

Immigrant Assistance – What We Can and Cannot Do

As Cardinal Cupich shared, we must advocate for and assist in the respecting and protection of civil rights. Our pastoral assistance is guided by our longstanding commitment to and promotion of human dignity. And importantly, we must always respect the law, which requires that parishes, schools and entities of the Archdiocese of Chicago adhere to federal, state and local laws and regulations.

To ensure that all clergy and staff of the Archdiocese act with these principles in mind, it is essential to be clear on what assistance we can and cannot provide. The lists below, while not exhaustive, communicate a clear distinction between what any Archdiocesan parish, school or entity can and cannot do. **Always contact the Office of Legal Services to address your questions or confirm that a proposed action is permissible.**

Allowed	Not Allowed
Welcoming people to attend Holy Mass	Hiding people from the authorities
Allowing all students to attend School	Harboring or transporting people – there is no legal “sanctuary” within churches, schools, etc.
Welcoming all people to be served at a Food Pantry, Soup Kitchen, ESL language sessions, etc.	Obstruction of justice – particularly refusing access to civil authorities with a lawful right to enter the premises and/or review records
Welcoming parishioners, school parents, and other guests to Parish or School events, ministries, etc.	
Educating the people of God on immigration-related resources (e.g., legal advocacy, pastoral/humanitarian assistance, etc.) – townhalls, bulletins, newsletters, etc.	

Keeping those we aim to serve in mind, it is most helpful when our voice and actions are unified and directed toward the resources and assistance we can provide. Contradictory messages or activities do not help but only sow confusion to an already complicated situation. Those we serve are best supported when what they hear and see from our local Church is clear and consistent.