



# Immigration

## Discussion Guide

### Let's review

*At the start of each discussion, review the conversation ground rules for returning and new members alike to set the stage for active participation by all. You may want to use a timer as you go around the room. And don't forget to decide who will take notes and post a discussion recap.*

- **Be open and curious:** Everyone has a unique perspective, so be prepared to hear a different point of view. Listen first, and focus on the facts.
- **Be respectful and engaged:** Be sure that everyone has a chance to speak before adding a second comment or perspective. Encourage each other's participation.
- **Be focused and concise:** Keep the conversation centered on the issue and the brief.

**The "Table-it" Rule:** If the group has gone off-topic but the area is of interest, the group can table the conversation and save it for another time to be addressed in a different manner.

### Let's begin

- **Take five minutes** to review the [Executive Summary](#) for this brief. Highlight the main point of each section and key statistics.
- Each member is invited to answer the following questions in a **two-three minute reaction** to the brief:
  - Introduce yourself, and share what "lens of care" did you wear when reviewing this brief (e.g. personal, professional, community, state, nation, global)?
  - What did you find most interesting or surprising from reading the brief? What matters?

### Spread the word: facts to share during your discussion

- [Census Bureau data](#) from November 2021 found there were 46.2 million immigrants that made up about 14% of the U.S. population. The number of unauthorized immigrants living in the U.S. could be anywhere from [10 million](#) to [20 million](#).
- Annually, the U.S. issues [more than 1 million green cards](#). [In FY2019](#), 14% were skills-based for employment purposes, 8% were for refugees, and 69% were based on familial connections. In 2020, immigrants comprised [17%](#) of the total civilian labor force.
- As of December 2021, there were more than [1.5 million cases pending in immigration courts](#). About one-fifth of U.S. consulates are still [not processing visas](#) after stopping during the pandemic, and those that are open are buried under an estimated 7.5 million visa application backlogs.

## Let's discuss

Below are 3 questions for the group to consider and discuss, or choose your own.

- **Community:** What is the right level of immigration for our country, and how does this look at the community level?
- **Government:** Do illegal immigrants have a right to government-funded education or healthcare? Why or why not?
- **Business:** How are business owners affected by immigration policy? What about immigrants who need certain licenses (such as a driver's license) to complete their work?

## Let's act

1. **Take it local. Talk to your neighbors** to understand how immigration affects your community. Identify opportunities to work with other community members in your area.
2. **Explore the impact of immigration policies in your community.** Search for your state's laws on [Ballotpedia](#), or see if your county or nearby cities are [sanctuary jurisdictions](#).
3. **Investigate community programs** in your state or municipality. On your state or municipality website, look for a dropdown menu or tab labeled "citizen resources," "community," or "families."
4. **Research your elected representatives' positions** on immigration, and their vision for how to tackle immigration-related challenges facing Americans and your community. You can find contact information for federal, state, and local government officials [here](#). Your state or municipality's websites will also have information to contact leaders. Try looking at the drop-down menu for a *Government* tab.
5. **Establish a relationship with your legislators.** It's easy to establish a relationship with your legislators. Start by introducing yourself. You can also learn to write to your representatives or set up a meeting with a legislator on [The Policy Circle website](#).
6. **Consider writing a letter to the editor or an op-ed on your stance on immigration policy in your local paper.** Learn how on [The Policy Circle website](#).

## Next Steps for Your Circle

- **Post a Recap:** Summarize your discussion to share thoughts with members not present, and share planned actions from group members. Designate who will post a meeting recap on your circle page.
- **Decide your next meeting topic.** Want to discuss a related brief at your next meeting? Suggestions include:
  - [Foreign Policy: Asia Pacific](#)
  - [Foreign Policy: Middle East](#)
  - [Human Trafficking](#)
- **Dive Deeper into the issues.** If this is an area you would like to pursue further, consider taking possible steps to influence policy. The Policy Circle offers resources for [developing a message about your issue](#) and [organizing a petition](#) to amplify your voice and raise awareness. Don't miss our [latest events](#) that help you dive deeper on this issue and more.