

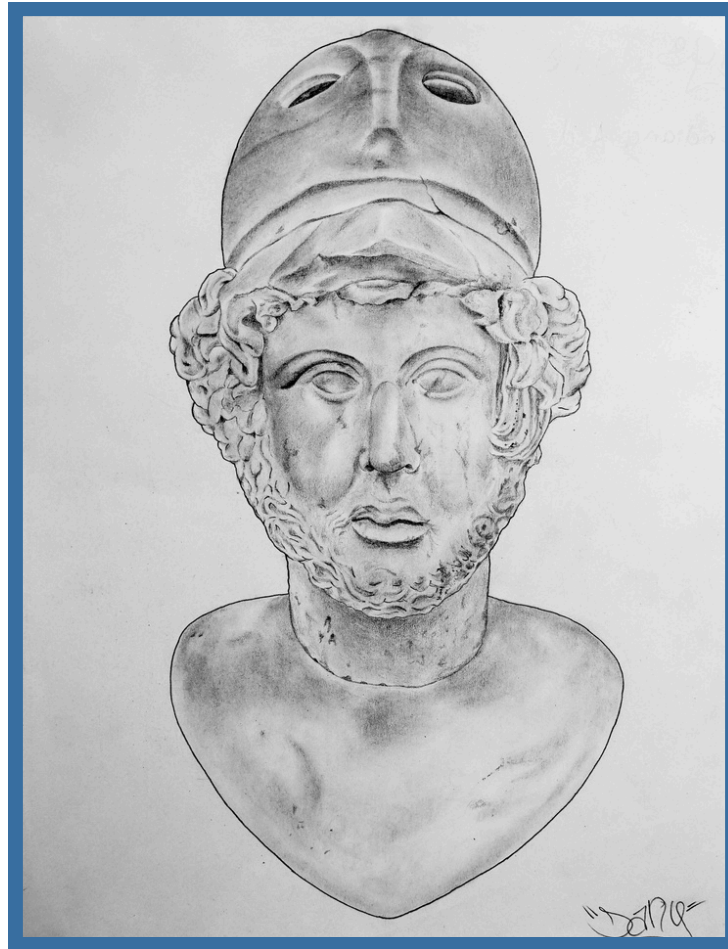
### The Impacts of Immigrants in the US

As a part of Indiana AID, a group of volunteers whose whole focus is to support immigrants in detention and their families, it has been deeply disheartening to witness the misinformation and disinformation that has circulated in our country about our immigrant neighbors. Our lives, our communities are made so much richer by a diversity of cultures, backgrounds, languages, and experiences. Just as a dish is made more delicious with a variety of flavors and seasonings, so are our communities and country.

It feels necessary, as a counterpoint to the ugliness we have seen in the media, to highlight some facts about the impacts that our immigrant neighbors have within our country and the impacts they experience. Sources are linked and emphasis in bold is our own:

1. Most immigrants (**77%**) are in the country legally ([source](#))
2. Immigrants play a key role in keeping Medicaid and Social Security afloat. They paid **\$194.5** billion to Social Security and **\$53.6** billion to Medicare in 2022 ([source](#))
  - a. Additionally, people in the country illegally are generally not eligible to receive any benefits through Medicare or Social Security, but they contribute to those programs anyway by paying payroll taxes on their earned wages ([source](#))
3. **60.1%** of ICE immigrant detainees have **no criminal record** according to data current as of September 8, 2024. Many more have only minor offenses, including traffic violations ([source](#))
4. From a study in Texas, undocumented immigrants are arrested at **less than half the rate** of native-born U.S. citizens for violent and drug crimes and **a quarter the rate** of native-born citizens for property crimes ([source](#))
5. Only **15.0%** of immigrants, including unaccompanied children, had an attorney to assist them in Immigration Court cases when a removal order was issued in September 2024 ([source](#))
6. It's illegal for people who are not U.S. citizens to vote in federal or state elections and it comes with severe consequences, such as losing the ability to ever become a U.S. citizen. Available data shows noncitizen voting is **incredibly rare** ([source](#))
7. People who enter the U.S. illegally are **not** receiving monthly cash assistance. This is a false claim. Refugees and people granted asylum — both groups that have legal status in the U.S. — can be eligible for assistance but at significantly lower rates than what has been falsely reported online ([source](#))

## Freedom in Expression



A portrait done in pencil by one of our incredibly talented detained partners. To create this artwork, every item to accomplish it would have to be purchased through the jail's commissary, choosing to prioritize creativity and artistic expression over food.

### Costs from the commissary website:

- Sketch pad (12x18) - \$11.10
- Gummed writing pad - \$2.69
- Golf pencil - \$0.18
  - They are not allowed larger writing utensils than a golf pencil, nor can the pencil have an attached eraser
- Eraser top - \$0.17

Another detained partner gifted us with a friendship card that contained a sweet note of gratitude. Our partners regularly speak of being hungry, so seeing afterward that the card would have cost him \$1.58 through the commissary when he could have spent that money instead on something like a packet of Ramen (\$1.08), it made the gesture even more meaningful.

# Witnessing Immigration Court

-the experience of an Indiana AID volunteer

I recently observed virtual immigration court, waiting to hear the case of my conversation partner, whom I will call Y. I found my partner's case information and court time and logged in to the [site](#). The judge and the government attorney were there as well as the Spanish interpreter. The judge said, "I see someone I don't know," so I unmuted and told him I wanted to observe the case of Y. He told me there would be a wait and even offered to call me back when the case came up, but I decided to stay on so I could see how the court worked.

The immigrants who came to this court today were all men. They were from Mexico, Honduras, Guatemala, and China. They were detained at jails in Kentucky, Wisconsin, and Indiana. Some were handcuffed and some not. Some were seen individually, some in groups. A few had attorneys, but most represented themselves (the judge asked if they had been given a list of pro bono resources; if they said they had not, he had the jail staff give them a copy on the spot). Most used the Spanish interpreter and one a Mandarin interpreter.

For the majority, it was their first hearing before the immigration judge. He had them verify that they were citizens of their home countries and not of the US. He explained that the government claimed that they had each entered the US without permission, and they acknowledged this was true. He asked how long they had been in the US, whether they had relatives who were citizens or permanent residents, and what kind of work they had been doing prior to being arrested. Some hoped for bond, others for voluntary deportation. The government attorney then spoke, detailing criminal charges against each person and uniformly recommending against bond or voluntary deportation. In most cases, the judge stated that because the immigrant had only been here a short time, did not have ties with citizens, and due to the nature of their crimes (whether accused or convicted— ranging from DUI to violence), he ordered deportation. In most cases he said they would be deported in about 2 weeks.

A few cases were different. One person had their bond lowered some, another individual had his case continued so he could speak with an attorney. One man's wife called in to testify on her husband's behalf, another man was married to a US citizen and the judge stated she should write a letter to the court regarding the spouse's character. Finally Y's case came up. He was handcuffed in a small room at Clay that I recognized. He answered the judge's questions through the Spanish interpreter. I learned details of his alleged criminal history. He asked for voluntary deportation, but it was denied. He was told he would be deported in ~two weeks.

At the end the judge asked me about my connection to Y. I said I was a volunteer with a tiny group, Indiana Assistance to Immigrants in Detention, and we provide support to immigrants detained at Clay in the form of video visits, commissary funds, books, and monthly Bible study. He apologized for the long wait, and I told him it had been an educational experience. "That's Immigration Court," he responded with a smile. I logged off.

## Contact Us

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## Follow Us

- Website: <https://www.indianaaid.org>
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/IndianaAID/>
- Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/indianaaid/>

## Volunteer

Currently, our greatest needs are for...

- Spanish-speaking visitation partners
- Visitation partners who speak languages other than English and Spanish
- Financial support/fundraising experience
- Website and social media specialists

## Donate



<https://www.indianaaid.org/donate>

- Indiana AID is a volunteer group funded 100% on donations. Please consider a tax-deductible donation via the QR code or link above.
- Shalom Mennonite Church is our fiscal sponsor - you will be taken to their site's giving page where you will first select an amount to give and then choose the fund where you would like your money to go, "Indiana AID Fund." None of the money donated to Indiana AID goes to the church's budget.
- You can also donate by sending a check to the church with "**Indiana AID**" in the memo line.
  - **Shalom Mennonite Church**  
**6100 E 32nd Street, Indianapolis, IN 46226**