husband–wife relationships (Dreby, 2012; Hagan et al., 2010; Zayas & Bradlee, 2014). Because of these dynamics, it is often mothers who bear the largest burdens after a deportation. Even if the family is reunited, effects of the forced separation on all family members often remain (Brabeck et al., 2012; Dreby, 2012; Hagan et al., 2010). The effects of potential parental deportation on US citizen children are arguably complex; however, in one study, children who accompanied their deported parents back to Mexico described profound adjustment difficulties, including a sense of loss regarding their future and the resources available to them (Gulbas & Zayas, 2017).

These impacts extend beyond the nuclear family to grandparents and other relatives. Three of four Latinx¹ grandparents co-parent with their grandchild's parent(s) (Fuller-Thomson & Minkler, 2007). Moreover, more than 4.4 million children live in grandparent-headed households, thousands of whom are US citizen grandchildren of unauthorized grandparents. With the number of grandchildren being raised by grandparents on the rise and higher than it has ever been in this country, grandparent deportation is of great concern. Zug (2009) estimates that thousands of grandparents who are primary caregivers to US citizen grandchildren are at risk for deportation. Grandparent-headed households already face more challenges than parent-headed households, including higher rates of poverty and stressful life events with fewer resources (Fuller-Thomson & Minkler, 2007). Although grandparent caregivers experience these challenges, their grandchildren do much better than those placed into foster care, and grandparent caregiving is associated with more positive grandchild psychological well-being and healthy development across the lifespan (Copen, 2006). When grandparents face deportation, their grandchildren may not only lack a primary caregiver (if their grandparent is co-parenting), but may lose their only caregiver and be placed in

foster care, putting them at risk for multiple placements and poorer outcomes.

The effects on children and other family members when another family member is deported are exacerbated by limited mental health services. Furthermore, when they are available, there are still barriers to accessing resources (Capps et al., 2015). These barriers range from a lack of therapists who are able to provide culturally informed services, to a lack of insurance coverage, to unfamiliarity with therapy and mistrust of local services due to the deportation that has occurred (Brabeck & Xu, 2010; Hagan et al., 2011).

Psychosocial Effects of Deportation on Communities

When someone is deported in the broader community, research indicates that others in that community become fearful and mistrustful of public institutions, reducing adult and child attendance and participation in churches, schools, health clinics, cultural activities, and other vital social services designed with public health in mind (Capps et al., 2011; Hagan et al., 2010, 2011; Vargas, 2015). For example, a national study of mothers found that an increase in risk of deportation is associated with a decrease in Medicaid use, which has negative consequences for children's health and well-being in the short- and long-term (Vargas, 2015). Moreover, immigrants reduce their participation in the life of the community, including reducing visits to parks, libraries, restaurants, and other community events (Hagan et al., 2011). This lack of social integration likely has significant negative effects on immigrants and their communities. Indeed, social integration promotes a sense of well-being and purpose in individuals' lives and is associated with lower risk of overall cancer and mortality, lower rates of cardiovascular disease, less functional decline and distress, and lower psychological distress and suicide risk (Berkman, Glass, Brissette, & Seeman, 2000; Dalgard & Thapa, 2007; Unger, 1999).

When deportations occur, fearfulness and mistrust extend to public safety officials. Specifically, trust has broken down between Latinx communities—particularly Latinx immigrant communities—and local law enforcement. The breakdown is acute when local officials are involved in immigration actions through 287(g) agreements or other policies (Hagan et al., 2010, 2011; Theodore, 2013). These agreements expect local law enforcement to act as federal immigration agents, which makes entire immigrant communities mistrustful of local authorities, which has implications for community safety. Specifically, families report being unwilling to call police for any reason after a deportation (Dreby, 2012; Sládková

¹ The term “Latinx” is more gender inclusive than “Latino” and is therefore used here.

et al., 2012). Indeed, results from a telephone survey in four cities indicate that unwillingness to call the police is strongest for those who are unauthorized, with 70% surveyed reporting that they would not call police even if they were victims of crimes (compared to 44% of Latinx people who were documented immigrants or US citizens; Theodore, 2013). In other studies, families and children reported fear of all police due to their role in deportation and forced family separation (Brabeck et al., 2012; Dreby, 2012). As a consequence, serious crimes, such as domestic violence, may be reported less frequently, which results in many community members losing access to mechanisms of protection (Sládková et al., 2012). The proliferation of ICE activity has also disrupted the notion of “safety” that once characterized neighborhood schools (Crawford, 2017) and other city/municipal resources, such as hospitals (Martinez et al., 2015), that were safeguarded from federal immigration enforcement. In fact, one survey of primary care and emergency care providers found that 48% reported that ICE activity negatively impacted patient access, further attesting to how ICE activity should be considered a social determinant to health (Hacker, Chu, Arsenault, & Marlin, 2012).

In addition to affecting public life, individual well-being for others in the community where the deportation occurred is also affected. The threat of deportation could come from many different places, including simply hearing about the deportation of another person in the broader community, the news, or the internet. For example, 18 immigrant adults from Guatemala and Honduras who were living in Massachusetts and Rhode Island were interviewed 1 year after an immigration raid in the region (Brabeck et al., 2012). These adults reported that they were emotionally affected by deportations and threat of deportations in the broader community. They discussed sadness, fatigue, feeling hopeless, anxious, fearful, mistrustful, worried, and hypervigilant. They also experienced nightmares and weight fluctuations (Brabeck et al., 2012). In fact, the majority of those interviewed (67%) described fears that occurred on a daily basis. The constant anxiety and psychological stress associated with fear of deportation for oneself, family members, or others in the community is also related to cardiovascular risk factors (Martinez et al., 2017; Torres et al., 2018). For example, a study in California with 545 Mexican-origin women found a significant link between fear of deportation and cardiovascular risk factors, such as greater body mass index, greater risk of obesity, larger waist circumference, and higher pulse pressure (Torres et al., 2018).

Parents also report negative effects for their children. In a study where 132 Latinx immigrant adults living in the northeastern US were surveyed 2 years after an immigration raid, those who had a greater level of deportation

vulnerability (i.e., were unauthorized and had been detained or deported in the past, or had a family member who had been deported) noted more negative outcomes for their children, such as poorer school performance and emotional well-being for fear of deportation (Brabeck & Xu, 2010). These results are consistent with the aforementioned study with immigrants from Guatemala and Honduras. Many of these parents (44%) discussed the threat of deportation of a family member being related to their children’s poorer academic grades, depression and anxiety symptoms, and behavioral distress.

It is not only parents who have noted negative effects for children after community raids. Indeed, children’s fear and shame have been documented in ethnographic research (Dreby, 2012). Often, community narratives around deportation are vague and abstract, potentially leading children to think that anyone who is an immigrant can be easily deported. Indeed, of the 110 children interviewed in this study, 29 were unauthorized but almost all 110 talked about the possibility of deportation for themselves or a family member (Dreby, 2012). These fears of deportation transcended legal status, and if the child knew someone who had been deported or not. For many, this fear was connected to shame and secrecy; children were ashamed to be or to have family members who were immigrants due to social stigma and fear of deportation. These outcomes, widespread for the children interviewed regardless of contact with the Department of Homeland Security or deportation processes, were “devastating for children’s identity and sense of self,” as well as their overall well-being (Dreby, 2012, p. 841).

Broad Contextual Factors that Affect Individuals, Families, and Communities

The results summarized in this research span the Bush and Obama administration years, with most collected while Obama was president. Moving forward, we must also recognize the overarching socio-political shift in climate that is fostering an even greater hostile and negative discourse surrounding immigrants and immigration policy. For example, immigration reform emerged as a key issue of debate in the 2008 presidential election, and despite executive orders for DACA, activities under the Obama administration remain highly criticized by immigrants’ rights and advocacy groups (e.g., increased deportations, creation of “priority juvenile docket” in 2014 in response to the crisis of unaccompanied minors). Unfortunately, this “mixed legacy” of the Obama administration coupled with an increasingly divisive rhetoric around immigration leading up to the 2016 election (see Chishti, Pierce, & Bolter, 2017) has created a particularly hostile

environment that proliferates anti-immigrant sentiment, defamatory/hate speech, and racist remarks. This is not the first time that a harsh socio-political climate escalated during our recent US history. For example, post 9/11 marked another time with a rise in hate crimes (Chung, Bemak, Ortiz, & Sandoval-Perez, 2008), prompting advocacy efforts for comprehensive tracking of hate crimes (Anti-Defamation League, 2004).

Ongoing xenophobic attitudes and anti-immigrant sentiments, fueled by misinformation of facts (see Anti-Defamation League, 2016), have created a heightened sense of fear, mistrust, and psychological distress among immigrant communities and other marginalized groups (Hiers, Soehl, & Wimmer, 2017; Tobar, 2017; Yee, 2017). Moreover, the current Trump administration continues to put forth harsh policies, including changes to regulations that require ICE to detain pregnant women (Sacchetti, 2018). In fact, between January 20th (first official day of Trump administration) and September 30th, 2017, approximately 16,000 more individuals who already lived in US were deported (this excludes deportation of people detained at the border) as compared to the year 2016 (last year of Obama administration) (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, 2017). Shifts in overt attitudes and policies are important because perceived discrimination perpetuated by others may exacerbate poor outcomes among those living in the US without authorization (e.g., Cobb, Meca, Xie, Schwartz, & Moise, 2017). Moreover, significant adverse psychological effects due to anti-immigration actions have been reported across groups, regardless of status (Roche, Vaquera, White, & Rivera, 2018). Other historical legislative actions (“Amnesty Act” in 1986) and policies (DACA) were arguably intended to support immigrant integration and opportunities for civic engagement. More inclusive and responsive policies have important implications that help mitigate the effects of anti-immigrant contexts. For example, a review of Oregon Medicaid claims data showed that children’s anxiety and adjustment claims decreased by 4.5% post-DACA (i.e., Hainmueller et al., 2017), and U.S. National Health Interview Data demonstrated a significant decrease in self-reported psychological distress among Latinx non-citizens post-DACA (Venkataramani, Shah, O’Brien, Kawachi, & Tsai, 2017)

Alternatives to Deportation, and Recommended Policies and Practices

National Laws and Judicial Review

1. Take into account what is in the best interests of US born children in immigration reform. Consistent with the position of the American Psychological Association, immigration policies should keep families together and discourage deportation. The Society for Community Research and Action calls on the US Congress to pass, and the president to sign, comprehensive immigration reform that would offer permanent protections to all 11 million people who are unauthorized to reside in the US currently and end the threat of deportation. This would protect the human rights of many individuals who have lived in this country for some years, and have strengthened US society. It would serve to further strengthen society, from a public health standpoint, because the adverse psychosocial effects would be reduced for individuals and families, just as the harms to broader communities would be mitigated.
2. Do not forcibly separate families given the demonstrated negative impact on children, other family members, and the broader community. As shown in the literature, the psychological consequences of separating families are long term and devastating to all involved. Therefore, policymakers should consider the human rights aspects of family unity (Brabeck et al., 2012). The 1969 American Convention on Human Rights and the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights provide a foundation for these positions.
3. Modify the hardship exemption to deportation statute in the Immigration and Nationality Act to include other family members in order to reflect the reality of kinship care in this country, such as grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins.
4. Narrow the scope of enforcement and removal activities and take into account parental and caregiving status, and length of residence in the US.
5. Consider the burden placed on the larger community by immigrant detention and deportation. Specifically, policymakers should take a public health perspective on deportation, recognizing the direct and indirect impacts of deportation on the emotional/behavioral health of community members via mechanisms such as increased mistrust of public institutions, negatively impacting community members’ likelihood of reporting violent crimes and receiving needed protection (Dreby, 2012).
6. Increase judicial review and discretionary authority of judges over deportation cases, as was the case prior to the passage of the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act and the Illegal Immigrant Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act in 1996. Processes that have such detrimental effects for families and communities deserve oversight by another governmental body, in this case, the judiciary. For example, weakening the judicial review process also removed legal constraints

that protected families and immigrants (Hagan et al., 2010, 2011; Kanstroom, 2007).

7. Ratify the 1990 International Convention on the Protection of Rights of All Migrant Workers and their Families, which would create a human rights framework in US immigration policy.
8. Ensure that there are no deportation quotas, in policy or practice. Previous quotas have resulted in the expansion of detention to those who were detained and deported simply due to immigration status (Hagan et al., 2010).

Local Jurisdictions

1. Local jurisdictions should declare themselves as sanctuary cities to enhance the protection of unauthorized immigrants and their families.
2. Local jurisdictions should not detain or deport people solely for immigration violations in local and state law enforcement.
3. Local school districts should be encouraged to build communications with their communities that prioritize safety and inclusion for all immigrant families, regardless of status. This would include a protocol for responding to ICE activity near schools and educating school personnel on the effects of immigration enforcement (i.e., threat of detention and possible deportation) on families and students. Moreover, the community's level of engagement with schools should increase to offer additional supports, just as the school should engage the community to offer community-level support.
4. Cities and other local jurisdictions should end their 287 (g) agreements, which have been controversial from the start. Specifically, communities are afraid to call local public safety officials, who are perceived as potentially deporting individuals with whom they come into contact, regardless of the behavior of the individual.
5. Local efforts are critical during post-deportation, in order to foster supportive social networks and create a sense of belonging among families. For example, schools, places of worship, and community organizations can provide important resources, both tangible and emotional. Programmatic efforts should be intentional with supporting mental health/healing, building community, and collective political action, as these types of programs foster hope and wellness for children and families (Ginwright, 2015).

Neighborhoods/Communities and Institutions/Sectors/Systems

1. Action efforts can also be concentrated at the community- or neighborhood-level to foster the well-being of

immigrant families and mitigate the negative effects of detention and deportation policies.

- a. Communities should educate local immigrants on their rights and ways to protect themselves through avenues such as Know Your Rights trainings, policy blasts/newsletters, and community forums.
 - b. Crowd-sourcing and fundraising should be readily available for families affected by detention and deportation.
 - c. Community members should build on existing community assets and strengths to support other community members during times of trauma due to fear of deportation.
 - d. Those who are not affected by deportations can become legal observers of detention and deportation actions and advocates for ending detention and deportation.
 - e. Those not affected by anti-immigrant hostilities can be trained in bystander interventions, and intervene when asked and/or when appropriate.
2. Institutions across local sectors—government, education, medical, social services—also serve an important role in creating safe access and equitable outcomes for all immigrants regardless of immigration status, and should create spaces where those who access services can feel heard, supported, protected, and valued.
 - a. Municipal governments should strengthen and/or create departments dedicated to supporting immigrant community members. Such departments may serve multiple purposes: to direct individuals to appropriate resources, to listen and respond to the challenges experienced by immigrants in the municipality, and to provide public awareness campaigns focused on valuing immigrant community members.
 - b. K-20 schools should invest in professional development for teachers and administrators on immigration policy, responsive and inclusive procedures and policies, and ways to elicit feedback from parents and students to improve school culture and climate.
 - c. K-20 schools should invest in well-trained mental and behavioral health providers who are bilingual and bicultural to support students who have experienced trauma.
 - d. Institutions of higher education should be held accountable (regardless of public or private funding) to allow equitable access to all eligible students, regardless of status. Also, concerted efforts need to focus on educating educators about creating learning environments that respect all students and provide

equitable resources to support all students regardless of their immigration status.

- e. Medical and social service sectors should focus on procedures to facilitate universal access, such as universal (i.e., single payer) health care, culturally competent professionals and/or better access to qualified interpreters, modified documentation procedures to prevent indicating immigration status in medical records, and more formalized linkages with local legal aid and advocacy networks (e.g., medical–legal partnerships).

Conclusion

In this policy statement, we have summarized the harmful effects of deportation and forced separation, and offered several policy and practice recommendations. As illustrated, the effects of deportation and forced separation are many, adverse, long-lasting and multi-faceted; they include psychosocial, physical, and economic adverse outcomes, and extend beyond the individual to powerfully impact families and communities more broadly. Consequently, the Society for Community Research and Action calls upon the Congress to pass a comprehensive immigration reform to protect the rights of all unauthorized immigrants living in the US to end the long-term fear and detrimental consequences of deportation. We also recognize that developing and passing such a reform is not an easy task to accomplish in the current socio-political climate and one that is unlikely to happen soon. Therefore, we also offer several multi-sectoral policy and practice recommendations for legal and judicial systems, local jurisdictions, communities, and public institutions to further prevent and counter, as much as possible, the harmful effects of deportation and forced separation.

Conflict of Interest

None of the authors who worked on this policy brief have a conflict of interest.

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