



Pass an International Migrants Day Resolution In Your City

Local or state resolutions in support of International Migrants Day can help to raise awareness about human rights for immigrants and build or strengthen important relationships among diverse communities, organizations, sectors and with elected officials. In some cities, this proposed resolution could be very controversial and generate strong opposition – so appropriate preparations should be made to ensure its passage. More than just a message – a local resolution in support of International Migrants Day is a great organizing opportunity!

Following are some basic considerations and steps towards moving forward a resolution in your city.

What is a Resolution?

A resolution expresses a formal position and lays out an agreement to operate in accordance with this position. A group or organization can pass a resolution. Each proposed resolution offers a chance for dialogue about your issue.

Every resolution that passes sends a strong message to other groups, officials, and legislators, and provides an opportunity for media attention.

Local Governmental Resolutions

Local governments can also pass a resolution. Most resolutions are introduced at city council meetings one week and then voted on the next week. However, if there are questions, it will be deferred to a committee for more consideration and possible re-writing. Committees will often hold hearings on subjects important to the public.

A proposed resolution offers a useful opportunity for dialogue about issues. A resolution that actually passes sends a strong message to state and national officials and also provides an opportunity for media attention. Local resolutions in support of International Migrants Day can provide leverage for improving state and federal policies.

Some Preparatory Advice...

- Research and discuss what is at stake in your city on the immigration issue. You may already be aware of how this issue has emerged in local politics, but you may want to speak further with community leaders, city council staff people, faith and labor representatives, academics, etc.
- Research the resolution process. Find out the timeline, procedure for introducing a resolution, and who has power to move the resolution forward.
- Research and discuss what you will “ask” in your proposed resolution – do you want a simple proclamation to be issued and publicized? Will the city issue a press release?

- Find out who in the local government may be supportive. Arrange a meeting with the members of your City Council and/or senior staff to find out who is receptive to your issue. Talking to even a local reporter might help to see who might be receptive.
- Set up a meeting with one or more of your elected officials. Provide them with a packet of information containing a cover letter (see below) describing your proposal.
- If you send information to local officials, follow up with a phone call and ask if they have received and reviewed the materials you sent. Try to pin down a timetable to have the resolution introduced and volunteer to provide a draft. As possible, try to enlist co-sponsors, including bi-partisan support.
- Mobilize for the public hearing or other process for the introduction of the resolution:
 - Discuss the resolution, any controversy, and process with your organization and other supporters. Be prepared to brief other community groups and allies to enlist their support. It is important that the resolution has broad backing beyond the immigrant community.
 - Work the media. If you have good media contacts, see if you can get local coverage before the resolution comes up for a hearing. Also, write a letter to the editor.
 - Finally, prepare a few brief and concise testimonies for the hearing. Think carefully about representative spokesperson from immigrant and allied communities. If there is a more “open” hearing, encourage people from different community groups to participate. Since comments are limited, make sure that people address various points. Keep everyone on the message because anything said can be published. If not everyone can speak, then have them show support by holding signs.

Post-resolution:

- If you are successful in getting your resolution passed, be sure to publicize! Send out a press announcement, circulate through social media, urge community-based media to cover.
- Celebrate! Even an informal and simple reception can help to bring community and allies together.
- If you are not successful in getting your resolution through, take the time to summarize, draw lessons, and assess if and when you may take up the effort again in the coming year.

SAMPLE LETTER TO INTRODUCE RESOLUTION

(Date)

Dear Councilperson/Representative/Board Member,

As members of this community and in recognition of the contributions and struggles of migrants here and everywhere, we urge you to adopt December 18 as International Migrants Day, and reaffirm our (city's/county's/state's) commitment to the respect and promotion of migrants' rights.

On December 18, 1990 the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (UN Migrant Workers Convention). The Convention recognizes that migrants are entitled to the rights guaranteed all human beings by international law - that migrants rights are human rights. In December 2000, the UN proclaimed December 18 as International Migrants Day, to encourage awareness-raising "on the human rights and fundamental freedoms of migrants," including the "sharing of experience and the design of actions to ensure their protection."

With consideration of the enormous contributions immigrants make to our community and the need to strengthen [name of city]'s commitment to an inclusive and welcoming city, we urge you to formally recognize December 18 as International Migrants Day in [name of city].

Sincerely,

(Your Name(s) / Organization)

SAMPLE CITY RESOLUTION FOR INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS DAY

This city resolution was passed on December 18, 2001, by a unanimous vote of the Los Angeles City Council. The language was drafted by the Multi-ethnic Immigrant Worker Organizing Network (MIWON), a network of four immigrant workers' rights and advocacy groups: the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA), Garment Worker Center (GWC), Korean Immigrant Worker Advocates (KIWA) and the Pilipino Workers Center (PWC), and received broad-based support from over eighty community organizations and city officials.

Immigrant Workers Platform

Whereas, the City of Los Angeles has historically been a place of refuge for migrants escaping from political turmoil, natural disasters and economic hardships in their country of origin -- immigrants from across the world have built this city and its economy continues to thrive through the major contributions of their labor. Nowhere is this clearer than in the low-wage industries, where wealth is created by garment, restaurant, day labor, domestic, home care workers and other immigrant workers who receive poverty wages and endure exploitation; and

Whereas, immigrant workers have endured deplorable working conditions such as long work hours without overtime pay, no access to workers compensation, little regard for their health and safety, harassment, discrimination, blacklisting, and have little or now protection by government agencies in charge of enforcing labor laws; and

Whereas, immigrant workers lack job security, a living wage and are trapped in these low-wage industries without the hope of improving their lives and that of their families;

Whereas, immigrant workers face higher levels of exploitation because most lack legal documentation, and they are subject to threats and harassment to be thrown out of the country, incarcerated and deported thereby creating a fearful working and living environment;

Whereas, immigrant workers and their families, because of their immigration status, are also systematically denied access to a driver's license, decent healthcare, social services, and quality education.

Let it be resolved:

That we, as leaders of a country built by immigrants, hereby endorse the following principles as guidelines for building a broader legalization program. We urge all others in the community to uphold these principles as we work together to improve the conditions for low-wage immigrant workers and their families.

JUSTICE - All immigrant workers deserve and must receive the following support to lead healthy, decent and productive lives:

- True legalization in this country should be given in the form of permanent legal status and citizenship. This should not be limited to any country of origin or work industry.
- Greater protection and enforcement of U.S. labor laws, which will guarantee at least minimum wage and security from blacklisting, harassment and intimidation of any kind.

DIGNITY - All immigrant workers and their families deserve:

- Clean, safe and proper working conditions to prevent illness, stress and workplace accidents.
- Access to decent and quality healthcare, and nutrition.
- Permanent, stable and secure work.
- Access to quality education and financial aid.
- Access to safe affordable housing.
- Access to a driver's license

DEMOCRACY - All immigrant workers and their families must hold basic democratic freedoms and rights as contributing members of this country. Immigrant families must be able to voice their concerns.

Thank you to all individuals and organizations that joined MIWON workers at the Council Meeting (IDEPSCA, Clinica Msr. Romero, So. California Fair Trade Network, Mobilization for Human Family, Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights, SEIU, AGENDA, National Campaign for Jobs and Income Support). Thank you to all the endorsers of MIWON and this platform.