



**JEWISH FUNDS  
FOR JUSTICE**

combining The Shefa Fund  
and Jewish Fund for Justice

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## **Jewish FundS for Justice: Position on immigration (May 2006)**

From the moment that Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden, to the centuries of slavery in Egypt, to subsequent settlements in Babylonia, Europe, North Africa, America, and elsewhere, the Jewish people have been wanderers and immigrants throughout the world. In response to this experience, Jewish law establishes protections for the *ger*—the sojourner whose precarious position in the community puts him or her at risk of exploitation.

In America today, immigrants, especially those who entered illegally, similarly find themselves subject to exploitation by employers, unable to secure social services, and afraid of the personal risks of demanding basic rights. Within the political and public discourse, the debate about appropriate border control and visa policies often overshadows the daily reality of the estimated 12-15 million undocumented immigrants in America who are vital to the health of the US economy, but who enjoy insufficient legal protections and who are often targeted by the same hate groups that perpetuate anti-Semitism, racism, and homophobia.

We remember that many of our own families were able to enter America either as a result of the liberal immigration policies of the early twentieth century or through illegal means, and were able to move into the middle class largely as a result of the availability of living wage jobs and access to good public education. We also acknowledge our own dependence on the labor of low-wage immigrant workers, who care for our children, clean our homes and workplaces, prepare our food, and otherwise make our own lifestyles possible.

The Jewish FundS for Justice therefore supports:

- Immigration reform that includes a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants already living in America.
- Visa policies that allow new immigrants to enter the United States legally.
- Guarantees that all visa applications will be considered within a reasonable period of time.
- The enforcement of minimum wage laws and other workers' rights, regardless of the immigration status of the worker.
- The extension of rights such as in-state public college tuition and drivers' licenses to immigrants, regardless of status.
- The right to language access, especially for critical medical and educational services, as well as programs designed to help immigrants with English language acquisition.
- Guarantees that immigrants who advocate for their rights will not be threatened or penalized with deportation or other punishments.

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