



A Guide To Organizing in Your Community

Created by BrewingBallads

*They tried to bury us, but
they didn't know we were seeds.*



Thank you for your involvement.
Follow @brewingballads on Instagram for new project updates.

Page 18

This booklet was created as a simplified guide to explain systems of power and how you, as a resident of this country, can make a difference. Everyone has a role to play. The important first step is finding the role that fits you and your lifestyle.

Our goal here is to provide all the information in an easily digestible format so that you can use it to your advantage. From breaking news updates to making calls, we've got you covered. There is power in community, now let's organize yours!

x Rosa

CONTENTS

Government Systems Simplified	05
Understanding the Different Roles	06
Important Dates to Remember	07
Breaking News	08
Phone Call Template	09
Email Template	10
Pop Quiz	11
Example at Work	12
Showing Up for Immigrants	13
Resources	14
Notes	18

Interpretation Cards

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 is a federal law that protects persons from discrimination based on the protected classes, including: their race, color, or national origin in services, programs, and activities that receive federal financial assistance.

This means you cannot be discriminated against for being a limited English speaker.

ANY organization that receives federal funding must provide professional language assistance.

This includes:

- Federal Agencies (IRS, Senators, Representatives, etc.)
- Nonprofits (Some Hospitals, etc.)
- Libraries
- City Recreation Centers

This does **NOT** include:

- Private Businesses that do not receive federal funding

More information on this policy can be found on the U.S. Department of Justice website at www.LEP.gov

You may request a free interpreter or a free translation of any documents offered by the agencies listed above *regardless* of citizenship status.

All people of Limited English Proficiency are entitled to have professional language assistance.



Education



For those looking to **grow their skillset**, there are many free online options available.

These websites offer free tutoring on a large variety of subjects.

For teens/adults:

- [coursera.org](https://www.coursera.org)
- edx.org

For children:

- [khanacademy.org](https://www.khanacademy.org)
- <https://learninglab.si.edu/>

Let us not neglect the wealth of knowledge available through **local public libraries**. In addition to having physical and digital media, libraries also often offer community programming for adults and children, resources such as tool rental, and much more. Check with your local library to see what services are available near you.

Apps like Fable, Hoopla, Libby allow you to connect to **free literature**.

Through Libby you can also connect to even more literature and resources that may not be available at your local public library. You can even add library cards from other states that offer them to nonresidents to enjoy.

Test your knowledge with this **free trivia game** and help feed people in need: <https://play.freerice.com/categories>

Free ESL Lessons: <https://eslpals.com/>

Learn about different subjects by experts: [ted.com/talks](https://www.ted.com/talks)

- https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story
- https://www.ted.com/talks/clint_smith_the_danger_of_silence



Systems Simplified



All systems of government whether at the national, state or local level have three main branches of government: **Executive**, **Legislative**, and **Judicial**.

Let's use the analogy of a high school to represent the nation.

Executive Branch - **Principal** of the School
ensures the rules are followed

Legislative Branch - **Teachers** of the School
enact the curriculums for each subject

Judicial Branch - The **Hall Monitors** of the School
interpret the rules of the school

Keep in mind this is a simplified breakdown of each group, but essentially, in the analogy of the nation being a school, these are the roles they represent.

Each Branch has their own hierarchy as well. Everyone has a boss they have to answer.

The Judicial Branch's highest court is the **Supreme Court**.
The Legislative Branch's highest position is the **Speaker**.
The Executive Branch's highest position is **President**.

Continuing with the analogy, while the principal may hold the highest position, they can be overridden by concerned parents (i.e. voters), and united school staff (legislators and judges).

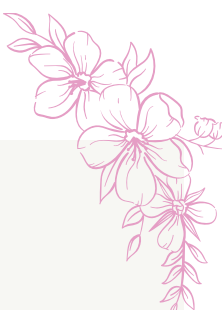


Understanding the Roles

Every community needs people to play different roles to have a successful movement. Not everyone can be everywhere at once.

Take a look at the different parts you can play in your community. Keep in mind one size does not fit all. It's okay to mix and match!

- The **Activist**: Attends rallies, attends protest events, reaches out to elected officials
- The **Artist**: Creates signage, art to confront injustice
- The **Distributor**: Aids in transportation needs such as picking up materials for community members, drops off members/materials
- The **Maker**: Makes sharable resources such as food, plant sprouts, veggie sprouts
- The **Organizer**: Gathers data related to upcoming events, resource needs, and makes a plan to put plans into action
- The **Digester**: Watches the news for information relevant to the community and simplifies it into a digestible format to be distributed to community
- The **Recruiter**: Attends community events, shares information about upcoming events in order to gain more community members



Charity Care

A majority of hospitals in the United States are classified as non-profits. This status allows hospitals to maintain a tax-exempt status. In order for hospitals to maintain their nonprofit status, they must offer Charity Care services to those who qualify.

Charity Care is a form of **financial assistance** provided by hospitals to low-income patients. Those that qualify may receive free or discounted medically necessary health care. Each hospital has its own policy related to financial assistance, however, income relative to the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) is often a primary qualification factor. Other factors hospitals may consider include household size and total cost of the bill.

Application process per hospital varies, but generally patients will need to provide proof of income (like paystubs or tax returns), residency, and potentially bank statements.

Uninsured and underinsured patients are eligible to apply. Charity Care is primarily used for those who lack health insurance or cannot afford to pay the portion of a bill not covered by their insurance.

Citizenship status also varies by hospital. Some hospitals may only offer these services to U.S. citizens while others may not require citizenship. Often though, they will have some type of financial assistance program in place regardless of if they are classified as nonprofit or for-profit.

A simple **online search** can help you find the application form to apply.



Resources

If you haven't already, you can register to vote here:
<https://vote.gov/>

Websites to Help Find Resources:

- findhelp.org (all resources)
- <https://nafcclinics.org/find-clinic/> (healthcare)

Find Your Congressional Representatives:

- <https://www.senate.gov/senators/>
- <https://www.house.gov/representatives>
- <https://senate.michigan.gov/senators/all-senators/> (MI Only)
- <https://www.house.mi.gov/AllRepresentatives> (MI Only)

Find Legislative Information:

- <https://www.congress.gov/>
- www.legislature.mi.gov (MI Only)

Mental Health Resources:

- Open Path Collective (low-cost therapy)
- PsychologyToday.com
- InclusiveTherapists.com
- Good Vibes Counseling and Consulting (MI-based)

Government Systems Explained Further:

- risenow.us/the-three-branches-of-government
- <https://indivisible.org/>

District Details

- <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members/map>
- <https://www.census.gov/mycd/> ← Find details about the district you live in



Important Dates to Remember

Every election cycle has important dates to keep in mind. While we may not be able to immediately change congress already in office; we can decide who gets placed into office to represent us when their election date comes.

There is power in making people believe their votes do not matter. The truth is no one can get into office without being voted into that position. Politicians need our votes to get into office, and get re-elected.

General (Congressional) Elections are held on the **Tuesday** after the first Monday in November in even-numbered years:

- Federal offices elections are every **four years**
- Representatives every **two years**
- Senators every **six years**

Congressional elections determine who represents your state in the federal government. Also, which political party will hold a majority in each (House and Senate) chamber.

Midterm elections take place halfway between presidential elections. Next midterm elections will take place **Nov 2026**.

State and local elections can take place in any year at various times throughout the year. Because of this, it is important to check when elections are taking place near you as the effects of state and local elections will hit closer to home.

You can find election dates near you by visiting:
<https://www.vote411.org/>



Breaking News



Constant breaking news updates can be deregulating. News updates coming daily can keep us distracted, and in a feeling of constant distress. It can be hard to organize and stay organized when you are stuck in a constant state of panic.

When a breaking news update hits, it is important to **break it down** and look at the facts:

- What is the update?
- How does it affect your community specifically?
Your town, friends, family?
- Has the new update already passed through congress?
- What date will this news go into effect?
- What can you do in this situation?
- What can you do right now to help you regulate your emotions?

Just as it is important to be updated on items that *can* affect you, doesn't mean you *have* to be constantly connected to news updates. It is equally important to take care of yourself mentally and physically.

Rest and joy are **equal parts** of importance in any resistance. You can't fill from an empty cup, so remember to look into your mental and physical wellness routines, consult a professional, and remember to take it one day at a time.



Showing Up for Immigrants



In addition to showing up for our most vulnerable community members by voting, there are other ways we can provide support as well.

Help find ICE detainees:

- Use ICE's Online Detainee Locator with their full name, date of birth, country of birth and/or Alien Registration Number
- Check Immigration Court Status via EOIR Online

Take down details so family members can find detainees:

- Get their **full name** and **date of birth**
- For Spanish-speakers ask: "Cual es su nombre completo y cumpleaños" [What is your full name and birthday]
- Phonetically, it is said like this:
"Koo-ahl ehs soo nohm-bre completo ee coomp-le-anios"

Print red cards to distribute:

- The "red" cards are wallet-sized cards available in multiple languages that help immigrants of any status assert their constitutionally protected rights
- You can also print Know Your Rights Flyers; both red cards and flyers are available through the ILRC

Connect your community to legal representation:

- Immigration Legal Resource Center (ILRC)
- ImmigrationAdvocates.org
- National Immigration Law Center
- Lakeshore Legal Aid



Example at Work



Let's take a look at a state bill to understand how these tips could play out in real time. For this example, we'll be using a Michigan State Bill that already passed in 2020.

Example Bill: SB0945 Michigan State Senate Bill

Look at the bill's details and **check these questions**:

- Who has already sponsored the bill? (sponsorship means they support the bill)
- Who is your representative in the State Senate?
- Are those that have sponsored the bill one of your representatives? (If yes, you don't need to contact your rep)
- In what committee in the State Senate is this bill currently sitting?
- Who are the state senators in that committee? Is your representative one of them?
- Do you know anyone who lives in the region of a state senator that has not made a stance on the bill?

After answering those questions, you can then determine your next steps. Look at the list of roles listed earlier in the guidebook to see how you want to ensure a bill passes/fails.

In this example, you can call/email your state senator to support/deny this bill. You can talk to friends that live in a region represented by a different state senator with a different stance than your own. You can distribute information on this bill, make signs, talk to neighbors. You can also keep up to date on the bill as it progresses through congress and keep others informed.

Every step counts.



Phone Call Template



Congressional members keep track of all calls received. However, too many long-winded calls can lead to full voicemail boxes, meaning constituents cannot have their voice heard. That is why when calling, you want to make sure you are strategic about your phone call.

Keep the call and/or voicemail **short**.

Be **specific** about the issue you are calling about.

Include **demographic** details that are relevant.

Do your **homework** and check you are calling the correct representative.

Making a quick call can be as easy as counting from 1 to 3.

Here is an example template to use when calling:

1. "Hello, I'm a constituent from [Your City/Town and ZIP code]."
2. State your purpose and request: "I am calling to urge Representative/Senator [Legislator's Last Name] to [support/oppose] [Bill Number or specific issue]."
3. State personal reason: "This issue is important to me because [I will be impacted]."

You can also ask that they email you a response on your representative's position on the issue. Asking for a response will ensure your call is noted.

Keep in mind, they may not have a stance at the moment or may give a roundabout answer when pressed for details. For calls related to specific bills, check to see which committees your congressional representative is a part.

Remember: local representative offices get less calls, you don't always have to call their DC office line to leave a message.

Email Template

Like phone calls, all emails received by representatives in congress are stored. Thus, when emailing, use an email address that does not include personal details about yourself that you aren't comfortable sharing. You can have a dedicated email address specifically for these purposes.

Unlike with your phone calls, your emails can be longer and include more details if you'd prefer. Remember to request a response if you would like one.

Example template:

Hello,

I'm a constituent from [Your City/Town and ZIP code]."

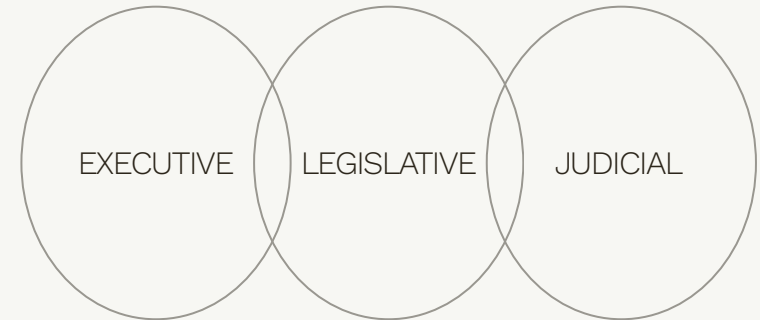
State your purpose and request: "I am emailing to urge Representative/Senator [Legislator's Last Name] to [support/oppose] [Bill Number or specific issue]."

State personal reason: "This issue is important to me because [I will be impacted]. Also, this matter is important because [town will be impacted]."

I would like to know the Representative's/Senator's position on this [bill/issue].

Thank you,
[Your Name]

Pop Quiz



Continuing with the school analogy of earlier, let's see if we can identify the roles of the members in each circle.

President	
Governor	Hall Monitors
Mayor	
House of Representatives	
Senate	
State Senate	Teachers
State House	
City Council	
Supreme Court	
State Supreme Court	
Court of Appeals	Principals
Municipal Court	

While we all may not be fans of being in school, there is no denying that we have to go through it and understanding how the system works definitely helps make the experience easier.